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**Francis Hutcheson and
the Origin of the Aesthetic**

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Editorial Note

Six of the papers presented here were originally delivered in the symposium ‘Hutcheson and the Emergence of Modern Aesthetics’ held at the University of Aberdeen on 23–24 January 2015.¹ Inspired by the success of this event, the participants decided to publish their papers together in a special issue of this journal, under the title of ‘Francis Hutcheson and the Origins of the Aesthetic’. To their enterprise, Emily Brady (Edinburgh), Bálint Gárdos (Budapest), and Richard Glauser (Neuchâtel) contributed with further papers. The present collection is not supposed to offer a unified re-interpretation of Hutcheson’s aesthetics, instead, it shows that there are historical and theoretical potentials in Hutcheson’s aesthetics which have remained partly or fully unexploited in the scholarship, and it maintains the plurality of approaches to an intellectual achievement which played a crucial role in the emergence of modern aesthetic thinking.

Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746) wrote the first philosophical aesthetics in Europe in 1725. The first part of his *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* is consensually regarded as his *par excellence* aesthetics which systematized some fundamental ideas of Lord Shaftesbury (whom Hutcheson explicitly mentioned as his main source of inspiration in the subtitle of the first edition), and applied the epistemological lessons drawn from John Locke’s philosophy. Three major features of his aesthetics proved lasting in the reception: the conception of ‘inner sense’ or ‘the sense of beauty’ as a special aesthetic sense of the human mind; his general formula of beauty in objects as ‘unity amidst variety’; and the claim of the tight relationship between aesthetics and morality which is emphasized already in the structure of his *Inquiry* whose first part contains the theory of the sense of beauty, while the second that of moral sense. Since Hutcheson was professor of moral philosophy at the University of Glasgow from 1730 to his death, it is not surprising that the large proportion of his *oeuvre* deals with moral philosophy; his posthumously

¹ This event was supported by a Marie Curie Intra-European Research Fellowship Scheme of the European Commission.

published *magnum opus* is *The System of Moral Philosophy* (1755). Still, beside the first part of his *Inquiry*, he also wrote three philosophical letters on laughter for the *Dublin Journal* (1725) which are customarily and rightly considered significant contribution to contemporary “aesthetic” thinking. With these works and several passages from other writings, especially in the Anglo-American scholarship, Hutcheson has become an indispensable and canonical figure in the narratives of the history of modern aesthetics.

The authors of this special issue show the multiple layers and the profoundness of Hutcheson’s aesthetic thinking, which is unduly neglected in its received interpretations, as well as the diversity of its inspirational sources, and the complexity of its reception. As such, they either rectify or complement the viewpoints of the mainstream literature. In so doing, they put Hutcheson’s aesthetic thinking into different contexts, and exploit various relationships between this eminent Scottish philosopher and a wide range of other authors, like Cicero, John Calvin, Franco Burgersdijk, Adriaan Heereboord, George Turnbull, Joseph Addison, Charles-Louis de Villette, Edmund Burke, David Hume, Archibald Alison, Thomas Reid, W. B. Yeats, Herbert J. C. Grierson, I. A. Richards, and some prominent figures of contemporary environmental aesthetics, to mention only a few.

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May 2016

Cover: Allan Ramsay: *Francis Hutcheson* (1694–1746), c.1740–45 (oil painting),
© The Hunterian, University of Glasgow 2015.

Francis Hutcheson, George Turnbull and the Intersection of Aesthetics and Morals

Alexander Broadie

1 Introduction

Of the two portraits of Francis Hutcheson that hang in Glasgow University's Hunterian Art Gallery one was painted by Allan Ramsay sometime during the period 1745–1746. The other, to a significant extent a copy of the first, and probably painted during the same period, was from the studio of Ramsay. It is however uncertain whether many (if any) of the brush strokes in the later portrait were Ramsay's.¹ In that portrait, though not in the earlier one, Hutcheson holds a copy of Cicero's *De finibus bonorum et malorum*, a text in which Cicero provides a detailed exposition, accompanied by critique, of Stoicism, Epicureanism and the philosophy of the Academy, the three schools of philosophy that were most prominent in Cicero's own day. The book that Hutcheson holds is surely no casual prop in this carefully staged performance here portrayed; it must have been chosen to represent the philosophical tradition within which Hutcheson saw himself as rooted. And while it is not from the *De finibus* that Hutcheson takes the lengthy passage we find on the title page of his first and most important book, *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*,² the passage quoted in that most conspicuous position is from a Ciceronian work very closely related to the *De finibus*, namely the *De officiis*:

And as regards the things sensed by sight, no animal other than man senses their beauty and elegance, and the harmony of the parts of those visible things; while by nature and reason, man, transferring these

1 For comment on the two portraits in the Hunterian Art Gallery, Glasgow University, see Mungo Campbell (ed.), *Allan Ramsay: Portraits of the Enlightenment* (Munich, 2013), 19–22. My thanks to Mungo Campbell and Anne Dulau for discussion of the portraits.

2 Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, ed. Wolfgang Leidhold (Indianapolis, 2004).

qualities from the eye to the mind, considers that beauty, consistency, and order should much more be preserved in our purposes and deeds.³ From these elements that which is moral (*honestum*), which is the object of our inquiry, is composed and created; and even if this be not ranked among the noble, it is nevertheless moral (*honestum*) and, even if no one praise it, by its nature it is worthy of praise. You perceive indeed the very form and, so to say, the face of the moral (*faciem honesti*), which, were it seen by the eyes, would produce a wondrous love of wisdom.⁴

This quotation explains the order of the two treatises that constitute Hutcheson's *Inquiry*, the first treatise being on beauty and the second on virtue. For Cicero first refers to our sense of beauty, elegance and harmony in the visible world, then to their analogues in the world of spirit, and finally he notes that moral goodness (*honestum*) is 'composed and created' (*conflatur et efficitur*) from the spiritual analogues of visible beauty, elegance and harmony. On this account, the beautiful and the moral are very similar and in some respects identical, and when, as happens from time to time, Hutcheson speaks of the beauty or loveliness of virtue, he is fully in harmony with the position that Cicero presents in the *De officiis*.

In section two of this paper I shall highlight the formidable closeness of beauty and virtue that emerges from Hutcheson's analysis. Then, in the third section, I shall focus on a very different way in which he represents their relationship, a way directly linked to a cosmic moment in the Scottish Enlightenment. To help us get our bearings permit me first to indicate the territory that I shall be occupying in the third section. Regarding the second of the aforementioned portraits of Hutcheson, it represents a professor of moral philosophy, garbed in what appears to be the gown of Glasgow University's dean of faculties,⁵ and displaying one of the great writings of the Roman Republic on the question on how a life should be lived; and he is portrayed as exercising the art of rhetoric, for he is in lecturing mode, his subject being that

3 At this point Hutcheson omits a sentence in Cicero's text: 'and he is watchful lest he do anything unseemly or effeminate, and watchful too in all his judgments and actions lest he either do or think anything licentious [*cavetque ne quid indecore effeminateve faciat tum in omnibus et opinionibus et factis ne quid libidinosae aut faciat aut cogitet*].'²

4 The translation is mine. The Latin passage that Hutcheson quotes is in Cicero, *De officiis*, bk. 1, ch. 4. Hutcheson's transcription is incomplete. The longest and most significant passage that is omitted is reproduced in footnote 3 above.

5 However, aside from this portrait no evidence has yet come to light that supports the claim that Hutcheson was ever dean of faculties.

most practical of issues: how one should live. Hutcheson was indeed a highly skilled orator, a fact highlighted by one of his students, Alexander Carlyle:

As his [Hutcheson's] elocution was good, and his voice and manner pleasing, he raised the attention of his hearers at all times; and when the subject led him to explain and enforce the moral virtues and duties, he displayed a fervent and persuasive eloquence which was irresistible.⁶

The portrait is therefore a fitting symbol of that singular event when Francis Hutcheson and David Hume in effect disagreed on the question of the role of the moral philosophy professor.⁷ In brief, Hutcheson had an answer to this question which would naturally incline him to the opinion that Hume was ill-fitted for the role of moral philosophy professor. I shall be discussing their disagreement, while at the same time noting the support for Hutcheson's position that is to be inferred from the writings of Hutcheson's contemporary, George Turnbull, sometime regent in Arts at Marischal College, Aberdeen, and author of one of the most interesting works on aesthetics to have been produced during the Scottish Enlightenment.

2 Some ways in which our ideas of beauty and virtue are alike

Explicitly or otherwise, Hutcheson indicates at least three respects in which our ideas of beauty and virtue are alike.

First, perceptions of beauty and of virtue are products of our faculties, one of them a faculty of inner sense and the other a faculty of moral sense, and these faculties are constituents of 'the frame of our nature'. Our earliest perceptions of things as beautiful and as virtuous are accomplished by a natural necessity, and thus without the intervention of either an act of discursive reason or an act of will. These earliest perceptions are of course by their nature uncultivated, but they are none the less in place and available for cultivation. Hutcheson has a good deal to say both about the naturalness of our perceptions of beauty and virtue and also about the integral or

⁶ Alexander Carlyle, *Autobiography of the Rev. Dr. Alexander Carlyle, Minister of Inveresk* (Edinburgh, 1860, 2nd edn), 70.

⁷ It may be conjectured that the disagreement between Hutcheson and Hume created the opportunity for the earlier of the two Ramsay portraits of Hutcheson. For it could have been painted in Ramsay's studio while Hutcheson was in the capital seeking to persuade town councillors and others to reject Hume's application.

concomitant element of pleasure that wells up by nature when we perceive beautiful things and virtuous acts. Something of this line of thought is visible in his affirmation that: ‘from the very Frame of our Nature we are determin’d to perceive Pleasure in the practice of Virtue, and to approve it when practis’d by our selves, or others.’⁸ And without resiling from the doctrine that there is a rational element, even a very large rational element, in aesthetic and moral perception, he does seem to downplay reason’s role when he writes:

But must a man have the Reflection of Cumberland, or Puffendorf, to admire Generosity, Faith, Humanity, Gratitude? Or reason so nicely to apprehend the Evil in Cruelty, Treachery, Ingratitude? Do not the former excite our Admiration, and Love, and Study of Imitation, wherever we see them, almost at first View, without any such Reflection; and the latter, our Hatred, Contempt, and Abhorrence?⁹

Hutcheson’s curious phrase ‘study of imitation’ that he uses here requires comment because of the part that it plays in the larger picture that Hutcheson paints. The Latin term ‘*studium*’ signifies, among other things, zeal or enthusiasm, and in eighteenth-century English the term ‘study’ also signifies zeal and enthusiasm as well as signifying study in the usual modern sense of the term. By our nature we respond to a generous or humane act not only, as Hutcheson says, with admiration and love, but also with a ‘study of imitation’, that is, an enthusiastic desire to imitate such behaviour. This interpretation is supported by the fact that Hutcheson here contrasts ‘study’ with ‘reflection’, though ‘study’, in the usual modern sense of the term, is clearly a reflective activity. ‘Study of imitation’, as I have interpreted the phrase, will have a significant role in my interpretation of Hutcheson’s criticism of Hume.

Secondly, the ideas of both beauty and virtue are inseparable from the idea of disinterest (as contrasted with self-interest). Regarding the perception of virtue, Hutcheson’s doctrine that benevolence is the moral motive – I think the sole moral motive – depends on his conceptual point that an agent acts benevolently in willing jointly (1) the happiness of another person and (2) the other’s happiness for the sake of the other and not for the sake of the agent himself.¹⁰ This is not to exclude the possibility that the agent who wills benevolently also has a self-interested motive for performing that same act.

⁸ Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 110.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 103.

The point is that if, having both a benevolent motive and also a self-interested motive, the agent would not have performed the act if the benevolent motive had not been in place, then the act is virtuous because the performance of the act is not determined by the presence of the self-interested motive.¹¹

As regards the parallel point relating to disinterest and the perception of beauty, Hutcheson has a good deal to say that is highly consonant with the Lockean doctrine that our power of association of ideas is a cause of corruption, and in particular Hutcheson focuses on our power of association of ideas as cause of corruption of our perceptions of beauty no less than of virtue. In that context he presents a prominent case for the claim that our ownership of certain objects poses a threat to our ability to make sound aesthetic judgments about those objects. He discusses the connoisseur who derives pleasure from his ownership of an object, and whose pleasure at ownership becomes so entwined with his pleasure at the sight of the beautiful object that what he takes to be an unadulterated aesthetic perception of the object is in fact a perception adulterated by its association with his ownership. The outcome is that a connoisseur of art may no more be capable of a disinterested perception of an *objet d'art* than is a miser who has, in Hutcheson's words: 'all Ideas of Good, of Worth, and Importance in Life confounded with his Coffers'.¹²

Thirdly, though Hutcheson emphasises the fact that our inner sense and moral sense are parts of the original frame of our nature, parts which can deliver up aesthetic and moral perceptions without the exercise of either our will or our discursive reason, he none the less ascribes an immense role to reason in the task of reaching aesthetic and moral judgments, not reaching them *tout court* but reaching better ones after starting from ones that we believe to be contestable. In short, Hutcheson believes both that as regards aesthetics and morals we are all on a learning curve, and also that reason is an invaluable means to propel us along the curve. It is an invaluable means because, as regards our perceptions aesthetic and moral, we are led into error by our unfortunate tendency to associate with our aesthetic and moral ideas other ideas that are inappropriately associated with them, and reason helps us both to identify inappropriate associations that we have made, and also suggests means to nullify the damage that the associations have done.

¹¹ Ibid., 103–4.

¹² Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense*, ed. Aaron Garrett (Indianapolis, 2002), 71. See also Alexander Broadie, 'Hutcheson on connoisseurship and the role of reflection', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 17 (2009), 351–64.

Regarding the similarity of beauty and virtue, there are further lines of investigation that could be explored, for example those relating to the fact mentioned earlier that aesthetic and moral perceptions include or give rise to perceptions of pleasure that are by no means accidentally related to the perceptions of beauty and virtue. But enough has been said to show that formally aesthetic and moral perceptions are close. Of course one should not leap to the conclusion that they are simply identical, for the beauty of an object is declared to be a function of its uniformity amidst diversity whereas our assessment of the moral value (*honestum*) of an act depends on whether we judge the agent to be acting benevolently. But there is none the less a single, rather thick concept under which aesthetic and moral perceptions can be brought. Arguably far more unites than divides those two sorts of perception, and indeed given that Hutcheson speaks of the beauty or loveliness of virtue, he surely believes virtuous dispositions and virtuous acts to be characterised by a certain kind of uniformity amidst diversity.

Having noted these ways in which Hutcheson brings our aesthetic and moral perceptions under a unifying concept, I shall now turn to a consideration of a further way in which he links beauty and morality.

3 Hutcheson, Turnbull and Hume: warmth in the cause of virtue

In January 1739 David Hume published books 1 and 2 of *A Treatise of Human Nature*. At a date unknown, but it must have been in 1739, he sent a draft of book 3 to Hutcheson who duly replied. The reply seems not to be extant, though we do know something of its content from Hume's own response to Hutcheson's letter. Hume writes:

What affected me most in your Remarks is your observing, that there wants a certain Warmth in the Cause of Virtue, which, you think, all good Men wou'd relish, & cou'd not displease amidst abstract Enquirys. I must own, this has not happen'd by Chance, but is the Effect of a Reasoning either good or bad. There are different ways of examining the Mind as well as the Body. One may consider it either as an Anatomist or as a Painter; either to discover its most secret Springs & Principles or to describe the Grace & Beauty of its Actions.¹³

¹³ David Hume, *The Letters of David Hume*, 2 Vols, ed. J. Y. T. Greig (Oxford, 1932), 1, 32.

The implication of this response is that Hutcheson had found fault with book 3 of the *Treatise* because of Hume's failure to promote, or to motivate people towards, virtue. Hume's response, that there is more than one way to be a moral philosopher and that one is to be a painter and another is to be an anatomist, involves the deployment of two resonant figures of speech, to which he returns in the *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, where he notes the importance of the anatomist's way while not at all decrying the painter's. Far from it, for he points out in the *Enquiry*, as he does also in his letter to Hutcheson, that the painter is all the better as a painter for knowing what the anatomist teaches:

The anatomist presents to the eye the most hideous and disagreeable objects; but his science is useful to the painter in delineating even a Venus or an Helen. While the latter [the painter] employs all the richest colours of his art, and gives his figures the most graceful and engaging airs; he must still carry his attention to the inward structure of the human body ... Accuracy is, in every case, advantageous to beauty, and just reasoning to delicate sentiment.¹⁴

I should say in passing that it is hard to see what Hutcheson would or even could object to in this distinction of Hume's, since Hutcheson himself was no less an anatomist in his moral philosophy than Hume was, no less sensitive than Hume to the fact that just reasoning can supply support for the exercise of delicate sentiment. But Hutcheson's objection was not to Hume's being an anatomist of virtue; it was to Hume's 'want of warmth in the cause of virtue' in a book in which such warmth might reasonably have been expected. My main concern here however is to note the fact that, in his responses to Hutcheson, both in the letter of 1739 and in the first *Enquiry* Hume is acknowledging the existence of a discourse, which he knew to be central to Hutcheson's thinking, in which virtue is conceptualised as a kind of beauty; and in which it is recognised that just as we are by our nature attracted to beauty so also are we therefore attracted to virtue, with an implication that part of the moral philosopher's task is to win people to virtue by displaying or representing virtue in all its beauty.

By the time Hume was writing about the moral philosopher in so far as he is, metaphorically speaking, a painter, the idea of morality as having an

¹⁴ David Hume, *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, rev. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford, 1975, 3rd edn), 10.

aesthetic dimension was already at home in the Scottish Enlightenment, not only through the work of Hutcheson, but also through Hutcheson's considerable hinterland, which included Shaftesbury's writings and Addison's essays in the *Spectator* on the pleasures of the imagination, while these various writings themselves reached back to classical philosophers, including Cicero, whose ideas on the beauty of virtue were part of the stock in trade of the Enlightenment scholar. So the disagreement between Hutcheson and Hume is locatable within an already richly endowed discourse.

Though Hume was speaking figuratively, a question might yet be raised whether one way to be a moral philosopher might be to be a painter in a non-figurative sense. It may be conjectured that Allan Ramsay was being a moral philosopher of the kind here at issue when he painted Hutcheson, tranquil, kindly, and with an open, honest gaze. In support of this approach I wish to note the judgment of George Turnbull. Book 3 of Hume's *Treatise* was published in November 1740 and shortly before, in that same year, George Turnbull published *A Treatise on Ancient Painting* in which he argued that one way to be a moral philosopher is to be a painter in the literal sense of the term. So far as Turnbull is known at all today this is principally because he was the teacher of Thomas Reid at Marischal College, Aberdeen, for at least two of the years between 1723 and 1726.¹⁵ I should like here to take seriously some thoughts that he presents in his *Treatise on Ancient Painting* on the subject of the moral philosopher as painter in the literal sense of the term. I shall also deploy insights that we find in Turnbull's *Principles of Moral and Christian Philosophy* likewise published in 1740 and in his *Observations upon Liberal Education, in all its Branches* published in 1742.¹⁶ My comments are intended to locate Turnbull in relation to the Hutcheson/Hume disagreement.

15 For matters biographical and philosophical on Turnbull see 'Introduction' in George Turnbull, *Treatise on Ancient Painting*, ed. Vincent Bevilacqua (Munich, 1971) (an edition lacking the plates); M. A. Stewart, 'George Turnbull and educational reform' in J. J. Carter and Joan M. Pittock (eds.), *Aberdeen and the Enlightenment* (Aberdeen, 1987), 95–103; Carol Gibson-Wood, 'Painting as philosophy: George Turnbull's *Treatise on Ancient Painting*' in Carter and Pittock (eds.), *Aberdeen and the Enlightenment*, 189–98; Paul Wood, 'George Turnbull' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004); Alexander Broadie, *A History of Scottish Philosophy* (Edinburgh, 2010), 108–23; 'Introduction' in George Turnbull, *Education for Life: Correspondence and Writings on Religion and Practical Philosophy*, eds. M. A. Stewart and Paul Wood, trans. Michael Silverthorne (Indianapolis, 2014), ix–xxvi.

16 George Turnbull, *A Treatise on Ancient Painting* (London, 1740); idem, *Observations upon Liberal Education, in All Its Branches*, ed. Terrence O. Moore, Jr. (Indianapolis, 2003); idem, *Principles of Moral and Christian Philosophy*, ed. Alexander Broadie (Indianapolis, 2005).

Turnbull's *Treatise on Ancient Painting* is as much a treatise on the liberal arts as it is on ancient painting. He does have something to say about ancient paintings, but the focus of the *Treatise* is on the fact that many leaders of society send their sons on the Grand Tour, and he raises a particular question regarding the purpose of Grand Touring – a question he must have pondered often in a professional capacity, for after resigning from his regency at Marischal College in 1727 Turnbull spent most of his time until 1743 as a private tutor, travelling with his tutees in the Low Countries, France, Germany and Italy.

His reply to the question about the purpose of the Grand Tour is that it is to facilitate the Grand Tourist's education, where the education is so slanted as to help prepare him for civic leadership; and the chief thesis of the book is that an appreciation of paintings can facilitate this educative activity. The youthful Grand Tourist, we learn, should be accompanied by a tutor whose main purpose is to deliver this education, and who has, amongst tasks constitutive of his role, that of using paintings as a means to instil in his young tutee knowledge of human nature, manners, virtue, and the public good.¹⁷ The ancients, we are reminded, used paintings as teaching aids for the promotion of virtue and, in Turnbull's opinion, we could hardly do better than imitate them in this matter. In order that the reader should have some idea of what ancient paintings looked like, the *Treatise on Ancient Painting* ends with a set of fifty four plates, some of which were based on drawings by Camillo Paderni, plates acquired by Turnbull partly through the services of Allan Ramsay.¹⁸

Regarding Turnbull's reply to the question of the purpose of the Grand Tour, he is not claiming that the study of painting would be sufficient to instil qualities required for civic leadership – such a claim would be unbelievable – but rather that in the context of a properly delivered liberal education the Grand Tourist's study of painting would provide considerable added value. The very fact of travelling can deliver up huge benefits. Turnbull reminds us that often when the ancients journeyed abroad they took the opportunity to observe and reflect on the various governments, laws, customs and policies, they met with, and to observe also the consequences of these things for the happiness or misery of the inhabitants of the countries in which they were

¹⁷ Turnbull, *Treatise*, xv, xvi.

¹⁸ Though the plates possibly convey some remote idea of what the originals looked like, they surely do not in the least convey what was, for Turnbull, the most important thing about them, namely their impactfulness. Their presence in the book is in any case puzzling given that, with a couple of exceptions, they do not figure in Turnbull's discussion.

journeying, all this with a view to bringing the benefits of this knowledge to their home countries.

Among the things they observed en route were examples of the visual arts. Some ancient philosophers judged certain works of visual art to be impactful in a very practical way. Turnbull reports that the philosophers spoke of the fitness of the visual arts:

to teach human Nature; to display the Beauties of Virtue and the Turpitude of Vice; and to convey the most profitable Instructions into the Mind in the most agreeable Manner. Accordingly they employ'd [the visual arts] to that noble Purpose, frequently taking the Subjects of their moral Lessons from Paintings and Sculptures with which public Porticoes at Athens, where the Philosophers taught, were adorned.¹⁹

The reference to the porticoes, the *stoa*, of Athens is clearly meant to put us in mind of a particular philosophical school where paintings were used to instil the beauty of virtue and the turpitude of vice, though Turnbull was aware that it was not only the Stoics who were using such teaching aids. Socrates is also recorded as having lectured on human nature to painters and sculptors, and, reports Turnbull: ‘often making use of those Arts, for instructing the Youth in Virtue, correcting their Manners, and giving them just Notions of moral Beauty.’²⁰

An art form can be considered in isolation and it can be considered in conjunction with another art form. This distinction prompts Turnbull to note the fact that art forms do in fact often occur in combination, and when in combination they are often mutually supportive or confirmatory. Especially he writes of painting and poetry as strengthening each other in their effectiveness at forming moral character. So in considering the education of the youthful Grand Tourist we are to think not of the impact that a painting has by itself, but of the impact it has on someone who has literary knowledge as well, someone who has, for example, learned from his reading of Homer the story of resolution, courage or cowardice that is represented in the painting he is looking at, and who is the more responsive to the painting because of its association in his mind with the powerful verses. By the same token his antecedent knowledge of the painting might enhance his response to the verses.

¹⁹ Turnbull, *Treatise*, xxi.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

Under the guidance of a tutor the two art forms can become jointly a powerful force for persuasion.

Whether the story being represented by the painter is factual or fictional does not greatly matter; the crucial point is that virtue should be represented in such a way as to secure the spectator's moral approval. As regards the foregoing distinction between fact and fiction, the point may be put in terms of a comparison between landscapes and narrative paintings. A painter may paint a landscape that is a product of his imagination, in the sense that he has never seen a single landscape which his painting accurately represents. So in a sense the painting is a fictional work. Yet all the same it may be believable, and this because even if the cloudscape, the quality of light, the kind of plant-life present, the windswept look of the vegetation, and so on, have not previously been seen in precisely this configuration, they nevertheless form a unity that is consistent with the laws of nature. Hence, though the painting is perhaps false at the level of the individual it is true at the level of the universal. Indeed, on this basis paintings could be used to give lessons in natural philosophy. The pictures become, in a favoured phrase of Turnbull's, 'samples and experiments' of laws of nature;²¹ they represent universal natural law contracted, as Duns Scotus would say, to the level of the individual.

From the point of view of giving and receiving an education, the conveyance of universal truth can count for no less than the conveyance of individual truth, and it may count for more because knowledge of the universal can be deployed as a universal major premiss in a syllogism that allows extrapolation to an indefinite number of cases falling under that universal. Knowledge of universal truths about nature means that we must have an idea of what to expect or at least of what not to be surprised at.

Turnbull believes that a similar account can be given of narrative painting, painting of such a kind as to be no less 'samples and experiments' than well-painted landscapes are, though in the case of the narrative paintings they are samples and experiments useful for educating people about human nature and moral philosophy. Turnbull affirms:

Moral pictures, as well as moral poems, are indeed mirrours in which we may view our inward features and complexions, our tempers and

²¹ Turnbull also uses the terms 'sample' and 'experiment' of Christ's miracles, certain of which may be 'proper samples or experiments of the powers, or knowledge claimed' by Christ's assertions regarding a future state. See Stewart, 'George Turnbull and educational reform', 99.

disposition, and the various workings of our affections. 'Tis true, the painter only represents outward features, Gestures, airs, and attitudes; but do not these, by an universal language, mark the different affections and dispositions of the mind?²²

The reference in this context to 'universal language' reminds us of Turnbull's rather wide sense of the term 'language', namely 'the various manners of making truths understood and felt'.²³ This account of language is offered, not in his *Treatise on Ancient Painting* but in his *Observations upon Liberal Education*. Nevertheless the account works perfectly in respect of the *Treatise*, as might be expected given that in the *Observations* Turnbull includes under the heading 'language' the arts of sculpture and painting. Part of his intention is to mark the fact that certain paintings not only speak, in a figurative sense, of virtues and vices, by displaying people engaged in acts that embody moral values, but speak in such a manner as to motivate acquisition of the virtues and rejection of the vices. In this context Turnbull reminds us that in Athens the statues, paintings and monuments of the city's soldiers: 'conduced exceedingly to enhance the merit of their valour, and of the services they rendered to their country, and to inspire the spectators with emulation and courage, and thus to cultivate and perpetuate a spirit of bravery and public zeal in the people...'²⁴ The paintings at issue are therefore being regarded as pieces of rhetoric, not simply as accounts of virtues but as exercises in the promotion of virtue and the denigration of vice. The Grand-Touring tutor is to use as teaching aids those pictures in which the painter is warm in the cause of virtue.

It is appropriate to recall here Turnbull's reference to Socrates 'frequently giving lessons to painters on the knowledge of human nature, that is requisite, in order to imitate Manners, and giving them just notions of moral Beauty'.²⁵ On the basis of this and other passages it seems plausible to suppose that Turnbull believes that the painter of paintings helpful to the Grand Tourist must himself be not only a painter of, but also an anatomist of virtue, a painter therefore who is also a rounded moral philosopher, knowledgeable about the nature of virtue and warm in its cause. For Turnbull the paintings on which the tutor should focus are moral philosophical texts, insightful about morality

²² Turnbull, *Treatise*, 147.

²³ Turnbull, *Observations*, 382.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 399.

²⁵ Turnbull, *Treatise*, 13.

and effective as pieces of rhetoric, in the Platonic sense of ‘rhetoric’, that is, ‘the art of persuasion by speech’.

I conclude that, as regards the disagreement between Hutcheson and Hume, Turnbull is on the side of Hutcheson. The fact that the Turnbullian moral philosophy texts are paintings does not affect the point. Whether using one language or another, whether English or painting, the moral philosophy expounded in the text should be not only well argued but presented in such a way as to educate the reader or spectator into a virtuous way of life. I acknowledge that Turnbull admires Hutcheson the anatomist no less than he does Hutcheson the painter, an acknowledgement surely sanctioned by Turnbull’s description of Hutcheson as ‘one whom I think not inferior to any modern writer on morals in accuracy and perspicuity, but rather superior to almost all.’²⁶ But it is particularly in respect of the painter’s warmth in the cause of virtue that the rhetorical dimension of painting comes into its own as a contribution to the preparation of the Grand Tourist for the noble role of civic leadership that awaits him.

I return finally to my point of departure, the fact that the passage from Cicero’s *De officiis* that appears on the title page of Hutcheson’s *Inquiry* contains a justification for the order of the two treatises in the *Inquiry*. It is out of aesthetic properties, such as beauty, elegance and harmony, that moral goodness is composed and created, a claim that surely permits us to ascribe a certain kind of primacy to aesthetic properties on the basis of a primacy of dependence. In the absence of aesthetic qualities, there cannot be morally good acts. Nevertheless, in his account of the role or, dare I say, the *officium*, of the moral philosophy professor, the painting that the professor is required to do – his bright, lively, ingratiating and seductive account of the virtues, and the darkly hued, sinister, threatening and disturbing account of the vices – all this mastery of verbal painting is for the sake of moral virtue. In short, these painterly devices, emerging as rhetorical figures and other tricks-of-the-trade of a silver-tongued orator, are at the service of the *honestum*. In that sense, we are dealing here not with the order of primacy in which matter precedes form, but the order of primacy in which an end precedes its means. The end here is the promotion of virtue, and the means is, or at least includes, the practice of the orator. There is no contradiction here; just two sorts of primacy.

In conclusion, for Hutcheson the aesthetic and the moral can be prised apart in the course of an analytic exercise, and indeed this is something that

²⁶ Turnbull, *Principles*, 14.

Hutcheson himself accomplishes when he analyses beauty in terms of unity amidst diversity and analyses moral motivation in terms of benevolence. But he believes that the loveliness of a moral act is not a mere accident supervenient upon the act, any more than the morality of a lovely act is accidental to it. If it is out of aesthetic properties that a moral act is composed and created, then where there is a moral act there also are aesthetic properties; and an act characterised by beauty, consistency and order will be moral. In short, Hutcheson's moral theory is essentially aesthetic.

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‘What could a Statue or Panegyrick effect?’ – A Note on the Abstractness of Hutcheson’s Aesthetics

Bálint Gárdos

Complaining about the too formal or too abstract character of Hutcheson’s theory of beauty has become something of a critical commonplace.¹ Paul Guyer describes ‘Hutcheson’s reduction of all cases of beauty to cases of uniformity amid variety’ in one of the most widely used overviews of eighteenth-century aesthetics as ‘an extreme position in eighteenth-century aesthetics’.² In the introduction to the only selection of the philosopher’s works in wider circulation, R. S. Downie wonders ‘whether Hutcheson stresses too much the formal side to beauty’, adding that ‘painting, poetry and music have a content as well as a form’.³ In the very useful Cambridge Companion volume on the Scottish Enlightenment, Alexander Broadie also affirms that ‘there is room to wonder whether the doctrine that beautiful objects display uniformity amidst variety can in the end escape the charge of vacuity’.⁴ Finally, it is difficult to escape the suspicion that even Peter Kivy, the leading authority on Hutcheson’s aesthetics, is making a virtue out of necessity when arguing that the ‘uniformity amidst variety’ formula is a forerunner of twentieth-century attempts at fusing form and content, so this ‘formalism’ has a decent enough (prospective) pedigree at least.⁵

In what follows I certainly do not wish to deny that the insistence on ‘uniformity amidst variety’ risks losing connection with the specific experience

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- 1 For the cited question in the title, see Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue in Two Treatises*, ed. Wolfgang Leidhold (Indianapolis, 2004), 97.
 - 2 Paul Guyer, ‘Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics’ in Stephen Davies, Kathleen Marie Higgins, Robert Hopkins, Robert Stecker and David E. Cooper (eds.), *A Companion to Aesthetics* (Oxford, 2009, 2nd edn), 32–51, 44.
 - 3 R. S. Downie, ‘Introduction’ in Francis Hutcheson, *Philosophical Writings* (London, 1994), xvii–xlvi, xxiii–xxiv.
 - 4 Alexander Broadie, ‘Art and Aesthetic Theory’ in idem (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 2003), 280–97, 282.
 - 5 Peter Kivy, ‘The “Sense” of Beauty and the Sense of “Art”: Hutcheson’s Place in the History and Practice of Aesthetics’, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 4 (1995), 349–57, 356.

of specific instances of beauty, nor do I wish to suggest that the oft-derided example of the practical applicability of the principle (“The Beauty of an equilateral Triangle is less than that of the Square; which is less than that of a Pentagon; and this again is surpass’d by the Hexagon.”⁶) does not weaken Hutcheson’s case simply by being very difficult to relish as a complete scale of beauty should probably be. What I would argue, nonetheless, is that if we can regard ‘the greatest Happiness for the greatest Numbers’ principle, despite its extremely formulaic character, and despite the supremely abstract computations based thereon, as a genuine attempt at discussing (moral and political) human interaction in the second treatise, then we should be able to look beyond the formalism of the first one, and see an attempt at discussing lived human experience here as well.

It is certainly untrue that readers of Hutcheson are given no examples of beauty other than the very abstract ones taken from geometry. The philosophical writings abound with quotations from classical poetry, with Horace as a probable favourite.⁷ Hutcheson seems to enjoy more recent English-language poetry as well, citing Milton’s *Paradise Lost* repeatedly, and takes especial pleasure in Samuel Butler’s *Hudibras* in the *Reflections upon Laughter*. In his ‘Inaugural Oration’ of 1730 he apparently intends to project the image more of a man of letters than of a professional philosopher. He indulges in nostalgia about the times he studied ‘humane letters and philosophy’ at the University of Glasgow, and he

imbibed the first elements of the inquiry after truth; where I had my first taste of the immortal sublimities of Homer and Virgil, of the charm, the felicity and dexterity, the humor and wit of Xenophon and Horace, of Aristophanes and Terence; likewise the abundant grace and dignity of Cicero in every branch of philosophy and his eloquent and vigorous contention in pleading.⁸

Importantly, Hutcheson makes no distinction here between philosophical and

⁶ Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 29.

⁷ Aaron Garrett notes that ‘Horace is the most quoted of the classical authors in the *Essay with Illustrations*, although Cicero, Marcus Aurelius, Plato, and Aristotle are also frequently cited’. See his edition of *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense* (Indianapolis, 2002), 1.

⁸ Francis Hutcheson: *Logic, Metaphysics, and the Natural Sociability of Mankind*, eds. James Moore and Michael Silverthorne (Indianapolis, 2006), 191–2.

literary studies, he seems to imply both of them in the phrase 'good letters',⁹ and this belletristic culture is evident in most of his writings.

Most literary quotes, however, are not found in the writings on what we like to call, anachronistically, aesthetics. In the *Inquiry*, this is especially apparent, with Treatise II taking so many of its moral *exempla* from classical mythology and poetry (Virgil's *Aeneid*, for example). This fact, on the one hand, points towards the rather old-fashioned humanism of this supposed philosophical innovator (towards his belief, that is, that the ancient *topoi* hold timeless truths about human nature), and, on the other hand, it shows that, while the sense of beauty may be described in rather abstract terms, Hutcheson is neither uninterested in art, nor does he want to limit its experience to some sort of purely formal aesthetic pleasure. While Hutcheson is the first to talk about a distinct sense of beauty, he does not wish to separate the experience of beauty from the domain of (to use the Kantian terminology) praxis, and so construct a purely aesthetic sphere. On the contrary, his very general formula of beauty allows him to demonstrate the quest for beauty or harmony in all aspects of our lives. Even luxury is an example.

This is confirm'd by the constant Practice of the very Enemys to these Senses [i.e. the internal senses]. As soon as they think they are got above the World, or extricated from the Hurrys of Avarice and Ambition; banish'd Nature will return upon them, and set them upon Pursuits of Beauty and Order in their Houses, Gardens, Dress, Table, Equipage. They are never easy without some degree of this; and were their Hearts open to our View, we should see Regularity, Decency, Beauty, as what their Wishes terminate upon.¹⁰

Even if this aspect of the theory is under-developed, Hutcheson's examples show that the sense of beauty is a formative presence in all areas of life, down to its simple, everyday components.

Nothing shows better that Hutcheson does not want to move the experience of beauty into some remote, abstract field than the fact that his theory of poetry is found in Treatise II (which treats of morality). The particular cases of the experience of beauty are so far from being separated from praxis that the moral sense is the 'Foundation also of the chief Pleasures of Poetry'.¹¹

9 Ibid., 191.

10 Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 77.

11 Ibid., 173.

Where we are studying to raise any Desire, or Admiration of an Object really beautiful, we are not content with a bare Narration, but endeavour, if we can, to present the Object it self, or the most lively Image of it. And hence the Epic Poem, or Tragedy, gives a vastly greater Pleasure than the Writings of Philosophers, tho both aim at recommending Virtue. The representing the Actions themselves, if the Representation be judicious, natural, and lively, will make us admire the Good, and detest the Vitious, the Inhuman, the Treacherous and Cruel, by means of our moral Sense, without any Reflections of the Poet to guide our Sentiments.¹²

Reading such a passage, one has the impression that nothing has changed. A new philosophical discipline may have been born in these pages, but when it comes to the discussion of poetry, the views expressed are emphatically traditional. As the history of criticism has long recognised, one of the standard theories of the late seventeenth-century was that poetry (as opposed to what Aristotle taught in his *Poetics*) is closer to history than to philosophy because it teaches morality not through general principles but through specific instances and is thus a more powerful force for the good. William H. Youngren, in a classic article on this critical tradition, where he also demonstrates that there was nothing new or unexpected about these ideas already during the Restoration, names John Dennis's *Remarks on a Book Entitled, Prince Arthur* as the fullest statement of this view. Here Dennis argues that

there are but two ways of giving Moral Instructions: The one is by Precept, which is call'd Philosophy; the other by Example, which, in other words, is History; and ever since there have been Societies of Men in the World, there has been both History and Moral Philosophy, either Written or Oral. But Homer, who had a Discernment altogether extraordinary, and a Genius capable of Reforming the World, saw that Common Precepts were ineffectual, and Common Examples impotent.¹³

Hutcheson's claim is not at all that different from Dennis's. He too suggests

¹² Ibid.

¹³ E. N. Hooker (ed.), *Critical Works of John Dennis* (2 vols; Baltimore, 1939–43), 1, 56. Qtd. in William H. Youngren, 'Generality, Science and Poetic Language in the Restoration', *ELH*, 35 (1968), 158–87, 170.

that poetry is connected to morality, that it motivates virtuous action, and that it does so by creating a 'most lively Image'. The last item is probably the reason why he emphatically focuses on imagery. 'Upon this same Sense [the moral sense] is founded the Power of that great Beauty in Poetry, the Prosopopoeia, by which every Affection is made a Person; every natural Event, Cause, Object, is animated by moral Epithets ...'¹⁴ Clearly, talk about beauty and talk about morality are in no way separated when we come to poetry.

While there is no denying that '[t]he treatise is distinctly philosophical rather than critical in interest, which is to say that Hutcheson is more interested in the analysis of perception than in evaluation of works of art',¹⁵ I think that an examination of the occasions when Hutcheson does venture nearer to criticism gives us an insight into the nature of the philosophical enterprise, and shows that while the epistemological analysis of the sense of the beautiful may be an important philosophical novelty of the tract, the epistemology is not an end in itself. The workings of the sense of beauty are always integrated with moral and even theological considerations.¹⁶

Hutcheson probably comes closest to putting his philosopher's hat to one side, while still applying his concept of beauty, in the *Reflections upon Laughter*. The journalistic context in which the writings first appeared, and the generic traditions of the essay that he follows here make Hutcheson pretend to talk outside academic philosophical discourse ('I know not which of them a philosopher would call it',¹⁷ etc.), and the discussion of a specific problem pushes the general issues somewhat to the background. Nevertheless, as far as formal description goes, I find Peter Kivy's interpretation, according to which Hutcheson actually explains the cause of laughter by a slight modification of his 'uniformity amidst variety' formula, to be perfectly convincing. Kivy claims that

In a certain sense, therefore, the quality of humor, like that of beauty, is based on the notion of unity in variety; but whereas with beauty the emphasis is on the unity, with humor it is on the variety. The inappropriate comparison, in order to be humor and not merely inappropriate, must bear some affinity to the other term of the simile or metaphor.

14 Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 174.

15 Carolyn Korsmeyer, 'The Two Beauties: A Perspective on Hutcheson's Aesthetics', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 38 (1979), 145–51, 146.

16 See the contribution of Endre Szécsényi in this special issue.

17 Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry Concerning Beauty, Order, Harmony, Design*, ed. Peter Kivy (The Hague, 1973), 108.

And therein lies the unity of humor. But that unity must be jarred by the inappropriateness, and therein lies the predominance of variety. Humor, thus, draws on the same principle as the aesthetic qualities of beauty and harmony.¹⁸

The *Reflections* are extremely valuable in this regard because, while the *Inquiry* proposes a definition of beauty which is taken to hold irrespective of time and space, in the discussion of the sense of the ridiculous such historically and culturally specific qualities are very much foregrounded, demonstrating that Hutcheson's perceived formalism is not at all alien to these.

[M]en are fond of imitating the mode; and if in any polite assembly, a contrary dress, behaviour, or ceremony appear, to which we have joined in our country the contrary ideas of meanness, rusticity, sullenness, a laugh does ordinarily arise, or a disposition to it, in those who have not the thorough good breeding, or reflection, to restrain themselves, or break through these customary associations. And hence we may see, that what is counted ridiculous in one age or nation, may not be so in another.¹⁹

In talking about laughter, Hutcheson shows himself to be perfectly capable of descending from a very abstract epistemology, and engaging with actual, human social experience. The general anti-Hobbesian and anti-Mandevillian tendency of the writing is just as clear in this case as in the more systematic works, but the *Reflections* succeed in giving a closer (Shaftesburian) reading of the beneficent effects of good-humoured social intercourse, which he finds of the utmost importance, since '[m]en have been laughed out of faults which a sermon could not reform'.²⁰

Arguably, then, there is a sense in which Hutcheson is not so much interested in creating a purely formal aesthetics, but in giving a description of the sense of beauty that can be applied to his purposes in moral psychology. How do I, then, account for the many negatives in the delineation of beauty, which are even highlighted by the marginalia, and which state that the sense of beauty is not dependent on custom or education, but is based on universal laws, and can, thus be discussed in abstract formulae? I believe that if one

¹⁸ Ibid., 99–100.

¹⁹ Ibid., 112.

²⁰ Ibid., 118.

looks at later works as well, it becomes clear that the theories propounded in the *Inquiry* only provide Hutcheson with a starting point: he is looking, as it were, for a common denominator. As Carolyn Wilker Korsmeyer has observed, in the *Inquiry* Hutcheson is looking for a principle with reference to which one 'could obtain some agreement about the beauty of at least the simplest objects', which is probably why 'Hutcheson begins his investigation of absolute beauty with geometrical figures'.²¹

Peter Kivy charts the multiplication of senses in Hutcheson's works. He says that in the *Inquiry* Hutcheson mentions five different aesthetic categories, but subsumes all of them to one aesthetic sense. But by the time of the *Essay* 'Hutcheson's epistemology has virtually exploded into "senses" of every description, although it is still not certain that he acknowledges more than one aesthetic sense.' '[I]n the *Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy* (1747), a halt has been called. We now have eight aesthetic categories and (unequivocally) but one "sense" appropriate to them.' Finally, in 'the posthumously published *System of Moral Philosophy* (1755)', 'Hutcheson is willing to call each category a sense'.²² Even during the three short years between the publication of the *Inquiry* (1725) and the *Essay* (1728) the list of the senses examined grows longer and the analysis loses in abstraction. Having established a common denominator, Hutcheson feels free to go on to make more subtle distinctions. In doing so, he uses not the terminology of a supposedly new emergent discipline (aesthetics), but he incorporates some of the most widely used critical concepts of his era into his theory of perception.

The development from a unitary sense of beauty to a diverse range of different senses allows Hutcheson to engage many traditional concerns of criticism. In the passage about the moral usefulness of poetry I quoted above Hutcheson shows himself to be well prepared to use the fashionable pleasure-discourse of poetry, but he refrains from using other prevalent concepts like taste or *sensus communis*. Clearly, when (in the *Inquiry*) the emphasis falls on the unmediated, instantaneous operation of the sense of beauty (or, indeed, the moral sense), these culture-dependent concepts are difficult to use. With the diversification of the theory in the *Essay*, however, they all explicitly re-emerge. What was once known as the sense of beauty (or harmony) is placed here in the company of the external senses, the public sense (or *sensus*

21 Carolyn Wilker Korsmeyer, 'Relativism and Hutcheson's Aesthetic Theory', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 36 (1975), 319–30, 327.

22 Peter Kivy, *The Seventh Sense: Francis Hutcheson and Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics* (Oxford, 2003), 33–5.

communis), the moral sense, and the sense of honour.²³ The sense of beauty itself is renamed as ‘*Pleasant Perceptions* arising from *regular, harmonious, uniform* Objects; as also from Grandeur and Novelty. These we may call, after Mr ADDISON, the Pleasures of the *Imagination*; or we may call the Power of receiving them, an *Internal Sense*.’²⁴ What we first notice here is that Hutcheson no longer focuses on beauty (or harmony) exclusively, but on what will later come to be known as the sublime and the picturesque. More importantly, from my perspective, by tying his theory to Addison’s *Spectator* essays, Hutcheson enters a conversation that is explicitly rooted in social behaviour. Without going into the analysis of Addison’s work here, it suffices to remark that in those papers he paints a ‘Polite World’ (No. 409) of social interaction in which taste is one of the most sought-after qualities and the pleasures of the imagination are the innocent ones that the members of this world delight in (‘There are, indeed, but very few who know how to be idle and innocent, or have a Relish of any Pleasures that are not Criminal; every Diversion they take is at the Expence of some one Virtue or another, and their very first Step out of Business is into Vice or Folly’, No. 411.).²⁵

The general lesson I wish to draw from the above considerations is that the analysis of Hutcheson’s aesthetics, as probably the analysis of all Enlightenment aesthetics, should be able to move between general philosophical positions (whatever branch of philosophy seems most pertinent at a given point) and specific instances of historically situated human experience, because many of the complexities of this discourse emerge from its dual commitments to general and invariable human nature on the one hand and an increasingly detailed knowledge and awareness of historic specificity and difference on the other.

In what follows, as part of my argument that we should not focus exclusively on the formal qualities of his work, I will try to present the case that Hutcheson’s aesthetic thinking is actually rather typical in displaying tensions between abstractness and specificity. I will refer, first, to some of the dilemmas Hutcheson shares with late seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century critical discourse, and, second, to a number of texts from the Scottish Enlightenment that show how Hutcheson’s problems (and attempted solutions) remained almost inevitable all through the eighteenth century.

The history of criticism in the years preceding Hutcheson’s arrival on the

²³ Garrett (ed.), 17–18.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁵ Donald F. Bond (ed.), *The Spectator* (5 vols; Oxford, 1965), 3, 527; 3, 538–9.

scene presents many examples. Many commentators have noticed Dryden's unusual attention to historical circumstance. Robert D. Hume, in an important monograph, devoted a full chapter to the discussion of Dryden's sense of history.²⁶ Already in the early *Of Dramatic Poesy* (1668) modern French and English drama is treated separately from its ancient forebears. Dryden, thus, seems to regard the different national traditions as more or less distinct units, he recognises separate periods with unique audience expectations (which the authors have to conform to), and is not willing to see modern drama as altogether dependent on ancient precedents. The exciting, but sadly never elaborated, sketch usually referred to as 'Heads of an Answer to Rymer' (1677) is the most forceful statement of his 'historical' position. It was meant as a rejoinder to Thomas Rymer's *The Tragedies of the Last Age* (whose end-papers it was written on). What Rymer suggested was that the classic works of antiquity should serve as timeless models, because human nature is always the same.²⁷ Dryden's answer was the following: 'tho' nature, as he objects, is the same in all places, and reason too the same, yet the climate, the age, the dispositions of the people to whom a poet writes, may be so different that what pleased the Greeks would not satisfy an English audience'.²⁸ This is a good example of how it was perfectly possible to believe in unchanging human nature and in the importance of historically contingent factors all at the same time.²⁹ In a similar vein, John Dennis (also debating Rymer's position) in his *The Impartial Critic* (1693) presented a strongly worded argument against inflexible trans-historical norms and for taking historical considerations into account in every critical act. 'For to set up the *Grecian* Method amongst us with success, it is absolutely necessary to restore not only their Religion and their Polity, but to transport us to the same Climate in which *Sophocles* and *Euripides* writ'.³⁰ The same Dennis, however, in his *The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry* (1704) is perfectly ready to state that the single, unchanging 'great Design of Arts is to restore the Deacays that happen'd to Human Nature by the Fall, by restoring Order'.³¹ The art that achieves its final religious task is, according to Dennis,

26 Robert D. Hume, *Dryden's Criticism* (Ithaca, 1970), 65–101.

27 Curt A. Zimansky (ed.), *The Critical Works of Thomas Rymer* (Westport, Conn, 1971), 19.

28 John Dryden, *Of Dramatic Poesy and Other Critical Essays*, ed. George Watson (2 vols; London, 1962), 1, 214.

29 Dryden repeats the thesis of universal human nature many times. See e.g. *Ibid.*, 2, 4.

30 Hooker (ed.), 1, 11. For context and further examples, see Hooker's 'Introduction', *ibid.*, 2, cxiii–cxiv.

31 *Ibid.*, 1, 336.

sublime. And one ‘Mark’ of sublimity is that ‘it pleases universally, People of different Humours, Intentions, Sexes, Ages, Times, Climates’.³² Dennis is a more interesting critic than Rhymer partly because of these differences: he does not dogmatically affirm the existence of universal humanity, but posits it as an ultimate purpose to struggle for and attempts to incorporate history into his critical model. Nevertheless, history (the particular) appears in a close and problematic relationship with the unchanging universal.

In a classic study, Timothy Hampton has demonstrated why ‘exemplarity’ is key to understanding early modern attitudes to history.

For perhaps to a greater degree than those of any other period, the texts of the Renaissance stress the importance of their relationship to their readers. They seek to provide the reader with a variety of options for possible action in the world. They educate the faculty of judgement and seek to influence behaviour within a specific social sphere. They aim to move readers to various types of moral and political behavior. And the representation of exemplary figures from history is a principal rhetorical technique in this process of shaping the reader.³³

Hampton describes how the need to mediate between the present and exemplary figures from the past creates its rhetoric, its hermeneutics, and its humanist pedagogy, but concludes that an ‘uneasy juxtaposition of an image of past excellence and an anxiety that history has lost its exemplary function marks the works of each of the late Renaissance writers studied here.’³⁴ This does not, however, mean that the humanist concerns eroded overnight,³⁵ especially because more important than the sense of a certain continuity between two (more or less) specific periods of history (the Renaissance and classical antiquity) was the educated ability to mediate between specific images and narratives on the one hand and generalised ‘precepts’ of philosophy on the

³² Ibid., 1, 360.

³³ Timothy Hampton, *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca and London, 1990), 4.

³⁴ Ibid., 299.

³⁵ Some recent studies have offered strong arguments for the continuity of humanism even until the end of the eighteenth century. See Robert deMaria, *The Life of Samuel Johnson: A Critical Biography* (Oxford and Cambridge, Mass, 1993); Marcus Walsh, *Shakespeare, Milton, and eighteenth-century literary editing: The beginnings of interpretative scholarship* (Cambridge, 1997).

other.³⁶ According to Reinhart Koselleck the standard formula '*historia magistra vitae*' remained an index of the belief that the most important point about history is that it shows us that things remain essentially the same.

It implies a thorough apprehension of human possibilities within a general historical continuum. History can instruct its contemporaries or descendants on how to become more prudent or relatively better, but only as long as the given assumptions and conditions are fundamentally the same. Until the eighteenth century, the use of our expression remained an unmistakable index for an assumed constancy of human nature, accounts of which serve as iterable means for the proof of moral, theological, legal, or political doctrines. ... The temporal structure of past history bounded a continuous space of potential experience.³⁷

The tensions between timeless and time-bound, abstract and concrete, theoretical and pragmatic turn up in different varieties in different studies concerning the Enlightenment period. James Noggle, for example, has discussed the eighteenth-century discourse of taste as displaying a basic tension, and begins his study with the following words:

Taste, the most potent evaluative term in eighteenth-century British culture, plays a divided role in the period's writing because it works in two fundamentally contrasting ways in time. It is defined in philosophy and psychology as the capacity to instantaneously judge nearly anything: it lives in the moment, in particular sensibilities. ... But in the century's social theory and historiography, taste names slowly evolved, collective processes and outcomes. The modern taste, the Gothic, classic, female, British, and Chinese tastes (and so on) are descriptors vital to eighteenth-century understandings of culture. Such accounts describe the rise and progress of various nations, social and political classes, and economies, shaped by vicissitudes of wealth and climate, local customs, and contests for national power. ... In the eighteenth century, these

36 See Marion Trousdale, 'A Possible Renaissance View of Form', *ELH*, 40 (1973), 179–204; John M. Wallace, "'Examples Are Best Precepts': Readers and Meanings in Seventeenth-Century Poetry', *Critical Inquiry*, 1 (1974), 273–90.

37 Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York, 2004), 27–8.

two temporal poles – intense immediacy and the long process – govern the discourse of taste together, neither negating nor fully harmonizing with each other.³⁸

Attentive both to taste as immediate personal response and as cultural process, Noggle mentions that

[e]ven Hutcheson, dedicated as he is to the idea of the immediate sense of beauty, accepts the fact of (e.g.) national tastes and does not indicate he believes that due attention to universal, innate senses would liquidate them, as when he notes that “The *Chinese* or *Persian* Buildings are not like the *Grecian* and *Roman*, and yet the former has its *Uniformity* of the various Parts to each other, and to the Whole, as well as the latter” (33). Tastes for him work at a level different from taste and on their own terms evince his core principle of the sense of beauty, uniformity in variety, in various historically composed styles – even the Gothic.³⁹

The parallel presence of temporal and atemporal structures in the same line of argument is not untypical of the period as a whole. Leon Pompa has examined the writings of thinkers as different as Vico, Hume, and Hegel, and found that their historical writings are all caught up in the paradox that historical knowledge needs a prior theory of unchangeable human nature, ‘the theory of human nature must itself be, in a certain sense, ahistorical, and such historical accounts as arise from it must share that ahistorical character’⁴⁰

This tension or interplay between historic and ahistorical factors was to be a defining feature of aesthetic thinking in the Scottish Enlightenment in the generations following Hutcheson as well. Adam Smith in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), in a chapter entitled ‘Of the Influence of Custom and Fashion upon our Notions of Beauty and Deformity’ presents a disorienting spectacle of a constant flux not only in such areas as clothing and furniture (where we might find it easier to accept that fashion rules the day), but also in supposedly more serious and settled areas like architecture, literature or music,

38 James Noggle, *The Temporality of Taste in Eighteenth-Century British Writing* (Oxford, 2012), 1.

39 *Ibid.*, 17–18. The reference is to the *Inquiry*.

40 Leon Pompa, *Human nature and historical knowledge: Hume, Hegel and Vico* (Cambridge, 1990), 9.

saying that it is next to impossible to tell which style to prefer for its own sake. The chapter finishes, however, with a not very well developed claim that Smith

cannot be induced to believe that our sense even of external beauty is founded altogether on custom. The utility of any form, its fitness for the useful purposes for which it was intended, evidently recommends it, and renders it agreeable to us, independent of custom. Certain colours are more agreeable than others, and give more delight to the eye the first time it ever beholds them. A smooth surface is more agreeable than a rough one. Variety is more pleasing than a tedious undiversified uniformity. Connected variety, in which each new appearance seems to be introduced by what went before it, and in which all the adjoining parts seem to have some natural relation to one another, is more agreeable than a disjointed and disorderly assemblage of unconnected objects.⁴¹

If one senses a note of desperation in the word 'evidently' applied in a claim that the author does not really seem to know how to substantiate, this bit of wishful thinking can be seen as a sign that both the awareness of dizzying variety, and the hoped-for norm(s) that transcend historical and cultural change are indispensable. In this double commitment, it is telling that Smith reaches back to Hutcheson's famous formula, of which 'connected variety' is probably a close paraphrase.

Lord Kames is another example. As the author of one of the foundational texts of Enlightenment historical thought (*Sketches on the History of Man*, 1774) he is surely expected to be more relativistic than Hutcheson. The assumption seems justified by some parts of his *Elements of Criticism* (1762) where, for instance, he claims that 'fashion is in a continual flux, and taste must vary with it',⁴² or when he emphasises that 'in matters of taste' 'our faint and more delicate feelings are readily susceptible of a bias from custom', even adding that custom has 'power to change the nature of things, and to make an object originally disagreeable, take on an opposite appearance'.⁴³ He, nevertheless, is not averse to using examples just as abstract as the infamous one used by

41 Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, eds. D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie (Indianapolis, 1984), 199–200.

42 Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, ed. Peter Jones (2 vols; Indianapolis, 2005), I, 148.

43 *Ibid.*, 1, 293.

Hutcheson, comparing the beauty of a square, a circle, an equilateral triangle, and a parallelogram.⁴⁴ His list of the qualities that make an object beautiful – ‘regularity, uniformity, proportion, order, and simplicity’ – is not altogether unlike Hutcheson’s formula.⁴⁵ Moreover, he emphasises his firm belief in a ‘standard of taste’ which he maintains is rooted in our ‘common nature’, with respect to which ‘we have a conviction that it is invariable not less than universal; that it will be the same hereafter as at present, and as it was in time past; the same among all nations and in all corners of the earth’.⁴⁶

Taste very often had the role of mediator between supposedly unchangeable human nature and a historically conditioned value-system. ‘If it be owing in part to nature’ – argued Hugh Blair in his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (first published in 1783) –, ‘it is owing to education and culture still more’. In the first aspect, it can be said that ‘[n]othing that belongs to human nature is more general than the relish of beauty’, in the second we have to admit that ‘although none be wholly devoid of this faculty, yet the degrees in which it is possessed are widely different’.⁴⁷

While the examples might be multiplied, the above can hopefully suggest that we do Hutcheson a disservice by presenting his work as a radical break in the history of Enlightenment aesthetics. Not only do we find many parallels with both preceding and subsequent writers, but (more importantly) we can notice a structural similarity with a range of relevant texts from the period. Much as Hutcheson’s aesthetic thought can be abstract on certain occasions, this tendency cannot be seen either as setting him radically apart from critical tradition, or as disabling him to discuss specific human experience in a meaningful way. The coexistence of extremely abstract examples of ahistorical argument (whether in aesthetics or other theoretical spheres) and of the critical examination of historically specific examples is an unescapable fact of Enlightenment thought.

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44 Ibid., 1, 145–7.

45 Ibid., 1, 144.

46 Ibid., 2, 721.

47 Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, eds. Linda Ferreira-Buckley and S. Michael Halloran (Carbondale, 2005), 11.

Hutcheson and Reid on Natural Beauty

Emily Brady

1 Introduction

In this paper, I compare ideas about natural beauty in the philosophies of Hutcheson and Reid, with special attention to the relevance of their ideas to contemporary debates in aesthetics of nature and environmental aesthetics. Why look to this period for ideas about aesthetics of *nature*? The principles of taste, beauty, sublimity, novelty, ugliness structured theories of aesthetics during this time. By structuring theories through ‘taste’ and focusing on capacities in the subject such as perception and imagination, the starting point was not questions about the arts and their status in society (as we see, chiefly, in contemporary aesthetics). Rather, the starting point and subject matter of aesthetics was conceived broadly in relation to these principles. That subject matter included animals, the human figure, landscapes, natural processes and places, gardens and other modified environments, as well as the arts. This wide remit can also be explained by the influence of the natural sciences and religion on aesthetic theories of the time. Ideas that were central to eighteenth-century aesthetics resonate with new thinking in environmental aesthetics, for example, non-instrumental aesthetic valuing of nature as emerging from disinterestedness, the association of aesthetic value with moral value, and the role of knowledge in appreciation.

Why is this project worthwhile? Along with Addison, Hutcheson had a strong influence on aesthetic theories developed in the eighteenth century, and both Hutcheson and Shaftesbury were important influences on Reid. Reid’s explicit criticisms of Hutcheson are, themselves, interesting for reflecting on aesthetic appreciation of nature. In contemporary debates about aesthetics of nature, while Kant has been discussed widely, Hutcheson and Reid have not, and together they have interesting ideas to contribute to these discussions.¹

¹ Hutcheson and Reid are not the only philosophers who offer interesting ideas about natural beauty in the eighteenth century, but I take the position that their ideas are interesting and relevant for the reasons I set out in this paper. Perhaps the widest dis-

In historical discussions about eighteenth-century aesthetic theory, natural beauty tends to get short shrift.² Also, Reid's work has enjoyed a rise in importance, generally, in contemporary philosophy, yet his aesthetic theory remains understudied.³

The paper begins with a short background section on empirically-driven theories of aesthetics, before proceeding to a discussion of Hutcheson's ideas on the sense of beauty, perception and natural beauty. I turn to Reid on these same topics next, showing how his theory differs from Hutcheson's, and what it has to offer in that regard. In the final section, I argue that their ideas on natural beauty usefully inform two central issues in contemporary debates: what it means to appreciate nature 'on its own terms', and the role of perception and knowledge in that appreciation. In discussing each philosopher, my focus will be on their concept of beauty, and I shall set the aside questions of whether or not there is a standard of taste with respect to beauty.

2 Empiricism and Nature

Many of the philosophers writing about beauty and other aesthetic categories were also interested in human nature and Newtonian science. This is significant for writing in aesthetics because it will have developed, in Britain at least, within a context of empirical philosophy deeply influenced by Locke's empiricism, which brought the senses into prominence. The aesthetic sense was described as an 'internal sense' and compared to other senses such as gustatory taste.⁴ In particular, Hutcheson became an important influence on

cussion of aesthetics of nature among philosophers of this period can be found in numerous treatises on the sublime; see Emily Brady, *The Sublime in Modern Philosophy: Aesthetics, Ethics, and Nature* (Cambridge, 2013), 11–46.

2 For example, Peter Kivy's important study of Hutcheson discusses his views of natural beauty, but not in very much depth; see, *The Seventh Sense: Francis Hutcheson and Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics* (Oxford, 2003, 2nd edn).

3 Esther Engels Krocker, 'Thomas Reid Today', *Journal of Scottish Philosophy*, 13 (2015), 95–114, 104. For some of the latest work in this area, see Rebecca Copenhaver, 'Thomas Reid and Aesthetic Perception', and Rachel Zuckert, 'Thomas Reid's Expressivist Aesthetics', both in Rebecca Copenhaver and Todd Buras (eds.), *Thomas Reid on Mind, Knowledge, and Value* (Oxford, 2015). Hutcheson's aesthetic theory, while receiving more attention than Reid in aesthetics and moral philosophy, is also relatively understudied. As an addition to Kivy's in depth work, the current volume of papers will help to remedy this.

4 The term, 'aesthetic' did not come into usage until well after Alexander Baumgarten's coinage in 1735.

subsequent aesthetic theories. This empirical foundation explains a genuine concern about actual qualities and phenomena in the world in contrast to the more metaphysical and cosmological ideas of beauty found in ancient and medieval philosophy.⁵

It is especially useful for grasping what it is that gives natural phenomena aesthetic value. While an ideal theory of beauty, characterized by order, harmony, and so on sits nicely with a holistic concept of natural beauty – perhaps aligned with ecological ideas – it can hide our lived, immediate experiences of the natural environment. From extraordinary to more ordinary encounters, experience through the senses, I would argue, must form the starting point for aesthetic appreciation of nature.

At least because of emerging interest in the science of human nature and natural history, eighteenth-century philosophers in Britain and the Continent write generously not only about the arts but also the natural world. ‘Nature’ is certainly a contested concept, and in the eighteenth century, as today, it has many meanings, including religious ones. For example, ‘Nature’ with an upper case ‘N’ is used by Shaftesbury to denote the cosmological whole that is divine creation.⁶ When Nature is used for the natural world as created by God, for Hutcheson, Reid and other contemporaries this also included ‘nature’ with a small ‘n’, an empirical reality in all its particularity – the universe, mountains, rivers, insects, mammals, plants, and natural environments of sky, sea, and land, and so on. In the philosophical lineage from Shaftesbury to Hutcheson and Reid we find a stronger empirical basis for natural beauty, with Hutcheson’s ‘more earthy empiricism’ and Reid’s ‘common sense’ philosophy signaling a move beyond the stronger deism of Shaftesbury’s approach.⁷ It is interesting to know that Reid had a strong interest in botany, and natural history more generally, having studied it and writing a text on the subject.⁸ Of course, we still see in Hutcheson and Reid an anthropocentrism inflected with deism, which is to say that God is the final cause, and the non-human/non-divine is generally considered inferior to the human and divine.

5 Dabney Townsend, ‘Lockean Aesthetics’, *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 49 (1991), 349–61.

6 Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, ed. Lawrence E. Klein (Cambridge, 1999). Costelloe’s discussion of divine ‘Nature’ in Shaftesbury’s aesthetics is insightful; see, Timothy M. Costelloe, *The British Aesthetic Tradition: From Shaftesbury to Wittgenstein* (Cambridge, 2013), 13.

7 Costelloe, *The British Aesthetic Tradition*, 22.

8 See Paul Wood, ‘Introduction’ in idem (ed.), *Thomas Reid and the Animate Creation: Papers Relating to the Life Sciences* (Edinburgh, 1995), 1–20.

3 The Sense of Beauty

In *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725) and *An Essay On the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections* (1728), Hutcheson develops the idea of a ‘sense of beauty’, which he compares to our external senses of sight and hearing.⁹ With the sense of beauty, he instantly indicates an interest in qualities of the world as the basis of beauty rather than metaphysical ideas. This empiricist approach articulates beauty as related to an aesthetic sense, grasped through perception that is immediate, rather than mediated by cognition or knowledge: ‘Beauty is taken for the Idea rais’d in us, and our Sense of Beauty for our Power of receiving this Idea’.¹⁰ The power for receiving these ideas is the ‘internal sense’, and when beauty is experienced it is accompanied by pleasure. This internal sense, unlike our external senses, can discern beauty in non-extended things such as ‘Theorems, or universal truths, in general Causes, and in some extensive Principles of Action’.¹¹ Like the external senses, the internal sense is natural rather than acquired, though we can develop the capacity and, thus, develop aesthetic taste.

Although influenced by Shaftesbury, especially in aligning aesthetics with morality, Hutcheson departs from his cognitive, neo-Platonist approach. Hutcheson’s emphasis on perception means that the senses show us the way to beauty:

This superior Power of Perception is justly called a Sense, because of its Affinity to the other Senses in this, that the Pleasure does not arise from any Knowledge of Principles, Proportions, Causes, or of the Usefulness of the Object; but strikes us at first with the Idea of Beauty...¹²

The way in which Hutcheson likens our perception of beauty to a sense underlines the non-cognitive nature of his approach. The external senses and the sense of beauty are not concerned with reflection, and thus knowledge does not mediate or enable the perception of beauty:

9 Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, ed. Wolfgang Leidhold (Indianapolis, 2008), hereafter abbreviated as *Inquiry*; Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay On the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections*, ed. Aaron Garrett (Indianapolis, 2003).

10 *Inquiry*, 23.

11 *Ibid.*, 24.

12 *Ibid.*, 25.

a dull Critick, or one of the Virtuosi can tell all the specific Differences of Trees, Herbs, Minerals, Metals; they know the Form of every Leaf, Stalk, Root, Flower, and Seed of all the Species, about which the Poet is often ignorant: And yet the Poet shall have a vastly more delightful Perception of the Whole ... the most accurate Knowledge of what the External Senses discover, often does not give the Pleasure of Beauty ...

With no role for reflection, we also find that the immediacy of the sense of beauty precludes utility and self-interest or 'self-love'; beauty is 'necessarily pleasant to us, as well as immediately so; neither can any Resolution of our own, nor any Prospect or Advantage or Disadvantage, vary the Beauty or Deformity of an Object'.¹³ The pleasure which accompanies beauty is 'distinct from that Joy which arises from Self-love upon Prospect of Advantage'.¹⁴ Hutcheson agrees with Shaftesbury concerning the absence of practical interest in matters of beauty, but this is expressed more emphatically in his work.¹⁵ The sense of beauty is characterized by disinterestedness, a concept which would be deeply influential on the aesthetic tradition which followed Hutcheson, and on Kant in particular.¹⁶ Hutcheson does recognise that although beauty is in actual fact perceived via the internal sense (with accompanying pleasure), knowledge about the object and its uses 'may super-add a distinct rational Pleasure from prospects of Advantage, or from the Increase of Knowledge'.¹⁷ When knowledge is fed in, while it can embellish appreciation it does not form its foundation.

Overall, we find an argument that our power to perceive ideas of beauty is based in an 'internal sense' comparable to our external senses. Beauty is experienced through the subject's perception of objects in the world or non-extended things such as mathematical ideas. As disinterested, our grasp of beauty is non-reflective, non-cognitive, and non-practical; bound up with perception and feeling rather than rationality. In the next section, I consider 'absolute beauty' and how this type of beauty is concerned with nature.

13 Ibid., 25.

14 Ibid.

15 Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, 318–19.

16 Miles Rind, 'The Concept of Disinterestedness in Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetics', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 41 (2002), 67–87.

17 *Inquiry*, 25.

4 Absolute Beauty and Nature

Hutcheson makes an important distinction concerning beauty:

Beauty is either Original or Comparative ... Absolute, or Relative ... by Absolute Beauty understand only that Beauty, which we perceive in Objects without comparison to any thing external, of which the Object suppos'd an Imitation, or Picture; such as that Beauty perceiv'd from the Works of Nature, artificial Forms, Figures, Theorems. Comparative or Relative Beauty is that which we perceive in Objects, commonly considered as Imitations or Resemblances of something else.¹⁸

'Original' or 'absolute' beauty is non-representational, it does not imitate anything, and is not beautiful in relation to anything else. Comparative or relative beauty is imitative of things, and the arts are characteristically imitative or representational (in Hutcheson's time, at least).¹⁹ For example, consider a painting of a peach versus the peach itself, or a poem about clouds, versus clouds themselves. Gardens make an appearance in his chapter on relative beauty, most certainly because they are designed (in many cases strongly so, as we see in the French style of formal gardens).

Absolute beauty operates not as an objective quality and more like a secondary quality (after Locke):

Beauty, like other Names of sensible Ideas, properly denotes the Perception of some Mind; so Cold, Hot, Sweet, Bitter, denote Sensations in our Minds, to which perhaps there is no resemblance in the Objects, which excite these ideas in us, however we generally imagine that there is something in the Object just like our Perception ... were there no Mind with a Sense of Beauty to contemplate Objects, I see not how they could be call'd beautiful.²⁰

Beauty is always relational in this way, that is, it always depends upon an internal sense – the human mind, perception and an idea of beauty as arising in the

¹⁸ Ibid., 26–7.

¹⁹ Natural beauty also features as comparative beauty but only to the extent that we see God's systematic work as creator; see *Inquiry*, 45. I agree with Kivy's interpretation here that natural beauty is principally absolute beauty; see Kivy, *The Seventh Sense*, 96–7.

²⁰ *Inquiry*, 27.

mind from some cause. That idea is closely associated with a feeling of pleasure in the subject as well. So, there is a clear emphasis on beauty in relation to the subject and, as we shall see, it is a point that Reid found objectionable.

Hutcheson identifies three kinds of absolute beauty: natural beauty, the beauty of theorems, and the beauty of art that is not imitative or representational. When the idea of beauty is aroused in us, we experience pleasure. What is it about the qualities of objects that causes pleasure? Absolute beauty is occasioned by what Hutcheson calls ‘uniformity amidst variety’. In arguing the case for this universal feature of beauty, a deep interest in mathematical forms is shown; his presentation of examples begins with them because they are ‘simpler Kinds ... and we may perhaps find that the same foundation extends to all the more complex Species of it.’²¹ His articulation of ‘uniformity amidst variety’ is itself mathematical, as Paul Guyer points out: ‘greater beauty can be produced either by greater variety when uniformity is constant or greater uniformity when variety is constant.’²² Additionally, we find that the beauty of theorems is distinguished from other kinds of absolute beauty, at least because ‘there is none which we shall see such an amazing Variety with Uniformity’.²³ Although Hutcheson by no means discusses mathematical forms exclusively, by his lights they seem to provide exemplars of uniformity amidst variety in absolute beauty.

In explaining natural beauty and arguing for uniformity amidst variety, Hutcheson’s method is empirical; a range of examples of things that have uniformity amidst variety is presented. It is systematic too, with his section on ‘Beauty in nature’ beginning with the universe and the uniformity amidst variety of spherical planets, elliptical orbits, regularity of changes in daylight and seasons, and other phenomena of the atmosphere and universe. Hutcheson moves from the heavens above to the earth below, with sections ordered by headings: ‘Earth’, ‘Plants’, ‘Animals’, ‘Proportion’, ‘Fowls’, ‘Fluids’, ‘Harmony’ (in music, which he takes to be non-representational).²⁴

To understand how uniformity amidst variety works in natural beauty, consider plants and birds, two of his examples. Amongst the great variety of plants, we find uniformity, according to Hutcheson, in the way they grow and propagate, and also in their structure, especially if seen under a magnifying

21 Ibid., 28.

22 Paul Guyer, *A History of Modern Aesthetics. Volume 1: The Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2014), 106.

23 *Inquiry*, 36.

24 Ibid., 30–4.

glass. ‘In the almost infinite Multitude of Leaves, Fruit, Seed, Flowers of any one Species, we often see an exact Uniformity in the Structure and Situation of the smallest Fibres. This is the Beauty which charms an ingenious Botanist.’²⁵ Likewise, there are many species of birds that differ because of their variety of colours and feathers, yet all have feathers that are structurally similar across species. In any particular bird, we may also find a variety of colours, yet here too those colours are displayed in feathers which have a uniform shape and grow from the body in a uniform rather than disordered way, for example, on each wing, symmetrically.²⁶ Hutcheson’s discussion of animals is noteworthy in so far as he observes their beauty in motion, as living creatures, rather than merely specimens, ‘walking, running, flying, swimming’. He does not venture further beyond visual interest in natural beauty, however. Although he discusses harmony in music, or ‘Beauty of Sound’, he does not consider natural sounds such as birdsong or waterfalls.²⁷ This is disappointing because aesthetic appreciation of nature potentially draws on more senses compared to the arts and Hutcheson, unlike later philosophers, does not take an interest in this.²⁸

The method used by Hutcheson for examining natural beauty begins with forms and patterns that we understand through astronomy and other sciences, yet he is clear that uniformity amidst variety is experienced through the sense of beauty rather than through knowledge, thereby maintaining a non-cognitive view of beauty: ‘This Delight which accompanys Sciences, or Universal *Theorems*, may really be call’d a kind of *Sensation*; since it necessarily accompanys the Discovery of any Proposition, and is distinct from bare Knowledge it self’.²⁹ In closing his discussion of absolute beauty of nature, he emphasises that our experience of uniformity amidst variety does not arise from reflection and, ‘We may have the Sensation without knowing what is the Occasion of it’.³⁰ This last point is especially interesting, for it shows that natural beauty does not seem to require special expertise. Later in the *Inquiry*, we see this democratic tendency reappear. In contrast to enjoying the arts, natural beauty may be enjoyed widely, not requiring a position of wealth or power: ‘Contemplation of the Works of Nature, is expos’d to every one without Expence; the Poor and the Low, may have as free a use of these Objects, in

25 Ibid., 32.

26 Ibid., 34.

27 Ibid.

28 See, for example, work by Edmund Burke and Archibald Alison on the sublime, as discussed in Brady, *The Sublime in Modern Philosophy*.

29 *Inquiry*, 40.

30 Ibid., 35.

this way, as the Wealthy or Powerful.³¹ We will see a similar generosity in Reid's account, and for both philosophers, the explanation is that beauty is linked to perception and feeling, rather than knowledge.

The immediacy of our perception of beauty and its disinterested character is an essential first step in formulating the foundation of the moral sense for Hutcheson, though he takes the sense of beauty and moral sense to be distinct. Beauty is independent, not subsumed by the moral, but nonetheless the two sentiments are intimately connected. His generous view of just what may be available in terms of beauty to any person can be explained at least because he is striving to provide an account of beauty in preparation for his defence of the moral sense, where self-interest is absent from both.

This raises the question of the extent to which Hutcheson's views about natural beauty are shaped by his broader philosophical aim of arguing against Hobbesian egoism. One might take the view that it is easier to provide an account of beauty as grounded in disinterested pleasure with respect to beauty that is not a sign of wealth or power; beauty that does not have a price tag. Natural beauty is perceived to be of this kind, not owned or possessed. In the *Essay*, Hutcheson is clear that the poet or *connoisseur* of art or nature, rather than the *possessor* of it, has a 'higher taste'. He cites Horace to underline this point about nature's significance in this respect, 'Is the grass poorer in fragrance or beauty than Libyan mosaics? Is the water purer which in city-streets struggles to burst its leaden pipes than that which dances and purls adown the sloping brooks?'³² In this regard, consider mathematical theorems. Are they owned or possessed? Do they give us advantage? Here too, it appears easier to make a case for a disinterested concept of beauty by providing evidence of this kind.

While there is certainly something to this sort of argument, it does not sufficiently acknowledge other features of Hutcheson's account of absolute beauty, which is to say that his interest in natural beauty does not function simply to serve his argument for the moral sense. First, Hutcheson shows a genuine interest in harmony and order, and his account of natural beauty as linked to unity amidst variety turns out to be holistic, prioritizing unities above particulars. For this reason, natural beauty is conceived, arguably, more narrowly than we see in Reid's approach (more on this below).³³ Second, beauty as uniformity amidst variety, together with several mentions of harmony,

31 Ibid., 77. See also, Hutcheson, *Essay*, 74.

32 Ibid., 114 (English translation appears in note 34).

33 Cf. Kivy, *The Seventh Sense*, 99.

suggests a strong emphasis on order in his theory. That order is not accidental, and though Hutcheson genuinely finds it in nature, in our appreciation of birds or planetary movements, it is ultimately down to a divine cause. Certainly, then, Hutcheson holds up natural beauty as worthy of appreciation in its own right, even if his approach is wanting in its attention to particulars and to the more multisensory dimension of aesthetic appreciation of nature. I now turn to a discussion of Reid's ideas on the sense of beauty, and natural beauty, before discussing the relevance of each philosopher's ideas for contemporary debates.

5 Reid: Natural Beauty and Aesthetic Realism

Reid's theory of taste appears in his essay, 'Of Taste', in his *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* (1785), and this text will be my focus.³⁴ It is not my intention to suggest that he offers a theory of natural beauty as such; rather, among eighteenth-century aesthetic theories his approach, like Hutcheson's, is well suited to thinking about natural aesthetics. I shall argue, though, that his aesthetic realism is especially instructive with respect to aesthetic appreciation of nature. This more realist approach to beauty is grounded in his theory of perception and his common sense epistemology, which he uses to oppose Hutcheson's subjectivism.

Like Hutcheson and others falling under his influence, Reid explains beauty through a kind of internal sense that discerns beauty. He also recognises the role of feeling, pleasure and displeasure, in our experience of beauty, and how different backgrounds and experiences shape our responses to beautiful things. Reid sets out the standard principles of taste – beauty, grandeur (or sublimity), and novelty – with deformity or ugliness appearing as a form of aesthetic disvalue. Taste is defined as:

That power of the mind by which we are capable of discerning and relishing the beauties of Nature, and whatever is excellent in the fine arts ... The external sense of taste, by which we distinguish and relish the various kinds of food, has given occasion to a metaphorical application of its name to this internal power of the mind, by which we

³⁴ Reid also wrote on the arts, but this is less relevant for thinking about natural beauty; see Thomas Reid, *On Logic, Rhetoric and the Fine Arts*, ed. Alexander Broadie (Edinburgh, 2005).

perceive what is beautiful, and what is deformed or defective in the various objects we contemplate.³⁵

Here we see an interest in both natural and artistic beauty, and his analogy to the external senses follows the contours of Hutcheson's account. Reid then builds a different, more realist picture of beauty through his understanding of aesthetic qualities as 'excellences,' and how these excellences are perceived: 'When I hear an air in music that pleases me, I say, it is fine, it is excellent. This excellence is not in me; it is in the music. But the pleasure it gives is not in the music; it is in me'.³⁶ Reid wants to emphasise that beauty is not found in the mind or feelings of the experiencing subject, and it is not an idea raised via perception. Rather, beauty is perceived and is occasioned by 'excellences' of aesthetic objects.

Now, as Hutcheson also points up, we might not always be able to say just what it is that makes something beautiful when we ascribe beauty to it: 'Perhaps I cannot say what it is in the tune that pleases my ear, as I cannot say what it is [in] a sapid body which pleases my palate; but there is a quality in the sapid body which pleases my palate ... and there is a quality in the tune that pleases my taste'.³⁷ Nonetheless, we can be certain that we have found *something* of aesthetic merit. In comparing our aesthetic perception to the other senses, Reid thinks that we can be as certain in our ascription of some excellence to an object through aesthetic perception as we are in finding something delicious through gustatory taste. Much of the time though, Reid thinks that we are in fact able to discern and identify excellences and, in noting this, it is clear that he recognizes a range of ways we may respond aesthetically: 'In some cases, that superior excellence is distinctly perceived and can be pointed out, in other cases, we have only a general notion of some excellence which we cannot describe'.³⁸

Reid's points here are in step with his more general theory of perception, which says that our perceptual engagement with the world is direct and

35 Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, ed. Derek Brookes (Edinburgh, 2002), 573; abbreviated, hereafter, as EIP.

36 *Ibid.*, 574.

37 *Ibid.*

38 *Ibid.*, 578. Reid's point here is shaped by his particular understanding of secondary qualities, as Roger Gallie notes, 'our senses only give us a relative and obscure notion of secondary qualities. They inform us only that secondary qualities are unknown qualities that affect us in a certain way'; Roger D. Gallie, *Thomas Reid: Ethics, Aesthetics and the Anatomy of the Self* (Dordrecht, 1998), 5. These kinds of qualities appear to be, nonetheless, directly perceived on Reid's account.

immediate. Famously, he objected to the ‘way of ideas’ of Descartes, Locke, and others, dispensing with a representational theory of perception where the object of perception was a mental representation of a thing rather than the thing itself. In perceiving a quality, we do not form an intermediary idea upon which a belief is formed; rather, belief is enfolded in the sensation which forms a part of any perception. In perception of beauty, this amounts to an aesthetic judgment of some excellence in a landscape, poem, and so on:

When a man pronounces a poem or palace to be beautiful, he affirms something of that poem or that palace; and every affirmation or denial expresses judgment. For we cannot better define judgment, than by saying that it is an affirmation or denial of one thing concerning another. I had occasion to show, when treating of judgment, that it is implied in every perception of our external senses. There is an immediate conviction and belief of the existence of the quality perceived, whether it be colour, sound, or figure; and the same thing holds in the perception of beauty and deformity.³⁹

To underline that we directly perceive excellence in objects, Reid points to the way language reveals the convention for which we ascribe beauty to objects rather than to feelings in ourselves, insisting, in this way, that aesthetic subjectivism is mistaken. Importantly, our perception of excellences is evident from the aesthetic counterpart, as it were, of our common sense. The ways we speak about beauty reveal that it is not something internal to ourselves:

My language, according to the necessary rules of construction, can bear no other meaning but this, that there is something in the poem, and not in me, which I call beauty. Even those who hold beauty to be merely a feeling in the person that perceives it, find themselves under a necessity of expressing themselves, as if beauty were solely a quality of the object, and not the percipient ... No reason can be given why all mankind should express themselves thus, but that they believe what they say. It is therefore contrary to the universal sense of mankind, expressed by their language, that beauty is not really in the object, but is merely a feeling in the person who is said to receive it.⁴⁰

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 577.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*; see also, EIP, 584.

The linguistic dimension of our aesthetic experiences seems to be deeply important for Reid in so far as it reveals beauty as something we converse about, point to, and recognize as real, found in qualities in the world.⁴¹

These ideas mark Reid out from the more idealist and subjectivist leanings of his two main influences, Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. As noted above, Reid interprets Hutcheson as strongly subjectivist, as if beauty could only be identified with a feeling of disinterested pleasure in the subject. While I agree with commentators who argue that Reid may interpret Hutcheson's theory as overly subjective, an important difference between their positions can still be detected.⁴²

Now, Reid must also give some role to the mind behind perception of beauty and the pleasure felt in response. He explains that excellences originate in the minds that create them: in the case of art, signs refer to the excellence of the artist's mind, and for nature, to the excellence of God's mind.⁴³ In all cases, ultimately, excellences originate in the divine mind. What can this mean? What place does Reid assign to mind and feeling in the perception of beauty? As part of his argument for not reducing excellences to minds, Reid holds that excellences are related to the *structure* of objects, to some 'arrangement of qualities'; they are what he calls 'signs' of excellences in minds, and are not merely mental qualities. I shall return to this point below.

It would be too hasty, however, to conclude that beauty does not belong to art or nature in any real sense and must somehow always refer beyond itself to some mind. Even if excellences as objective, value-laden qualities have the quasi-mental status Reid assigns to them, they remain the source of beauty and the pleasurable feeling associated with it. Beauty is perceived through excellences and signs, but it is not reduced to them. Following a discussion about why the idea of secondary qualities is mistaken and how this mistake

41 By contrast, Reid's view of grandeur (the sublime) appears to be less direct and objective. Grandeur 'is found originally and properly in qualities of the mind ... discerned in objects of sense only by reflection ... those who look for grandeur in mere matter, seek the living along the dead'; EIP, 591.

42 Emily Michael's discussion in 'Francis Hutcheson on Aesthetic Perception and Aesthetic Pleasure', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 24 (1984), 241–55.

43 Even if God is the final cause, the natural world, natural order and natural laws are best explained through Newtonian science, on Reid's view. We know that Reid read, understood, and taught Newton's writings', even if he did not always agree with his ideas; see, Ryan Nichols and Gideon Yaffe, 'Thomas Reid', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2015 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2015/entries/reid/>>. Accessed 1/7/15; Wood, 'Introduction' in *Thomas Reid*.

has shaped theories of taste (in particular, Hutcheson's), Reid writes,

The sense of beauty may be analysed in a manner very similar to the sense of sweetness. It is an agreeable feeling or emotion, accompanied with an opinion or judgment of some excellence in the object, which is fitted by Nature to produce that feeling ... [T]he use of all language shows, that the name of beauty belongs to this excellence of the object, and not to the feelings of the spectator.⁴⁴

Peter Kivy's interpretation of Reid's resistance to subjectivism about beauty is instructive: 'Reid was insisting on the objective existence of aesthetic qualities in the strong sense ... For Reid, I suggest, the world was nondispositionally colored and aesthetic.'⁴⁵

Reid's emphasis on perception and language, on our sense that beauty lies in things, and belongs to things, shapes an aesthetic realism driven less by metaphysics and more by common sense.⁴⁶ Beauty in some ways might be said to 'track' common sense, in so far as we can have a direct and self-evident grasp of it.⁴⁷ This kind of approach places the qualities of nature and artworks front and center in a different way than Hutcheson's theory, and moves beyond the close association of beauty with the subject and their pleasure. Given Reid's contrasting picture of the aesthetic subject, where does this leave the concept of disinterestedness?

Reid does not explicitly discuss the concept, as we find in Hutcheson, but he does recognise beauty's independence from utility. The pleasure that accompanies beauty 'gives value to the object, abstracted from its utility'. With possessions, beauty 'greatly enhances the price', but this is not all, 'A beautiful dog ... is valued by its owner and by others, not only for its utility, but for its beauty.'⁴⁸ By the time Reid was setting out his theory of taste, beauty's independence from utility had become well established, so I would speculate that he felt no need to give disinterestedness special attention. This could also be explained by the fact that, as we have seen, Reid makes a sharper separation between

44 EIP, 594; see also, Reid's mention of Hutcheson's remarks here.

45 Kivy, *The Seventh Sense*, 172. See also, Copenhaver, 'Thomas Reid and Aesthetic Perception', 136, on secondary qualities as properties of objects.

46 Zuckert, 'Thomas Reid's 'Expressivist Aesthetics''; Dabney Townsend, 'Thomas Reid and the Theory of Taste', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 61 (2003), 346.

47 Another way of putting this, perhaps more strongly, is that there are 'first principles' of taste, in the sense that Reid understands this notion; see Gallie, *Thomas Reid*, 151.

48 EIP, 591.

beauty and pleasure than Hutcheson. Our perception of beauty gives rise to a *judgment* about the object's value (recall that for Reid, belief is wrapped into perception in a more direct way). In this way, we see that the ground of the judgment seems to be perception of the object rather than an immediate feeling of pleasure in the subject. If this is how the perception of beauty works, then aesthetic value is not *dependent* on pleasure, but only on the perception of qualities in objects.⁴⁹ The upshot is that aesthetic qualities become especially important, with less emphasis on pleasure in the subject. In the next section, I consider how this approach to taste and beauty shapes his ideas about natural beauty, before turning to the relevance of his aesthetic realism for contemporary discussions.

6 Instinctive and Rational Judgments of Beauty

Generally speaking, like Hutcheson, Reid thinks that we are naturally fitted to experience beauty and ascribe aesthetic qualities to things, that is, to perceive their excellences and feel pleasure in response. 'Some objects strike us at once, and appear beautiful at first sight, without any reflection, without our being able to say why we call them beautiful, or being able to specify any perfection which justifies our judgment ... In the plumage of birds, and of butterflies, in the colors and form of flowers, of shells, and of many other objects, we perceive a beauty that delights; but cannot say what it is in the object that should produce that emotion.'⁵⁰

In recognizing this kind of response, Reid points to a capacity to experience beauty immediately that will be available to children and adults, amateurs and experts alike. He even suggests that non-human species also possess the aesthetic sense, using it in sexual selection and in looking after offspring, quoting Addison at length on how birds may exhibit the sense of beauty in courtship.⁵¹ This sense of beauty is described as 'instinctive', and he illustrates it in this way:

In a heap of pebbles, one that is remarkable for brilliancy of colour and regularity of figure, will be picked out of the heap by a child. He perceives beauty in it, puts a value upon it, and is fond of the property

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid., 596.

51 Ibid., 596–7.

of it. For this preference, no reason can be given, but that children are, by their constitution, fond of brilliant colors, and of regular figures...⁵²

Reid makes a distinction between this instinctive sense or judgment of beauty and a more developed one, which he calls a ‘rational’ judgment of beauty. In rational judgments we are able to identify relevant qualities and provide reasons or an explanation for our judgment. The quality of the object is ‘distinctly conceived, and may be specified’:

The beauties of the field, of the forest, and of the flower-garden, strike a child long before he can reason. He is delighted with what he sees; but he knows not why. This is instinct, but it is not confined to childhood; it continues through all the stages of life. It leads the florist, the botanist, the philosopher, to examine and compare the objects which Nature, by this powerful instinct, recommends to his attention. By degrees, he becomes a critic in beauties of this kind, and can give a reason why he prefers one to another. In every species, he sees the greatest beauty in the plants or flowers that are most perfect in their kind – which have neither suffered from unkindly soil nor inclement weather; which have not been robbed of their nourishment by other plants, nor hurt by any accident.⁵³

It is important to understand that this is the only sense in which he thinks that aesthetic judgments are ‘rational’. Reasoning is not the basis of aesthetic experience and we do not arrive at aesthetic judgments through reasoning, say, as if we could deduce beauty in some way from a set of qualities in objects. The sense in which experience of beauty is rational tracks his common sense idea that perception includes belief. Knowledge will play some role, certainly, and more so than we see in Hutcheson’s account.⁵⁴ The appreciator with more experience of some aesthetic object will potentially experience greater beauty, able to grasp why the object has aesthetic value and able to make comparisons to other beauties.

52 Ibid., 598. Reid may have been making an implicit reference to Hutcheson’s remark that children tend to like ‘simpler’ and ‘regular’ figures (*Inquiry*, 30).

53 EIP, 607.

54 Cf. Kivy, *The Seventh Sense*, 158–68. I would argue against an interpretation of Reid’s theory as a type of ‘rationalist aesthetics’ (or, even, without qualification, ‘empiricist aesthetics’). It is a distinctive aesthetic theory, strongly shaped by his complex epistemology.

On first glance, it might seem that appreciators lacking experience and knowledge have shallow experiences of beauty, but I do not think this is what Reid means to say.⁵⁵ Reid, like Hutcheson, sketches a democratic picture of the capacity to experience beauty – from the experience of the child, to an adult lacking experience of something, to an adult who has acquired more understanding through greater experience of the aesthetic object or through specialist knowledge. It is noteworthy that his list of experienced appreciators of flower-gardens does not privilege scientific knowledge over other ways in which we might develop the capacity to make rational judgments of beauty. The florist and the botanist are on equal footing: the florist, with extensive sensory experience of flowers and formal arrangements of them; and the botanist, with their specialised scientific knowledge of plants. We have also seen that the sense of instinctive beauty extends to non-humans animals.⁵⁶

In addition, it is certainly the case that the instinctive judgment of beauty is a kind of aesthetic judgment in its own right. It is a judgment of aesthetic merit, where beauty strikes us, even if we cannot pin it down to particular qualities. The passages quoted above provide evidence of the child's capacity to experience beauty in this way, perceiving aesthetic qualities and experiencing pleasure. So, while greater beauty might follow with more experience, this does not seem to diminish the *quality* of these experiences and the judgments that we make. They are not necessarily superficial, being only of a different kind. Reid holds that instinctive judgments cannot be true or false, the standard of taste which he holds for rational judgments, because if we cannot pin down the qualities which strike us as beautiful, it will be more difficult to provide an explanation for our judgment.

In light of these points, we find that Reid's distinction not only identifies but is also able to capture the broad range of our aesthetic responses to nature, from being struck by we know not what to responses with a greater degree of attention, repeated experiences, or where background knowledge and experience fill out appreciation. We also find that he values the genesis of taste across our lives, from childhood to adulthood, as it develops and expands. The mature taste of an adult, traced through empirical experience by Reid, rather than development of the mind exclusively, is more valuable, but he also observes that 'each is beautiful in its season.'⁵⁷

55 Cf. Copenhaver, 'Thomas Reid and Aesthetic Perception'.

56 Hutcheson also alludes to this; see *Inquiry*, 28.

57 EIP, 614.

The broadness in Reid's account also reflects an interesting pluralism in his grasp of natural beauty. Like Hutcheson, he provides an inventory of beauties, but two points of contrast are immediately apparent. First, Reid's inventory is less systematic, and while it moves through the natural world, from inanimate matter to plants to animals, and finally, to human beauty, he does not really treat each class of things as carefully as Hutcheson. Second, Reid does not privilege mathematical theorems as a class of beauty. I surmise that this is because he objects to the reduction of beauty to one source or common quality, as we see found in 'uniformity amidst variety'. He argues:

Beauty is found in things so various, and so very different in nature, that it is difficult to say wherein it consists, or what there can be common to all objects in which it is found ... What can it be that is common to the thought of a mind, and the form of a piece of matter, to an abstract theorem, and a strike of wit? I am indeed unable to conceive any quality in all the different things that are called beautiful, that is the same in them all...⁵⁸

Without the emphasis on mathematical theorems and the discussion of astronomical phenomena, order and harmony are mainly limited to his own discussion of the planets and the universe, and otherwise do not feature strongly in his theory. The upshot is a more pluralistic approach to natural beauty that is closer, I believe, to the actual range of natural beauties many of us experience.⁵⁹ I shall return to this point below.

A potential stumbling block for Reid's views about natural beauty arises from his wider philosophical ideas as well as his deism. Unlike Hutcheson, Reid draws a distinction between 'original' and 'derived' beauty. Original beauty is found in qualities of mind, while 'objects of sense' have derived beauty, which is 'derived from some relation they bear to mind, as the signs or expressions of some amiable mental quality, or as the effects of design, art, and wise contrivance.'⁶⁰ Human beings have original beauty (e.g., in the virtues), and works of art, as the products of human minds, have derived

⁵⁸ EIP, 591; see also EIP, 575; and Costelloe, *The British Aesthetic Tradition*, 30.

⁵⁹ This wide-ranging picture of beauty need not collapse into relativism because, on Reid's account, we nevertheless perceive excellences as objective qualities; see Gallie's defence of Hutcheson on this point in *Thomas Reid*, 148–9.

⁶⁰ EIP, 601.

beauty.⁶¹ Where does this leave natural beauty that is not human beauty? This is where Reid's deism comes to the fore. Natural beauties will exhibit divine mental qualities and their beauty will be expressive of such qualities.⁶² The question arises, however, as to whether or not nature's derived beauty is therefore reduced to divine beauty, and not something appreciated in its own right.

That natural beauty is reduced to divine beauty would not do justice, I believe, to the ways in which Reid's aesthetic theory moves on from Shaftesbury's, especially in light of Reid's familiarity with subsequent theories of taste and beauty, as well as own interest in natural history and Newtonian science. A more charitable interpretation, supported by Reid's remarks quoted earlier, would be that nature is appreciated as beautiful for both its own qualities and its qualities of mind as derived from God. That is, those qualities, even if indicators of and originating in the divine, will still have the objective qualities that make something beautiful, such as a particular configuration of colours and forms.⁶³

7 Hutcheson, Reid, and Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics of Nature and Environmental Aesthetics

Perhaps the most central question motivating new work in aesthetics and nature and environmental aesthetics is: What are the grounds of appropriate aesthetic judgments of nature? One way that appropriateness is construed in this context is in terms of appreciating nature *as nature* as opposed to, say, appreciating nature as if it were a work of art. With works of art, artistic considerations such as style and intention help to ground and guide our judgments about why we find works of art beautiful, ugly and so on. With

61 Reid also points to human beings as the greatest kind of natural beauty; see EIP, 608.

62 Zuckert shows that the derived beauty of plants and animals is also expressive of mind for Reid, in the sense that they express signs of flourishing ('Thomas Reid's Expressivist Aesthetics'). Here, we see mental qualities which appear to be reflected across human and non-human life.

63 Gallie makes a similar, though rather more sophisticated, argument for the derived beauty of objects of sense (*Thomas Reid*, 171–4). Copenhaver defends Reid against claims that his distinction between original and derived beauty commits him to some kind of subjectivism ('Thomas Reid and Aesthetic Perception', 136.). These arguments, as well as Zuckert's (see previous note), provide additional reasons why derived natural beauty may be considered independently of human or divine mind or intentions.

respect to nature and environment, this kind of guidance does not make much sense, so we need to consider where such guidance might come from. If one agrees with the view that aesthetic judgments of nature are more indeterminate than judgments of art – somehow more free, less constrained by, for example, by the conventions and ways of the artworld – this issue becomes especially important. Environmental aesthetics has sought to move beyond imposing human frameworks on nature, humanising nature, where one such framework would be appreciating nature always through the lens of art. The aesthetic perspective is commonly identified with culture, in so far as we are, here, talking about aesthetic valuing made by human culture. That is, aesthetic judgment is *anthropogenic*. However, it is possible to distinguish between aesthetic perspectives and values which are more and less *anthropocentric*.

In recent debates, answers to the question of appropriate appreciation of nature divide into two competing approaches: ‘scientific cognitivism’ and ‘non-cognitivism’. Scientific cognitivism holds that if our aesthetic valuing of nature is to reach beyond a superficial response and to be appropriate to what it is we perceive, that valuing must be informed by scientific knowledge. The most well established position, Allen Carlson’s ‘natural environmental model’ rests on an argument by analogy.⁶⁴ In artistic judgments, art history and criticism provide the appropriate foundation. For natural aesthetics, Carlson finds the most legitimate and ‘objective’ source in the natural sciences. It is claimed that such knowledge will ensure aesthetic judgments that accord with their objects, enabling a grasp of relevant aesthetic qualities. For example, if I were to appreciate a humpback whale under the category of ‘fish’ rather than ‘mammal’, the whale may appear as a clumsy fish rather than a majestic mammal moving gracefully through the ocean.

Non-cognitivists agree that we need to avoid aesthetic valuing that distorts or humanises nature, but they argue that scientific cognitivism too narrowly characterises what is appropriate and thereby discounts the range of legitimate ways we experience the natural world, for example, through immersive, environmental, appreciation, or responses which are open to the place of imagination and emotion as layers that enhance perception and increase forms of attention to the world.⁶⁵

64 Allen Carlson, *Aesthetics and the Environment: The Appreciation of Nature, Art and Architecture* (London and New York, 2000).

65 For a representative sample of cognitive and non-cognitive approaches in environmental aesthetics, see, Allen Carlson and Arnold Berleant (ed.), *The Aesthetics of*

Now, it seems to me that a baseline for appropriate appreciation will be a non-instrumental approach, that is, one that appreciates the object for what it is, the qualities it actually possesses. Yuriko Saito expresses this idea as appreciating nature ‘on its own terms’, which means adopting a normative aesthetic approach: ‘an attitude which would involve listening to nature’s own story ... recognizing and respecting nature as having its own reality apart from our presence’.⁶⁶ It is in articulating this normative feature of aesthetic appreciation of nature that Hutcheson’s theory becomes especially significant, in so far as disinterestedness means that our judgments of natural beauty, as grounded in the sense of beauty, will be directed at natural items, processes and phenomena themselves, and not our own interests or desire for possession or appropriation. On his account (and from within his necessarily more anthropocentric philosophical and historical framework), there is no explicit interest in grasping nature’s own terms, but there is an interest in theorizing the sense of beauty as independent from self-interest, as he prepares the ground for his case for the moral sense. We can learn from his approach that aesthetic judgment is constrained in this way, and as such, signifies a stance that will resist imposing one’s own utilitarian interests – human interests – on the aesthetic object. Given that Reid also recognises the independence of beauty from utility, his ideas are consistent with such an approach.

Our own human ways of seeing things will show themselves in our engagement with the natural world, no doubt, and we may never be able to grasp what nature’s ‘terms’, in fact, are. But the main point of Saito’s idea is that we ought to make the effort if we are truly to appreciate nature in all its distinctiveness, and not what we want from it or what we want it to be. This does not mean that our aesthetic engagement with nature must be totally ‘dehumanized’, somehow divorced from the cultural position of any human aesthetic stance, but it ought not be overly humanizing either. In this vein, Hutcheson recognizes the role of association of ideas, and with respect to nature this takes the form of seeing resemblances between nature and culture: ‘Thus a Tempest at Sea is often an Emblem of Wrath; a Plant or Tree drooping under the Rain, of a Person in Sorrow’.⁶⁷ However, he also admonishes the way some associations of ideas take the form of biases which prevent proper perception of beauty: ‘Thus Swines, Serpents of all

Natural Environments (Peterborough, 2004).

⁶⁶ Yuriko Saito, ‘Appreciating Nature on Its Own Terms’, *Environmental Ethics*, 20 (1998).

⁶⁷ *Inquiry*, 44.

Kinds, and some Insects really beautiful enough, are beheld with Aversion by many People, who have got some accidental Ideas associated to them.⁶⁸ Reid also describes expressiveness in nature through his concept of natural signs, but as I have argued earlier in the paper, his account is not reductive and recognises the excellences that underlie beauty of nature in their own right.⁶⁹

The independence of beauty from utility and knowledge as well as Hutcheson's categorising of the natural world within 'absolute' beauty makes his theory of beauty a good fit for a non-cognitive approach. That knowledge may play some role as an added effect, but not as grounding our aesthetic judgments, is also present in both Hutcheson's theory and non-cognitive views. Where does Reid's theory fit with respect to contemporary ideas about natural beauty?

Reid's distinction between instinctive and rational beauty is especially interesting for reflecting on this question. On the one hand, it fits with cognitive approaches in so far as our capacity for rational beauty means that when we gain knowledge and experience of, say, plants, we may become better at identifying and explaining their beauty. But unlike Carlson, Reid does not appear to prioritise the experience of the botanist over the experience of the florist, which also has more experience (in Reid's 'rational' terms), yet not from science. The florist's experience is one of learning how to formally arrange flowers (based largely in sensory or perceptual experience) and, presumably, developing a sense for what colours and forms work best to create appealing arrangements. For Carlson, the botanist would always make the most appropriate or correct judgments because they have knowledge of natural history and, in that respect, an understanding of the appropriate appreciative categories.

In this way, Reid's ideas chime nicely with theories in environmental aesthetics which do not prioritise perception thickened by thought elements over aesthetic engagement where the senses are more prominent. Ronald Hepburn explains the range of appropriate appreciations we might find in aesthetic experience. 'We need to acknowledge a duality in much aesthetic appreciation of nature, a sensuous component and a thought-component. First, sensuous immediacy: in the purest cases one is taken aback by, for instance, a sky colour-effect, or by the rolling away of cloud and mist from a landscape. Most often, however, an element of thought is present, as we implicitly compare

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁶⁹ For some of Reid's remarks on expressiveness in nature, see EIP, 590.

and contrast here with elsewhere, actual and possible, present with past.⁷⁰ Each experience is appropriate and aesthetically valuable for Hepburn, opening up space for a wide range of appropriate responses and different aesthetic frameworks. Given Reid's botanist and florist, as well as the instinctive beauty perceived by a child, we find a more open approach to natural beauty than the cognitivist offers.

Instinctive beauty maps nicely, too, onto Saito's own approach, which sits between the cognitive and non-cognitive, supporting the role of science but challenging its centrality. Her views embrace a range of appreciative frameworks, which nonetheless begin and end in the sensuous surface of natural phenomena.

Certainly, the philosophical ideas of Hutcheson and Reid are products of their time. Although we do see an interest in nature where the three 'kingdoms' of nature – animal, plant, and mineral – are recognized in their own right as worthy of aesthetic consideration, their overall perspective remains anthropocentric. Yet, we also find that their theories of beauty, as well as their empirical examples from natural history, are sensitive to natural qualities possessed independently of human utility. Ultimately, their views present a non-instrumental valuing of natural beauty that is meaningful in its own time and significant for ours.

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70 Ronald W. Hepburn, *Reach of the Aesthetic* (Aldershot and Burlington, 2001), 2.

The Experience of Absolute Beauty in Hutcheson: Perception, Reason and Pleasure

Richard Glauser

In the *Inquiry Concerning Beauty, Order, Harmony, Design* (hereafter *ICB*), Hutcheson's only treatise devoted to what we today call 'aesthetics' and 'aesthetic experience', he defends the idea that human beings have a natural sense over and above their external senses: 'a natural sense of beauty from uniformity',¹ which he calls an 'internal' sense. The basic outline of his argument for such a sense is as follows. He compares human sensitivity to beauty with the external senses; he details the similarities and the differences between them, and concludes (1) that the similarities are important enough to warrant attributing to human beings a natural, specific sense of beauty; and (2) that the differences explain why it is an internal sense. I am taking both conclusions as granted in this paper.

The similarities between the sense of beauty and the external senses have been well canvassed by commentators.² Among the differences that Hutcheson notes, there is one in particular that, I believe, expresses an interesting and important philosophical claim. The claim, in a nutshell, is that, contrary to the external senses, the sense of beauty is dependent on antecedent perceptions. The claim is not unknown to commentators, but I believe that its implications and explanatory potential have not been sufficiently explored. I wish to show that a great deal of Hutcheson's thought on our aesthetic experience depends on it.

The claim that the sense of beauty depends on antecedent perceptions does not appear forcefully in the first edition of the *Inquiry Concerning Beauty*

1 Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry Concerning Beauty, Order, Harmony, Design*, ed. Peter Kivy (The Hague, 1973). References to this work indicate the section, the subsection and page number in that order; in the present case: *ICB*, VII, ii, 83. Although the term 'aesthetic' was not used in the eighteenth century as we use it today, I will use it liberally in the sense of 'pertaining to beauty'.

2 For example, Peter Kivy, *The Seventh Sense* (New York, 1976), 26–41. David Fate Norton gives a list of characteristics that the moral sense has in common with other senses; cf. 'Hutcheson on Perception and Moral Perception', *Archiv für die Geschichte der Philosophie*, 59 (1977), 182–6.

(1725). It appears, nevertheless, when Hutcheson writes: ‘we are conscious that this pleasure necessarily *arises from the contemplation of the idea* which is then present to our minds, with all its circumstances’. (*ICB*, Preface, 24, my italics.) We shall see that it appears clearly in the fourth edition (1738), and sharply in several of Hutcheson’s other publications, beginning with the first edition of *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of Passions and Affections* (1728).³

In the first Section I briefly discuss beauty and the idea of beauty in the first *Inquiry*. Because a great deal of Hutcheson’s conception of aesthetic experience depends on the way he distinguishes the pleasures of the external senses and those of the internal sense of beauty, Sections 2 and 3 are devoted respectively to those two topics. Section 4 explores the significance of the claim that aesthetic pleasure always depends on previous perceptions, or complex ideas. The issue is pursued in Section 5, where I try to show that, because aesthetic pleasure depends on antecedent complex ideas it also depends, in varying degrees, on certain more or less conscious operations of reason. Their function is to make manifest the ‘uniformity amidst variety’ of the complex ideas. In Sections 4 and 5 I also defend the claim that, insofar as the sense of beauty depends on previous perceptions (complex ideas) of external objects, it is highly sensitive to the *way* we perceive the objects.

1 Beauty and the idea of beauty

Throughout his writings Hutcheson works with at least five aesthetic categories: absolute (or original) beauty; relative (or comparative) beauty, e.g., imitation; harmony; grandeur; and novelty. One might add design, although Hutcheson places this source of aesthetic pleasure under relative, or comparative beauty.⁴ I shall discuss only the most basic of these categories, absolute (or original) beauty: ‘that beauty which we perceive in objects without comparison

3 In the ‘Preface’ to the *Essay*, Hutcheson writes: ‘In the references at bottom of the pages, the inquiry into *Beauty* is called *Treatise I*. That into the ideas of moral good and evil, is *Treatise II*. The *Essay on the Passions*, *Treatise III*. And the *Illustrations on the moral sense*, *Treatise IV*.’ Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections*, ed. Paul McReynolds (Gainesville, 1969, 3rd edn; 1742), xx. (hereafter *Essay*). This shows that Hutcheson considered the two *Inquiries*, the *Essay* and the *Illustrations* as four parts of a consistent whole. So, it is not detrimental to our interpretation if the claim that the sense of beauty depends on prior perceptions is made more sharply in the *Essay* than in the *Inquiry Concerning Beauty*.

4 The beauty of design is the fitness of a complex structure, whether man-made or natural, to a certain end, or to an intention; cf. *ICB*, II, x, 45. and III, vii, 57–8.

to anything external, of which the object is supposed an imitation or picture, such as that beauty perceived from the works of nature, artificial forms, figures'. (ICB, I, xvi, 39.) Absolute beauty is perceived in many external objects, both natural and artistic, but also in abstract entities such as theorems, to which Hutcheson devotes Section III of the first *Inquiry*.

On the one hand, we have just seen that Hutcheson speaks of the 'beauty which we perceive in objects'. Yet, on the other hand, he warns his reader that beauty is an idea in the mind: 'Let it be observed that in the following papers the word *beauty* is taken for *the idea raised in us*, and a *sense* of beauty for *our power of receiving this idea*'. (ICB, I, ix, 34.) So a question arises: How can we perceive beauty *in* objects if beauty is only an idea in our minds? The question is made all the more pressing when we look at how Hutcheson applies the adjective 'beautiful'. There are some fifty-odd occurrences of the term in the *Inquiry Concerning Beauty* and, as far as I can see, Hutcheson always applies the term either to external objects – natural or artistic – or to abstract entities such as theorems. He does not say that our idea of beauty is beautiful, nor that our perceptions of things are beautiful. What he invariably says is that, for example, certain plants, animals, gardens, works of art and theorems are beautiful. Obviously, if he calls such things 'beautiful' so often, there must be a sense in which he holds that it is legitimate to call them so. If there is a legitimate sense, then it is only to be presumed that it is because, as we have seen, there is some 'beauty which we perceive in objects'. So, once again: How can we perceive beauty *in* them if beauty is only an idea in our minds?

At least part of the answer to the question, I believe, lies in the following passage, where Hutcheson denies that beauty is a mind-independent property of objects:

by absolute or original beauty is not understood any quality supposed to be in the object [which] should of itself be beautiful, without relation to any mind which perceives it. For beauty, like other names of sensible ideas, properly denotes the *perception* of some mind; so *cold*, [*hot*,] *sweet*, *bitter*, denote the sensations in our minds, to which perhaps there is no resemblance in the objects which excite these ideas in us, however we generally imagine [otherwise]. (ICB, I, xvi, 38–9.)

A comparison is being made here between beauty and ideas of secondary qualities. Just as 'cold', 'hot', 'sweet' and 'bitter' denote 'sensations in our minds', 'beauty' denotes 'the perception of some mind'. As we will see further

on, Hutcheson calls this perception ‘the idea of beauty’. In one respect, then, the idea of beauty is similar to ideas of secondary qualities: just as the secondary qualities we are aware of merely by our sensations do not resemble mind-independent properties of the objects that cause such sensations, the beauty that we perceive in an object does not resemble a mind-independent property of the object that causes our perception. The significance of the comparison is that, just as external objects appear to us as cold, hot, sweet, etc., by causing sensations of such secondary qualities in our minds, certain objects *appear* beautiful by causing ‘the *perception* of some mind’. Thus, when Hutcheson speaks of our perceiving beauty *in* objects, he means to speak of objects as appearing beautiful to us: ‘All beauty is relative to the sense of some mind perceiving it’ (*ICB*, IV, i, 54.); ‘all beauty has a relation to some perceiving power’. (*ICB*, VI, i, 74.)

So far, so good – hopefully. But what is it, then, for an object to appear beautiful, in the sense of appearing to have absolute beauty? This question requires a rather long answer, which I will try to develop further on by exploring some of Hutcheson’s philosophy of mind involved in aesthetic experience. For the time being, let us note two essential components of his reply. The first is that an object – whether material or abstract – appears beautiful in virtue of our perception of a certain feature of the object, which Hutcheson calls ‘uniformity amidst variety’ (hereafter UAV), and which he considers, unlike beauty, to be a ‘real quality in the objects’. (*ICB*, I, ix, 34.) This feature is ‘the general foundation or occasion of the ideas of beauty among men’ (*ICB*, II, ii, 40.); ‘what we call beautiful in objects, to speak in the mathematical style, seems to be in compound ratio of uniformity and variety: so that where the uniformity of bodies is equal, the beauty is as the variety; and where the variety is equal, the beauty is as the uniformity’.⁵

5 *ICB*, II, iii, 40. Hutcheson’s definition of UAV implies that there are different degrees of UAV. He acknowledges as much: ‘[I]t may perhaps appear that regularity and uniformity are so copiously diffused through the universe, and we are so readily determined to pursue this as the foundation of beauty in works of art, that there is scarcely anything ever fancied as beautiful where there is not really something of this uniformity and regularity’ (*ICB*, VI, v, 77.); ‘there may be real beauty where there is not the greatest, ... there are an infinity of different forms which may all have some unity, and yet differ from each other’. (*ICB*, VI, vii, 78.) The following passages suggest that he does not think, however, that everything has some degree of UAV: ‘Every particular object in nature does not indeed appear beautiful to us’ (*ICB*, II, v, 42.); ‘That many objects give no pleasure to our sense is obvious: many are certainly void of beauty’. (*ICB*, VI, i, 74.) Although there is a zero degree of UAV, there are no negative degrees.

The second essential component is that, when an object appears beautiful, it appears pleasing, or agreeable.⁶ Thus, Hutcheson writes about absolute beauty: ‘beauty has always relation to the sense of some mind; and when we afterwards show how generally the objects which occur to us *are beautiful*, we mean that such objects are *agreeable* to the sense of men’. (*ICB*, II, i, 39, my italics.) Notice that ‘we’ here, does not refer to the generality of mankind, but to Hutcheson himself, because it is he who intends to ‘show how generally the objects which occur to us are beautiful’. Thus, he is not making a semantic claim as to what ‘beautiful’ means as ordinarily understood. What he is saying is that he, Hutcheson, is going to use ‘beautiful’ to mean ‘agreeable to the sense of men’, in conformity with his metaphysical claim that ‘beauty has always relation to the sense of some mind’.⁷

I mentioned above a certain idea that Hutcheson calls ‘the idea of beauty’. The last four decades of Hutcheson scholarship have proven it notoriously difficult to pin down what it is, exactly, that he calls our ‘idea of beauty’. Two of the most plausible interpretations, in my opinion, are those of Kivy and Matthews, and I agree at bottom with Matthews. Her detailed analysis of Hutcheson’s numerous and occasionally wavering pronouncements, and her critical discussion of alternative readings lead to the conclusion that, all said, the idea of beauty is a specific pleasure, and that what Hutcheson calls an ‘internal sense’ in the first *Inquiry* is a power of receiving such a pleasure.⁸

But, one might object, if the idea of beauty is just a certain pleasure, why not just call it a pleasure? Why also call it, additionally, ‘the idea of beauty’? According to my reading, Hutcheson calls aesthetic pleasure an ‘idea of beauty’ because he holds that the pleasure plays an important role – along with perceived UAV – in explaining why certain things appear beautiful (i.e.

6 Hutcheson uses the expression ‘appear pleasant’ in this precise context; cf. Francis Hutcheson, ‘A System of Moral Philosophy’ (1755) in *Collected Works of Francis Hutcheson*, ed. Bernard Fabian (Hildesheim, Zürich, New York, 1990), V, 15.

7 This last point helps to explain why, in both treatises of the *Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, Hutcheson often speaks of *moral* beauty. For example, he speaks of ‘this moral sense of beauty in actions and affections’. (‘Preface’ to the two *Inquiries*, 25.) Although pleasure received by the internal sense of beauty is quite different from the pleasure received by the moral sense (Hutcheson contrasts aesthetic and moral pleasure in *ICB*, I, xv, 38.), the former being based on the perception of UAV whereas the latter is not, it nevertheless remains that in both cases the objects that are called ‘beautiful’ are called so precisely because they are pleasing.

8 Cf. Patricia M. Matthews, ‘Hutcheson on the Idea of Beauty’, *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 36 (1998), 233–59.

pleasing), and why we can thus legitimately call them ‘beautiful’ (i.e. pleasing) even though beauty is not a mind-independent quality.

Kivy, however, apparently holds that the idea of beauty is both a pleasure and an idea of a secondary quality. They are, according to Kivy, ‘the same idea under different descriptions’;⁹ ‘for Hutcheson the idea of beauty as something like a secondary quality, and the idea of beauty as a pleasure are one and the same idea, just as Berkeley’s idea of intense heat and his idea of pain are one and the same idea’.¹⁰ I disagree with this reading for several reasons. First, Kivy does not describe the quale of the purported idea of a secondary quality. Secondly, ideas of secondary qualities depend on the causal powers of physical objects. Theorems – the intellectual perception of which causes aesthetic pleasure – are abstract entities and have no causal powers. So, the idea of their ‘beauty’ cannot be, or be like, a secondary quality. Thirdly, ideas of secondary qualities *directly* depend on the causal powers of external objects, whereas aesthetic pleasures do not, as we shall see further on.¹¹ So, let us go ahead with the assumption that Hutcheson’s idea of beauty is just a certain pleasure.

On the one hand, the idea of beauty is a pleasure of the internal sense. On the other hand, Hutcheson states that he will be using the term ‘beautiful’ to mean ‘agreeable to the sense of men’. And we have seen that it is in virtue of such a pleasure, which is based on an object’s perceived UAV, that the object *appears* beautiful, i.e. ‘agreeable to the sense of men’. However, all of this

9 Cf. Kivy, *The Seventh Sense*, 56.

10 Ibid., 55. He writes: ‘What stands in the way of a consistent interpretation is our easy acceptance of the disjunction: either a secondary quality or a pleasure. Can we not say *both*?’ Ibid., 54.

11 In fact, there is a fourth reason, too, for objecting to Kivy’s interpretation. Kivy underestimates the trouble Berkeley gets into when he says that an intense heat and its related pain are ‘one simple, uncompounded idea’. George Berkeley, ‘Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous’ in *The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne*, eds. A.A. Luce & T.E. Jessop (Edinburgh, 1948–51), II, 176. The trouble is that if an intense heat and its related pain are one and the same sensation, how is it that both the vulgar and the learned situate the pain in themselves, whereas for both it is, say, a fire that appears to be hot? This would be problematic for any philosopher with Hutcheson’s metaphysics, which affirms the existence of material substances and their causal powers. (But it is problematic even within Berkeley’s immaterialist ontology of sensible bodies: the intense heat, according to Berkeley, is a member of a collection of sensible ideas that constitute a fire, whereas the pain is not. He surely does not want to say that the fire feels pain, which yet seems implied if, as he says, the pain and the intense heat are numerically identical.) So, again: how could the phenomenological difference of location of the intense heat and the pain be explained if they were numerically identical? It seems that Kivy’s interpretation inadvertently, and needlessly infects Hutcheson with a difficulty.

leaves open a question that we should now address: What is the sense of the word ‘beauty’ that Hutcheson uses when he makes the negative metaphysical claim that beauty is not a mind-independent property? It cannot be something such as ‘the power to be agreeable to the sense of men’, or ‘the power to (transitively) cause pleasure in a human internal sense’, because in that case, although the concept of beauty (i.e. the concept of the power) would include the concept of a relation to some mind, beauty itself (i.e. the power) would nevertheless be mind-independent, and so the negative metaphysical claim would be false. Therefore, when making his negative metaphysical statement, he must be using ‘beauty’ in another sense, a sense presumably encoded in ordinary language, as at least some of his readers might be presumed to understand it. Yet, he does not say what that sense is. So, in order to find out, let us ask: What would it be for objects to have beauty in a way that would be both mind-independent and not purely dispositional? An answer may be gleaned from two features of aesthetic pleasure as Hutcheson understands it.

First, he holds that aesthetic pleasure, as all other pleasures, gives rise to a desire for the pleasing object. He speaks of a desire of beauty in *ICB*, I, v, 31. In the *Essay*, he says: ‘Desires arise in our mind, from the frame of our nature, upon apprehension of good or evil in objects, actions, or events, to obtain for *ourselves* or *others* the *agreeable sensation*, when the object or event is good; or to prevent the *uneasy sensation*, when it is evil (*Essay*, 7.). The following lines on the same page clearly indicate that he has in mind, among others, ‘the desires of the pleasures of imagination or internal sense’, referring in a footnote to the first Treatise (i.e. the *Inquiry into Beauty*). And in the *Short Introduction* he speaks of our ‘superadded’ aesthetic perceptive powers, saying: ‘Whatever is grateful to any of these perceptive powers is *for itself desirable*, and may on some occasions be to us an ultimate end’.¹²

Secondly, he says that aesthetic pleasure is – or at least elicits – an approbation.¹³ An approbation is a positive evaluation, a mental state expressed by a positive value judgment, perhaps of the form ‘this object is beautiful’. Doubtless, the concept of beauty as ordinarily understood is an axiological concept, albeit lacking descriptive content. In ordinary language a judgment such as ‘this object is beautiful’, as at least some understand it, might be taken

12 Francis Hutcheson, ‘A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy’ (1747) in *Collected Works of Francis Hutcheson*, ed. Bernard Fabian (Hildesheim, Zürich, New York, 1990), IV, 13, my italics.

13 For example, cf. *ICB*, ‘Preface’, 26.; I, vii, 32.; VI, vii, 78–9. On the relation of aesthetic pleasure to approbation, cf. Mark Strasser, ‘Hutcheson on Aesthetic Perception’, *Philosophia*, 21 (1991–2), 113–14.

to state of a certain object that it has an objective, mind-independent axiological property, a property that would be metaphysically on a par with primary qualities. And this, I take it, is what Hutcheson is warning us against. It seems that when he says that beauty is not a mind-independent property of things, he means that our idea of beauty does not represent, or express a mind-independent value, or axiological property, and that a value judgment such as ‘this object is beautiful’ would be false if taken to attribute such a property to the object.

Understanding the nature and function of the idea of beauty depends crucially on understanding why Hutcheson holds that the idea belongs to an internal sense. In order to understand that, we must contrast the pleasures of the external senses with those of the internal sense of beauty; we do so in the next two sections.

2 Perceptions of the external senses

Hutcheson defines the external senses as ‘determinations of nature by which certain perceptions constantly arise in the mind, when certain impressions are made upon the organs of the body, or motions raised in them’.¹⁴ They ‘depend on certain organs of the body, so constituted that upon any impression made on them, or motion excited, *whether by external impulses or internal forces in the body*, a certain feeling is raised in the soul’.¹⁵ External sensations are those ‘which arise in the mind as the result of a certain motion excited in the body or impressed upon it’.¹⁶ Notice the disjunction: perceptions of the external senses arise *either* because of impressions made on the body by external objects (i.e. ‘external impulses’), *or* because of motions raised in the body (i.e. ‘internal forces in the body’). The former cause ideas of secondary qualities; the latter cause certain pleasures or pains that we feel in our bodies, in particular pains such as hunger, thirst, weariness and sickness.¹⁷ Thus, Hutcheson

14 Hutcheson, ‘A System of Moral Philosophy’, 4.

15 Hutcheson, ‘A Short Introduction’, 4, my italics.

16 Francis Hutcheson, ‘A Synopsis of Metaphysics’ (1744, 2nd edn) in *Logic, Metaphysics, and the Sociability of Mankind*, eds. James Moore & Michael Silverthorne (Indianapolis, 2006), 114.

17 It is because of these pleasures and pains that Hutcheson is dissatisfied with the traditional classification of the external senses, and suggests that there may be more than five of them: ‘The division of our external senses into the five common classes, seems very imperfect. Some sensations received *without any previous idea*, can either

includes among the perceptions of the external senses not only sensations proper to each of the five senses, but also bodily pleasures and pains that are independent of sensations of bodies external to ours.

These latter sensations must be distinguished from the pleasures and pains that also depend on our external senses, but that typically attend our sensations of secondary qualities of external bodies. Certain smells, tastes and tactile feelings, seem to be inherently pleasant or unpleasant; when pleasant, they count as what Hutcheson call ‘sensual’ pleasures. Sensations of sight and hearing are not in the same way unpleasant or painful; they are so only when very violent.¹⁸

Sensations proper to sight and touch are accompanied by ideas common to both, which Hutcheson calls ‘concomitant ideas’, basically a short list of Lockean ideas of primary qualities: extension, figure, magnitude motion and rest.¹⁹ In the *Synopsis of Metaphysics* Hutcheson ranks these among the ‘intellectual ideas’, not because they are not given in sense perception, but because the concomitant ideas received in external sense perception can be made universal by abstraction, thus becoming objects of reason.²⁰ Two other concomitant ideas – duration and number – accompany all mental states, both those that depend on the external senses and those that are perceived by an internal sense, to which we shall turn shortly. Contrary to the sensations of secondary qualities, which are all simple, and several of which can be pleasant or painful, or just painful (as violent sensations of light and sound), there seem to be few or no pleasures or pains of the external senses directly attached to any of the concomitant ideas: ‘the simpler ideas of this class, which some call the

be reduced to none of them, such as the sensations of hunger, thirst, weariness, sickness; or if we reduce them to the sense of feeling, they are perceptions as different from the other ideas of touch, such as cold heat, hardness, softness, as the ideas of taste or smell. Others have hinted at an external sense different from all of these’. *Essay*, 3, footnote, my italics.

18 Hutcheson, ‘A System of Moral Philosophy’, 5.

19 ‘Extension, figure, motion, or rest seem therefore to be more properly called *ideas accompanying* the sensations of sight and touch, than the sensations of either of these senses; since they can be received sometimes without the ideas of colour, and sometimes without those of touching, though *never without the one or the other*’. *Essay*, 3, footnote, my italics.

20 ‘[W]e judge that the ideas of these [qualities] *and of the relations which hold between them* are representations of external things, under the guidance of nature; hence they are classified as *intellectual ideas*, because in them the powers of reason are exercised with the greatest profit and pleasure’. ‘A Synopsis of Metaphysics’, 114, my italics. Cf. also Hutcheson, ‘A Compend of Logic’ (1756) in idem, *Logic, Metaphysics, and the Sociability of Mankind*, 12, 14–15.

concomitant ideas of sensation, are not generally either pleasant or painful.²¹ (The more complex concomitant ideas will be part of the basis of aesthetic pleasure, which relates to an internal sense.)

In sum, there are four sorts of perceptions from the external senses: (a) sensations of secondary qualities, directly caused by external objects; (b) the pleasures or pains attending the latter sensations; (c) the pleasures and pains we feel in our bodies independently of our perceptions of (secondary or primary qualities of) external objects; (d) perceptions of concomitant ideas, namely ideas of primary qualities, which are generally not attended with pleasures or pains of the external senses. According to Hutcheson, all of the first three [(a) – (c)] ‘as the learned agree, are not pictures or representations of like external qualities in objects, nor of the impression or change made in the bodily organs’. Yet, all three have their proper, natural functions, as long as our senses are unaltered and operate optimally.

They are either *signals*, as it were, of new events happening to the body, of which experience and observation will show us the cause; or *marks*, settled by the Author of Nature, to show us what things are salutary, innocent, or hurtful; or intimations of things not otherwise discernable which may affect our state.²²

Obviously, the second of the three natural functions – ‘*marks* ... to show us what things are salutary, innocent, or hurtful’ – is basically biological, conducive to our health and survival.

All of the ideas received by the external senses are what Hutcheson calls ‘direct and antecedent’ perceptions (as opposed to ‘reflex, or subsequent’ perceptions, about which shortly). These are perceptions that do not depend on other perceptions: ‘they presuppose no previous ideas’.²³ It is important to keep this in mind with regard to (b) the pleasures or pains related to the sensations of secondary qualities caused by external objects. Why? Although Hutcheson does not spell this out in so many words in the first *Inquiry*, the ranking of such pleasures and pains among the direct perceptions implies that the external objects that directly cause the ideas of secondary qualities

21 Hutcheson, ‘System of Moral Philosophy’, 6. Elsewhere he says that these perceptions ‘are of a middle nature as to pleasure or pain, having a very small degree of either joined immediately with them’. Hutcheson, ‘A Short Introduction’, 5.

22 Hutcheson, ‘A System of Moral Philosophy’, 5.

23 Hutcheson, ‘A Short Introduction’, 6.

also directly cause their related pleasures or pains. One and the same external object directly produces, in each case, both a certain taste *and* its pleasantness or unpleasantness, both a certain smell *and* its pleasantness or foulness, both a violent light or sound *and* their respective pains.²⁴ In sum, it is not the case that, first, the external object causes the sensation of a secondary quality, and that, afterwards, this latter causes its related pleasure or pain.²⁵ It is this causal structure that explains why these pleasures and pains (as long as our senses are unaltered and function optimally) are reliable ‘marks, settled by the Author of Nature, to show us what things are salutary, innocent, or hurtful’ from a biological perspective.

3 Internal sense, and a reflex, or subsequent sense

In the *Short Introduction* Hutcheson defines the ‘internal senses’ as:

those powers or determinations of the mind, by which it perceives or is conscious of all within itself, its actions, passions, judgments, wills, desires, joys, sorrows, purposes of action. This power some celebrated writers call *consciousness* or *reflection*, which has for its objects the qualities,

24 Kivy says: ‘The internal senses, for Hutcheson, receive pleasure from “ideas”; but so, too, do the external senses, on the Lockean model of “representative” perception, to which Hutcheson adhered’. Kivy, *The Seventh Sense*, 25. It is true that, for Hutcheson, the internal sense of beauty receives pleasure from the perception of a complex idea, as we shall see further on. However, Kivy is mistaken in holding that, for Hutcheson, the pleasures and pains of the external senses, too, depend on previous ideas. (And it is dubious that Hutcheson was a faithful Lockean.) Admittedly, Hutcheson is perhaps not entirely consistent on the cause of the pleasures or pains related to the sensations of secondary qualities, for he also speaks of a ‘simple idea or perception’ as *giving* pleasure or pain (cf. *ICB*, I, vii, 33, last sentence), thereby perhaps suggesting that the pleasure or pain might be directly caused by the idea, rather than by an external object. However, the evidence of an inconsistency is inconclusive because the whole sentence is negative.

25 As Matthews rightly says: ‘the *object*, not the sensitive perception, causes the pleasure or pain’. Matthews, ‘Hutcheson on the Idea of Beauty’, 238. However, this leaves open the question whether the pleasure is part of the idea of the secondary quality, or whether they are distinct ideas. Matthews seems to hold that a sensation of a secondary quality and the pleasure (or pain) are two aspects of one and the same idea. *Ibid.*, 238–9. I believe that Hutcheson’s texts do not afford a clear answer to the question.

actions or states of the mind itself, as the external senses have things external.²⁶

In the same text Hutcheson goes on to distinguish both the external and the internal senses from a higher order of senses. The reason why the latter senses may not inappropriately be called ‘higher-order’ is because they are powers of receiving ideas or pleasures that depend on previous ideas or mental states: ‘we next consider these senses we called *reflex* or subsequent, by which certain new forms or perceptions are received, *in consequence of others previously observed by our external or internal senses*.’²⁷ The italicised words indicate that there is a third set of senses that is dependent on – but distinct from – both the external and the internal senses. For, if there are senses that receive certain pleasures or pains *in consequence* of ideas received by the external and internal senses, then these latter senses do not themselves receive the pleasures and pains in question; hence, those that do so – the subsequent senses – must be distinct from them.²⁸

At this point a terminological issue must be clarified. When defining ‘internal sense’ in the first quotation above from the *Short Introduction*, Hutcheson says: ‘this power some celebrated writers call *consciousness* or *reflection*’. Among the celebrated writers is surely Locke, who called the awareness of our mental states ‘consciousness’, ‘internal sense’, or ‘reflection’.²⁹ Thus, in that passage of the *Short Introduction*, Hutcheson is talking about the way Locke and his followers speak, which differs from Hutcheson’s usual way of speaking. Consequently, we must beware of two things. First, we must not confuse

26 Hutcheson, ‘A Short Introduction’, 6. Hutcheson adds: ‘these two classes of sensation, external and internal, furnish our whole store of ideas, the materials about which we exercise that noblest power of *reasoning*’. Ibid. Elsewhere he makes the same point about consciousness, which he there calls ‘inward sensation’. Hutcheson, ‘A System of Moral Philosophy’, 6.

27 Hutcheson, ‘A Short Introduction’, 12–13, my italics.

28 This is not to say that the mind is not aware of the pleasures received by one’s subsequent senses; of course it is. Hutcheson’s point is merely that in order for the mind to be aware of such a pleasure, it must first be received by a specific subsequent sense, which is distinct from the external senses.

29 ‘The other fountain, from which experience furnisheth the understanding with *ideas*, is the *perception of the operations of our own minds* within us ... and such are, *perception, reasoning, knowing, willing*, and all the different actings of our own minds. ... This source of *ideas*, every man has wholly in himself: and though it be not sense, as having nothing to do with external objects; yet it is very like it, and might properly be called internal sense. But as I call the other *sensation*, so I call this *reflection*’. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford, 1979), 105. (II, i, 4).

‘consciousness or reflection’ in the first quotation above with ‘these senses we called reflex or subsequent’ in the second quotation. The first expression denotes inner awareness, or consciousness, whereas the second refers to the higher-order senses, such as the aesthetic and moral senses, which are dependent on – but distinct from – both ‘our external or internal senses’. Secondly, in the first *Inquiry* the expression ‘internal sense’ is used to refer to the sense of beauty, as it is, too, in the *Essay*.³⁰ It is abundantly clear, however, that ‘internal sense’ in the first *Inquiry* corresponds to what Hutcheson later calls a ‘subsequent’ sense.

The change of expression, I believe, is not a change in doctrine, and a good reason can be adduced to explain it. One of the reasons for which, in the first *Inquiry*, Hutcheson calls the sense of beauty ‘internal’ is because it has no bodily organ. Nevertheless, the pleasures received by the internal sense often depend indirectly on external objects, which appear perceptually to the mind by causing complex ideas. We are aesthetically pleased, or not, with external things as long as we perceive them, or at least retain an idea of them in our minds. What might be confusing, though, is that pleasures of the internal sense are thus often ‘outward-looking’, in the sense that they are directed towards external things.³¹ Hutcheson’s rewording in the *Short Introduction* eliminates a possible source of confusion, in two steps. First, he now uses ‘internal sense’ to refer to consciousness, which apprehends all of one’s mental states. Secondly, he now calls the aesthetic and moral senses, not ‘internal’, but ‘reflex or subsequent’.³² He calls them so because by them ‘certain new forms or perceptions are received, in consequence of others previously observed by our *external or internal senses*’, underscoring that the subsequent senses are ‘employed about the objects of *even the external senses*’,³³ thereby avoiding talk of an internal sense that receives pleasures most of which are directed towards external objects. The shift in vocabulary clarifies something that had been going on since the

30 ‘[T]hese pleasures presupposing previous ideas, were called *perceptions of an internal sense*, in a former treatise’ (*Essay*, 2–3), and he adds a footnote referring to the *Inquiry into Beauty* (*Ibid.*, 3). The final part of Hutcheson’s next footnote makes it clear that ‘the perceptions of the internal sense’ are those of the sense of beauty (cf. *Ibid.*, 4).

31 Given Hutcheson’s important distinction between external and internal senses, it is *prima facie* disconcerting to read that ‘It is of no consequence whether we call these ideas of beauty and harmony perceptions of the external senses of seeing and hearing or not’ (*ICB*, I, x, 34). Good sense can be made of the statement, however, if it is taken to allude to the fact that aesthetic pleasures are ‘outward-looking’.

32 These two shifts also appear elsewhere, cf. Hutcheson, ‘A Synopsis of Metaphysics’, 113, 117–18.

33 Hutcheson, ‘A Short Introduction’, 12–13, 6, my italics.

first *Inquiry*, namely a move away from Locke, who identified internal sense and consciousness. In discussing the first *Inquiry* from now on, I will be using the expression ‘internal sense’ as Hutcheson uses it in that work, namely to refer to what he later calls a ‘subsequent’ sense of beauty.

4 The internal, subsequent sense of beauty

Because aesthetic pleasure belongs to a subsequent sense, it necessarily depends on previous ideas. For this reason the proximate cause of aesthetic pleasure is a complex perception, or idea that manifests UAV. In other words, what directly causes the idea of beauty, or aesthetic pleasure, is our perception of an object’s UAV. This holds whether the object is a theorem or a physical object, natural or artistic. Let us momentarily focus on physical objects. To say that the proximate cause of aesthetic pleasure is a complex perception, or idea that manifests UAV is not to say that the external object that causes the complex idea, and that the complex idea represents, plays no causal role with respect to aesthetic pleasure. Of course it does, because causation is transitive. The external object with its UAV is a mediate, or indirect causal factor of aesthetic pleasure insofar as a complex idea that manifests the object’s UAV causally depends on the object: ‘Objects, actions, or events obtain the name of good, or evil, according as they are causes, or occasions, *mediately, or immediately*, of a grateful, or ungrateful perception to some sensitive nature’³⁴.

Ideas of secondary qualities and their related pleasures do not resemble the causal power of the object that causes these ideas, nor do they resemble the sub-microscopic structure of the primary qualities on which the object’s causal power depends. Just so, aesthetic pleasure bears no resemblance to UAV. Furthermore, one can enjoy the taste of a fruit without knowing *why* – or even *that* – eating the fruit is beneficial to our health, and also without knowing *what it is* in the fruit (the sub-microscopic structure of its primary qualities) that causes our pleasure, nor *how* it causes it. By analogy, we may have an aesthetic pleasure when looking at an object without knowing whether or not it might

³⁴ *Essay*, 2, my italics (‘grateful’, i.e. pleasing, delightful). They cause a pleasure immediately when the pleasure is that of an external sense, mediately when the pleasure is that of an internal sense. Of course, if we are dealing with theorems, it is only the UAV presented by the complex idea of the theorem that causes aesthetic pleasure.

be put to any practical use, and without knowing *what it is* in the object (its UAV) that causes our pleasure, nor *how* it causes it.

This superior power of perception is justly called a *sense* because of its affinity to the other senses in this, that the pleasure does not arise from any *knowledge* of principles, *proportions*, causes, or of the usefulness of the object, but strikes us at first with the idea of beauty. *Nor does the most accurate knowledge increase this pleasure of beauty*, however it may superadd a distinct rational pleasure from prospects of advantage, or from increase of knowledge. (*ICB*, I, xii, 36, my italics.)

But in all these instances of beauty let it be observed that the pleasure is communicated to those who never reflected on this *general foundation*, and that all here alleged is this, that the pleasant sensation arises only from objects in which there is *uniformity amidst variety*. *We may have the sensation without knowing what is the occasion of it*, as a man's taste may suggest ideas of sweets, acids, bitters, though he be ignorant of the forms of the small bodies, or their motions, which excite these perceptions in him. (*ICB*, II, xiv, 47, my italics.)

In sum, in order to have an aesthetic pleasure of absolute beauty, it is necessary and sufficient to have a complex idea that displays an object's UAV, and thus it is necessary and sufficient to perceive an object's UAV; it is not necessary, however, to know that it is the object's perceived UAV that causes the pleasure. Kivy calls a perception 'non-epistemic' when it neither depends on, nor affords, knowledge of what quality in the object causes it.³⁵ Notice, though, that Hutcheson does not imply that it is necessary that the perception of UAV be non-epistemic. He implies that it can be either epistemic or not: 'We *may* have the sensation without knowing what is the occasion of it' (my italics). However, if in addition to perceiving UAV, we also know that it is the perceived UAV that causes our pleasure, such knowledge neither heightens nor diminishes the aesthetic pleasure:

Many of our sensitive perceptions are pleasant, and many painful, immediately, and that without any knowledge of the cause of this

35 Cf. Peter Kivy, 'The 'Sense' of Beauty and the Sense of 'Art': Hutcheson's Place in the History and Practice of Aesthetics', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 53 (1995), 350–1.

pleasure or pain, or how the objects excite it, or are the occasions of it, or without seeing to what farther advantage or detriment the use of such objects might tend. *Nor would the most accurate knowledge of these things vary either the pleasure or pain of the perception*, however it might give a rational pleasure distinct from the sensible; or might raise a distinct joy from a prospect of farther advantage in the object, or aversion from an apprehension of evil.³⁶

This highlights a fundamental difference between (1) sensations of secondary qualities and their related pleasures of the external senses, and (2) aesthetic pleasure. Whereas it is impossible in practice to perceive what it is, in an external object, that causes our sensible ‘ideas of sweets, acids, bitters’ and their related pleasures and pains (because the corpuscles and their motions are too small to be perceived), it is not only possible, but necessary, to perceive (at least non-epistemically) the UAV of an external object for it to cause an aesthetic pleasure. The reason for the difference is that the aesthetic pleasure belongs to a subsequent sense, not to an external sense. Contrary to the ideas of secondary qualities and their related sensible pleasures – which are ‘direct and antecedent’ perceptions – aesthetic pleasure always depends on a *previous* perception, and so, according to Hutcheson, the pleasure can only arise if we first perceive a complex idea that presents an object’s UAV. The objective foundation of aesthetic pleasure, UAV, is not sub-microscopic; if it is to

36 *ICB*, I, vi, 31–2. (A) The expression ‘sensitive perceptions’ might suggest that Hutcheson is talking only about the pleasures of the external senses. That is not the case. In the lines just preceding the quotation he speaks of the desire of beauty; he is intent on highlighting what the external senses and our aesthetic sensitivity have in common, in order to argue that such a sensitivity is a proper sense. Thus, he is comparing the pleasures of the external senses and aesthetic pleasure. (B) As to the content of the quotation, I submit that Hutcheson is right. Suppose that, after admiring Piero della Francesca’s *Flagellation of Christ*, you attend a lecture explaining all of the sophisticated geometrical proportions constitutive of the UAV exhibited in the painting. Your newly acquired ‘most accurate knowledge’ may well bring you to enjoy new pleasures in better understanding Piero’s intentions, his craftsmanship, the formal structure of the work, and possibly part of its implicit meaning. Your pleasurable admiration for the man, his mathematical knowledge and his artistic skills is now heightened, and you gain in the joy of discovery and knowledge. So, you now have ‘a distinct rational pleasure ... from the increase of knowledge’. Indeed, because of your knowledge of the formal structure of the work, you can even understand its UAV in mathematical terms, and you now know that that is what caused your aesthetic pleasure. Yet, when you return to look at the painting itself, it appears neither more, nor less, beautiful (i.e. pleasing) than it did before your tutoring. Nor, I submit, would Piero have wished that it should.

produce an aesthetic pleasure, it must be observable at a macroscopic level. Thus, it can be perceived, and it can also be known.

Another difference, obviously, between the external senses and the sense of beauty is that the former have bodily organs, not so the latter. This difference is connected to the fact that the sense of beauty is a subsequent sense. For, the internal sense's not having a bodily organ implies that external objects cannot affect it directly, but can do so only indirectly, by causing a complex idea containing UAV, the perception of which by the mind affects the internal sense.³⁷ If the internal sense had a bodily organ, it would not be a subsequent sense, and aesthetic pleasure would not depend on a previous perception. That the internal sense requires no bodily organ is all the more obvious if what pleases aesthetically is an abstract entity such as a theorem, in which case no physical object plays a causal role. (cf. *ICB*, I, xi, 35.)

A further difference, related to the fact that the internal sense has no bodily organ, is that, contrary to the external senses, the internal sense cannot immediately receive displeasure or pain, because 'there is no form which seems necessarily disagreeable of itself'; '[d]eformity is only the absence of beauty, or deficiency in the beauty expected in any species'. (*ICB*, VI, i, 74.) (This is presumably because, although UAV varies in degrees and there is also a zero degree of UAV, there are no negative degrees.) Aesthetic displeasure can be received only indirectly. For, it depends, first, on the mistaken belief that we would receive an aesthetic pleasure from a certain object, and secondly, on the disappointment resulting from the discovery that the object does not afford any, or affords less than what we expected: 'Our sense of beauty seems designed to give us positive pleasure, but not positive pain or disgust, any farther than what arises from disappointment'.³⁸

Now, because aesthetic pleasure depends on a perception that manifests an object's UAV, the question of what the causal powers are, in the object, that give rise to the complex idea containing UAV becomes irrelevant from an aesthetic point of view. First, because some objects we call 'beautiful' – abstract entities such as theorems – have no causal powers. Secondly, because as noted by Kail, it is doubtful that the UAV that we perceive in all the external

37 I agree with Matthews that it is not the subsequent sense of beauty that perceives the complex idea: 'it is a mistake to assume that the internal sense perceives or re-perceives the complex idea that is the cause of beauty. The internal sense is reactive, like other senses, except that it reacts to complex ideas'. Matthews, 'Hutcheson on the Idea of Beauty', 250.

38 *ICB*, VI, i, 75. Cf. also *Essay*, 163.

objects we call ‘beautiful’ share a type-identical causal property.³⁹ Thus, when we consider external objects from an aesthetic perspective, their primary qualities and their visual and auditory secondary qualities are on a par. Both are part of our complex ideas, and so are essential to our perception of the UAV of visible objects and of music. This is not to say, however, that our complex ideas are beautiful; the external objects are beautiful, but they are beautiful *as perceived*.

There is something that Hutcheson does not say, but that I believe he implies. Although UAV is a ‘real quality in the objects’ (*ICB*, I, ix, 34.), aesthetic pleasure depends on our perception of an object’s UAV, and so it depends to a large extent on the *way* we perceive the object and its UAV. Consider some examples that illustrate the point. There are many ways of looking at the same countryside – with the same trees, same meadows, same pond, same houses, same paths – while feeling very little aesthetic pleasure. It often happens that one has to climb to a vantage point to appreciate the scenery, and then, perhaps only from a certain angle. So, the landscape may suddenly become aesthetically pleasing – it may all of a sudden fully manifest its UAV – but its UAV may be restricted to that single point of view.

Consider, next, one of Uccello’s three great battle paintings. It may have all the UAV one can imagine in a painting, yet if looked at from too close up, or too far off, or from a very acute angle, it will display little or no UAV. It reveals its UAV to its full effect only once you are in a “correct” position, the notion of correctness being here the adequacy of the position with the painter’s presumable intention.⁴⁰ Or, think of the pleasure taken in looking at many animals we call ‘beautiful’ – horses, deer, lions, swans; they certainly manifest UAV when seen laterally, but much less when viewed from beneath their underbellies. The same applies *mutatis mutandis* to a great deal of classical sculpture and architecture.

Or, imagine a funeral march played at breakneck speed, or a scherzo played at a snail’s pace. In both cases, all of the relations and proportions of the

39 ‘It is extremely implausible, to say the least, that, given the disparate kinds of things to which the predicate ‘is beautiful’ is applied, they should share some common causally relevant property’. Peter J. E. Kail, ‘Function and Normativity in Hutcheson’s Aesthetic Epistemology’, *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 40 (2000), 449.

40 More often than not, we do not consciously reflect on the painter’s intention regarding the position from which to look at a painting; we just shuffle around unwittingly until we reach a suitable position. There are extreme cases: Holbein’s ‘The Ambassadors’, with its anamorphosis of a skull, requires the spectator to discover two, perhaps three positions.

intervals between the notes would be objectively present, and so the objective UAV of both works would be intact. Yet, the complex ideas of such interpretations would not elicit an aesthetic pleasure, because our ability to discern the inherent relations and proportions would be impaired by the speeds. A virtue of Hutcheson's theory of a subsequent aesthetic sense is that it can accommodate and account for this sensitivity of our aesthetic pleasures to such perceptual factors. The reason is that according to Hutcheson aesthetic pleasure, or lack thereof, does not depend directly on the objects, but on our perception of them, and therefore on *how* we perceive them.⁴¹

5. Perception, reason and pleasure

There is another important difference between the external senses and the internal sense of beauty, a difference that is not strongly highlighted in the first *Inquiry*, but obviously present nevertheless. The difference is that pleasures of the internal sense of beauty depend to a great extent on what Hutcheson elsewhere variously calls 'the understanding', 'intellect' or 'reason', whereas those of the external senses do not. Let me explain.

In a passage added in the fourth edition to Section I, xii, Hutcheson distinguishes three levels in aesthetic experience: (1) the powers of perceiving ideas of primary and secondary qualities by the external senses; (2) 'the power of *comparing*, or of discerning the similitudes of proportions'; (3) the power of receiving aesthetic pleasure. Hutcheson distinguishes the levels by arguing that they are partly independent one from another. A certain being, he says, might have the first power and not the second. And a certain other being might have both of these, without having the third. Indeed, 'the bare idea of the form is something separable from pleasure' (*ICB*, I, xii, 35.), because there is no necessary connection between perceived UAV and aesthetic pleasure:

Similitude, proportion, analogy or equality of proportion are objects of the *understanding*, and must be actually known before we know the natural causes of our pleasure. But *pleasure* perhaps is *not necessarily connected with*

41 In speaking of the sensitivity of our aesthetic pleasures to the ways we perceive the UAV of objects by means of our complex ideas, I have tried to give some examples, but have not attempted to list and classify systematically all of the possible 'ways'. Such a task lies far beyond the limits of this paper, and would be exceedingly speculative with regard to Hutcheson's texts.

perception of them, and may be felt where the proportion is not known or attended to, and may not be felt where the proportion is observed.⁴²

We learn later on in the first *Inquiry* that our being pleased with perceived UAV in the absence of any necessary connection between the latter and our aesthetic pleasure is due to God's good will.⁴³ Granting this, let us return to the second level: 'the power of *comparing*, or of discerning the similitudes of proportions'. As should now be clear, merely having a complex idea of an object's primary and secondary qualities is not sufficient to bring about an aesthetic pleasure. Much more is required, and that is to be able to *compare* the ideas that make up a complex idea, and thereby to discern the relations among these qualities. These relations are constitutive of 'similitude, proportion, analogy or equality of proportion'; they are constitutive, thus, of the UAV of absolute beauty. In sum, having a complex idea made up of certain primary and secondary qualities is one thing; perceiving – either epistemically or non-epistemically – the UAV that is constituted by their relations and proportions is another thing. In the passage under discussion Hutcheson says that the relations are 'objects of the understanding'. Elsewhere he attributes such objects to reason, or intellect.⁴⁴ Whatever the term, mental activity over and above mere sense perception is required in order to make the UAV of a complex idea manifest.

42 *ICB*, I, xii, 35, my italics. (1) Notice that when Hutcheson says 'must be actually *known* before we *know* the natural causes of our pleasure' (my italics), he is speaking of knowledge, not perception. Throughout the first *Inquiry*, he maintains a strong distinction between perception and knowledge. So, the passage quoted does not contradict the claim that the *perception* of UAV may be non-epistemic. (2) The context shows that, when Hutcheson says that pleasure 'may not be felt where the proportion is observed', he is thinking either (a) of a non-human being without an internal sense, or (b) of a non-human being with an internal sense different from that of the human species, or (c) of a human being with an internal sense, but very dull. (Cf. also *ICB*, I, xi, 35. and V, i, 59–60.) The reason for which Hutcheson may be thinking about (c) can be drawn from the second and third editions of *ICB*, I, xii, where he speaks of 'that cold lifeless conception which we imagine in a dull critic, or one of the *virtuosi*, without what we call a *fine taste*'. (*ICB*, I, 36, footnote.)

43 'There seems to be no necessary connection of our pleasing ideas of beauty with the uniformity or regularity of the objects, from the nature of things, antecedent to some constitution of the Author of our nature, which has made such forms pleasant to us'. (*ICB*, V, i, 59.)

44 On the role of reason in aesthetic experience according to Hutcheson, cf. Strasser, 'Hutcheson on Aesthetic Perception', 112ff.

For instance, at the beginning of the first *Inquiry*, Hutcheson speaks of our power of ‘*comparing* [objects] by means of the ideas, and of observing their *relations* and *proportions*’. (*ICB*, I, iii, 31.) In the *Essay* he explains that pleasures of the aesthetic sense ‘arise only upon some previous idea, or image, or assemblage, or *comparison* of ideas ... Thus regularity and uniformity in figures, are no less grateful than tastes, or smells; the harmony of notes, is more grateful than simple sounds’. (*Essay*, 2-3.) In a footnote he speaks of ‘those pleasures perceived upon the previous reception and *comparison* of various sensible perceptions, with their concomitant ideas, or intellectual ideas, when we find *uniformity*, or *resemblance* among them. (*Essay*, 4, my italics.) Further on, he attributes such activity to the intellect: ‘Reasoning or intellect seems to raise no new species of ideas, but to discover or *discern* the *relations* of those received’. (*Essay*, 241, my italics.) In *A Synopsis of Metaphysics*, Hutcheson writes:

God himself seems to have made the forms or elements of all ideas, without our own minds contributing anything at this point. But once ideas have been admitted, the mind can ring the changes upon them, and vigorously exercise its powers in doing so. It can either retain ideas or dismiss them, *pay attention to them or turn to others*; it can divide concrete ideas by abstracting, or join simple ideas and compound them. It can in a certain manner enlarge ideas or diminish them, *compare them with each other and learn their relations*. In all these activities no less than in willed motions and appetites, *the mind is conscious to itself of truly doing something*.⁴⁵

In *A Short Introduction* he explains that:

‘Tis by this power of reason, that the soul perceives *the relations and connexions of things*, and their consequences and causes; infers what is to ensue, or what preceded; can *discern resemblances*, consider on one view the present and the future, propose to itself a whole plan of life, and provide all things requisite for it.⁴⁶

In *A System of Moral Philosophy*, he says that, given our powers of ‘judging and reasoning’, ‘*the mind never rests in bare perception; it compares the ideas received, discerns their relations ...*; it inquires into the natures, *proportions*, causes, effects,

⁴⁵ Hutcheson, ‘A Synopsis of Metaphysics’, 116, my italics.

⁴⁶ Hutcheson, ‘A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy’, 6–7, my italics.

antecedents, consequents, of every thing'.⁴⁷ A good example of the kind of relations that are constitutive of UAV, and are discovered by comparing and discerning, is found in classical architecture:

In that kind of architecture which the Europeans call *regular*, the uniformity of parts is very obvious, the several parts are regular figures, and either equal or similar at least in the same range: the pedestals are parallelepipedons or square prisms; the pillars, cylinders nearly; the arches circular, and all those in the same row equal; there is the same proportion everywhere observed in the same range between the diameters of pillars and their heights, their capitals, the diameters of arches, the heights of the pedestals, the projections of the cornice, and all [the] ornaments in each of our five orders. (*ICB*, III, vii, 53–4.)

Although one must be able to grasp these relations and proportions – thanks to the more or less conscious use of reason in discernments and comparisons – in order to experience an aesthetic pleasure of absolute beauty, one need not have any explicit knowledge of them, nor know that their combined UAV is the proper cause of our aesthetic pleasure. In many cases, for human beings at least, the phenomenal, qualitative impact of these relations and proportions in non-epistemic perception is sufficient to bring about aesthetic pleasure. The many thousands of music lovers who have no technical knowledge of composition and harmony, and who cannot decipher a score, are confirmation of Hutcheson's insight. The point is that even the merely phenomenal, qualitative impact of a complex idea's non-epistemically perceived UAV on our sense of beauty depends on the role of the more or less conscious role of reason in making the UAV phenomenally manifest.

I wish, hereafter, to distinguish (1) the operations of reason I have focused on up to here from (2) the more ordinarily known operation of reason, namely reasoning, based as it is on propositional knowledge and inference.⁴⁸ Hutcheson

⁴⁷ Hutcheson, 'A System of Moral Philosophy', 6–7.

⁴⁸ Cf. Hutcheson, 'A Compend of Logic', 31ff. To say that (1) the activity of comparing and discerning relations and proportions constitutive of the UAV of our complex ideas, and (2) reasoning as involving propositional knowledge and inferences, can be distinguished is not to say that Hutcheson opposes them, as if they had nothing in common. They have a great deal in common; indeed, discerning, comparing and discovering relations are common to both. According to Hutcheson, in reasoning we make comparisons and discover relations between 'terms' (i.e. concepts) in order to construct syllogisms: 'When the *relation* or connection of two ideas or *terms* cannot

makes it clear that a great deal of reasoning is involved in the acquisition of all of the mathematical, physical, astronomical and biological knowledge necessary in order for us to grasp – i.e. to understand intellectually – the UAV of, *inter alia*, theorems in mathematics and in physics (*ICB*, III, i–v, 48–51.), and also the UAV of many natural things such as fluids (*ICB*, II, v, 46.), biological organisms, the solar system, indeed nature itself. (*ICB*, II, v, 41–3.) In such cases, of course, reasoning is bound to be quite conscious. However, I wish to set aside reasoning as such in this paper, and to focus on the operations of reason in discovering, discerning and comparing the relations and proportions constitutive of the UAV of our complex ideas comprising primary and secondary qualities.

Now, this latter activity of discerning and comparing has its limits. When Hutcheson illustrates the notion of UAV through the series of geometrical figures he discusses in *ICB*, II, he indirectly underscores both the necessity of the activity of discerning and comparing relations in order to have an aesthetic pleasure, and the *limits* of our power of discerning and comparing them. If the number of equal sides of a polygon is sufficiently great, then, although the resulting figure has a great deal of UAV, the proportion of the sides ‘to the radius, or diameter of the figure, or of the circle to which regular polygons have an obvious relation, *is so much lost to our observation, that the beauty does not increase with the number of sides*’. (*ICB*, II, iii, 40, my italics.) In other words, at a certain level of complexity of our ideas, the degree of aesthetic pleasure taken in a complex idea of a polygon does not increase proportionately with the greater degree of UAV. A polygon with, say, 179 equal sides inscribed in a circle has greater UAV than, say, a regular octagon, because the uniformity of the two polygons is equal (all sides of each polygon are equal) and the diversity (i.e. the number of sides) is greater in the former than in the latter. Yet, at the level of complexity of the former, our power of reason meets a contingent limit: we can no longer compare and discern the inherent relations and proportions of the figure. This is why, Hutcheson believes, we have no more aesthetic pleasure in the former than in the latter. This highlights, once again, the fact that it is not merely UAV that causes aesthetic pleasure, but it is UAV

be directly perceived, the *relation* between them will often be able to be seen by a *comparison* of both of them with some third or middle [idea or term] or with several middle [ideas or terms] which are closely connected with each other. This mental process is dianoetic judgment or discourse’ (*Ibid.*, 31, my italics). Also, some of the quotations given above indicate that Hutcheson considers (1) and (2) as different sorts of the same generic mental activities. I wish to distinguish the sorts, and to focus hereafter on (1).

as perceived, in this case as made manifest by the more or less conscious activity of reason in discerning and comparing relations in our complex ideas.⁴⁹

Although, the power of discerning and comparing relations has its natural limits, there is ample room to develop, improve and perfect the power within those limits. Indeed, Hutcheson aims to show that: ‘all men, according as their capacity enlarges, so as to receive and compare *more complex* ideas, have a greater delight in uniformity, and are pleased with *more complex* kinds, both original and relative’. (*ICB*, VI, iv, 76, my italics.) And one way of developing the power of discerning and comparing relations is through custom. In order to explain this last point, let us take a step back and approach matters from a broader angle.

In Sections VI and VII of the first *Inquiry* Hutcheson wants to explain why it is that people differ to some extent in their aesthetic pleasures and judgments; but, he wants to ‘account for the diversities of fancy, without denying the uniformity of our internal sense of beauty’. (*ICB*, VI, xii, 81.) In other words, he intends to explain the differences in aesthetic pleasures and judgments in such a way that they are shown to be compatible with the claim that the internal sense is natural, and so common to all humans. In his explanations of such differences, he appeals to associations of ideas (*ICB*, VI), custom, education and example (*ICB*, VII). Let us set aside education and example, and focus on associations of ideas and custom. It is not clear to what extent Hutcheson really distinguishes these two factors, because some examples he gives of the effects of custom are clearly cases of an association of ideas.⁵⁰ So, let us distinguish in Hutcheson two roles of custom.

The first role is the habitual association of ideas. However, what is peculiar to the way the habitual association of ideas functions to produce differences in persons’ pleasures and judgments is that the resulting differences have little or nothing to do with the perception of UAV, and so they are not really relevant to our aesthetic experience.⁵¹ The second role of custom, as now

49 Of course, the role of reason in comparing is even more important with regard to relative, or comparative beauty: cf. *ICB*, IV.

50 For example, in discussing the effects of custom, he says ‘We are naturally capable of sentiments of fear, and dread of any powerful presence; and so custom may connect the ideas of religious horror to certain buildings’. (*ICB*, VII, ii, 82.) This is obviously a case of an association of ideas.

51 ‘The association of ideas above hinted at is one great cause of the apparent diversity of fancies in the sense of beauty, as well as in the external senses, and often makes men have an aversion to objects of beauty, and a liking to others void of it, *but under different conceptions than those of beauty or deformity*’. (*ICB*, VI, xi, 80, my italics.) The results of associations of ideas are ‘approbations and distastes ... *remote from the ideas of beauty, being plainly different ideas*’. (VI, xi, 81, my italics.)

distinguished from the association of ideas, is related to the use of reason. Its outcomes, contrary to those of associations of ideas, are directly relevant in a positive sense to the enhancement of our aesthetic experience. ‘Custom’, Hutcheson explains, ‘operates in this manner. As to actions, it only gives a disposition to the mind or body more easily to perform those actions which have been frequently repeated’. (*ICB*, VII, ii, 82.) It is in this sense of the term that he appeals to custom in order to explain the diversity of aesthetic pleasures and judgements: ‘custom may make us capable of extending our views farther and of receiving more complex ideas of beauty in bodies, or harmony in sounds, by increasing our attention and quickness of perception’; ‘custom may increase our power of receiving or comparing complex ideas’. (*ICB*, VII, ii, 83.) ‘Custom makes us more capable of retaining and comparing complex ideas, so as to discern more complicated uniformity which escapes the observation of novices in any art’. (*ICB*, VII, ii, 84.) Indeed: ‘education and custom may influence our internal senses, where they are antecedently, by enlarging the capacity of our minds to retain and compare the parts of complex compositions; and then if the finest objects are presented to us we grow conscious of a pleasure far superior to what common performances excite’. (*ICB*, VII, iii, 85.) The role of custom here is not that of associating ideas, but of repeated practice and experience in our operations of comparing and discerning relations. Thus, through practice and experience our power of reason (as relevant to aesthetic experience) can be developed and perfected. The implication is that, according to the degree to which persons severally develop the power of their reason to compare and discern relations constitutive of UAV, their natural aesthetic sensitivity will be more or less developed. Once fully developed, it is commonly called, ‘*fine genius* or *taste*’. (*ICB*, I, x, 35.) So, although the internal sense is natural and thus common to all human beings, there may be great differences in aesthetic sensitivity because of differences, due to custom, or lack thereof, in the practice and experience of reason. This helps to explain what Hutcheson says about ‘many men’:

They can tell in separate notes, the higher, lower, sharper or flatter, when separately sounded; in figures they discern the length, breadth, wideness of each line, surface, angle; and may be as capable of hearing and seeing at great distances as any men whatsoever. And yet perhaps they shall find no pleasure in musical compositions, in painting, architecture, natural landscape, or but a very weak one in comparison of what others enjoy from the same objects. This greater capacity of

receiving such pleasant ideas we commonly call a fine genius or taste. (*ICB*, I, x, 34–5, my italics.)

It is important to notice the terms ‘separate’ and ‘separately’. Hutcheson’s point is that such persons’ external senses function correctly, and so they can perceive singly, one by one, all of the primary and secondary qualities contained in the UAV of a complex idea. What the passage suggests, therefore, is that the lack of such persons’ aesthetic pleasure, or ‘very weak one’, in compositions, paintings, architecture, etc. is due to insufficient practice in comparing and discerning the relations and proportions of the qualities constitutive of the UAV of certain more complex ideas. Because of this shortcoming of their reason, the UAV of their complex ideas is not made sufficiently manifest.

Difference in aesthetic responses, in sum, is not to be explained only by education, example and the more or less arbitrary associations of ideas, but also by the various degrees to which persons develop their power of comparing, discovering and discerning the relations and proportions constitutive of UAV. The point here is not that Hutcheson is interested in theorising about a ‘standard of taste’, as Hume does, nor in showing how expertise in aesthetic judgment can be attained, as Hume also does. The point is rather as follows: (1) one of the roles Hutcheson assigns to custom is that of developing and perfecting the power of reason to make more subtle and wide-ranging comparisons and discernments of the relations and proportions constitutive of more complex UAV, so as to make the UAV manifest; (2) he thereby makes ample room for different degrees of aesthetic pleasure with regard to a certain object’s UAV, *if and when* the degree of aesthetic pleasure varies proportionately to the degree to which persons have developed and perfected their reason; (3) he then argues that such differences in the degrees of aesthetic pleasure with regard to a certain object’s UAV do not conflict with the general claim that the internal sense of beauty is natural, thus common to all persons.

The reading pursued up to here – to the effect that reason plays an important role in the perception of UAV – does not contradict Hutcheson’s claim that aesthetic ‘pleasures are necessary and immediate’. (*ICB*, I, xii, 36, marginal subtitle.) To say that an aesthetic pleasure is necessary, according to Hutcheson, is to say that, once we perceive an object that displays UAV, our having the pleasure is independent of any direct control of our will. To say that the pleasure is immediate is to say, as we have seen, that ‘the pleasure does not arise from any *knowledge* of principles, proportions, causes, or of the usefulness of the object, but strikes us at first with the idea of beauty’. (*ICB*, I,

xii, 36.) Now, because the internal sense is a subsequent sense, it depends on a previously perceived complex idea that manifests UAV. This is why aesthetic pleasure arises from what Hutcheson calls the ‘contemplation’ of a complex idea. (*ICB*, Preface, 24, my italics.) The reading pursued up to here merely attempts to unpack the notion of contemplation, by showing that it involves the more or less conscious operations of reason in comparing and discerning the relations and proportions constitutive of UAV. Once such operations have been successfully performed so that UAV becomes perceptually manifest in our complex ideas, aesthetic pleasure follows necessarily and immediately.

Further confirmation of the role of reason in the contemplation of complex ideas presenting UAV can be gathered from the following consideration. We have seen that Hutcheson readily grants that our aesthetic sensitivity can be developed, improved and perfected through custom, in the sense of repeated practice and exercise. However, the internal sense, contrary to reason, is a passive power⁵². Therefore, one cannot develop and improve one’s internal sense by practice or exercise, because one cannot actively practice or exercise a passive power. An improvement of our aesthetic sensitivity, inasmuch as the improvement depends on custom (i.e. practice), must depend on an active power. The texts we have seen indicate that the active power that heightens our aesthetic sensitivity is reason. It heightens our aesthetic sensitivity, not by modifying our internal sense, but by making the UAV of our complex ideas more perceptually manifest. Aesthetic sensitivity to UAV, in sum, depends not only on our internal sense of beauty, but also on reason.

It would be mistaken to assume that, for Hutcheson, the degrees of aesthetic pleasure *always* co-vary proportionately with the degrees of UAV of an object. His theory is happily subtler than this. We have already seen a case where the degree of aesthetic pleasure is not proportionate to the degree of UAV: if the UAV of an object is so complex that we are unable to discern the proportions between its parts, our aesthetic pleasure is no greater than with an object that has less UAV. Now, custom can have a similar effect. The repeated perception of things with great UAV results in our getting used to them. When this happens, our aesthetic pleasure becomes lesser than it first was with the same sort of objects:

however custom may *increase our power of receiving or comparing complex ideas*, yet it seems rather to weaken than strengthen the ideas of beauty,

⁵² ‘The internal sense is a passive power of receiving ideas of beauty from all objects in which there is uniformity amidst variety’. (*ICB*, VI, x, 80.)

or the impressions of pleasure from regular objects, else how is it possible that any person can go into the open air on a sunny day, or clear evening, without the most extravagant raptures, such as Milton represents our ancestor in upon his first creation? For such any person would fall into upon the first representation of such a scene. (*ICB*, VII, ii, 83, my italics.)

Thus, if at first, a high degree of our aesthetic pleasure was proportionate to that of the object's UAV, it happens that, with the repeated perception of the same sort of object, the degree of our aesthetic pleasure weakens, and it becomes disproportionately lesser than the degree of the object's UAV.

Furthermore, at least one passage suggests the contrary disproportion – cases where the degree of aesthetic pleasure is disproportionately higher than that of an object's UAV: 'We are indeed often mistaken in imagining that there is the greatest possible beauty, where it is but very imperfect; but still it is some degree of beauty which pleases, although there may be higher degrees which we do not observe'. (*ICB*, VI, v, 77.) If someone perceiving an object imagines that it has 'the greatest possible beauty' when it does not, it is surely because the degree of her aesthetic pleasure is disproportionately high in comparison with the degree of the object's real UAV. Aesthetic raptures brought about by the limited UAV of sugary ballads and heavy metal music are commonplace.

We have seen that (a) sensations of secondary qualities, (b) the pleasures or pains attending them, and (c) the pleasures and pains we feel in our bodies independently of our perceptions of external objects, are all '*signals ... of new events happening to the body*'. Similarly, whether we know it or not, aesthetic pleasures are signals of some UAV in objects *as we perceive them*, because our internal sense of beauty is a reliable UAV-detector insofar as it always responds positively to perceived UAV in complex ideas. Thus, aesthetic pleasures afford a correct answer to the question: Does this object have UAV or does it not? However, according to Hutcheson, the lack of aesthetic pleasure does not necessarily signal an absence of UAV: this is so in cases where a complex idea presenting UAV is associated with ideas that cause a powerful non-aesthetic disgust. (cf. *ICB*, VI, iii, 75–6.) As to the respective degrees of aesthetic pleasure and of UAV, although it frequently happens that the degree of our aesthetic pleasure is proportionate to the degree of the perceived UAV of an object, it is not always the case. (As I have tried to show, its not being the case can be independent of associations of ideas, of education and of example.) It can happen that we have a degree of aesthetic pleasure that is

disproportionately low or high in comparison with the degree of an object's UAV. Thus, our internal sense of beauty is not always a reliable UAV-detector regarding the question: What is the relative *degree* of the UAV of this object in comparison with others?

Finally, what we have seen prompts a speculative question about our aesthetic experience of natural and artistic objects. Is there, according to Hutcheson, a connection between (1) the claim that beauty is not a mind-independent property, and (2) the fact that, although UAV is a real quality, the responses of our subsequent sense of beauty are highly sensitive, as I have tried to show, to the *way* we perceive such objects and their UAV by means of our complex ideas (regardless of the influence of associations of ideas, education and example)? A case could be made on theoretical grounds for an affirmative reply, but textual evidence is lacking.

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Francis Hutcheson's Aesthetics and his Critics in Ireland: Charles-Louis de Villette and Edmund Burke

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In his own time as much as in ours, the response to Francis Hutcheson's philosophy has concentrated above all on his contribution to moral thought, especially the articulation of a so-called 'moral sense'.¹ The moral sense as described by Hutcheson responds to events in the world by notifying the subject of pleasure when experiencing or observing acts of benevolence, and displeasure when witnessing their opposite. Hutcheson's aesthetic theory has not preoccupied critics to the same extent, despite the fact that it formed an important, indeed intrinsic part of his argument in *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725). In a vein that Shaftesbury had influentially explored before him, Hutcheson began his account by establishing the model of an internal aesthetic sense which made experience of beauty, harmony, form and order possible. His confidence that his audience would accept the empirical existence of such a sense facilitated the transition to the argument about a parallel *moral* sense.

Quite apart from its structural significance in his system, there are reasons for attending to Hutcheson's aesthetic argument on its own terms. Paul Guyer has recently argued in his *History of Modern Aesthetics* that 'what we now call aesthetics as a specialty within academic philosophy began in Britain with the *Treatise Concerning Beauty, Order, Harmony, Design* by Francis Hutcheson', i.e. the first of the two treatises that constituted the *Inquiry*.² Scholarly accounts of Hutcheson's impact in the field of aesthetics and the development of this area of discussion after him typically focus on his Scottish successors, from David

1 See Daniel Carey, 'Francis Hutcheson's Philosophy and the Scottish Enlightenment: Reception, Reputation, and Legacy' in Aaron Garrett and James A. Harris (eds.), *Scottish Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2015), I, 36–76.

2 Paul Guyer, *A History of Modern Aesthetics*, vol. 1: *The Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2014), 98. According to Peter Kivy, 'the first of the two treatises [in the *Inquiry*]... is certainly the first systematic philosophical treatment in English of what we would now call "aesthetics"', Peter Kivy, *The Seventh Sense: Francis Hutcheson and Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetics* (Oxford, 2003, 2nd edn), 24.

Hume to Archibald Alison, Alexander Gerard, Thomas Reid and Dugald Stewart. The purpose of this essay is to look specifically at the reaction Hutcheson received to his aesthetic philosophy in Ireland, where his career developed in running a dissenting academy in Dublin the 1720s and where he published his most significant work before taking up his appointment as Professor Moral Philosophy in Glasgow in 1730. The major Irish figure is of course Edmund Burke, whose *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, with its echo of Hutcheson's title, appeared in 1757. But I also discuss a now forgotten thinker who responded with a significant analysis of Hutcheson, the Huguenot pastor based in Dublin, Charles-Louis de Villette, writing in 1750 not long after Hutcheson's death.

1 Hutcheson's aesthetics

Before turning to these two critics, we need a fuller appreciation of the key commitments that characterize Hutcheson's aesthetics. His most important contribution was the formal identification and description of an internal sense, modeled on the external senses, which has the function of automatically and naturally registering responses. While the external senses supply sensory data, the internal sense of the aesthetic notifies us of pleasure attached to our experience of certain objects. Some things 'necessarily please us' according to Hutcheson. In other words, our reactions to them are both immediate, natural and in some sense obligatory. In the case of the aesthetic we respond pleasurable to 'the Beauty of Regularity, Order, [and] Harmony' in particular.³

The internal sense model had a number of advantages for Hutcheson. If aesthetic reactions are immediate and necessary then they are not subject to calculation of personal advantage or interest. In that respect they do not require ratiocination.⁴ In other words, they constitute disinterested responses, to the extent that they occur prior to some form of reckoning of the pleasure they will give us. The external senses are passive and so is the internal sense of beauty. Thus he could block the hedonist understanding of human nature, most famously expounded by Hobbes but which had been developed with polemical effect in the eighteenth century by Bernard

3 Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, ed. Wolfgang Leidhold (Indianapolis, 2008, rev. edn), 8, 9.

4 Kivy questions whether immediacy in Hutcheson's system can be used to distinguish the operations of sense from reason, cf. Kivy, *Seventh Sense*, 40–2.

Mandeville. The sense model also enabled Hutcheson to deny another strand of Mandeville's argument, namely that custom and education accounted for our tastes and predilections. The internal sense, as a natural endowment, precedes education, which only supervenes on our untutored reactions. In a succinct statement of his convictions, Hutcheson argued:

the Pleasure does not arise from any Knowledge of Principles, Proportions, Causes, or of the Usefulness of the Object; but strikes us at first with the Idea of Beauty: nor does the more accurate Knowledge increase this Pleasure of Beauty, however it may super-add a distinct rational Pleasure from prospects of Advantage, or from the Increase of Knowledge.⁵

There was of course a built in danger of multiplying the number of internal senses indefinitely. Hutcheson seems to have been unmoved by the objection. Indeed, in the *Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense* (1728), Hutcheson began elaborating such senses considerably.⁶ On his account, any ideas occurring independently of the will accompanied by pain or pleasure could be regarded as being received by a sense, and he thought, accordingly, that 'there were many other *Senses* besides those commonly explained'. He confirmed the existence of an aesthetic sense (now identified with the Addisonian pleasures of the imagination); a public sense – which determines us to take pleasure in the happiness of others and experience uneasiness in their misery, identified with the classical (and Shaftesburian) *sensus communis*; the moral sense; and a sense of honour and shame. But he was also prepared to entertain more classes of this kind, mentioning '*Decency, Dignity, Suitableness to human Nature*' and their related opposites

5 Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 25.

6 In the preface to the *Essay*, Hutcheson remarked that the number of external senses could be multiplied to '*Seven or Ten*', while '*Multitudes of Perceptions*' occurred without relation to the external senses – he noted ideas of number, duration, proportion, virtue, and vice, as well as '*Pleasures of Honour, of Congratulation; the Pains of Remorse, Shame, Sympathy, and many others*'. *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense*, ed. A. Garrett (Indianapolis, 2002), 5. In the posthumously published *System of Moral Philosophy*, Hutcheson affirmed a '*sense of decency or dignity*' (London, 1755; 2 vols), I, 27. For further discussion, see Kivy, *Seventh Sense*, 34–6. It is clear from Hutcheson's brief discussion of grandeur and novelty as 'two Ideas different from Beauty' that they must also require a sense of their own, see Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 69.

of indecency, meanness and unworthiness, which suggested a potentially capacious array of senses.⁷

In articulating the sense model in his aesthetics (and elsewhere in his philosophy), Hutcheson followed Locke to the extent that he identified the internal sense as receiving ‘simple’ ideas. That is to say, sensory experience generates ‘ideas’ passively rather than the mind having responsibility for creating them. But the aesthetic is also, importantly, a domain in which we have ‘complex’ ideas, which also form a key part of Locke’s account. Locke operates with two definitions of complex ideas: in the first, he understands complex ideas as those we acquire when we ‘repeat, compare and unite’ simple ideas given in perception;⁸ the second definition considers complex ideas as complex insofar as they can be analyzed into constituent simple ideas but that, in their complex form, they may nonetheless be given directly in experience.⁹ In Hutcheson’s analysis, we form complex ideas of objects deemed beautiful, regular and harmonious, from which we derive ‘vastly greater’ pleasure than from mere simple ideas. He has in mind here complexity of the composition or of the components in a work of art or natural setting. Thus, for example, we experience more delight in a ‘fine Face, a just Picture’ than we do ‘with the View of any one Colour, were it as strong and lively as possible’, and similarly we are more taken with

a Prospect of the Sun arising among settled Clouds, and colouring their Edges, with a starry Hemisphere, a fine Landskip, a regular Building, than with a clear blue Sky, a smooth Sea, or a large open Plain, not diversify’d by Woods, Hills, Waters, Buildings ... So in Musick, the Pleasure of a fine Composition is incomparably greater than that of any one Note, how sweet, full or swelling soever.¹⁰

If complex ideas can be given in experience, then they require no additional reflection to assimilate but afford pleasure immediately and in greater abundance than more simple scenes and sounds.

Elsewhere the distinction between simple and complex ideas raises potential difficulties that Hutcheson does not address, specifically in relation to his

⁷ Hutcheson, *Essay*, 17–18.

⁸ John Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford, 1975), II, ii, 2.

⁹ Kivy, *Seventh Sense*, 46–7.

¹⁰ Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 22.

model of immediacy. The advantage of the sense model is that the reactions occur spontaneously and without our being able to resist them. But complex ideas – as combinations of simple ideas – seem to admit of a kind of delay to the extent that they are constructed. Later in his discussion, for instance, Hutcheson says of individuals' experience: 'according as their Capacity enlarges, so as to receive and compare more complex Ideas, [they] have a greater Delight in Uniformity, and are pleas'd with its more complex Kinds'.¹¹ An enlarged capacity on the one hand allows us to 'receive' complex ideas directly but on the other to compare such ideas. The former scenario preserves immediacy while the latter implies an interval or 'time delay' which not only militates against immediacy but also invites the cynical Mandevillian interpretation which described our aesthetic responses as essentially artificial and coached, so to speak, by social influences rather than emerging naturally and instantly.

Perhaps the solution runs like this. As Peter Kivy notes, the idea of beauty must be a simple idea in order to need a sense to perceive it (whether or not Hutcheson tells us explicitly that it is simple).¹² But if we suppose that the idea of beauty is identical with the pleasure we experience, then the idea of beauty can remain simple while the things that cause it are complex. This would hold regardless of whether we have a direct perception of a complex idea or construct it ourselves. Once the construction of the idea triggers a pleasure experience, the idea of beauty has been apprehended. There may be a parallel, too, with the fact that a sequence of deductions made from theorems, which entails an interval, is nonetheless accompanied by 'immediate Pleasure'.¹³

The pressing dilemma for Hutcheson, of course, is how to ground the structure of the aesthetic in nature while allowing for and recognising the capacity to develop, expand, and add nuance to our experience,

11 Ibid., 63. See also the change to the fourth edition of the *Inquiry* noted by Kivy, *Seventh Sense*, 27, in which Hutcheson moves from defining the sense of beauty as a determination to be pleased 'with any Forms, or Ideas which occur to our Observation' with a determination to be pleased with 'certain complex Forms', *Inquiry*, 8, 199 (in the editions of 1738 known as D2 and D3; see Leidhold's 'Note on the Text', xxiii–xxviii).

12 Kivy, *Seventh Sense*, 48–9. An alternative theory of the idea of beauty as a complex idea is advanced by Dabney Townsend, 'Lockean Aesthetics', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 49 (1991), 349–61, 351–3; and for Kivy's reply, *Seventh Sense*, 260–5. See also the discussion in Emily Michael, 'Francis Hutcheson on Aesthetic Perception and Aesthetic Pleasure', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 24 (1984), 241–55.

13 Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 38; see also 39.

in part through greater cultivation and exposure to sophisticated forms. He addressed this side of the equation formally in a section ‘Of the Power of Custom, Education, and Example, as to our internal Senses’ (I, vii). Here he allowed that education and custom could indeed have an influence on our ‘antecedent’ internal senses. But it was crucial to recognize that education in itself could never make us ‘apprehend any Qualitys in Objects, which we have not naturally Senses capable of perceiving’. With this important proviso, he accepted that education and custom enlarged ‘the Capacity of our Minds to retain and compare the Parts of complex Compositions’. As a result, when encountering ‘the finest Objects’ we ‘grow conscious of a Pleasure far superior to what common Performances excite’.¹⁴ It is worth noting that the pleasure/sense conjunction remains in tact but the process of retaining and comparing takes time and therefore departs from the immediacy model.

For Hutcheson, taste is understood not as aesthetic appreciation but as a power of perception: ‘This greater Capacity of receiving such pleasant Ideas we commonly call a fine Genius or Taste’.¹⁵ Perception can be heightened and cultivated, but it arises from the structure of faculties or ‘powers’ endowed in human nature. The alternative analysis, assigning taste to a capacity for appreciation, would make the aesthetic an affair of judgement and it would be difficult to rescue it from the territory of rational reflection and the cognitive, which would have ceded the ground to rationalist philosophers whom Hutcheson opposed in aesthetics and in morals. I would argue that one of the fundamental strategies adopted by Hutcheson in both of these domains (the moral and aesthetic) is to collapse the moment of perception and judgement.

We will return to this question after we consider what Hutcheson believes is responsible for causing us to designate figures as beautiful. In Section II of his treatise Hutcheson explains that figures exhibiting ‘Uniformity amidst Variety’, in compound ratio, seem to be those that ‘excite’ the idea of beauty in us (if bodies are equal in uniformity, the beauty is as the variety, whereas with those exhibiting the same variety, the beauty is as the uniformity).¹⁶ This first formulation is tentative but it later emerges as foundational.¹⁷ Of course this notion is open

¹⁴ Ibid., 72, 73.

¹⁵ Ibid., 23.

¹⁶ Ibid., 28, 29.

¹⁷ See *ibid.*, 35, 41.

to the objection that it comprehends too much or excludes too little and therefore lacks sufficient clarity or definition to do much philosophical work. Hutcheson advances the discussion through examples, consistent with the empirical framing of the argument and its appeal to the intuitive, consensual and proto-phenomenological. He begins with geometric figures which generally increase in beauty in terms of variety as they grow in the number of sides, while beauty in terms of uniformity increases with figures that have more regularity. In works of nature, beauty also stems from uniformity amidst variety, including the movement of the planets, the light and shade that diversify landscapes, and the vast array of species, whether animal or vegetable, which are similar in themselves and yet enormously diversified across the span of nature as a whole. He classes harmony under original or absolute beauty, which he regards as a 'sort of Uniformity' dependent on proportions. Discords in musical composition refresh the ear with variety, he supposes, by 'awakening the Attention, and enlivening the Relish for the succeeding Harmony of Concords'.¹⁸

In section III Hutcheson discusses the beauty of theorems. This is one of his most distinctive contributions.¹⁹ A great advantage of this topic for him is that the reaction to beauty in this context cannot be predicated on the usefulness of the theorem.²⁰ It is a pure reaction and, as such, supports his emphasis on the disinterested character of aesthetic responses.

One of the notable features of Hutcheson's position that he draws attention to more than once is the fact that, as he puts it,

There seems to be no necessary Connection of our pleasing Ideas of Beauty with the Uniformity or Regularity of the Objects, from the Nature of things, antecedent to some Constitution of the Author of our Nature, which has made such Forms pleasant to us.²¹

The voluntarist argument used here is a bit of a puzzle since Hutcheson had followed Shaftesbury as a moralist in making human nature sufficient

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁹ See Timothy M. Costelloe, *The British Aesthetic Tradition: From Shaftesbury to Wittgenstein* (Cambridge, 2013), 25–6.

²⁰ Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 36, 38, 40.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 46; see also 57, 80.

to grasp virtue and vice, although he emphasised the providential design of such a system.²² It was one of the objections Shaftesbury made about Locke that he had thrown everything into disorder in the moral world by making moral law subject to the will of the deity who could manipulate good and evil according to his wishes rather than their residing in the very structure of things, consonant with a beautiful and orderly universe.²³ Hutcheson seems to feel that ‘other Minds’ – by which he means the minds of animals – might be equipped differently and not respond aesthetically to uniformity. ‘We actually find that the same regular Forms seem not equally to please all the Animals known to us’.²⁴

What counter-arguments does Hutcheson particularly need to combat? Two of them are related. If the internal sense is natural and universal, as Hutcheson insists, it ought to follow that it should produce consensus in the world in aesthetic judgements and taste. Evidence of diversity in aesthetic preferences would seem to tell against both its universality and its naturalness.²⁵ Secondly if diversity can be shown to exist, then the more plausible explanation for it appears to be, as Hutcheson acknowledges, that ‘all our Relish for Beauty, and Order is either from prospect of advantage, Custom, or Education’.²⁶ This argument is particularly tempting for those who follow Locke in rejecting innate ideas and principles – presumably on the basis that too much variation exists to sustain the notion that we share a nature unified by inbuilt ideas and principles. Locke’s strategy with respect to innateness had been precisely to advertise cultural difference and incommensurability, on the premise that a unified nature should produce what he called ‘conformity of Action’.²⁷

22 Ibid., 9. Hutcheson’s former student Hugh Heugh (writing as Euzelus Philaethes, took him to task for claiming that knowledge of good and evil could be attained without knowledge of God’s existence (and therefore his will and law presumably). *Shaftesbury’s Ghost Conjur’d: Or, a Letter to Francis Hutcheson* (Glasgow, 1738), 6–7.

23 See Daniel Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson: Contesting Diversity in the Enlightenment and Beyond* (Cambridge, 2006), 130–1.

24 Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 46; see also 78, 80.

25 In the Preface, Hutcheson acknowledges: ‘In the first Treatise, the Author perhaps in some Instances has gone too far, in supposing a greater Agreement of Mankind in their Sense of Beauty, than Experience will confirm’, Ibid., 10. He explained that his goal was simply to establish a sense of beauty as natural to human beings and that the agreement it generated was equal to that of the external senses.

26 Ibid., 66.

27 Locke, *Essay*, I, iii, 13.

In his response to this potential dilemma, Hutcheson clarifies, first of all, that innate ideas or principles do not enter the scenario. An internal sense does not presuppose innateness any more than the external senses do.²⁸ Thus a further advantage of the sense analogy or model was the leverage it gave Hutcheson to evade Locke's critique. The internal sense, on his analysis, is a passive power to receive ideas of beauty from objects that display uniformity amidst variety rather than an implanted tendency to embrace certain notions.

Hutcheson's second strategy in replying to the problem of diversity is to provide an alternative theory to account for its existence. He traces the diversity of aesthetic preferences specifically to the association of ideas. Locke had in fact introduced the concept into discussion in the *Essay*, as a means of accounting for aberrant or adventitious ideas with no natural connection which nonetheless had significant (if unfortunate) influence on people's thinking (for example, the negative effect of stories about goblins told to children by their nursemaids).²⁹ These are distorted, psychological conjunctions of ideas, but they do not tell against the mind's 'normal' operations when they are properly policed. In the context of Hutcheson's moral thought, the usefulness of Locke's understanding of association remains its capacity to describe arbitrary and unwarranted connections, or what could be termed forms of intellectual interference caused by association. In the aesthetic sphere, Hutcheson initially followed Locke's lead in focusing on the way that certain 'casual Conjunctions of Ideas' cause us to react with disgust to things that actually have nothing disagreeable about them. Thus we might develop 'fantastick Aversions' to different animals and insects with real beauty to them (he mentions swine and serpents) on account of these 'accidental Ideas'.³⁰ Similarly, Goths who fancy their country's architecture superior to that of the Romans have allowed their patriotism and hostility to enemies to colour their response by means of association. Yet when he comes back to association in diagnosing the

28 Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 67. For further discussion of Hutcheson and innateness, see Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson*, 161–72.

29 Locke, *Essay*, II, xxxiii (added to fourth edition in 1700). He described the relationship between these ideas as 'wholly owing to Chance or Custom' (II, xxxiii, 5), and as a 'wrong Connexion' with pervasive effect (II, xxxiii, 9). Thus goblins and 'Sprights' have no more to do with darkness than with light but darkness would engender 'frightful Ideas' in children when inculcated by nursemaids (II, xxxiii, 10).

30 Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 63.

existence of diversity specifically, his approach is pitched less negatively or critically. He remarks for example on the way that woods and groves become places of retreat for the religious and pensive as well as the amorous, creating an association between location and such patterns of thought or romance. Similarly the dim light of gothic structures is associated with religion, as he notes in quoting lines from Milton's *Il Penseroso*. More generally, strong passions have a tendency to conjoin with the place, circumstances, and even dress, voice or song which attended the occasion of the passion. As a result, we experience delight or aversion in relation to various objects which are in themselves indifferent. For Hutcheson, the key is not to confuse one thing with another. The fact that people are prone to distinctive passions offers a way to explain how they 'disagree in their Fancies of Objects' despite the fact that their sense of beauty and harmony remains 'perfectly uniform'.³¹

2 Charles-Louis de Villette: a mid-century Huguenot response to Hutcheson

Accounts of the response to Hutcheson's aesthetic theory have largely focused, as I indicated, on a distinguished group of Scottish contemporaries and successors. But two figures in Ireland gave his work serious attention. Burke's engagement with Hutcheson – to which I will come in the next section – in his 1757 *Philosophical Enquiry* is one of lasting significance, but he was preceded by another interlocutor who has been almost entirely overlooked, the Dublin-based Huguenot pastor, Charles-Louis de Villette.³² Villette's 'Essai Philosophique sur le Beau, & sur le Gout' ('Philosophical Essay on Beauty and Taste') in his *Oeuvres Mêlées* appeared in Dublin in 1750 and set out his own philosophy at length, during which he engaged in frequent commentary on the shortcomings of Hutcheson's analysis. Villette was born in Lausanne in 1688, the son of a French refugee from Burgundy. He was minister in Carlow from c. 1723 to 1737 and rector of Kilruane in the diocese of Killaloe in 1726. In 1737 he arrived in Dublin as fourth minister of the French church at St. Patrick's Cathedral in 1737 (seven years after Hutcheson's departure for Glasgow as

³¹ Ibid., 69.

³² For the only available study, which provides a useful summary of Villette's position, see Alfred Owen Aldridge, 'A French Critic of Hutcheson's Aesthetics', *Modern Philology*, 45 (1948), 169–84.

Chair of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow).³³ In Dublin, Villette published books on the problem of evil and the future life, in addition to his *Oeuvres Mêlées* which explored aesthetic questions relating to style, modern theatre, beauty and taste. As his *Dissertation sur l'Origine du Mal* (1755) indicates, he was clearly closely engaged with Irish intellectual life, including the work of Archbishop King on theodicy, and he has much to say there in praise of Hutcheson's moral philosophy. But in his *Oeuvres Mêlées* he strung together some quite powerful objections to Hutcheson's aesthetic position. He explained that he had written a long piece refuting Hutcheson as well as Jean-Pierre de Crousaz, author of the *Traité du Beau* (1715) – from whom Hutcheson borrowed – but he thought such a disquisition would not appeal to his readers.³⁴ Nonetheless he incorporated extensive remarks on both authors in the text, especially the notes.

There are several key issues that Villette raised in his critique of Hutcheson. The first is that Hutcheson's understanding of the passivity of the soul in aesthetic perception left his account purely mechanical and dry, as if aesthetic reactions required no further explanation.³⁵ In his view the aesthetic needed the contribution of 'Intelligence' or judgement missing in Hutcheson's analysis. Hutcheson was not only badly mistaken in his approach but he also threatened morality as a consequence. In Villette's estimation, ideas of uniformity, variety, regularity, and their opposites supposed Intelligence.³⁶ Brutes were capable of identifying that certain parts of an object were uniform with others parts, but that was not the same as possessing the idea of uniformity, which resulted from judgement. The faculty of judgement itself only belonged to an 'Etre Intelligent' (intelligent being).³⁷ Similarly, brutes could recognize such things as circles, squares and triangles without understanding regularity or arrangement, for which a judgement based on reflection was essential. One merely had to consider the matter for a moment to become convinced that only with reflection was it possible to sense or grasp the beautiful. Later he clarifies that the recognition of

33 Thomas Philip Le Fanu, 'The Huguenot Churches of Dublin and their Ministers', *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of London*, 8 (1905), 128, and more generally on the context, 87–139.

34 Charles-Louis de Villette, *Oeuvres Mêlées, dont les Sujets sont le Stile, le Théâtre Moderne, le Beau, et le Goût* (Dublin, 1750), 102–3n.

35 *Ibid.*, 101, 103n.

36 'Tout cela est absolument du ressort de l'Intelligence' ('all of this is absolutely the territory of Intelligence'), *ibid.*, 104n.

37 *Ibid.*, 104n.

design which is crucial to appreciating the beauty, for example, of landscapes, did not occur promptly or immediately but required a degree of attention and reflection to make it known. He concluded that this single principle, '*Que le Sentiment du Beau depend en partie de l'attention, de la reflexion, met entre les idées de Monsieur Hutcheson & les miennes une très grande difference*'.³⁸

We can, as I have suggested, readily account for Hutcheson's inclination to frame things in this way. To position the aesthetic as an affair of judgement and not perception would have opened the door either to the rationalist analysis or the self-interested version of events. He needed to make aesthetic (as well as moral) reactions immediate in order to prevent this. Thus he collapsed the moment of perception and judgement into one. Villette took a very different view, distinguishing conceptually and phenomenologically between these moments: 'Quand on porte son attention sur un objet, & qu'on le trouve Beau, n'éprouve-t-on distinctivement qu'il y a là quelque chose de plus qu'une simple Sensation? Qu'il y a un Jugement tacite qui ne peut venir que de la Raison, de la Reflexion?'³⁹

As he clarifies the premises of his position, Villette notes that we have to distinguish between an active intellectual faculty and a passive 'susceptibility to sentiment' (*Susceptibilité de Sentiment*) or sense which operates independently of the will. Intelligence on its own does not 'excite' a sentiment; the sentiment derives from the senses. At the same time the agreeable sentiment or sensation that we experience must generate an idea or image to register as beautiful, which he believes can only come specifically from the senses of sight and hearing, interestingly.⁴⁰ Beauty, in turn, is an affair of the faculty of imagination. Thus he presents a more mediated account than Hutcheson, although it is not radically dissimilar insofar as sentiments provide the foundation. He also accepts Hutcheson's distinction between absolute and relative beauty;⁴¹ strongly supports his view that aesthetic reactions are disin-

38 'That the sentiment of beauty depends in part on attention, on reflection constitutes a very great difference between my ideas and those of Mr. Hutcheson', *ibid.*, 105n, 182, 188n.

39 'When we train our attention on an object and find it beautiful, do we not feel distinctly that we experience something more than a simple sensation? That there is a tacit judgement which could only come from reason and reflection?', *ibid.*, 105n.

40 *Ibid.*, 112, 119, 132.

41 Absolute beauty responds to objects whose beauty is apparent without reference

terested; and follows him in observing the distorting effect of the association of ideas.⁴² He articulates his own definition of the aesthetic by insisting that for objects to trigger the agreeable sentiment that registers their beauty, they must have a visible tendency towards an end, implying design in their formation (and reflection to appreciate this).⁴³ The sentiment attached to the beautiful is also defined, in his system, as a *moral* sentiment, which he explains in part by identifying love and gratitude (*reconnaissance*) towards the initiator(s) of this design.⁴⁴ In relation to the beauty of theorems alleged by Hutcheson, Villette was able to use the example to his advantage by claiming that what made them so was precisely the way that the long line of consequences drawn in connection with theorems fulfilled a sense of an end or design.⁴⁵ He also alleged, perhaps unfairly, that Hutcheson had very imperfectly explained the role of dissonance in musical composition, the purpose of which, in his estimation, was to introduce a singular diversity which did not disturb the overall design but was rather 'artisement entrelardées dans les accords' (artistically interlarded with the harmonies).⁴⁶

The second major point that seriously troubled Villette was Hutcheson's positioning of the aesthetic reaction – for example the connection between harmony and the sentiment of beauty – as, in effect, arbitrary. This voluntarist account made it possible that the Creator could have established the same connection or sentiment between beauty and disorder or confusion.⁴⁷ This conclusion followed

to comparison (Hutcheson cites 'Works of Nature, artificial Forms, Figures, Theorems'). Relative beauty relates to the perception of objects that are beautiful as they imitate or resemble something else, Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 27.

42 Villette, *Oeuvres Mêlées*, 109, 160–1; 145; 245.

43 *Ibid.*, 115, 126.

44 *Ibid.*, 135–7. Hutcheson was more explicit on this point in his *Essay*, 116, arguing that the aesthetic sense leads to an apprehension of the deity: 'Grandeur, Beauty, Order, Harmony, wherever they occur, raise an Opinion of a Mind, of *Design*, and *Wisdom*'.

45 'Cela flatte agréablement mon Imagination par l'idée d'apprendre, & de savoir' (this pleasantly flatters my imagination with the idea of learning and knowing), *ibid.*, 175; for additional examples see 175–8.

46 *Ibid.*, 178.

47 '... il nous fait entendre que la Connexion qu'il y a entre l'Ordre, ou l'Harmonie et le sentiment du Beau est arbitraire: D'où il suit que le Créateur eût pu établir la même Connexion entre ce sentiment & le Desordre, ou la Confusion. Ces deux idées decoulent de la supposition de ce Sens Interne purement mécanique qui nous donne le Beau sans que notre Intelligence y ait aucune part' (...he would have us

from the first point in which Hutcheson made us entirely passive in the affair, exercising no intelligence in judgements of beauty. As far as Villette was concerned, ‘Ce qui depend d’un acte de l’Intelligence, d’un Jugement, ne sauroit être plus Arbitraire que la Raison même’.⁴⁸ Once we allowed intelligence into the equation it also becomes clear that Beauty itself cannot be arbitrary. Intelligence simply could not give us a taste for the confused. On the contrary, ‘Elle ne peut donc que me le faire trouver *Laid*, m’inspirer pour cet objet un sentiment de mepris, d’aversion, précisément le rebours de celui du *Beau*’.⁴⁹ He expressed particular dismay over what this would mean for our response to the beauty of moral objects which would make it possible for vice to appear beautiful and to require us to love it, on which he was succinct: ‘Que de confusion, que d’horreurs!’ (what confusion! what horrors!).⁵⁰

Villette proceeded to attack the privileging of uniformity amidst variety by Hutcheson as well as Crousaz, from whom the notion derived, as insufficient and often false.⁵¹ According to this principle a windmill would be more beautiful than a simply and elegantly furnished apartment exhibiting less uniformity and variety. In the same way, an elaborately fashioned lock would excel a prettily made snuffbox.⁵² He draws attention to something unsatisfying in Hutcheson’s criterion, namely that if one applied it with any rigour it would produce a series of anomalies. Elsewhere, he commented that in Hutcheson’s (and Crousaz’s) work there was something vague, uncertain and incomplete.

understand that the connection between order or harmony and the sentiment of beauty is arbitrary: from which it follows that the Creator could have established the same connection between this sentiment and disorder or confusion. These two ideas stem from the supposition of a purely mechanical internal sense that gives us the beautiful without intelligence playing any part), *ibid.*, 103n.

48 ‘That which depends on an act of intelligence, on a judgement cannot be more arbitrary than reason itself’, *ibid.*, 105n; he also equates this with the stability of truth, *ibid.*, 106n.

49 ‘Intelligence could not but make me find it [confusion] ugly and inspire in me contempt and aversion for such an object, precisely the reverse of that of beauty’, *ibid.*

50 *Ibid.*, 179.

51 See J.P. de Crousaz, *Traité du Beau* (Amsterdam, 1715), 12–16, 63, 263 (on music). On the subject of Hutcheson’s debt to Crousaz, see David R. Raynor, ‘Hutcheson’s Defence against a Charge of Plagiarism’, *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 2 (1987), 177–81.

52 Villette, *Oeuvres Mêlées*, 129n. Later he clarifies that the mistake in Hutcheson (and Crousaz) is to approve of all objects as beautiful that have a component of art, which would admit windmills, fortifications, and locks into the equation, *ibid.*, 170n.

‘On sent un vuide qui fait de la peine: On y cherche la lumiere, & on ne la rencontre point’,⁵³ a comment that could be applied to the uniformity amidst variety criterion.

In his positive account of his own aesthetics, Villette was more precise in defining variety as something that occurs within species and diversity as something between genera (or even more radically separate entities), from which it followed that variety always supposes uniformity but diversity does not.⁵⁴ These features (uniformity and variety) did not in themselves constitute the beautiful, although they might be important in the design or composition that made something beautiful. Regarding Hutcheson’s view that the degree of beauty varied with the degree of mixture of variety and uniformity, the principle on its own was false unless one introduced the concept of arrangement, which Hutcheson had entirely neglected in Villette’s view.⁵⁵

Villette’s third substantive objection emerges in his argument that Hutcheson’s system requires him to multiply the senses as he goes along. Hutcheson notes that there are different sorts of beauty that provide us with pleasure, but Villette emphasizes the implications of the fact that they do not act on the same sense organs. Thus the ear gives a different sensation from what is experienced from the eye. Equally we need a sense for the idea of uniformity, another for variety and another for diversity, along with a way to sense uniformity joined to diversity, and another sense for the unity of things in a theorem. ‘Et que sai-je combien d’autres!’ (And how many others, say I!), he exclaims.⁵⁶ For Villette, this point also tells against the universality of the internal sense, although he does not elaborate on the point.⁵⁷ Hutcheson, as I observed, seemed untroubled by similar objections lodged by his critics on the moral side of the argument who also asserted the needless manufacturing of senses implied by his system.⁵⁸

53 ‘We sense a void that distresses us: we search for light and do not encounter it at all’, *ibid.*, 173.

54 *Ibid.*, 150–1.

55 *Ibid.*, 156, 157n. Hutcheson does in fact mention arrangement in the Preface, although it does not appear elsewhere, Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 8.

56 Villette, *Oeuvres Mêlées*, 174–5n.

57 Later, he observes that the taste in beauty of physical objects is much less general than in the case of morality. *Ibid.*, 183. The lack of immediacy of reactions to beauty and the reflection required to gain an appreciation to it tell against the sense of beauty being more widespread.

58 For Dugald Stewart’s complaint, see Carey, ‘Francis Hutcheson’s Philosophy’, 54.

The conjunction between moral and aesthetic thought, which forms such an important part of Hutcheson's argument, represents one of the most interesting aspects of Villette's engagement with him. First of all, Villette observed significantly that when Hutcheson turns in his second treatise of the *Inquiry* to consider the beauty of moral objects, he ceases to speak in terms of unity, uniformity, or variety as distinguishing features. He wondered if this was because moral beauty had no distinctive character for Hutcheson; Villette clearly thought that it did and furthermore that it had analogies with other objects of beauty (presumably in terms of design and intention). He remained in doubt whether Hutcheson simply could not accommodate moral beauty to his foregoing principles or whether he thought it was enough just to prove that we have a moral sense that gives us pleasure in witnessing good actions. Villette regarded this proposition as true, but that, on its own, it was unsatisfying.⁵⁹ For him there was a tighter connection between the moral and the aesthetic, in one respect. Although moral objects had no physical existence, remaining a matter of intentions, dispositions and sentiments, and therefore ideational, they nonetheless shared features of 'Arrangement, Unité de Dessein, Diversité, Rapports, Assortiments, Contraste' (arrangement, unity of design, diversity, connections, affinities, contrast).⁶⁰ In another respect he did not make his argument about moral beauty contingent on aesthetic beauty in the same way as Hutcheson. For Hutcheson they are structurally similar as senses, and therefore any undermining of one undermines the other, even if they respond to different things in the world. Villette was not constrained in this way. He set up a contrast between the immediacy and clarity of moral sentiments and our more reflective relationship to the aesthetic. An intelligent being with no susceptibility to the beauty of moral sentiments would be a monster and did not exist because the possibility contradicted the infinite goodness and wisdom of the Creator.⁶¹ With physical objects of beauty it was otherwise. Such things could make different impressions on people and be subject to diversity without throwing the good of the whole into disorder. In fact he was

59 Villette, *Oeuvres Mêlées*, 179–80n.

60 *Ibid.*, 180.

61 *Ibid.*, 188. Evidently this was not inconsistent with the fact that for a number of people 'les Sens Moraux sont trop grossiers, trop durs, pour sentir' (the moral senses are too coarse, too hard, to feel), *ibid.*, 235.

not disturbed by the conclusion that the beauty of design was relative to the observer, a notion that would have sat uneasily with his ethics.⁶²

Tying these points together in his theory is somewhat challenging. For Villette, the sentiment of beauty was in truth a moral sentiment and therefore part of the operation of the moral sense itself, based on design and the appreciation of 'ends'.⁶³ Yet the necessity of contemplation and reflection to arrive at this judgement; the apparent lack of universality of aesthetic appreciation (given these demands); and the variability of judgements did not destabilize morality. Here Villette was comfortable to insist on an order essential to mankind as created beings. For this reason he wholeheartedly embraced Hutcheson's account of the moral sense.⁶⁴ In his later *Dissertation sur l'Origine du Mal*, Villette praised Hutcheson repeatedly on this point and defended him against the criticism that he had turned the moral sense into an occult quality. On this point, Villette was unapologetic: 'Toute susceptibilité de Sentiment est une qualité occulte: Je ne comprends pas mieux pourquoi le Miel est doux à mon palais, ou pourquoi la brulure me fait du Mal, que je ne comprends l'Instinct qui produit la Compassion'.⁶⁵

3 Burke and Hutcheson

In 1757 Irish aesthetics rose to a new level of sophistication and significance with the appearance of Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. The title itself, as a number of critics have observed,⁶⁶ provides a deliberate echo of Hutcheson's *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, but Burke engaged with a

62 Ibid., 189.

63 Ibid., 130, 134.

64 Ibid., 135n.

65 'All susceptibility of sentiment is an occult quality. I do not better comprehend why honey is sweet to my palate or why burning does me harm than I do the instinct that produces compassion.' Charles-Louis de Villette, *Dissertation sur l'Origine du Mal* (Dublin, 1755), 50–1.

66 Richard Bourke, *Empire & Revolution: The Political Life of Edmund Burke* (Princeton, 2015), 120. F. P. Lock, 'The Politics of Burke's *Enquiry*' in Koen Vermeir and Michael Funk Deckard (eds.), *The Science of Sensibility: Reading Burke's Philosophical Enquiry* (Dordrecht, 2012), 126. Lock insists on the English context of Burke's work on aesthetics, without acknowledging that the echo of Hutcheson engages an Irish tradition.

much wider field of philosophers, synthesizing a range of ancient sources such as Plato, Aristotle and Longinus; contemporary interventions, including the work of various French authorities; and, in his 'Introduction. On Taste' added to the second edition (1759), with David Hume's essay on the subject of 1757.⁶⁷ Throughout the text there is evidence not only of Burke's wide reading in poetry and literature,⁶⁸ as well as his exposure to the aesthetics of art and landscape, but also his passionate engagement with the subject which surpasses Hutcheson's uplifting yet more limited repertoire of examples. Nonetheless Hutcheson remains an important figure for Burke to contend with, and his response to him forms a key part of the story of Irish reactions to Hutcheson's position. His awareness of Hutcheson is hardly surprising, of course. In fact Burke's close Irish friends Richard Shackleton and William Dennis understood the work as offering an answer to Hutcheson.⁶⁹ In early February 1747/8, a year-and-a-half after Hutcheson's death, Burke wrote a 249-line poem addressed to him, which hailed Hutcheson for showing 'The Structure of Man's Passions' and 'The source from whence they flow'. The invocation of Hutcheson's *Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions* is clear in a reference to Longinus's lost treatise on the passions which Hutcheson had in effect now revealed.⁷⁰ The burden of the poem is to address the undeveloped account in Hutcheson's work of the passion of love, told through the powerful story of Samson and Delilah.

In terms of his intellectual debts, a common thread between Burke and Hutcheson appears in what they owe to Locke. Locke's influence is evident in Burke's commitment to a method informed by the way of ideas. Thus he speaks in the preface to the first edition of the *Philosophical Enquiry* of a 'confusion of ideas' between the sublime and beautiful and indeed 'an abuse of the word Beauty' which makes his

67 See Cressida Ryan, 'Burke's Classical Heritage: Playing Games with Longinus' in *The Science of Sensibility*, 225–45; Dario Perinetti, 'Between Knowledge and Sentiment: Burke and Hume on Taste' in *The Science of Sensibility*, 283–304.

68 See Paddy Bullard, 'Edmund Burke among the Poets: Milton, Lucretius and the *Philosophical Enquiry*' in *The Science of Sensibility*, 247–63; see also the table of quotations provided by Ryan, 'Burke's Classical Heritage', 245.

69 Paddy Bullard, *Edmund Burke and the Art of Rhetoric* (Cambridge, 2011), 93; Bourke, *Empire & Revolution*, 120–1.

70 Edmund Burke, 'To Dr H———n' in Paul Langford et al. (eds.), *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, vol. 1: *The Early Writings*, ed. T. O. McLoughlin and James T. Boulton, textual ed. William B. Todd (Oxford, 1997), 31–2.

analysis necessary.⁷¹ In a methodologically similar fashion to Hutcheson (following Locke), he refers in the body of the text to ideas of pain and pleasure which make an impression on the mind, and thus he is attempting to trace passionate responses to ideas – in the case of the sublime – such as ‘pain, sickness, and death’ which ‘fill the mind with strong emotions of horror’.⁷² Burke emphasises the limitations of Locke’s analysis in maintaining a simple model of reciprocity in which pain results in a depletion of pleasure or an increase in pleasure from a decrease in pain. For Burke, on the contrary, ‘both of these states represented self-contained ideas’, as Richard Bourke has recently observed, separated by a state of tranquility,⁷³ which allowed him to refine his account of experience and to attend to mixed states or emotions. He also questioned the adequacy of the notion of ‘uneasiness’ that Locke had introduced as part of his psychology of motivation.⁷⁴ The hedonist account adhered to by Locke is incomplete for Burke, who, in common with Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, allowed the appreciation of beauty to occur in a disinterested fashion.

Burke shares, then, with Hutcheson, a determination to attend carefully to modifications of the passions in the aesthetic sphere and to attempt a proto-phenomenological description of them while also speculating on their efficient causes and ends within a providential framework. What he finds (as did Hume and Adam Smith, in different ways) is a far greater set of reactions and possibilities, which he ranges under the impulses of self-preservation (associated with fear and the sublime) and sociability (connected with pity, compassion and beauty). The account of the sublime, in particular, is a major advance over Hutcheson who included ‘grandeur’ among the things that the internal sense responded to, but without elaborating on its conditions or implications.⁷⁵

Burke allows a more positive role for the association of ideas than Locke, developing the potential that Hutcheson seems to have detected

71 Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. Adam Phillips (Oxford, 1990), 1. On Shaftesbury as the particular target of this accusation, see Bullard, *Edmund Burke*, 97–8.

72 Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, 36.

73 Bourke, *Revolution & Empire*, 124–5.

74 For Burke’s reply, see *Philosophical Enquiry*, 37; and for discussion, Bullard, *Edmund Burke*, 94–5.

75 Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 69; *Essay*, 17.

in the concept in the aesthetic sphere. But it still poses some interesting challenges that are instructive about the need to ground aesthetic responses. In a brief separate section on the topic of association, Burke notes that determining the cause of the passions is complicated by the fact that these processes begin early on, in a time prior to reflection. Things affect us ‘according to their natural powers’ but associations also occur at this stage ‘which we find it very hard afterwards to distinguish from natural effects’. The truth is that we are affected by association, but it would also be absurd, he maintains, to say that this is the only source of our reactions ‘since some things must have been originally and naturally agreeable or disagreeable, from which the others derive their associated power’.⁷⁶ He is determined to look for ‘natural properties’ in the first instance and to turn to association only when this preferred mode of analysis fails. The matter becomes pressing later in Part Four of the *Enquiry* when he responds to Locke’s view that darkness has no necessary relationship to terror, i.e. the context in which Locke reported the effect of nursemaids connecting ideas of ghosts and goblins with the dark. Burke’s objection is not so much to the view that such ideas are associated but that the universal connection between terror and darkness, apparent ‘in all times, and in all countries’, must derive from something less precarious or trivial than stories of this kind told in childhood. He searches, that is, for ‘an association of a more general nature, an association which takes in all mankind [that] may make darkness terrible’.⁷⁷ But he goes on to suggest a stronger reading which embeds these reactions in nature. Drawing on a report in the *Philosophical Transactions* by the English physician William Cheselden, Burke reports on a boy born blind who attained the power of sight after the removal of cataracts at the age of 13 or 14. Among other things, the boy responded with uneasiness when presented with a black object for the first time, and that ‘upon accidentally seeing a negro woman, he was struck with great horror at the sight’.⁷⁸ According to Burke, this reaction could not have arisen from association since there was no time for it to develop. Leaving aside the disturbing implications of the example,⁷⁹ he

⁷⁶ Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, 118.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 131, 130.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 131.

⁷⁹ On this subject, see David Lloyd, ‘The Pathological Sublime: Pleasure and Pain in the Colonial Context’ in Daniel Carey and Lynn Festa (eds.), *The Postcolonial Enlightenment: Eighteenth-Century Colonialism and Postcolonial Theory* (Oxford, 2009), 98–9; Srinivas

wants to secure a foundation for the sublime, where possible, in nature, underwritten in this instance by empirical testimony. Burke shared this aspiration with Hutcheson and of course a wide array of eighteenth-century thinkers, resisting the conclusion that our reactions are merely arbitrary or conditioned by social forces of education and custom.

In his account of beauty, Burke adhered to a model made available by Hutcheson. Burke noted that beauty was 'no creature of reason' and concluded that it must result from 'some quality in bodies, acting mechanically upon the human mind by the intervention of the senses'.⁸⁰ As a consequence of this analysis he proceeded to attend closely to the 'sensible qualities' that experience taught us constituted the beautiful, running from smallness (as opposed to the giant scale of objects evoking the sublime) to smoothness, gradual variation, delicacy, and, in the case of the human form, physiognomy and the face which 'must be expressive of such gentle and amiable qualities, as correspond with the softness, smoothness, and delicacy of the outward form', a subject on which Hutcheson had also made pronouncements. One of the factors that led Burke to separate beauty from the claims of reason was that it 'strikes us without reference to use'. By rejecting utility as constitutive of the beautiful, Burke sided with Hutcheson against Berkeley.⁸¹ Fitness to an end had nothing to do with it, as the unattractive (yet highly useful and well designed) snout of the hog, bill of the pelican or hide of hedgehog demonstrated. Among the decisive instances was the fact that, in Burke's gendered analysis of human beings, if usefulness dictated the matter then 'men would be much more lovely than women'.⁸²

In affirming that effect occurred prior to use, a conclusion that Hutcheson would have embraced as a confirmation of disinterestedness, Burke repudiated proportion as a criterion of beauty since judgements of this kind required that we know what the entity was designed for.⁸³ But this was only part of his extended critique of proportion as a criterion. He devoted four sections of the discussion

Aravamudan, *Tropicopolitans: Colonialism and Agency, 1688–1804* (Durham, 1999), 192–201.

80 Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, 102. Vilette of course rejected this 'mechanical' approach.

81 See Hutcheson's comment added to the fourth edition (1738) of the *Inquiry*, 210–11.

82 Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, 107, 102, 95, 96.

83 *Ibid.*, 98.

of beauty to dispatching the commonly held view that beauty consists ‘in certain proportions of parts’, from vegetables to animals and then to the human species. Without pegging his account to usefulness, Hutcheson had argued that a defining element in the beauty of animals was precisely ‘a certain Proportion of the various Parts to each other’,⁸⁴ reflected in statuary for example – in itself a fairly conventional view. Burke offered some observations to contradict this suggestion. The swan was acknowledged to be a beautiful bird and yet it has a neck longer than the rest of its body and a short tail – no beautiful proportion here. The peacock, on the other hand had a comparatively short neck and a tale of very considerable length.⁸⁵ Meanwhile the horse offered a standard of beauty in terms of proportion, but what would we make of a dog or a cat in comparison? The argument from proportion quickly ran into difficulties.⁸⁶ Burke traced this mistaken way of thinking, this ‘prejudice in favour of proportion’, to the tendency to oppose deformity to beauty whereas the real contrast was between deformity and a ‘complete, common form’.⁸⁷

One of Burke’s more striking contributions was his rejection of the equation between beauty and virtue. For him this was a confounding of ideas, resulting in ‘an infinite deal of whimsical theory’.⁸⁸ The question is whether he intended Hutcheson as one of his targets. Burke mentioned proportion, congruity and perfection among the false notions that this way of thinking generated. Although Hutcheson had some attachment to proportion as an aesthetic concept it is not clear that it figured as a point of contact with his moral thought; nor did congruity and perfection. However, the bridge or analogy between the internal sense of beauty and the moral sense in Hutcheson is so strong that we are invited to identify one with the other.⁸⁹ Indeed in

84 Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 33.

85 Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, 87.

86 See also Villette, *Oeuvres Mêlées*, 173 on this subject. In expressing his dissatisfaction with Hutcheson on proportion he too uses the example of the peacock and the horse, which makes it conceivable that Burke had encountered his work.

87 Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, 93.

88 *Ibid.*, 101.

89 For a valuable discussion of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson on this question, see Laurent Jaffro, ‘Francis Hutcheson et l’héritage shaftesburien: quelle analogie entre le beau et le bien?’ in Pierre Destrée and Carol Talon-Hugon (eds.), *Le Beau & le bien* (Nice, 2011), 117–33. He argues that Hutcheson abandons Shaftesbury’s Socratic view of the identity of the beautiful and the good in favour of a subjective analogy between them founded in moral judgements and judgements of beauty.

the preface to the *Inquiry*, Hutcheson remarked on the acknowledged taste in beauty, harmony, and imitation before asking: 'may we not find too in Mankind a Relish for a Beauty in Characters, and Manners?' In the text proper, he confirmed that the desire for virtue could be offset by self-interest, but 'our Sentient or Perception of its Beauty cannot'. The moral sense 'makes rational Actions appear Beautiful, or Deform'd'.⁹⁰ For Burke, the assertion of a conjunction between morals and virtue represented 'a loose and inaccurate manner of speaking' which did damage in matters of taste as well as morals by resting them 'upon foundations altogether visionary and unsubstantial'.⁹¹ His moral philosophy depended on the concept of duty and we can certainly conclude that he rejected the internal sense argument made by Hutcheson.⁹²

Burke added an introduction on taste to the second edition of the *Philosophical Enquiry* 1759 which enunciates some important principles. There is a standard of taste, he insists, common to all human beings. He presupposes a shared nature that informs this experience and makes it susceptible to a description valid beyond himself: 'the pleasures and pains which every object excites in one man, it must raise in all mankind'.⁹³ The structure of argument parallels Hutcheson's approach in seeking a wider consensus. This means that Burke must also confront the diversity problem that Hutcheson encountered. The pressure to locate a shared nature even impinges on the imagination; Burke says that 'there must be just as close an agreement in the imaginations as in the senses of men', which follows presumably from the fund – the senses – and the sensory equipment being the same. He does however acknowledge what he calls 'a greater degree of natural sensibility' which sets some people off.⁹⁴ Taste, which consists of sensibility and judgement, can therefore vary considerably while still deriving from a shared foundation. Kant would of course provide a later solution to this problem in the *Critique of Judgement* in his notion of subjective universal validity.⁹⁵

90 Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 9, 94–5, 91. Elsewhere his emphasis is on loveliness, e.g. 'Virtue [is] a lovely Form', *ibid.*, 9; we 'admire the lovely Action', *ibid.*, 91; 'The human Nature is a lovely Form', *ibid.*, 105. These comments suggest that virtue is worthy or inspiring of love but may also combine that response with an aesthetic appreciation.

91 Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, 102.

92 Bourke, *Revolution & Empire*, 143.

93 Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, 13.

94 *Ibid.*, 17, 21.

95 Mehmet Atalay, 'Kant's Aesthetic Theory: Subjectivity vs. Universal Validity', *Periphi*, 1 (2007), 44–52.

Burke sets himself off from Hutcheson in having a theory of the imagination. This seems, if I am not mistaken, to be largely absent from Hutcheson's aesthetics (unless one regards his willingness to identify his system with Addison's 'pleasures of the imagination' as sufficient).⁹⁶ The focus of Hutcheson's work is mainly on the position of the observer (or introspector) taking note of his or her own internal reactions, rather than on the generative power of the aesthetic imagination. By romantic standards, it must be said, Burke's provision is rather limited. On his view, the 'imagination is incapable of producing anything absolutely new; it can only vary the disposition of those ideas which it has received from the senses'.⁹⁷ The British tradition really only found a way of expanding this through association, which in turn was then surpassed through Coleridge's engagement with German idealism in the nineteenth century.

The key difference between Hutcheson and Burke in relation to taste is that Burke has a more traditional understanding of taste as a matter of judgement. Again, for Hutcheson it was a case of perception, for the peculiar reason that he wished to make it immediate and defensible against the predation of the rationalist tradition or the hedonist alternative. At the close of the piece Burke offers what looks like a rejoinder to Hutcheson on this issue. He takes notice of an opinion held by many people that makes taste a 'separate Faculty of the mind, and distinct from the judgement and imagination; a species of instinct by which we are struck naturally, and at the first glance, without any previous reasoning with the excellencies, or the defects of a composition.' Burke agrees that when it comes to the imagination and the passions that reason has little role.

But where disposition, where decorum, where congruity are concerned, in short wherever the best Taste differs from the worst, I am convinced that the understanding operates and nothing else; and its operation is in reality far from being always sudden, or when it is sudden, it is often far from being right.⁹⁸

In taking this line, Burke sided with Villette. Between them they provided an instructive Irish response to Hutcheson's aesthetics. The Scottish milieu has understandably dominated historical discussion of the uptake of Hutcheson's

⁹⁶ Hutcheson, *Essay*, 17; *System*, I, 15.

⁹⁷ Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, 17.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 25.

intervention in this field and his attempt to systematize the working materials he inherited from Shaftesbury. If the moral sense remains his most significant contribution, his aesthetic thought provoked important reactions and resistance in his native country.⁹⁹

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Francis Hutcheson and the Aesthetics of Multitude

Cairns Craig

1 The Strange Death and Revival of the Associationist Aesthetic

Histories of literature still tend to view the aesthetics of ‘associationism’ as an eighteenth century phenomenon, propelled by the Lockean psychology which needed to account for why, if human beings are fundamentally rational creatures, they should so regularly disagree about particular truths. Locke’s answer was that people failed to recognise truths for which there was clear evidence because they were diverted by accidental associations that prevented them properly recognising what they were experiencing:

Some of our ideas have a natural correspondence and connexion one with another: it is the office and excellency of our reason to trace these, and hold them together in that union and correspondence which is founded in their peculiar beings. Besides this, there is another connexion of ideas wholly owing to chance or custom: ideas, that in themselves are not all of kin, come to be so united in some men’s minds, that it is very hard to separate them; they always keep in company, and the one no sooner at any time comes into the understanding, but its associate appears with it; and if they are more than two, which are thus united, the whole gang, always inseparable, show themselves together.¹

Locke’s rhetorical flourish by which associated ideas become a disruptive ‘gang’ reveals the extent to which such mental connections are not to be trusted, but the history of late eighteenth-century aesthetics is, in large measure, the outcome of that ‘gang’ invading the territory of the beautiful, the sublime and the picturesque and establishing Locke’s apparently disruptive principle not only as the foundation on which aesthetic experience was based but the

¹ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, The Works of John Locke in Nine Volumes* (London, 1824, 12th edn; 1689), 5, 419 (I, xxxiii), accessed via <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/761>, 27/10/2015.

principle which governed aesthetic judgment. As Archibald Alison puts it in his *Essay on Taste*,

When any object, either of sublimity or beauty, is presented to the mind, I believe every man is conscious of a train of thought being immediately awakened in his imagination, analogous to the character or expression of the original object. The simple perception of the object, we frequently find, is insufficient to excite these emotions, unless, according to common expression, our imagination is seized, and our fancy busied in the pursuit of all those trains of thought, which are allied to this character or expression.²

Only by understanding the process of association can we understand why some people are susceptible to beauty while others are not –

The beauty of a theory, or of a relic of antiquity, is unintelligible to a peasant. The charms of the country are altogether lost upon a citizen who has passed his life in town. In the same manner, the more that our ideas are increased, or our conceptions extended upon any subject, the greater the number of associations we connect with it, the stronger the emotion of sublimity or beauty we receive from it.³

– and without studying peoples’ processes of association neither artist nor critic will be able ‘to determine, whether the Beauty he creates is temporary or permanent, whether adapted to the accidental prejudices of his Age, or to the uniform constitution of the human Mind’.⁴

For Peter Kivy, whose *The Seventh Sense: a study of Francis Hutcheson’s aesthetics and its influence in eighteenth-century Britain* (1976) is still the most recent book-length study of Francis Hutcheson’s aesthetic theory, Hutcheson’s notion of an internal sense which provides an immediate response to the beautiful is, from the mid-eighteenth century, steadily displaced by associationist accounts of both beauty and taste. Where Hutcheson insists that we should ‘call our Power of perceiving these ideas [of beauty and harmony] an Internal Sense, were it only for the Convenience of distinguishing them from other Sensations

2 Archibald Alison, *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste* (Edinburgh, 1811; 2nd edn), Essay 1, 4–5.

3 *Ibid.*, 35.

4 *Ibid.*, xv.

of Seeing and Hearing which men may have without Perception of Beauty and Harmony',⁵ associationists provided, according to Kivy, an alternative hypothesis which fitted better with the emergence of empiricist accounts of the workings of the mind:

It is obvious that the role of association in aesthetic perception is very different for Gerard than it had been for Hutcheson. The latter looked upon the association of ideas as the chief corrupter of taste, joining what is innately pleasurable with what is not and thus poisoning aesthetic sensibility. The former, on the contrary, "usually treats the functioning of association not as a corrupter of taste but as one of the main occasions for its activity and one of the principal causes of its extension." For Gerard, in fact, association is the mainspring of aesthetic perception in general and the perception of beauty in particular: "There is perhaps no term used in a looser sense than *beauty*, which is applied to almost every thing that pleases us. ... In all these cases, beauty is, at least in part, resolvable into association."⁶

For Kivy, Gerard's combination of an 'inner sense' account of beauty with an associationist aesthetic is the unstable transition which foretold that, by the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, associationism would entirely displace Hutcheson's 'inner sense' account of aesthetic experience:

I have presented Gerard as rather an ambiguous figure because he seems to adopt two theories which do not keep very good company together: Hutcheson's doctrine of aesthetic senses, and the doctrine of associationism which, more than anything else, contributed to the downfall of the internal sense aesthetics. I conclude, however, with two thinkers who display no ambivalence in this regard: Archibald Alison and Dugald Stewart. They brought the associationist aesthetics to full

5 Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue in Two Treatises*, ed. Wolfgang Leidhold (Indianapolis, 2004), 23.

6 Peter Kivy, *The Seventh Sense: a study of Francis Hutcheson's aesthetics and its influence in eighteenth-century Britain* (New York, 1976), 181; the quotations from Gerard are from Alexander Gerard, *An Essay on Taste*, ed. Walter John Hipple, Jr. (Gainesville, 1963), 52, 43.

flower and, in so doing, laid the ghost of Hutcheson and the sense of beauty to rest.⁷

By 1790, Locke's unruly 'gang' of associations has so effaced Hutcheson's notion of the 'inner sense' that it is, apparently, not even a ghostly presence in early nineteenth-century aesthetics.

The finality with which the 'inner sense' philosophy is replaced by associationism in Kivy's account is matched, in almost all accounts of the development of British aesthetics, by the finality with which an apparently mechanistic associationism was in turn displaced by romantic notions of the 'organic' imagination – or so, at least, it seems in the many critical accounts of Wordsworth and Coleridge that stress the parallels between their works and a Germanic idealism which was believed to have overthrown the sceptical presuppositions of British empiricism.⁸ This critical tradition can be traced to M. H. Abrams' influential *The Mirror and the Lamp*, first published in 1953, in which Abrams notes the longevity of associationism through the nineteenth century – 'Indeed, the system only achieved its most detailed and uncompromising statement in 1829, with the *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind* of James Mill⁹ – but effectively dismisses its intellectual relevance in the light of Coleridge's 'antithesis between fancy and imagination', in which association is related to the lower faculty – fancy – and is incapable of the true creative potential of the higher faculty, imagination.¹⁰ Ironically, however, Abrams' title is taken from a quote by W. B. Yeats – 'soul must become its own betrayer, its own deliverer, the one activity, the mirror turn lamp'¹¹ – but Yeats, whether we see him as the 'last romantic' or the first of the 'modernists', continues assertively to use the language of association to explain the workings of art in general and poetry in particular, and defines the new 'symbolist' impulse in modern art in associationist terms:

All sounds, all colours, all forms either because of their pre-ordained energies or because of long association, evoke indefinable and yet

7 Kivy, *Seventh Sense*, 192 (Chapter 11).

8 See Gavin Budge, 'Introduction' in idem (ed.), *Romantic Empiricism: Poetics and the Philosophy of Common Sense, 1780–1830* (Lewisburg, 2007), 22ff.

9 M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (New York, 1958; 1953), 177.

10 Ibid., 179.

11 W. B. Yeats, 'Introduction' in idem (ed.), *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse 1892–1935* (Oxford, 1936), xxxiii.

precise emotions, or, as I prefer to think, call down among us certain disembodied powers, whose footsteps over our hearts we call emotions.¹²

Equally, it is a context invoked by T. S. Eliot in his influential early essays immediately after the First World War:

...some of Donne's most successful and characteristic effects are secured by brief words and sudden contrasts:

A bracelet of bright hair about the bone,

Here the most powerful effect is produced by the sudden contrast of associations of 'bright hair' and 'bone'.¹³

Far from being an eighteenth-century theory which persisted dully into the nineteenth, failing to take account of the romantic revolution and providing intellectually uninteresting answers to aesthetic issues, associationist aesthetics was revived from the mid-nineteenth century by the development of empirical psychology which, in the work of exponents such as John Stuart Mill's co-worker, Alexander Bain, re-established associationism as the foundational structure of the mind and, therefore, as the foundational structure of aesthetics: 'all thinking for an end', Bain writes '— be it practical or speculative, scientific or æsthetic, — consists in availing ourselves of the materials afforded by association'.¹⁴

The continuing relevance of associationist accounts of aesthetics was to be underlined by two influential contributions to the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, edited by William Robertson Smith, the Scottish theologian. James Ward was the author of the entry on 'Psychology', often cited as the beginning of the modern discipline of psychology, and James Sully was the author of the article on 'Aesthetics'. Ward's article is often read as challenging the empiricist tradition that derives from Locke, but Ward's essay aims to bridge the then divided philosophical universe of empiricists and idealists by suggesting that mind does indeed, as the empiricists argued,

12 W. B. Yeats, 'The Symbolism of Poetry' in idem, *Essays and Introductions* (London, 1961), 156–7.

13 T. S. Eliot, 'The Metaphysical Poets' (1921) in idem, *Selected Essays* (London, 1951), 283.

14 Alexander Bain, 'On "Association" Controversies', *Mind*, 12 (1887): 46, 180.

work by associations but that the associations are not the result of each individual person's experience – rather they are laid down as 'engrams' in the brain, engrams that each of us inherits from the whole of our heredity. The individual mind does not start as a Lockean *tabula rasa* because it is, from birth, already shaped by the accumulated associations of every generation back to the beginning of humanity:

What was experienced in the past has become instinct in the present. The descendent has not consciousness of his ancestors' failures when performing by 'an untaught ability' what they slowly and painfully found out. But if we are to attempt to follow the genesis of mind from its earliest dawn it is the primary experience rather than the eventual instinct that we have first of all to keep in view. To this end, then, it is proposed to assume that we are dealing with one individual which continuously advanced from the beginning of psychical life and not with a series of individuals of which all save the first have inherited certain capacities from its progenitors. The life-history of such an imaginary individual, that is to say, would correspond with all that was new, all that could be called evolution or development, in a certain typical series of individuals each of whom advanced a certain stage in mental differentiation.¹⁵

The 'innate ideas' that empiricists had always challenged in idealist philosophies become written into our genetic inheritance, so that our 'associations' are no longer individual but can access a vast reservoir of memories beyond our personal recollection. This was a view that had been anticipated in Herbert Spencer's *Psychology* (1855), and it was from Spencer that James Sully developed a parallel account of the nature of the aesthetic:

The first and lowest class of pleasures, are those of simple sensation, as tone and colour, which are part organic and partly the results of association ... The highest order of pleasures are those of the aesthetic sentiments proper, consisting of the multitudinous emotions ideally excited by aesthetic objects, natural and artistic. Among these vaguely and partially revived emotion Mr Spencer reckons not only those of the individual, but also many of the constant feelings of the race. Thus he

¹⁵ James Ward, 'Psychology', *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Edinburgh, 1886), XX, 44–5.

would attribute the vagueness and apparent depth of musical emotion to association with vocal tones, built up during the course of vast ages.¹⁶

The power of the aesthetic rested in part upon the depth of the memories and emotions provoked – their apparent lack of immediate connection with the individual – and the innumerable flow that was released – ‘multitudinous emotions ideally excited’ (– that is, excited as ‘ideas’). Aesthetic experience was so powerful and significant precisely because it gave us a means of accessing the associative connections which had accumulated in the human mind since the very beginning of a recognisably ‘human’ existence: the aesthetic was, in part, the mind’s rediscovery of its own inner resources. These were notions taken up and adapted by W.B. Yeats in an early essay on ‘Magic’ in which he offers three propositions:

- (1) That the borders of our mind are ever shifting and that many minds can flow into one another, as it were, and create or reveal a single mind, a single energy.
- (2) That the borders of our memories are as shifting, and that our memories are a part of one great memory, the memory of Nature herself.
- (3) That this great mind and great memory can be evoked by symbols.¹⁷

The power of art and its relationship to magic rests on our access to a memory far beyond individual recollection, and that allows us to call down, through symbols, the contents of ‘this great mind and great memory’ and make them not only active again in our own experience but a part of the history of our times. In Yeats, Sully’s ‘multitudinous emotions’ become ‘the emotion of multitude’:

I have been thinking a good deal about plays lately, and I have been wondering why I dislike the clear and logical construction which seems necessary if one is to succeed on the Modern Stage. It came into my head the other day that this construction, which all the world has learnt from France, has everything of high literature except the emotion of multitude. The Greek drama has got the emotion of multitude from its

16 James Sully, ‘Aesthetics’, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. I (Edinburgh, 1875), 224.

17 W. B. Yeats, ‘Magic’ (1901) in *idem*, *Essays and Introductions*, 28.

chorus, which called up famous sorrows, long-leaguered Troy, much-enduring Odysseus, and all the gods and heroes to witness, as it were, some well-ordered fable, some action separated but for this from all but itself. The French play delights in the well-ordered fable, but by leaving out the chorus it has created an art where poetry and imagination, always the children of far-off multitudinous things, must of necessity grow less important than the mere will. This is why, I said to myself, French dramatic poetry is so often a little rhetorical, for rhetoric is the will trying to do the work of the imagination. The Shakespearean Drama gets the emotion of multitude out of the sub-plot which copies the main plot, much as a shadow upon the wall copies one's body in the firelight. We think of King Lear less as the history of one man and his sorrows than as the history of a whole evil time. Lear's shadow is in Gloster, who also has ungrateful children, and the mind goes on imagining other shadows, shadow beyond shadow till it has pictured the world.¹⁸

For Yeats, the best art combines 'the little limited life of the fable, which is always the better the simpler it is, and the rich, far-wandering, many-imaged life of the half-seen world beyond it';¹⁹ without 'multitude' art cannot plumb the depths of human experience. T. S. Eliot was to summarise his poetics in the same terms in his essay on 'The Music of Poetry':

[The Music of Poetry is] a point of intersection: it arises from its relation first to the words immediately preceding and following it, and indefinitely to the rest of its context; and from another relation, that of its immediate meaning in that context to all the other meanings which it has had in other contexts, to its greater or less wealth of association.²⁰

'Association' was not simply a precursor to romantic organicism; it was also the means by which modernist poets, inheritors of nineteenth-century empirical psychology, sought styles that would combine the realistic and the suggestive, the simple and the sonorous, the objects and experiences of the present with the endless implications of the most distant past, styles based on

18 W. B. Yeats, 'The Emotion of Multitude' (1903) in idem, *Essays and Introductions*, 215.

19 Ibid., 216.

20 T. S. Eliot, 'The Music of Poetry' in idem, *On Poetry and Poets* (London, 1957), 32.

‘a development by rapid associations of thought which requires considerable agility on the part of the reader’.²¹

2 Aesthetic Multitude

In the first *Inquiry*, Hutcheson distinguishes two kinds of beauty, ‘original’ or ‘absolute’ beauty and ‘comparative’ or ‘relative’ beauty, a distinction which he elucidates as follows:

We therefore by Absolute Beauty understand only that Beauty, which we perceive in Objects without comparison to any thing external, of which the Object is suppos’d an Imitation, or Picture; such as that Beauty perceiv’d from the Works of Nature, artificial Forms, Figures, Theorems. Comparative or Relative Beauty is that which we perceive in Objects, commonly considered as imitations or Resemblances of something else.²²

A footnote clarifies that these are not actually separate in terms of their objects but are rather two different ways in which we respond to particular objects: the distinction rests on the ‘different Foundations of Pleasure to our Sense of it, rather than from the Objects themselves: for most of the following Instances of relative Beauty have also absolute Beauty; and many of the Instances of absolute Beauty, have also relative Beauty in some respect or other’.²³ A representational painting, for instance, could be looked at in terms not of its accuracy to an original but rather in terms of its ‘artificial forms’. These two categories are supposed to exhaust the nature of the beautiful, but Hutcheson’s text is haunted by a third possibility, which regularly reasserts itself and has to be as regularly and insistently thrust aside, and that is the possibility of a sense of beauty that arises from the associations inspired in us by particular objects. Association, Hutcheson argues,

is one great Cause of the apparent Diversity of Fancys in the Sense of Beauty, as well as in the external Senses; and often makes Men have an aversion to Objects of Beauty, and a liking to others void of it,

²¹ Eliot, ‘The Metaphysical Poets’, 282.

²² Hutcheson, *An Inquiry*, 27.

²³ Ibid.

but under different Conceptions than those of Beauty or Deformity. And here it may not be improper to give some Instances of some of these Associations. The Beauty of Trees, their cool Shades, and their Aptness to conceal from Observation, have made Groves and Woods the usual Retreat to those who love Solitude, especially to the Religious, the Pensive, the Melancholy, and the Amorous. And do not we find that we have so join'd the Ideas of these Dispositions of Mind with those external Objects, that they always recur to us along with them? The Cunning of the Heathen priests might make such obscure Places the Scene of the fictitious Appearances of their Deitys; and hence we join Ideas of something Divine to them. We know the like Effect in the Ideas of our Churches, from the perpetual use of them only in religious Exercises. The faint Light in Gothick Buildings has had the same Association of a very foreign Idea, which our Poet shews in his Epithet,

———A Dim religious Light.

In like manner it is known, That often all the Circumstances of Actions, or Places, or Dresses of Persons, or Voice, or Song, which have occur'd at any time together, when we were strongly affected by any Passion, will be so connected that any one of these will make all the rest recur. And this is often the occasion both of great Pleasure and Pain, Delight and Aversion to many Objects, which of themselves might have been perfectly indifferent to us: but these Approbations, or Distastes, are remote from the Ideas of Beauty, being plainly different Ideas.²⁴

I have quoted this passage at length because it illustrates something that happens more than once in Hutcheson's text: when he discusses the association of ideas the text itself becomes an associative train, linking the 'the Religious, the Pensive, the Melancholy, and the Amorous' by a sudden leap to 'heathen priests', who, despite their beliefs inspire in us 'something Divine', which is then linked to 'Churches' because of their use in religious ritual and then to 'Gothick Buildings' which share the same kind of light as a church. Such a train of associations 'is often the occasion of great Pleasure and Pain, Delight and Aversion' but those emotions have to be resolutely distinguished 'from the Ideas of Beauty, being plainly different ideas'.

24 *Ibid.*, 67–8.

The question which Hutcheson's associative reverie raises, however, is how are we to distinguish the 'plainly different ideas' in the experience of someone enjoying the associations which the 'Trees' provoke, from someone responding to their beauty? How is the observer to disentangle the 'original' beauty of the natural object from the memories it sets in motion? And what if, at a later point, those memories in turn bring back to the observer's mind the beauty of the trees: can the 'beauty' of the recollected scene be separated from the associations which call it up? Could such a distinction be made, for instance, in the context of the kind of experience described by Wordsworth in 'Tintern Abbey', when direct experience of a landscape recalls an earlier encounter with the same scenery and the memories that the earlier encounter later provoked:

Though absent long
 These forms of beauty have not been to me,
 As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
 But oft, in lonely rooms, and mid the din
 Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
 In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
 Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart...²⁵

Such associational interconnections may, for Hutcheson, produce certain trains of emotions but the associations which accompany them cannot be any portion of the 'beauty' to which Wordsworth responds in the landscape. Any suggestion that beauty might be a function of associational recall would make beauty relative to the associational contexts within which it was experienced, so that perceptions of the same object would not be experiences of the same beauty. Hutcheson's 'internal sense' is a passive Power of receiving Ideas of Beauty from all Objects in which there is Uniformity amidst Variety'.²⁶ Its passivity is crucial: it receives and recognises the beautiful because it is as sensitive to beauty as the eye is sensitive to light. Association is, for Hutcheson, an active process which interferes with and potentially displaces our recognition of the beautiful. Thus,

We know how agreeable a very wild Country may be to any Person who has spent the chearful Days of his Youth in it, and how disagreeable

²⁵ William Wordsworth, 'Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey' in Stephen Gill (ed.), *William Wordsworth* (Oxford, 1984), 132.

²⁶ Hutcheson, *An Inquiry*, 67.

very beautiful Places may be, if they were the Scenes of his Misery. And this may help us in many Cases to account for the Diversities of Fancy, without denying the Uniformity of our internal Sense of Beauty.²⁷

Where associative *activity* is strong it obscures the passive capacity of the internal sense to respond appropriately to cases of ‘uniformity amidst variety’. This disruptive interaction of association and the ‘internal sense’ Hutcheson illustrates by reference to a Goth who,

is mistaken, when from Education he imagines the Architecture of his country to be the most perfect: and a Conjunction of some hostile Ideas, may make him have an Aversion to Roman Buildings, and study to demolish them, as some of our Reformers did the Popish Buildings, not being able to separate the Ideas of the superstitious Worship, from the Forms of the Buildings where it was practised: and yet it is still real Beauty which pleases the Goth, founded upon Uniformity amidst Variety. For the Gothick Pillars are uniform to each other, not only in their Sections, which are Lozenge-form’d; but also in their Heights and Ornaments: Their Arches are not one uniform Curve, but yet they are Segments of similar Curves, and generally equal in the same Ranges.²⁸

Associations peculiar to the individual or to a society thus intervene to blind the Goth to the recognition of the beauty of roman buildings, but his appreciation of his own architecture, however far it is from classical perfection, is still based on a uniformity which is the universal condition of the beautiful – ‘yet it is still real Beauty which pleases the Goth’. An individual can, then, possess the ‘internal sense’ that recognises beauty in ‘uniformity amidst variety’ but can also, by particularly strong and active associations, be made insensitive to even the most perfect instances of uniformity amidst variety.

If Hutcheson’s example were to be reversed, however, to focus on a roman citizen who thought his own culture’s architecture was indeed the most beautiful, not because he recognised in its proportions a perfect instance of ‘uniformity amidst diversity’, but because he associated it so strongly with power and authority, how would we be able to distinguish that associative activity from an aesthetic response to ‘uniformity amidst diversity’? In the case of the Goth it is easy, because his associations are preventing his recognition

²⁷ Ibid., 69.

²⁸ Ibid., 65.

of something we ‘know’ to be beautiful, but how would we distinguish the experience of someone whose response to that object was based not on the ‘internal sense’ but on an associative reaction, an associative reaction that was taken to *be* the experience of beauty? In such a case the person would describe the object as ‘beautiful’, would apparently respond appropriately to it *as* beautiful, and yet, according to Hutcheson, would be using the wrong criterion for distinguishing beauty. Hutcheson’s problem with cases in which the beautiful is not obscured – indeed, may even be enhanced – by association is made clear in Kivy’s account of Hutcheson’s argument:

Thus, Mr. A may mistake his pleasant feeling of security which, through the association of ideas, he has come to connect with a particular house, for the feeling of beauty and think the house beautiful when it is not; whereas Mr. B, free of this association, sees immediately that the house is totally lacking in beauty. The house lacks *uniformity amidst variety* and causes the idea of beauty neither in Mr. A nor in Mr. B. But it causes *another* pleasant idea in Mr. A which he mistakes for the idea of beauty. In this case, too, the association of ideas is responsible for Mr. A’s and Mr. B’s perceiving different phenomenal objects in response to the same primary qualities. There is, however, no idea of beauty involved in the case at all.²⁹

What though, if the house were indeed beautiful? How would we distinguish between Mr. A’s ‘pleasant idea’ and Mr. B’s *recognition* of its beauty – and how would we be able to tell that Mr. B didn’t himself have a set of associations which enhanced the ‘uniformity amidst variety’ that he claimed to perceive? Hutcheson’s attempt to purify aesthetic experience so that it cannot be distorted by the subjective workings of association does not lead to the recognition of a ‘singular’ object, unmodified by association, but leads to what his own examples imply to be an impossibility – a perception and a judgment on the part of an observer that is uncontaminated by any associations. Hutcheson’s discussion is haunted by association because in any real situation where someone appears to be responding to beauty, it is impossible to be certain that their experience is not, or is not *also*, the product of association – a set of ‘pleasant ideas’ – rather than the receptivity of the ‘internal sense’ to the combination of unity and diversity that it is designed to recognise, and

²⁹ Kivy, *The Seventh Sense*, 84.

which must be ‘antecedent to all Custom, Education or Example’.³⁰ In any real case of the experience of the beautiful it will be impossible to be assured of such clarity of perception that we can be certain it is entirely free of ‘Custom, Education or Example’ – especially given that,

The Effect of Education is this, that thereby we receive many speculative Opinions, which are sometimes true and sometimes false; and are often led to believe that Objects may be naturally apt to give Pleasure or Pain to our external Senses, which in reality have no such Quality. And further, by Education there are some strong Associations of Ideas without any Reason, by mere Accident sometimes, as well as by Design, which it is very hard for us ever after to break asunder.³¹

The power of association disrupts Hutcheson’s argument as profoundly as that argument insists it disrupts the experience of beauty.

When associationism eventually displaced Hutcheson’s ‘internal sense’ theory in the work of Alison and Stewart, it by no means, however, discarded Hutcheson’s insights into the aesthetic, despite Kivy’s belief that even the ghost of his theory was then laid to rest. When Alison and then Stewart analysed the beautiful and the sublime as the *product* of trains of associations rather than the perception of an ‘internal sense’, they abandoned neither ‘uniformity’ nor ‘diversity’ as key components in aesthetic experience. For Alison, what distinguishes aesthetic experience from all other experience is the freedom of the mind to follow the associations evoked by, and maintained by, a particular emotion: contemplating an autumnal scene, Alison asks,

Who is there, who, at this season, does not feel his mind impressed with a sentiment of melancholy? Or who is able to resist that current of thought, which, from such appearances of decay, so naturally leads him to the solemn imagination of that inevitable fate, which is to bring on alike the decay of life, of empire, and of nature itself? In such cases of emotion, every man must have felt, that the character of the scene is no sooner impressed upon his mind, than various trains of correspondent imagery rise before his imagination; that whatever may be the nature of the impression, the general tone of his thoughts partakes of this nature

³⁰ Hutcheson, *An Inquiry*, 70.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 72.

or character; and that his delight is proportioned to the degree in which this uniformity of character prevails.³²

The emotion provides the ‘uniformity of character’ of the experience while the various attendant ‘trains of correspondent imagery’ provide the diversity that make possible an aesthetic experience: Hutchesonian ‘passivity’ on the part of the ‘internal sense’ is replaced by a passivity towards the active purposes of life in which the imagination is released into spontaneous activity:

In such trains of imagination, no labour of thought, or habits of attention are required: they rise spontaneously in the mind, upon the prospect of any object to which they bear the slightest resemblance, and they lead it almost insensibly along, in a kind of bewitching reverie, through all its store of pleasing or interesting conceptions.³³

The terms of Hutcheson’s account are not discarded by Alison but transposed as the necessary characteristics of associational ‘reverie’: rather than the ‘internal sense’ model being overthrown by the associationists, it was in terms of the key elements of Hutcheson’s theory that they explained why some trains of association – those both unified and various – produced experiences of the beautiful and the sublime while some – having a practical direction – did not. Associational *activity* in a context where associations are undirected by any practical purpose replaces Hutchesonian *passivity* as the ground of aesthetic experience, and the difference in each individual’s associational capacity explains both why some people show no sign of recognising the beautiful and the diversity of tastes among those who do. Hutcheson’s theories are adapted to explain why what he tried to dismiss as irrelevant to the perception of beauty – association – is actually its foundation.

Associationists could so easily adopt Hutchesonian categories, however, because Hutcheson had already included within his argument something which closely resembled an associationist account, though it was focused on the ‘Absolute Beauty’ in which ‘we perceive in Objects without comparison to any thing external’,³⁴ and which might seem, therefore, to be entirely antithetic to associationist theories of beauty. But Hutcheson’s account of the beauty of mathematical theorems introduces the notion of ‘multitude’ as central to the

³² Alison, *Essays on Taste*, I, 17.

³³ *Ibid.*, 21–2.

³⁴ Hutcheson, *An Inquiry*, 27.

experience of beauty: general theorems, Hutcheson argues, reduced apparently disorderly multitudes to a revelatory singularity:

That we may the better discern this Agreement, or Unity of an Infinity of Objects, in the general Theorem, to be the Foundation of the Beauty or Pleasure attending their Discovery, let us compare our Satisfaction in such Discoverys, with the uneasy state of Mind in which we are, when we can only measure Lines, or Surfaces, by a Scale, or are making Experiments which we can reduce to no general Canon, but only heaping up a Multitude of particular incoherent Observations. Now each of these Trials discovers a new Truth, but with no Pleasure or Beauty, notwithstanding the Variety, till we can discover some sort of Unity, or reduce them to some general Canon.³⁵

When ‘a Multitude of particular incoherent Observations’ is transformed into ‘unity’ we experience ‘Pleasure’ and ‘Beauty’, but the ‘Pleasure’ and the ‘Beauty’ depend on our awareness both of the multitude and the unity – it is the interaction of the potential ‘infinite individuals’³⁶ of the multitude and the singularity of the unity of the theorem that produces our sense of ‘how beautiful is the Theorem, and how we are ravish’d with its first Discovery!’³⁷ Indeed,

in one Theorem we may find included, with the most exact Agreement, an infinite Multitude of particular Truths; nay, often an Infinity of Infinites: so that altho the Necessity of forming abstract Ideas, and universal Theorems, arises perhaps from the Limitation of our Minds, which cannot admit an infinite Multitude of singular Ideas or Judgments at once, yet this Power gives us an Evidence of the Largeness of the human Capacity above our Imagination. Thus for instance, the 47th Proposition of the first Book of Euclid’s *Elements* contains an infinite Multitude of Truths, concerning the infinite possible Sizes of right-angled Triangles, as you make the Area greater or less; and in each of these Sizes you may find an infinite Multitude of dissimilar Triangles,

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

as you vary the Proportion of the Base to the Perpendicular; all which Infinities of Infinites agree in the general Theorem.³⁸

The aesthetic experience of mathematical truths requires the awareness of ‘infintys of infinites’ which are yet reducible to a singularity: ‘original beauty’ is not in the multitude of individual measurements, nor in the theorem which explains them, but in the interaction of the ‘multitude’ and the ‘singular’, and the mind’s consciousness of their inter-relationship. It is precisely such a structure which underlies Alison and Stewart’s associationist accounts of beauty: in Hutcheson’s account, beauty is revealed when a multitude (‘infinitys of infintes’) is discovered to be contained within a singularity (the theorem), whereas for the associationists singularity (the original encounter with an aesthetic object) generates multitudes of the possible associations that can be discovered in ‘reverie’. Both accounts depend on the interaction of singularity and multitude: the associationist aesthetic is, in effect, a mirror image of Hutcheson’s account of this aspect of ‘original’ or ‘absolute’ beauty, its translation into the very domain which Hutcheson wanted to exclude from the conception of beauty. Associationism developed as the major aesthetic theory of the late eighteenth century – and, indeed of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – not by rejecting Hutcheson but by applying one aspect of his analysis – the theorems of mathematics – to another – his analysis of the disruptive effects of association – and discovering that the virtues of the former were, in fact, equally the virtues of the latter.

3 Interinanimations

When W. B. Yeats was asked to edit the *Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, he chose as the starting point of the ‘modern’ a section from Walter Pater’s *The Renaissance*, converting the original prose into lines of poetry:

Mona Lisa

She is older than the rocks among which she sits;
Like the Vampire,
She has been dead many times,

38 Ibid., 36.

And learned the secrets of the grave;
 And has been a diver in deep seas,
 And keeps their fallen day about her;
 And trafficked for strange webs with Eastern merchants;
 And, as Leda,
 Was the mother of Helen of Troy,
 And, as St Anne,
 Was the mother of Mary;
 And all this has been to her but as the sound of lyres and flutes,
 And lives
 Only in the delicacy
 With which it has moulded the changing lineaments,
 And tinged the eyelids and the hands.³⁹

Pater's description of Leonardo's *Mona Lisa* is the associative recollection of a particular viewer as he traces all the memories of other women in art, religion and mythology that it suggests. Pater, however, turns the recollective power of an associationist epistemology into an ontology in which what is recollected appears to be not merely memory but the actuality of history. Each recollection, therefore, seems to be a version of *Mona Lisa* herself, as though she has lived not only her own life but the lives of the multitudes whom her image evokes. Pater's account of Leonardo's masterpiece is, for Yeats, the epitome of a modernity in which reality is structured like the associational workings of the mind: reality is composed by the memories which association calls up and sets in motion to disturb the world – as Leopold Bloom unknowingly calls Ulysses into the Dublin of 1906.

The intense subjectivity of this account of art might appear heroic to someone like Yeats, with his belief in an aristocracy that acted in defiance of 'what the blind and ignorant town/Imagines best to make it thrive',⁴⁰ but to others that emphasis on subjective response was likely to produce only a flaccid substitution of personal emotions for any substantial engagement with the work of art. It was to test the *relevance* of readers' responses that I. A. Richards set up the experiment which became, in 1929, *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment* – which might more rightly have been subtitled *A Study of*

³⁹ Yeats, *Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, 1.

⁴⁰ W. B. Yeats, 'To a Wealthy Man who Promised a Second Subscription to the Dublin Municipal Gallery if it were Proved the People Wanted Pictures', *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (London, 1950), 119.

Literary Misjudgment, since what Richards sought to identify were the ways in which the readings of poems produced by his students failed to engage with what the poem actually (in his view) sought to convey. What associationists would have accepted as the necessary divergence of the reading mind from the text on the page, as it passed into its own related memories in order to enter into that state of reverie in which it can discover beauty, Richards regards as an unhealthy evasion of reality:

But images are erratic things: lively images aroused in one mind need have no similarity to the equally lively images stirred by the same line of poetry in another, and neither set need have anything to do with any images which may have existed in the poet's mind. Here is a troublesome source of critical deviations.⁴¹

Equally, many associations are, for Richards, either 'mnemonic irrelevancies', defined as 'misleading effects of the reader's being reminded of some personal scene or adventure, erratic associations, the interference of emotional reverberations from a past which may have nothing to do with the poem',⁴² or 'stock responses', in which 'a poem seems to, or does, involve views and emotions already fully prepared in the reader's mind, so that what happens appears to be more of the reader's doing than the poet's'.⁴³ 'Practical criticism' is the surgical removal from aesthetic experience of those personal recollections which associationist theories had encouraged – and even, presumably, of that larger body of associations which derived from the various versions of the unconscious that associationists used to 'depersonalise' the experience of beauty, whether it was Yeats's 'great memory' or the myths described in J. G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890) that underpinned T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* of 1922. For Richards, associational misreading has been so pervasive that he has to insist that 'poetry is a mode of communication':

What it communicates and how it does so and the worth of what is communicated form the subject-matter of criticism. It follows that criticism itself is very largely, though not wholly, an exercise in navigation. It is all the more surprising then that no treatise on the art and science of intellectual and emotional navigation has yet been written;

41 I. A. Richards, *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment* (London, 1964; 1929), 15.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

for logic, which might appear to cover part of this field, in actuality hardly touches it.⁴⁴

Allowing the poem to *communicate* requires constant vigilance against the introduction of irrelevant materials, a level of vigilance which means we must 'look upon a successful interpretation, a correct understanding, as a triumph against odds' – indeed, 'we must cease to regard misinterpretation as a mere unlucky accident' but 'must treat it as the normal and probable event'.⁴⁵

Richards's antidote to this pessimistic view of art's communicable potential and, therefore, the potential of a real – rather than a delusory – experience of beauty is the development of a technique – or techniques – of reading which would produce:

...not only an accurate direction of thought, a correct evocation of feeling, an exact apprehension of tone, and a precise recognition of intention, but further it would get these contributory meanings in their right order and proportion to one another, and seize – though not in terms of explicit thought – their interdependence upon one another, their sequences and interrelations.⁴⁶

Stripped of irrelevant associative material, our response to a work of art becomes a highly complex interaction between its multiple ways of communicating. These, however, must be teased out as being 'internal' to the poem rather than associative externalities, 'for the value of a passage frequently hangs upon this *internal order* among its contributory meanings',⁴⁷ an internal order in the work of art which subsequently produces an internal order in the person experiencing the art-work: 'It is an actual formation in the receptive mind of a whole condition of feeling and awareness corresponding, in due order, to the original meaning which is being discerned'.⁴⁸ The receptive mind and original meaning become one and the same thing. Richards' argument, in effect, replicates Hutcheson's 'internal sense', but instead of a sense which immediately apprehends the beauty to which it is designed to respond, Richards's receptive mind is the product of much training, training by which it

44 Ibid., 11.

45 Ibid., 336.

46 Ibid., 332.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid., 333.

is made capable of recognising the inner complexity of the work of art, allowing an effective communication to take place as the basis for a valid, rather than a merely personal, aesthetic experience:

The poet is not writing as a scientist. He uses these words because the interest whose movement is the growth of the poem combine to bring them, just in this form, into his consciousness *as a means of ordering, controlling and consolidating* the uttered experience of which they are themselves a main part. The experience itself, the tide of impulses sweeping through the mind, is the source and sanction of the words. They represent this experience itself, not any set of perceptions or reflections, though often to a reader who approaches the poem wrongly they will seem to be only a series of remarks about other things. But to a suitable reader the words – if they actually spring from experience and are not due to verbal habits, to the desire to be effective, to factitious excogitation, to imitation, to irrelevant contrivances, or to any other of the failings which prevent most people from writing poetry – the words will reproduce in his mind a similar play of interests putting him for the while into a similar situation and leading to the same response.⁴⁹

For Richards, the recognition of communicative meaning and aesthetic value will be as certain in the correctly trained and developed mind as they were to Hutcheson's 'internal sense' – it is a hard-won, rather than an inherent, response to beauty but it is no less certain. Winnowing and rejecting all the stock responses and the personal associations a poem might generate, the 'practical critic' will discover the interconnections between all the elements of a poem that allow him to experience it as a moment which 'brings into play as many as possible of [one's] positive interests'.⁵⁰ The artist is characterised by an ability to bring order to experience, or, rather to bring experience into order, thereby achieving what all of us seek at every moment in our lives:

We should picture the mind as a system of very delicately poised balances, a system which so long as we are in health is constantly *growing*. Every situation we come into disturbs some of those balances to some

49 I. A. Richards, *Poetries and Sciences* (London, 1970; 1926), 33.

50 *Ibid.*, 38.

degree. The ways in which they swing back to a new equipoise are the impulses with which we respond to the situation.⁵¹

For Richards, ‘every experience is essentially some interest or group of interests swinging back to rest’,⁵² and that state of balance is what is achieved in a good poem – it allows us to *experience indirectly* the balance of competing forces that we strive to achieve in our own lives. An effective poem is the model of a mind in harmony with itself and with the world it inhabits, and it is so because of its capacity to turn multitudinous experiences – in the case of a poem, multitudinous potential *meanings* – into a unity which the reader can recreate.⁵³

Richards’s ultimate object, however, is only fully realised when the reader or perceiver is able to generate the same multitudinousness by which Hutcheson was so impressed in mathematical theorems and which Alison adopted into his account of the workings of association. For Richards, a fully realised poem is a multitude of possible meanings poised in a unity. In 1942 Richards published an essay entitled ‘The Interaction of Words’, in which he described the process of mutual modification that words undergo when brought together in a poem. When he came to reprint the essay in 1973 he retitled it, ‘The Interanimations of Words’ – adopting a word which Herbert Grierson had discovered in a manuscript version of John Donne’s ‘The Extasie’, and which was first made available to the world in Grierson’s edition of Donne’s poetry published in 1912. No other editor of Donne had ever noticed this word and in his notes Grierson gives no example of Donne ever having used the word elsewhere, but Grierson makes it crucial to what he takes to be one of Donne’s most important poems, which he presents as an exposition of Donne’s ‘philosophy of love’, one in which the body and soul – unlike in earlier Renaissance literature – are seen as having equal value, and in which the union of two bodies and two souls is the ultimate unity to which human beings can aspire.

But the body has its function also, without which the soul could not fulfil its: and that function is ‘sense’. It is through this medium that human souls must operate to obtain knowledge of each other. The

51 Ibid., 25.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid., 39.

bodies must yield their forces or faculties ('sense' in all its forms, especially sight and touch – hands and eyes) to us before our souls can become one.⁵⁴

In an essay on 'The Exstasie' (1957), Richards glossed *interinanimates* as being 'like two logs each of which makes the other flame the better',⁵⁵ and adopts Grierson's discovery as the ultimate definition of what poetry, and, therefore, all art strives to achieve, because two minds, the mind of the artist and the mind of reader or observer, are united by the artwork in an experience which transcends and *interinanimates* them both.

Richards's essay on 'The Interinanimations of Words' is, in part, a comparison between Donne's kind of poetry and the poetry of John Dryden, designed to show that Dryden's words are 'in routine conventional relations' – 'they do not induce revolutions in one another'⁵⁶ – while,

In the Donne, I suggest, there is prodigious activity between the words as we read them. Following, exploring, realizing, BECOMING that activity is, I suggest, the essential thing in reading the poem. Understanding it is not a preparation for reading the poem. It is itself the poem. And it is a constructive, hazardous, free creative process, a process of conception through which a new being is growing in the mind.⁵⁷

As John Paul Russo notes, interinanimation, for Richards, 'stands above and includes the "equilibrium of opposed impulses" for mental integration and poetic wholeness. It calls attention to the fact that items do not necessarily stand in strict opposition or provoke their opposites. Rather, there is "multiplicity, the limitless variety, of the linkages among phrases", and likewise among thoughts.'⁵⁸ That 'multiplicity', that 'limitless variety' held within the unity of the poetic organisation is, I suggest, Richards's recapitulation of Hutcheson's fundamental principle of aesthetic experience, and, like Hutcheson's, is designed to circumvent the accidental impact of associations while replicating, in a contained and purified form, the emphasis in the associationist account of aesthetic experience of the force of multitude: 'interinanimations'

54 Herbert J. C. Grierson (ed.), *The Poems of John Donne* (Oxford, 1912), II, 44.

55 I. A. Richards, *Poetries: Their Media and Ends: A Collection of essays by I. A. Richards published to celebrate his 80th birthday*, ed. Trevor Eaton (The Hague, 1974), 90.

56 *Ibid.*, 77.

57 *Ibid.*

58 John Paul Russo, *I. A. Richards: His Life and Work* (Baltimore, MA, 1989), 265–6.

is, for Richards, the multiplicity of meaning that a poem can generate without recourse to (merely) individual associations:

I conceive then a word, as poetry is concerned with it, and as separated from the mere physical or sensory occasion, to be a component of an act of the mind so subtly dependent on the other components of this act and of other acts that it can be distinguished from these interanimations only as a convenience of discourse. It sounds nonsense to say that a word is its interanimations with other words; but that is a short way of saying what Poetics is always in danger of overlooking. Words only work together. We understand no word except in and through its interanimations with other words.⁵⁹

In the well-trained appropriate reader, a poem is limitless because it is always creating new interconnections that animate new possibilities of meaning.

4 Empiricism, Beauty and the Imagination

When I. A. Richards published *Coleridge on the Imagination* in 1935 it was taken by many of his critics as an apostasy from his earlier ‘positivist’ or ‘empiricist’ thought and an indication of his acceptance that neither ‘positivism’ nor ‘empiricism’ could give an adequate account of the workings of the imagination.⁶⁰ In this, of course, he seemed to be replicating the intellectual journey

⁵⁹ Richards, *Poetries: Their Media and Ends*, 76.

⁶⁰ See, for instance, John Crowe Ransom, ‘A Psychologist Looks at Poetry’, ‘his change is like what evangelists call a “conversion”. I applaud the regeneration’, John Constable (ed.), *I. A. Richards and his Critics: Selected Reviews and Critical Articles* (London, 2001), 456; see also Richard Foster’s commentary on Ransom’s account, ‘The Romanticism of I. A. Richards Author(s)’, *ELH*, 26 (1959), 91–101: ‘I think such passages as those we have been citing illustrate the essential meaning of Richards’ “conversion.” All of them implement the dethroning of the scientific icon with its attendant statistical and instrumental imageries and its doctrines of precision and objectivity, and the elevation in its place of a modern romantic version of the humanistic icon: Man-sensitive, intuitive, complex, free and creative in his interminable quest to realize the splendor, and perhaps the tragedy, of his own nature. There is the tone almost of contrition in this sentence from a recent essay collected in his volume *Speculative Instruments*: “I did hold, and still do, that science is true – i.e. that it says verifiable things – but to protect us from thinking that it is true in other and equally important senses is just what we need Philosophy... for.”

of Coleridge himself, who, as Richards records, wrote to a correspondent on March 16, 1801 that,

The interval since my last letter has been filled up by me in the most intense study. If I do not greatly delude myself, I have not only *completely extricated the notions of time and space*, but have overthrown the doctrine of association, as taught by Hartley, and with it all the irreligious metaphysics of modern infidels.⁶¹

Richards also seems to be retracing the experience of the thinker whom he regards as providing the ‘best introduction’⁶² to Coleridge, John Stuart Mill, who famously recorded in his autobiography that he suffered some kind of breakdown as a result of the restrictions of his father’s Benthamite educational principles, subsequently recovering by reading the literature which Benthamite empiricism regarded as being without significance.⁶³ This journey from empiricism to transcendentalism is thus both personal – the realisation of a higher potentiality of the mind than had been previously acknowledged – and historical – the overcoming of the limitations of an essentially eighteenth-century conception of our relationship to the world by the alternative possibilities opened up by a Kantian idealism: as George Santayana put it, ‘empiricism, understood in this psychological way, [was] the starting point for transcendentalism’.⁶⁴

But like John Stuart Mill, who ends his essay on Bentham and Coleridge by asserting his continued commitment to his father’s empirical philosophy,⁶⁵ Richards resists such co-option: his account of Coleridge is written ‘as a Benthamite also’,⁶⁶ and one who believes that Coleridge’s importance is that he sought to articulate what would, in fact, be posited by later theories of psychology:

61 I. A. Richards, *Coleridge on Imagination* (London, 1934), 15.

62 *Ibid.*, 17.

63 See John Stuart Mill, *Autobiography and Literary Essays*, *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, eds. John M. Robson and Jack Stillinger (Toronto, 1981; 33 vols), I, 137.

64 George Santayana, *Character and Opinion in the United States* (New York, 1920), 28.

65 Mill writes that the ‘truth on this much debated question lies with the school of Locke and Bentham’ for there is ‘no ground for believing that anything can be the object of our knowledge except experience’. Mill, ‘Coleridge’ in *idem*, *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, Vol. X, *Essays on Ethics, Religion and Society* (Toronto, 1969), 128.

66 Richards, *Coleridge on Imagination*, 18.

There can be little doubt, in the light of subsequent developments, that Coleridge as against Associationism of the Hartley-Condillac type was right all along the line. But, and here he exemplified a frequent pattern of philosophic advance, what has proved him right has been constructive developments on the part of the very materialistic-mechanistic doctrines that he was attacking – developments of a kind that he did not foresee, made in the teeth of the arguments and exhortations the Coleridge of 1817 was most attached to. Were Coleridge alive now, he would, I hope, be applauding and improving doctrines of the type he, as a metaphysician, thought least promising in his own day.⁶⁷

Richards's Coleridge is the Coleridge whose psychology showed 'a very curious prescience of the developments to come',⁶⁸ which allows him to be re-read in terms of those later developments. And while Richards is keen to follow Coleridge's intuition about the difference between 'fancy' – according to Coleridge the mechanical connecting of ideas according to the principles of association – and 'imagination', which fuses ideas into new wholes, Richards reinterprets the products of 'imagination' as 'interanimations', in which 'the more the image is followed up, the more links of relevance between the units are discovered'.⁶⁹ This is an insight traced not to the influence of German philosophy but to the empiricism of John Stuart Mill:

A word then by this sort of definition is a permanent set of possibilities of understanding, much as John Stuart Mill's table was a permanent possibility of sensation. And as the sensations the table yields depend on the angle you look from, the other things you see it with, the air, your glasses, your eyes and the light ... so how a word is understood depends on the other words you hear it with, and the other frames you have heard it in, on the whole setting present and past in which it has developed as a part of your mind. But the interanimations of words with one another and with other things are far more complex than can be paralleled anywhere except by such things as pictures, music or the expressions of faces which are other modes of languages. Language, as

67 *Ibid.*, 67.

68 *Ibid.*

69 *Ibid.*, 83.

understood is the mind itself at work and these interanimations of words are interdependencies of our own being.⁷⁰

Coleridge's work may be prescient of later developments in psychology and may help us distinguish what characterises the greatest works of literature but those distinctions can be explained entirely within the ambit of an empiricist conception of the mind – in part, perhaps, as James Engell insists, because Coleridge's thought was also a summation of eighteenth-century theories of the nature of the imagination and of the beautiful, derived from his reading of 'nearly every other writer who discussed the subject'.⁷¹ And here, Richards traces the origin of Coleridge's argument about the nature of the imagination to an argument which seems to recapitulate Hutcheson's account of the 'internal sense'; Richards quotes a passage from Coleridge which seems to be founded on the belief in an 'inner sense':

One man's consciousness extends only to the pleasant or unpleasant sensations caused in him by external impressions; another enlarges his inner sense to a consciousness of forms and quantity, a third in addition to the image is conscious of the conception or notion of the thing; a fourth attains to notion of his notions – he reflects upon his own reflections; and thus we may say without impropriety that the one possesses more or less inner sense than the other.⁷²

To a person from a primitive people, Coleridge suggests, 'our most popular philosophy would be wholly unintelligible' because 'the sense, the inward organ for it, is not yet born in him'.⁷³ Without the 'inward organ', the 'internal sense', that allows us to perceive the 'notion of [our] notions', we cannot begin to understand the 'coincidence of an object with a subject' which it is the business of the imagination to realise in us. The importance of this 'inner sense' is underlined in the second essay of 'On the Principles of General Criticism' where Coleridge, following Hutcheson, attempts to set aside the workings of association – whose accidents 'please us because they please us (in which case

⁷⁰ Richards, *Poetries: Their Media and Ends*, 75–6.

⁷¹ James Engell, *The Creative Imagination: Enlightenment to Romanticism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), 328.

⁷² Richards, *Coleridge on Imagination*, 46, quoting Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ed. J. Shawcross (Oxford, 1907), I, 172.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 1, 173.

it would be impossible either to praise or to condemn any man's taste ...)'⁷⁴ – in favour of the belief that,

there exists in the constitution of the human soul a sense, and a regulative principle, which may indeed be stifled and latent in some, and be perverted in and denaturalized in others, yet is nevertheless universal in a given state of intellectual and moral culture; which is independent of local and temporary circumstances, and dependent only on the degree in which the faculties of the mind are developed; and which, consequently, it is our duty to cultivate and improve, as soon as the sense of its actual existence dawns upon us.⁷⁵

But just as Coleridge founds his argument on the historical development of an 'inner sense' – one which Hutcheson, of course, takes to be God-given – so he concludes that beauty is indeed a Hutchesonian mixture of 'uniformity amidst variety': imagination, he states is 'the power by which one image or feeling is made to modify many others and by a sort of *fusion to force many into one*',⁷⁶ an outcome which is translated into Coleridgean vocabulary as 'unity in multitude':

With regard to works in all the branches of the fine arts, I may remark that the pleasure arising from novelty must of course be allowed its due place and weight. This pleasure consists in the identity of two opposite elements, that is to say – sameness and variety. If in the midst of the variety there be not some fixed object for the attention, the unceasing succession of the variety will prevent the mind from observing the difference of the individual objects; and the only thing remaining will be the succession, which will then produce precisely the same effect as sameness. This we experience when we let the trees or hedges pass before the fixed eye during a rapid movement in a carriage, or on the other hand, when we suffer a file of soldiers or ranks of men in procession to go on before us without resting the eye on any one in particular. In order to derive pleasure from the occupation of the mind, the principle of unity must always be present, so that in the midst of the multitude

⁷⁴ Ibid., 2, 227. ('On the Principles of General Criticism')

⁷⁵ Ibid. Shawcross notes the parallel with Hutcheson (II, 310), and suggests the 'regulative principle' derives from Kant.

⁷⁶ Thomas Middleton Raysor (ed.), *Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism* (London, 1930), 1, 212–13.

the centripetal force be never suspended, nor the sense be fatigued by the predominance of the centrifugal force. This unity in multieity I have elsewhere stated as the principle of beauty.⁷⁷

Far from Hutcheson's 'ghost' having been laid to rest by the associationists, Hutcheson's notions of the 'internal sense', of 'uniformity amidst diversity', and of the multitudinous potential of the aesthetic object, haunt subsequent discussions of art and beauty with all the insistence of a very restless ghost. Indeed, Coleridge derives his notion of 'multieity' from precisely the same 'original' beauty that Hutcheson had identified:

Nay, in order to express '*the many*' as *simply contra-distinguished from 'the one'*, I have hazarded the smile of the reader, by introducing to his acquaintance, from the forgotten terminology of the old schoolmen, the phrase *multieity*, because I felt that I could not substitute *multitude*, without more or less connecting with the notion of 'a great many'. Thus the Philosopher of the later Platonic, or Alexandrine school, named the triangle the first-born of beauty, it being the first and simplest symbol of *multieity in unity*.⁷⁸

For an intellectual historian like M. H. Abrams, Coleridge's *multieity in unity* is symptomatic of the romantic conceptions of the beautiful that he shared with German thinkers and that became characteristic of a post-associationist, romantic art:

Coleridge, like the German critics with whom he has close affinity, elevated the variegated multieity in unity of modern or 'romantic' art over what he regarded as the simpler unity of more uniform materials in the in the products of the Greeks and Romans.⁷⁹

Hutcheson's own aesthetic taste may have been for the classical, but his description of mathematical beauty is already an articulation of *multieity in unity* and, rather than being made redundant by later developments in aesthetic theory, provided the foundations of an account of aesthetic experience that was to continue to shape the responses of 'modern' sensibilities from the

⁷⁷ Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 2, 262. ('On the Principles of General Criticism')

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 2, 230. ('On the Principles of Genial Criticism Concerning the Fine Arts')

⁷⁹ Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, 221. Hutcheson does not feature in Abrams account.

period of 'romanticism' into that of 'modernism'. Kivy profoundly underestimates Hutcheson's influence on subsequent aesthetic theorising: Hutcheson's 'uniformity amidst diversity', along with his analysis of the beauty produced by 'Infinitys of Infinites', established the boundaries within which British aesthetic theory developed throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century.

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The Aesthetics of Political Economy: The Case of Francis Hutcheson

Michael Brown

There is a well-worn path which historians walk when retracing the steps taken to reach the high ground of Classical political economy. It is one which begins in the valleys of political arithmetic accompanied by William Petty, rises through the sloped forests of imperial mercantilism in which Thomas Mun dwells, and breathes the heady air of the Scottish Enlightenment on reaching the pinnacle with Adam Smith. What marks out this pathway is a continuous reliance on numbers as a guiderail. Starting with the calculations of Richard Gough in *The History of Myddle*, this parochialism gives way rapidly to the urbanity of Daniel Defoe's morbid tabulation of death in *A Journal of the Plague Year*.¹ The national issue is raised in the historical comparisons offered by David Hume when dealing with the 'populousness of ancient nations'.² And an international purview is provided whilst condemning modern republicanism through Burke's tabulations in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.³ The British eighteenth-century imaginary can be thought of as obsessed with calculation.⁴

If Mary Poovey has located the source of this imaginative turn in an epistemological need for certainty within a post-providential world and Ian Hacking has postulated that what fires the creative energy is the mathematics of probability, both influential renditions of this culture of the number

1 Richard Gough, *The History of Myddle* (London, 1981); Daniel Defoe, *A Journal of the Plague Year* (London, 2003).

2 David Hume, 'Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations' in idem, *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis, 1987), 377–464; for an extended treatment of this work see M. A. Box and Michael Silverthorne, 'The "Most Curious & Important of All Questions of Erudition": Hume's Assessment of the Populousness of Ancient Nations' in Mark G. Spencer (ed.), *David Hume: Historical Thinker, Historical Writer* (Philadelphia, 2013), 225–54.

3 Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France: A Critical Edition*, ed. J. C. D. Clark (Stanford, 2001); F. P. Lock, *Edmund Burke, Volume II: 1784–1797* (Oxford, 2006), 305–8.

4 F. P. Lock, *The Rhetoric of Numbers in Gibbon's History* (Lanham, 2012).

are informed by the intersection with the cultural history of science.⁵ They are of a piece with the work of Steven Shapin for example in *A Social History of Truth*, or Shapin and Simon Schaffer in *Leviathan and the Air Pump* in their concern for how scientific knowledge depends on the credibility of the observer and the socially constructed nature of the conclusions drawn.⁶

In so much as this broadly revisionist project has adjusted our understanding, and provided a liberal (sometimes neo-liberal) account of the development of the social science of political economy, then it has served its own self-scribed purpose. While the achieved ambition was to write over an older Marxist leaning account, it may in doing so have occluded another viewpoint, or chosen one road up the mountain over another, to return to my opening conceit. What this essay suggests is the existence of another rather untidy, indeterminate route to the summit; one which involves some courage to mark out the path and some scrambling through the brambles. To begin it will point to one landmark on this provisional map.

The embarkation point for this journey is found by noticing how the narrative of the emergence of political economy as related to an imaginative concern for numbers sometimes integrates an aborted experiment of the Irish-Scottish philosopher Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746).⁷ In his first substantial publication, *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725), he attempted to create a kind of mathematics of ethical response – reductively expressed as series of equations in the treatise on virtue.⁸ This constitutes an early attempt to articulate morality through numbers, and has been used by Mary Poovey, for instance, to locate Hutcheson in her story about enumeration.⁹ Yet it is also of some significance that Hutcheson's definition of beauty as 'uniformity amidst variety' sat alongside his ethical arguments, offering a sustained if implicit analogy that replaces a concern with numbers in the imaginative origins of political economy with an aesthetic

5 Mary Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago, 1998); Ian Hacking, *The Emergence of Probability: A Philosophical Study of Early Ideas about Probability, Induction and Statistical Inference* (Cambridge, 2006).

6 Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago, 1995); Simon Schaffer and Steven Shapin, *Leviathan and the Air Pump: Hobbes, Boyle and the Experimental Life* (Princeton, 1985).

7 The best biographical study remains W. R. Scott, *Francis Hutcheson: His Life, Teaching and Position in the History of Philosophy* (1900; Bristol, 1992).

8 Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, ed. Wolfgang Leidhold (1725; Indianapolis, 2004), 128–31.

9 Poovey, *History of the Modern Fact*, 182–92.

concern.¹⁰ To understand the relevance of this decision it is necessary to move away from Scotland (for a time and go instead to Dublin, where the *Inquiry* was written), and into the social world of Francis Hutcheson.

Teaching at a dissenting academy in the city in the 1720s, Hutcheson was to develop his intellectual reputation through the publication of two major works of moral theory – *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* of 1725 and an *Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions* of 1728. He also engaged in some occasional writing in the pages of the *Dublin Weekly Journal*, a newspaper-cum-literary periodical edited by his friend and fellow Presbyterian James Arbuckle (c.1700–42). Arbuckle was a minor poet – he wrote a rather elegant celebration of Glasgow where he had been a student, *Glotta* – and thought himself to be a literary critic, notably falling foul of Jonathan Swift. The ‘Hibernicus Letters’ Arbuckle penned for the *Dublin Weekly Journal* contained a number of his translations of Horace.¹¹

While Richard Holmes has done sterling work in recuperating Arbuckle’s literary endeavours, identifying some poetic works as his and revealing much of the skill and craft that lay behind his compositions, as well as the political and social pressures under which he composed, the merit or demerit of Arbuckle’s creative output is not the central concern here.¹² Rather it is the fact of his persistent engagement with questions of beauty. Running from April 1725 to March 1727, the ‘Hibernicus Letters’ contained a sustained if episodic meditation on aesthetics. As Holmes has calculated, its pages hold some ‘twenty original poems [which] evidence the liveliness of contemporary Dublin literary culture. The number of original poems published in Dublin in the years 1725 to 1727’ – Holmes goes on to assert – ‘is approximately the same as in London (Edinburgh was almost a poetic desert by comparison).’¹³ This literary underworld, so well depicted in a neglected PhD by Bryan Coleburne was the environment that produced Swift (who did not have to be in London to understand the landscape of the *Dunciad*) and Arbuckle, and which Hutcheson also inhabited.¹⁴

10 Hutcheson, *An Inquiry*, 28.

11 Both *Glotta* and a number of these translations are included in Richard Holmes (ed.), *James Arbuckle: Selected Works* (Lewisburg, 2014).

12 See for instance, Richard Holmes, ‘James Arbuckle and Dean Swift: Cultural Politics in the Irish Confessional State’, *Irish Studies Review*, 16 (2008), 431–44; idem, ‘James Arbuckle: A Whig Critic of Irish Penal Laws?’ in John Bergin, Eoin Magennis, Lesa Ní Mhugháil and Patrick Walsh (eds.), *New Perspectives on the Penal Laws: Eighteenth-Century Ireland Special Issue 1* (2011), 93–112.

13 Holmes, *James Arbuckle*, xxiv.

14 Bryan Coleburne, ‘Jonathan Swift and the Dunces of Dublin’, PhD thesis (National University of Ireland, Dublin, 1982).

In this context two things become apparent about Hutcheson's early work. First, his treatise on beauty was of a piece with the social circle in which he moved. Arbuckle cast a shadow over that essay as much as did his patron Robert Molesworth (1656–1725), whose development of a garden at his north Dublin estate of Brackenstown (which Swift visited) I have used elsewhere as a foil with which to read Hutcheson's aesthetic theory.¹⁵ Second, when Hutcheson came to write for Arbuckle's vehicle – a fact acknowledged in the concluding essay to the sequence – he chose to attack Thomas Hobbes on the issue of laughter and, crucially, Bernard Mandeville on egoism.

Mandeville (1670–1733), a Dutch medic living in London whose *Fable of the Bees* (1704 and onward) scandalised early Hanoverian society, was a proponent of Hobbes.¹⁶ He argued notoriously that private vices were constitutive of social goods in generating demand for products, creating employment and supporting the wealth and wellbeing of the community. Selfishness, sanctimony, lust, and greed were all defended as necessary stimulants to a successful society. And he made the case primarily in a poem.

'The Grumbling Hive: Or Knaves Turn'd Honest' is a very fine example of early eighteenth-century doggerel. In clunky couplets it recounts the tale of a flourishing bee hive petitioning the Gods for virtue. Granted this wish, social collapse ensues, for the moral is, as Mandeville renders it in the culmination to the composition:

So Vice is beneficial found,
When it's by Justice lopt and bound;
Nay, where the people would be great,
As necessary to the state
As Hunger is to make 'em eat.
Bare Vertue can't make Nations live
In Splendour; they that would revive
A Golden Age, must be as free
For Acorns, as for Honesty.¹⁷

15 Michael Brown, *Francis Hutcheson in Dublin, 1719–1730: the Crucible of his Thought* (Dublin, 2002), 40–50.

16 From a large literature see M. M. Goldsmith, *Private Vices, Public Benefits. The Social and Political Thought of Bernard Mandeville* (Cambridge, 1985); E. G. Hundert, *The Enlightenment's Fable: Bernard Mandeville and the Discovery of Society* (Cambridge, 1994); T. A. Horne, *The Social Thought of Bernard Mandeville: Virtue and Commerce in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (New York, 1978).

17 Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, ed. F. B. Kaye (2 vols; Indianapolis, 1988), I, 37.

Hutcheson accosted Mandeville in three issues of the *Dublin Weekly Journal*. While attention has rightly been cast on the moral arguments which Hutcheson deploys – at least in my own treatment of the matter in *Francis Hutcheson in Dublin* – it is perhaps worth noticing here how the essays are also, however loosely, a form of literary criticism.¹⁸ Moreover, the policy of attacking the morals of a literary work, and not its aesthetic effect (the man and not the ball perhaps) was not unusual or reprehensible in the period. Indeed, Arbuckle and Swift became entangled in a literary joust in which both men attacked the other's moral probity in increasingly venomous satiric poems.¹⁹ And as I have suggested elsewhere the political tussle between Old and New Whig was productive of *ad hominin* attacks precisely because the issue in question was how to behave in a commercialising, post-revolutionary society.²⁰ Hutcheson's rebuttal of Mandeville is, comparatively, a rather tepid affair, working over the definition of luxury. Mandeville sets up as a straw man, namely the Stoic, Old Whig position that luxury is identical to conspicuous consumption. This allows him to argue for a rehabilitation of consumption on Epicurean principles, by seeing it as charged with social energy. Hutcheson rejects this as a false dichotomy. He instead proposes that luxury is not inherent in all consumption, but rather is a relative concept. He defines luxury as over-consumption. 'Intemperance is the use of meat and drink which is pernicious to the health and vigour of any person in the discharge of the offices of life', he writes,

Luxury is the using more curious and expensive habitation, dress, table, equipage, than the person's wealth will bear, so as to discharge his duty to his family, his friends, his country or the indigent ... There is no sort of food, architecture, dress or furniture, the use of which can be called evil of itself. Intemperance and luxury are plainly terms relative to the bodily constitution and wealth of the person.²¹

Mandeville is therefore as intellectually duplicitous as his Epicureanism is morally suspect. Hutcheson rehabilitates society while retaining the morally righteous rejection of luxury. He literally has his cake and eats it.

18 Brown, *Francis Hutcheson in Dublin*, 97–122.

19 Michael Brown, 'A Biter Bitten: Ireland and the Rude Enlightenment', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 45 (2012), 393–407.

20 Michael Brown, 'Jonathan Swift, the Earl of Wharton and the Problem of Whig Regeneration', *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture*, 39 (2015), 83–99.

21 Francis Hutcheson, *Reflections upon Laughter and Remarks upon the Fable of the Bees* (Glasgow, 1750), 56.

If Hutcheson's rejection of Mandeville constitutes a piece of overtly moral literary criticism, his own literary output, particularly the *Inquiry*, was equally structured to parallel aesthetic and moral concerns. Indeed, the whole edifice is founded on a sustained analogy between the sense of beauty and the moral sense: both are conceived of by Hutcheson to be pre-rational, immediate and judgemental. Moreover, this conception also sites Hutcheson within Dublin intellectual circles which were experimenting with what David Berman has called theological representationalism, whereby comprehension of God is reached by developing analogies to man's positive attributes.²² Indeed Hutcheson's capstone to his treatise on morals, in which God is depicted, is a remarkable piece of writing in this vein and worth quoting at length here:

It has often been taken for granted in these papers, 'that the deity is morally good'; though the reasoning is not at all built upon this supposition. If we enquire into the reason of the great agreement of mankind in this opinion, we shall perhaps find no demonstrative arguments à priori, from the idea of an independent being, to prove his goodness. But there is abundant probability, deduced from the whole frame of nature, which seems as far as we know, plainly contrived for the good of the whole; and the casual evils seem the necessary concomitants of some mechanism designed for vastly prepollent good. Nay, this very moral sense, implanted in rational agents, to delight in and admire whatever actions flow from a study of the good in others, is one of the strongest evidences of goodness in the author of nature.²³

Hutcheson's motivation in developing this analogy between aesthetics and morality was to recuperate the ontological condition of humanity, challenged as it was by the pessimism of the Presbyterian assumption of total depravity (enunciated in the Synod of Dort and restated in the Westminster Confession of Faith), and by the Hobbist Epicureanism which was considered fashionable amongst the *avant garde* of Dublin in the 1720s. In the 'Hibernicus Letters' Hutcheson noticed how the fashionable coffee house, Lucas's, on Cork Hill, was used by 'free wits', fops attracted to a disreputable materialism made fashionable by Mandeville.²⁴

22 David Berman, *Berkeley and Irish Philosophy* (London, 2006).

23 Hutcheson, *An Inquiry*, 196–7.

24 Hutcheson, *Remarks*, 119.

While himself a signatory (twice) to the Westminster Confession, Hutcheson was quickly in trouble when arriving in more conservative Glasgow for his teachings on moral capability. He was wrongly thought to favour the freethinking religiosity of Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713), whose work he appropriated but actively Christianised in so doing.²⁵ However the author, Hugh Heugh, himself the son of a traditional Presbyterian minister John Huegh, was more accurate in deeming that Hutcheson did not share ‘an estimation of mankind as vitiated by original sin and incapable of attaining moral knowledge without recourse to Scripture.’²⁶ Rather Hutcheson ascribed to humanity an ability to improve through the exercise of volition which contradicted Heugh’s emphasis on ‘the Corruption of our natures’ which left people ‘utterly indisposed, disabled and opposite to all Good’.²⁷ That indeed was an essential predicate for his work as an educator both in Dublin and subsequently at the University of Glasgow where he was to become a renown professor of moral philosophy. While the polemical purpose of the *Inquiry* was thus unmistakably moral, Hutcheson’s conceptualisation of aesthetics was also freighted with political intention and social vision. In the treatise devoted to a consideration of the concept of beauty, and as noted above, he argued that its origin lay in the viewer’s identification of ‘uniformity amidst variety’. Far from being a simple exposition of the classical unities, Hutcheson suggested that their melody was only apparent when set in relief against the surrounding cacophony. Indeed, a surfeit of order was just as damaging to an aesthetic experience as was the lack of a controlling artificer. Availing of a mathematical vocabulary he explained how:

what we call Beautiful in Objects, to speak in the Mathematical Style, seems to be in a compound Ratio of Uniformity and Variety: so that

25 James Moore, ‘Presbyterianism and the Right of Private Judgement: Church Government in Ireland and Scotland in the Age of Francis Hutcheson’ in Ruth Evelyn Savage (ed.), *Philosophy and Religion in Enlightenment Britain* (Oxford, 2012), 141–68. On Shaftesbury see Lawrence E. Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness: Moral Discourse and Cultural Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1994).

26 Daniel Carey, ‘Francis Hutcheson’s Philosophy and the Scottish Enlightenment: Reception, Reputation and Legacy’ in Aaron Garrett and James A. Harris (eds.), *Scottish Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century: Volume 1: Morals, Politics, Art, Religion* (Oxford, 2015), 61.

27 [Hugh Heugh], *Shaftesbury’s Ghost Conjur’d* (Glasgow, 1738), 22.

where the Uniformity of Bodys [*sic*] is equal, the Beauty is as the Variety;
and where the Variety is equal, the Beauty is as the Uniformity.²⁸

The moral parallel for this was developed in the second treatise in the book, on virtue, which contended that humans had an internal, pre-rational sense that responded to displays of benevolence independent of the interest which we have in the action's success or failure. Again Hutcheson deployed a mathematical register to explain himself, devising a series of equations to compute the moment of good in relation to the benevolence of the actor, the self-interest they have in the determination and the ability of the person to intervene.²⁹ In both cases, beauty and virtue, then, the values were thought to be both universal and situated, emerging from the motivation of the actor and the context of that action.

Politically it is worth recognising how Hutcheson shared with Arbuckle an open admiration for the Whig politician and writer Joseph Addison (1672–1719). Whereas Arbuckle composed an elegy on his death, Hutcheson cited the 'ingenious Mr Addison in his treatise of the Pleasures of the Imagination', published in *The Spectator* in 1712.³⁰ Written immediately after Addison's sojourn in Dublin as personal secretary to the lord lieutenant Thomas, Earl of Wharton (who gained Swift's immense contempt as a personification of modern Whig culture), *The Spectator* was, as Brian Cowan has elucidated, a Whig vehicle which aimed to alter the literary culture of England. It seemed to undermine the Tory hegemony that had been established in the general election of 1710 and which had ignominiously returned Addison's friends to the opposition benches.³¹ In other words, by citing Addison Hutcheson was positioning his work within a literary discourse of modern commercial whiggery that, in Irish terms, was concerned with domestic improvement and the reform of English legislation that hampered local trade.³² These measures included the Woollen

28 Hutcheson, *An Inquiry*, 29.

29 *Ibid.*, 128–31.

30 James Arbuckle, *An Epistle to Thomas, the Rt Hon Earl of Hadington on the Death of Joseph Addison Esq* (Glasgow, 1719); Hutcheson, *Reflections upon Laughter*, 16; and Joseph Addison, 'The Pleasures of the Imagination' in Donald F. Bond (ed.), *The Spectator* (5 vols; Oxford, 1965), issue numbers 411–421: III, 535–82.

31 Brian Cowan, 'Mr Spectator and the Coffeehouse Public Sphere', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 37 (2004), 345–66.

32 The connection between these two aspects of the programme is well drawn in Gordon Rees, 'Sir Richard Cox 1702–66: Patriotism and Improvement in Eighteenth-Century Ireland', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 29 (2014), 47–62. On Irish improvers see Toby Barnard, *Improving Ireland? Projectors, Propbets and Profiteers, 1641–1786* (Dublin,

Act that imposed restrictions on Irish exports, the Declaratory Act that limited the power of the Dublin parliament to that of a dependent kingdom, and the passing of bills supporting the introduction of the controversial Wood's half-pence that was intended to alleviate the problems generated by a lack of small specie circulating in the Irish economy. If attention amongst literary critics has fallen on Swift's creative responses to these developments across the 1720s – *A Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufactures* (1720), the *Drapier's Letters* (1724–5) and the terrifying *Modest Proposal* (1729) – it should be recognised that his atypicality was not just a product of his genius.³³ Rather Swift was expressive of an Old Whig politics that envisioned economic wealth as founded in land; his contemporaries were oftentimes developing a modern Whig view in which trade was foundational.³⁴ If Robert Molesworth, Swift's dedicatee and Hutcheson's patron, hovered between the two stances, Thomas Prior on absenteeism, David Bindon on the circulation of money and Arthur Dobbs on trade spoke to Ireland's position in a commercial whig imaginative universe.³⁵

Hutcheson's definition of luxury as a relative concept was, as we have noticed, akin to his reorientation of virtue towards social exchange. His definition of beauty in the *Inquiry* as the recognition by an observer of what he terms 'uniformity amidst variety' carries a similar intellectual freight. It depends upon the capacity of an individual to recognise patterning in diverse circumstances, to identify order in apparent chaos, to see logic and structure in apparently disparate events, actions and things. If this is true of the natural world, in which the mind of God is revealed, it is true secondarily in the world of artifice humanity creates for itself. Hutcheson cites gardens, architecture and fashion as venues in which order emerges from diversity; it may also be said, by analogy, of social laws. On this basis, Hutcheson can compose

2008).

33 The literature is immense but for a reading of this material through the lens of the financial revolution see Sean D. Moore, *Swift, the Book and the Irish Financial Revolution: Satire and Sovereignty in Colonial Ireland* (Baltimore, 2010).

34 On Swift as an Old or 'True Whig' see Alan Downie, *Jonathan Swift: Political Writer* (London, 1984).

35 For a summary of this literature see Patrick Kelly, 'The Politics of Political Economy in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Ireland' in S. J. Connolly (ed.), *Political Ideas in Eighteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin, 2000), 105–29. See also James Livesey, 'A Kingdom of Cosmopolitan Improvers: The Dublin Society, 1731–1798' in Jani Marjanen and Koen Stapelbroek (eds.), *The Rise of Economic Societies in the Eighteenth Century: Patriotic Reform in Europe and North America* (Houndsmills, 2012), 52–72. The latter argues for the centrality of agriculture to the economic imagination of this generation of writers (particularly see *ibid.*, 64–5).

music from the cacophony of passions, the concern of his second Dublin treatise the *Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations of the Moral Sense* (1728). Therein he established moral hierarchy of the passions, moving out from the individual needs and want, and towards universal benevolence, or a desire for the good of all mankind.³⁶ Moreover, the capacity for individuals to identify patterns or ‘uniformity’ in the chaos of experience – ‘amidst variety’ – underpinned Hutcheson’s rendering of a system of political economy found in his *Short Introduction of Moral Philosophy* (1747).

Published during Hutcheson’s tenure in Glasgow, where he had been appointed to the University’s chair in moral philosophy in 1730, the *Short Introduction* was a student compend, an *aide de memoire* for his class and a primer for his lecture series. The final section was concerned with what he termed economics and politics, being those ‘adventitious states, founded upon some human deed or institution’.³⁷ Economics was, in this usage, concerned with domestic arrangements, which he subdivided into the duties which existed between marital partners; parents and children; and masters and servants. This preceded his consideration of political structures. However, under the rubric of natural law, and thus underscoring his view that it was inherent to the condition of mankind, he elsewhere considered at length the rights and duties pertaining to commerce and the value or price of goods.

Hutcheson here perceived in the development of society an intrinsic need for the division of labour and for collaboration. He reflected that:

the common interest of all constantly requires an intercourse of offices, and the joint labours of many, and that when mankind grows numerous, all necessaries and conveniences will be much better supplied to all, when each chooses an art to himself, by practice acquires dexterity in it, and thus provides himself great plenty of such goods as that art produces, to be exchanged in commerce for the goods produced in a like manner by other artisans; than if each one by turns practised every necessary art, without ever acquiring dexterity in them.³⁸

The management of this commercial interdependence required the development of legal understandings of contract – the imposition of a political

³⁶ See Brown, *Francis Hutcheson in Dublin*, for a reading of this text.

³⁷ Francis Hutcheson, *A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy* (Glasgow, 1747), 255.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 163.

uniformity to manage the economic variety. Hutcheson ascribed therefore a vital role to contract law in the development of civility, declaring

in an intercourse of services, in commerce and in joint labour, our sentiments, inclinations and designs must be mutually made known ... Contracts are an absolute necessity in life, and so is the maintaining of faith in them ... There must be conferences and bargains about them, that the parties may agree about their mutual performances ... The perfidious for his part breaks all social commerce among men.³⁹

Contract law was the mechanism whereby uniformity was fashioned from the diverse economic wants, desires and needs of the community, and social intercourse was managed to allow the division of labour to effectively operate. In rehearsing the political economy of labour, therefore, Hutcheson sought to identify beauty.

Similarly, with regard to price, and in accordance with his treatment of luxury as relative, Hutcheson emphasised the relationship between supply and demand in determining the value ascribed to a good: ‘The ground of all price must be some fitness in the things to yield some use or pleasure in life. But this being presupposed the price of things will be in a compound proportion of the demand for them and the difficulty in acquiring them.’⁴⁰ The measure of this relationship was to be taken by ascribing a monetary value to the object; here Hutcheson underscores the continuing vitality of the Irish school of economic thought that fretted over this issue in the 1720s. For Hutcheson, possibly writing in that decade as the origins of the *Short Introduction* may lie in the preparatory work he conducted for Dublin dissenters readying to leave for Glasgow University, the value of money was not intrinsic. Rather money itself had a price that was determined by its supply – ‘the real value of these metals, and of money too, like that of all other goods, is lessened as they are more plentiful and increase when they grow scarcer, though the pieces keep the same names.’⁴¹ So too the valuation of gold and silver might alter against each other. However international trade was dependent on the shared acceptance of specie as a viable measure – one that was chosen from their characteristics of scarcity, portability, durability and divisibility.⁴² Hutcheson wrote:

³⁹ Ibid., 177–8.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 209.

⁴¹ Ibid., 211–12.

⁴² Ibid., 211.

No state which holds any commerce with neighbours, can alter the value of their own [money] in proportion to that of goods . . . After the legal settlement of the denomination of coins, and many contracts and legal obligations settled in these legal sum denominations, a decree of state raising the value of the pieces will be fraud on all the creditors.⁴³

Commerce then was a system in which diversity was given order by law: various modes of production could trade through the use of a ‘universal’ system of value, money, and with the backing of a legal order that upheld the contracts made and the obligations incurred. Political economy turned the desires of a society into the orderly pursuit of satisfaction. It transmuted base desire into social wellbeing as Mandeville suggested, but did so by recognising ‘uniformity amidst variety’. The system of political economy was a thing of beauty.

Certainly Hume and ultimately Smith were to reposition economics as artificial or ‘adventitious’ and not as Hutcheson had it as part of the ‘natural’ order. Yet their predecessor’s concern for seeing in the chaos of human activity a kind of order – ‘uniformity amidst variety’ – informed the development of Scottish political economy by giving to it a concern for systemisation and beauty. Less a machine than a natural organism, Hutcheson conceived of the political economy as the natural product of humanity’s interdependence, its social character and its need for moral co-operation. His writing infused in the Scottish Enlightenment a sustained interest in what has been nicely described by Leslie Ellen Brown as ‘the interplay of the beautiful and the good’.⁴⁴ This interplay found particular application in the emergent domain of political economy, itself a study of social interaction, individual desire and moral ambition. Far from the ‘dismal science’ it may have become under the austere hand of Thomas Malthus, in the hands of the sprites of the Scottish Enlightenment it was a panacea: an intoxicating recipe for progress, improvement, wealth, health, civilisation and human flourishing.

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43 Ibid., 212.

44 Leslie Ellen Brown, *Artful Virtue: The Interplay of the Beautiful and the Good in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Farnham, 2015).

The Epistemology of Sense from Calvin to Hutcheson

Giovanni Gellera

1 Introduction

The notions of moral and aesthetic sense are characteristic of the philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment and are intimately linked to the name of Francis Hutcheson.¹ The main influences on Hutcheson were Lord Shaftesbury and John Locke, whose importance Hutcheson himself was keen to remark. The name of Shaftesbury appears on the title page of the first edition of *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725), where Hutcheson professes to be ‘explaining and defending’ Shaftesbury’s ideas. Accordingly, scholars have mainly focused on the Locke–Shaftesbury–Hutcheson triangle, as the book of a similar title by Daniel Carey exemplifies well.² A second influence which has gained recent currency is that of the Cambridge Platonists. According to Michael B. Gill the similarities ‘between the Cambridge Platonists and Scottish sentimentalists [are] more important than whether moral judgments originate in reason or sentiment’.³ Gill refers to the Moral Self-Governance View and the belief in the innate human ability to grasp moral and intellectual truths as two such similarities. Sarah Hutton has

1 This paper was presented at *Francis Hutcheson and the Emergence of Modern Aesthetics. A Symposium*, 23–24 January 2015, Research Institute of Irish and Scottish Studies, University of Aberdeen. I thank the audience for their helpful comments, and Christian Maurer, who kindly suggested important revisions and references. I also thank the Université de Fribourg (Switzerland) for awarding me a postdoctoral visiting fellowship during which the first version of this paper was written. I am grateful to my hosts in Fribourg, Jean-Claude Wolf and Christian Maurer.

2 Daniel Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson* (Cambridge, 2005). Beyond the influence on Hutcheson, Sarah Hutton suggests that Shaftesbury and Locke champion two diverse interpretations of the relations between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries in British philosophy: sentimentalism and anticlericalism vis-à-vis empiricism and natural law: *British Philosophy in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 2015), 224.

3 Michael B. Gill, ‘From Cambridge Platonism to Scottish Sentimentalism’, *Journal of Scottish Philosophy*, 8 (2010), 13–31, 16.

argued that the Cambridge Platonists had a readership already in seventeenth-century Scotland,⁴ hence suggesting that the Cambridge Platonists' influence on Hutcheson was not entirely mediated by Shaftesbury.⁵

Less explored, and the object of this paper, is the relationship between Hutcheson and the varieties of early modern Calvinism. Among these and without any pretension of comprehensiveness, I will focus on Calvin and two representative authors of Dutch Reformed scholasticism. It is acknowledged that 'Hutcheson's philosophy developed from a complex group of classical, scholastic, and modern influences in ethics, epistemology, logic, and jurisprudence',⁶ and that 'Hutcheson in his presbyterian Academy in Ulster had the advantage of an initial training in the kind of scholastic Aristotelianism which was no longer taught in Scotland ... The effect of this upon his later philosophical writing is notable.'⁷ While I disagree with the claim that "scholastic Aristotelianism" was not taught in the Scottish universities during Hutcheson's youth,⁸ it is my goal to show that the effect of Reformed scholasticism on Hutcheson's thought is, if not notable, at least plausible.

The notion of sense features prominently in the theology and anthropology of John Calvin and makes appearances in seventeenth-century Reformed scholasticism. Calvin believes that men are endowed with a faculty or disposition, which he calls the "sense of divinity" (hereafter SoD), which produces the awareness of the Deity. Later Reformed philosophers incorporated Calvin's view into their scholastico-Aristotelian philosophy. My case studies here are two: first, Franco Burgersdijk's and Adriaan Heereboord's views on the innateness of the idea of God; secondly, Burgersdijk's view on sensibility and moral

4 Sarah Hutton, 'From Cudworth to Hume: Cambridge Platonism and the Scottish Enlightenment', *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 42 (2012), 8–26, 14–16. See also Christine M. Shepherd, *Philosophy and Science in the Arts Curriculum of the Scottish Universities in the 17th century*, PhD Diss. (University of Edinburgh, 1975), 201.

5 Another channel of transmission of early modern ideas to Hutcheson is Gershom Carmichael, Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow, teacher and predecessor of Hutcheson on the same chair. Regarding the topic of this paper, James Moore writes that 'Hutcheson's relationship with Carmichael is complicated by the fact that the distinctive feature of Hutcheson's moral philosophy, as expressed in his English language writings directed to adult readers – his theory of a moral sense which brings ideas of virtue and vice before the mind – has no parallel in Carmichael's work.' James Moore and Michael Silverthorne (eds.), *Natural Rights on the Threshold of the Scottish Enlightenment. The Writings of Gershom Carmichael* (Indianapolis, 2002), xv.

6 Hutton, *British Philosophy in the Seventeenth Century*, 153.

7 Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice, Which Rationality* (Chicago, 1989), 260.

8 See Giovanni Gellera, 'Theses Philosophicae in Aberdeen in the Early Eighteenth Century', *Journal of Scottish Thought*, 3 (2010), 109–25.

judgments in his commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. The interesting aspect of the Reformed notion(s) of sense is that it is, just like Hutcheson's, a source of ideas quite distinct from reason.⁹ On the relation between Hutcheson and Calvinism, Alexander Broadie has written that 'Hutcheson's position is remarkable, given its contrast with the kind of Calvinist Christianity, prevalent in seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-century Scotland, that places heavy emphasis on the Fall and on our consequent depravity.'¹⁰ I will suggest that although Hutcheson's anthropology, moral psychology, and warmth for virtue are all elements at odds with the Calvinist view of man, the epistemology of the Calvinist notion of sense might be acknowledged as one of the sources of Hutcheson's sentimentalism.

The paper is divided into four parts. Part (1) is on John Calvin and the *sensus divinitatis*. According to Calvin, all rational beings have an immediate awareness of God, which justifies the belief that God exists but does not produce knowledge of God. Part (2) investigates the background of Calvin's original notion of sense. According to scholastic anthropology, the senses put the knower in direct and immediate contact with the known thing but, unlike Calvin's SoD, do not have propositional content. Part (3) investigates the notion of sense in Reformed scholastic philosophy: natural theology in Franco Burgersdijk and Adriaan Heereboord, and moral philosophy in Burgersdijk. Burgersdijk does not attribute full propositional content to the sense, and sense is not a faculty; yet, he marks a difference from the scholastic notion in that he argues that the sense provides the mind with ideas (of God, and of good and evil) which are not sensible that is, are not ideas of material substances. This survey of scholastic sources might suggest that a novel epistemology of sense started to appear in early modern scholastic philosophy based on Calvin's original Part (4) attempts to highlight the assonances between Hutcheson and the respective philosophical legacies of Shaftesbury and Locke on the one side, and Calvin, Burgersdijk, and Heereboord on the

9 In the seventeenth-century, this distinction is not always as clear-cut. See for example Gill, 'From Cambridge Platonism', 25–9 on the 'sentimentalism' of the Cambridge Platonists, and Laurent Jaffro, 'Émotions et jugement moral chez Shaftesbury, Hutcheson et Hume', in Sylvain Roux (ed.), *Les émotions* (Paris, 2009), 135–59, 146, for a rationalist conception of moral sense in Shaftesbury. I introduce the distinction between sense and reason here in light of the opposition of scholastic intellectualism and (Hutcheson's) sentimentalism. My view is that SoD challenges scholastic intellectualism before early modern sentimentalism does, and that it is plausible to identify anticipations of the latter in SoD.

10 Alexander Broadie, *A History of Scottish Philosophy* (Edinburgh, 2009), 140. See also Gill, 'From Cambridge Platonism', 16.

other. The remarkable legacy of Calvinism and Reformed scholasticism is that ‘sense’ is a source of knowledge parallel and complementary to reason; later, Hutcheson’s genius will establish it as a fully formed ‘faculty’ of human nature.

2 John Calvin and the *sensus divinitatis*

Calvin does not develop a full epistemology of SoD, but what he has to say about it is very interesting. The central text is the following:

There is within the human mind, and indeed by natural instinct, an awareness of divinity. This we take to be beyond controversy. To prevent any one from taking refuge in the pretence of ignorance, God himself has implanted in all men a certain understanding of his divine majesty. . . . Since, therefore, men one and all perceive that there is a God and that he is their Maker, they are condemned by their own testimony because they have failed to honor him and to consecrate their lives to his will. . . . [t]here is, as the eminent pagan says, no nation so barbarous, no people so savage, that they have not a deep-seated conviction that there is a God. . . . there lies in this a tacit confession of a sense of deity inscribed in the hearts of all.¹¹

We can gather the following views: (1) the human mind is naturally aware of God, by instinct. This natural awareness grounds universal inexcusability, of believers and deniers of the existence of God alike; (2) the awareness of God defeats the ‘pretence of ignorance’: awareness is so strong, evident, compelling, that anyone in her normal rational state and intellectual honesty has to accept it (it is epistemically binding); (3) one ought to accept the evidence of God’s existence, but also to honour and worship God: a rich notion of knowledge, what Paul Helm calls the ‘metaphysical-cognitive and moral-cognitive components’ of knowledge.¹² And (4) there is empirical evidence of this awareness in the fact that all cultures in history have a deity (argument from

11 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill (Louisville, 1960; reissued 2006), I, 43–4.

12 Paul Helm, ‘The “Sensus Divinitatis”, and the Noetic Effects of Sin’, *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 43 (1998), 87–107, 90. See also David Reiter, ‘Calvin’s “Sense of Divinity” and Externalist Knowledge of God’, *Faith and Philosophy*, 15 (1998), 253–70, 254.

consensus). There remain the questions of how this awareness relates to a theory of human mind, and how its content compels our judgment.

Paul Helm argues that Calvin's view is that men do not have a direct experience of God, but that they

conceive (or perceive) *that there is a God*. . . This basic knowledge of God is propositional in content rather than a person to person awareness of God. And Calvin uses the terms 'conceive' and 'perceive' seemingly interchangeably in order to highlight that this knowledge is direct. . . There is, in the first place, the *sensus*, a human faculty or disposition to interpret certain data in certain ways. It is this faculty that is innate.¹³

On Helm's reading of Calvin's SoD, men are endowed with a faculty or disposition (innate, constitutional) to grasp the propositional content 'God exists'. This proposition compels our belief because it is delivered to us directly and immediately. Three more insights by Helm are important for my analysis. First, 'the *sensus* is thus not immediate awareness, as the awareness of a physical sensation is immediate; rather it is a judgment of a highly unself-conscious and automatic kind, "natural" in yet another sense of that term, based upon an experience of certain features of the physical world, upon its beauty and orderliness and other features'.¹⁴ Secondly, '[Calvin's] natural theology is not one that is based upon discursive proofs, but upon innate, properly functioning capacities common (i.e. natural) to all people'.¹⁵ Finally, Calvin does not hold that men have an innate idea of God.¹⁶ We will see how these views appear in the Reformed scholastic proofs of the existence of God in Burgersdijk and Heereboord.

Before moving on to the analysis of the scholastic background, I would like to remark the difference between the seventeenth-century and the contemporary interests in SoD. The contemporary strand of Reformed Epistemology, whose main proponent is Plantinga,¹⁷ crucially focuses on the reasonableness and rationality of belief in the content accessible to us in virtue of SoD. The SoD is reliable (hence trustworthy) because it is a proper function of the human nature: a warranted belief is a belief for which the knower lacks proofs

¹³ Ibid., 91. Original emphasis.

¹⁴ Ibid., 92. Original emphasis.

¹⁵ Ibid., 93. Original emphasis.

¹⁶ Ibid., 94.

¹⁷ See, for example, Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (Oxford, 2000).

but for which the knower has sufficient evidence. The article by Paul Helm cited here is construed as a reply to the main tenets of the contemporary Reformed Epistemology interpretation of Calvin. Calvin is not interested in the rationality of belief (which he assumes) but rather in the knowledge of God,¹⁸ and he is a proponent of weak foundationalism versus the strong foundationalism of the Cartesian and Enlightenment tradition. Calvin's SoD has given origin to the opposite views that natural theology is not necessary, as in contemporary Reformed Epistemology, and that natural theology provides the necessary confirmation of SoD. We will see in section three that Burgersdijk, just like Calvin, focuses on the content of SoD and the modality of its deliverance and that, unlike Calvin, he relies on the rational proofs of the existence of God in his natural theology.

In conclusion to this section, according to Calvin men are directly aware of God, by means of a *sense*, that is a faculty or disposition to believe that God exists. Men do not have an innate idea of God, rather the sense elaborates on the experience of the external world and reaches the conclusion, common to all men, that 'God exists'.

3 Sense in scholastic philosophy

Calvin did not develop a philosophical anthropology around the notion of sense. For example, he did not clarify whether the sense is a faculty or a disposition, a problem which Hutcheson will face with respect to the innateness of the deliverances of sense.¹⁹ Calvin's main preoccupation is theological, not anthropological. In SoD he seeks to combine prima facie opposed views: the inexcusability of the atheist, based on sufficient natural evidence for theism, and belief in the unreliability of the deliverances of natural reason, based on the doctrine of the Fall. Some of the tensions intrinsic to Calvin's SoD surface against the background of the traditional scholastic views of sensibility, immediate knowledge, and self-evidence.

The scholastics divide the senses into external and internal. The external senses are the so-called 'corporal' (smell, touch, taste) and 'spiritual' (sight, hearing) senses. Many considered sight as the most noble sense because it is

18 See Reiter, 'Calvin's "Sense of Divinity"', for an example of the debates internal to Reformed Epistemology. Reiter argues for a robust interpretation of SoD, one in which it delivers knowledge of God, not just justified or rational belief in God.

19 See Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson*, 169.

primarily involved with the process of knowledge. Others considered touch as the archetypical sense because all sensing, including sight, is a form of contact. For either positions, textual evidence in Aristotle was invoked. The internal sense, or sixth sense, is the sense which collects all the inputs of the external senses and delivers a unitary material to the intellect. The faculty of sense is passive, it receives forms from the external objects, and it is about individual things *per se* and universal things *per accidens*. The senses alone do not deliver conscious propositional content. Prior to the reception of the material by the intellect, it is not possible to speak of knowledge of the sensible species or of the external object. According to the scholastics, knowledge is produced only by a self-reflective act of the intellect: reason is the only faculty of knowledge.

For Hutcheson sense is ‘every determination of our minds to receive ideas independently of our will, and to have perceptions of pleasure and pain. In accordance with this definition, the five external senses determine us to receive ideas which please or pain us, and the will does not intervene.’²⁰ Here, a scholastic philosopher would take exception with ‘ideas’ (or concepts) being received by sense because only the ‘sensible species’ are received by the senses: ideas are a product of the intellect’s acting on the species. One of Hutcheson’s assumptions is the ‘ideal theory’ or the ‘way of ideas’, that is, the view that the first immediate cognitive content presented to our minds are simple ideas. What is common to the scholastic view and to Hutcheson is the (very) general agreement about sense being an original epistemic source of material for the intellect. Without the senses the mind lacks cognitive inputs: the scholastics would say that it lacks *notiones*, Hutcheson would say that it lacks simple ideas.

The scholastics did not have to wait for John Locke to produce a critique of innate ideas. Thomas Aquinas writes that:

[First] if the soul has innate ideas of all things, then it is not possible that such awareness is shrouded in such a forgetfulness that the soul does not even know that it possesses it; no man can forget those things which he knows naturally, such as that the whole is bigger than its parts. Second, ...if one lacks some senses, he also lacks the corresponding

20 Alexander Broadie, ‘Scottish Philosophy in the 18th Century’, *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (2013), ed. Edward N. Zalta, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/scottish-18th/>, accessed 1 October 2015.

knowledge of them, which one apprehends in virtue of them; so that someone born blind from birth cannot have any awareness of the colours.²¹

If innate ideas exist in our mind, Aquinas reasons, then it is impossible to explain why we ignore some things, because we would know all things naturally, and to make sense of the commonsensical assumption of a connection between sensing and knowing. Aquinas's remark that we have *notitiam de coloribus* only via the senses is particularly important. *Notitia* is translated with both awareness and knowledge. *Notitia* is something which is *notum* to a knower either *per se* or *per aliud*. Something is known *per se* when it is self-evident. In the case of a proposition, when the predicate belongs to the definition of the subject or follows immediately from it, for example in 'the whole is bigger than its parts'. The proposition is self-evidently upon the simple understanding of the words 'whole' and 'parts'. Something is *notum per aliud* when its evidence is based on something else, which is more evident: for example when a proposition follows by way of argument from other propositions. Aquinas acknowledges that the awareness of colours provided by sight is original, pre-theoretical and not otherwise available to the mind. The *notitia de coloribus* is not a Hutchesonian simple idea, but it is nonetheless a distinct (potentially cognitive) content which does not originate in the intellect.

In conclusion to this section, the ideal theory stands between the scholastics and Hutcheson. The scholastics did not conceive of the faculty of senses as the source of simple ideas of the external things. Though, they held that the senses furnish the mind with sensible original content, which is cognitive in potency. The Reformed scholastics sought to combine the Calvinist intuition of the sensible origin of the idea of God and traditional scholastic rationalism. We now move on to the Reformed scholastic uses of SoD and the debates on whether the idea of God is innate and self-evident.

21 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, 84, a. 3 co.: '*Si habet anima naturalem notitiam omnium, non videtur esse possibile quod huius naturalis notitiae tantam oblivionem capiat, quod nesciat se huiusmodi scientiam habere, nullus enim homo obliviscitur ea quae naturaliter cognoscit, sicut quod omne totum sit maius sua parte ... Secundo ... deficiente aliquo sensu, deficit scientia eorum, quae apprehenduntur secundum illum sensum; sicut caecus natus nullam potest habere notitiam de coloribus.*' (All translations are my own) www.corpusthomicum.org, last accessed January 2016. All translations are my own.

4 Sense in Reformed scholastic philosophy

A minority of the scholastics believed that the idea of God was innate, while the majority did not. Thomas Aquinas is an authority in the latter camp. In *De Veritate* 10, 12 the only innateness that he accepts is that of the faculty which enables men to know that God exists. Likewise, John Locke argues for the innateness of the faculty of reason and not for the innateness of the content of the mind. So do Hutcheson and, arguably, Descartes.²² Eustachius a Sancto Paulo (1573–1640), celebrated professor of philosophy at the Sorbonne, holds the standard view that the idea of God is self-evident but not innate:

This proposition, *God exists*, from the nature of things and by itself is most known and known by itself, because the predicate is the same as the subject. ... Nonetheless, we do not know what God is, [the proposition] is not known to us by itself, and it requires a demonstration by means of those things which are better known to us, that is, by way of effects.²³

The distinction is between a proposition which is self-evident absolutely speaking and one which is evident with respect to us. ‘The whole is bigger than its parts’ is self-evident absolutely and with respect to us. ‘God exists’ is self-evident absolutely, because the predicate of existence is the same as the subject, God’s essence. Though, it is not evident with respect to us because we need an argument for it, such as the a posteriori proof favoured by Eustachius.

I investigate the views of Franco Burgersdijk (1590–1635), influential Reformed Aristotelian professor of Logic and Ethics at the University of Leiden, and his pupil Adriaan Heereboord (1613–1661), Reformed Cartesian professor of Logic at the University of Leiden. Very influential in the Dutch universities, they were taught in the Scottish universities for their importance in the Northern European Reformed scholastic curriculum.²⁴ Though prompted by historical evidence, the aim of the investigation is primarily

22 Peter Kivy, *The Seventh Sense. Francis Hutcheson and Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetics* (Oxford, 2003), 28; Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson*, 161ff.

23 Eustachius a Sancto Paulo, *Summa philosophiae quadripartita* (Paris, 1609), Disp. Tertia, quaestio II: ‘*Utrum, Deum esse, demonstrari possit; et quomodo. Haec propositio, Deus est, a parte rei et secundum se est notissima seu per se nota, quia praedicatum idem est cum subjecto; ... tamen non scimus de Deo quid est, non est nobis seu quoad nos per se nota, sed indiget demonstrari per ea quae sunt magis nota quoad nos, i. e. per effectus.*’

24 Hutton, *British Philosophy in the Seventeenth Century*, chapter 2.

analytic. Burgersdijk and Heereboord hold different views over the innateness of the idea of God. Burgersdijk's externalist argument shows the credentials of the empiricist approach characteristic of late-Renaissance Aristotelianism, while Heereboord's belief that the idea of God is in us as a *notitia innata* bears a Cartesian mark. Both philosophers believe that SoD is in some way naturally innate in men and formulate an epistemology of sense. In the latter part of this section I will investigate the epistemology of sensibility in Burgersdijk's account of moral judgments.

Burgersdijk's natural theology is in *Institutionum metaphysicarum Libri II* (Leiden, 1640), part II, chapter IV: *Utrum Deum esse*. The opening passage is mindful of Thomas Aquinas's position: Burgersdijk answers negatively to the question whether 'God exists' is self-evident in the way 'the whole is bigger than its parts' is. The reason is that

when one says that '*God exists*' is naturally known [*notum*], one does not mean that an awareness of this proposition and a sort of assent to it are inscribed and engraved in the minds of the newborn; rather one means this: the first notion of God, by which we establish that God exists, does not come from Revelation but from reasoning and argument.²⁵

The Aristotelian theory of science dictates that no discipline provides the evidence of the existence of its own subject matter. Hence, evidence that God exists is not within the remit of theology.

Burgersdijk further remarks that 'it is not possible that the mind is not affected by some sort of sense and awe of Deity; this is granted. Nonetheless, it does not follow that the proposition *God exists* is known to us in the same way as the proposition *The whole is bigger than its parts* is. No one can seriously deny this';²⁶ and 'wherever there is a sense of Deity, there some religion is established; and, conversely, where religion is established, there is some sense of Deity'.²⁷ Central to the demonstration of the existence of God is

25 Burgersdijk, *Metaphysicarum institutionum*, II, IV.II: '*Cum dicitur, Deum esse, naturaliter esse notum, non dicitur, huius propositionis notitiam atque assensum animis nascentium inscriptam atque insculptam esse sed hoc dicitur; primam illam Deitatis notionem, qua statuimus Deum esse, non ex revelatione proficisci, sed ex ratiocinatione et discursu.*'

26 Ibid., II, IV.I: '*Fieri non potest, ut mens non afficiatur aliquo sensu ac metu Deitatis: esto sane; at tamen hinc sequitur, non ita notam esse propositionem hanc, Deus est, quam, Totum est majus sua parte: nam posterius hoc nemo serio negare potest.*'

27 Ibid., II, IV.V: '*Ubi enim sensus est Deitatis, ibi et religio aliqua viget; et vicissim, ubi religio viget, ibi aliquis sensus est Deitatis.*'

the awareness that God is a being *'quod religiose colendum sit'*, which ought to be worshipped. The idea of God is unlike any other idea: it is not merely theoretical knowledge but a thought immediately connected to a feeling, or a sentiment. Like Calvin, Burgersdijk regards SoD as the universal marker of religiosity. Unlike Calvin, Burgersdijk believes that it is reason, and not an independent faculty/disposition of sense, which delivers the idea of God. The central text on SoD and natural theology is in thesis IV, which refers to the famous passage in Paul's *Letter to the Romans* I, 19–20:

In fact, there are so manifest evidences of God in almost all the creatures, and in particular they are so ingrained in this whole world, that those who do not gather from these that God exists and that He is to be worshipped, are committing injustice towards the truth.²⁸

The experience of the external world is sufficient to compel our judgment that God exists and hence to ground inexcusability. Burgersdijk draws a distinction between reason, the faculty which provides the idea of God, and the sense of deity which immediately accompanies the experience of the external world and which, crucially, precedes the rational proofs. Reason alone is the faculty of knowledge, and SoD is constituted as a quasi-sentiment of God, not as a faculty. What we call 'sense' is not what originates the idea, rather the disposition of reason to produce the idea of God and to accompany it with an emotional reaction. For Burgersdijk, SoD is important for the proofs of the existence of God but does not replace in any way natural theology. The success of the proofs is independent of the sense: what the sense does, is to give moral and epistemic strength to the proofs, and to incline the believer towards assenting to them.

Adriaan Heereboord's views of SoD are quite different from Burgersdijk's. Heereboord treats natural theology in *Meletemata philosophica*, chapter II and following.²⁹ In 1644 Heereboord met Descartes and converted to Cartesianism.³⁰ This might explain Heereboord's acceptance of innate ideas in what is, arguably, a misrepresentation of Descartes' own arguments. Descartes argues that the idea of God which we find in us reveals perfections which

28 Ibid., II, IV.IV: *'Nam tam manifesta Deitatis indicia omnibus pene creaturis, ac imprimis toti mundo insculpta sunt, ut, qui ex iis non colligant, et esse Deum, et Deum religiose colendum esse, dicantur veritatem in injustitia detinere.'*

29 Adriaan Heereboord, *Meletemata philosophica* (Leiden, 1659).

30 Theo Verbeek, *Descartes and the Dutch. Early Reactions to Cartesian Philosophy 1637–1650* (Carbondale, 1992), 37ff.

exceed our finitude; hence, God alone, not us, can be the maker of such an idea. As John Locke acknowledged, the idea of God is the most plausible candidate for innateness: were it not innate, no other idea could be.³¹ Nonetheless, Descartes never claimed that the content of the mind is innate in the sense of being always present or pre-existing in the mind. Heereboord seems to defend precisely this view, famously criticised by Locke.³²

According to Heereboord the *notitia Dei naturalis* is innate in our minds. He compares it to the seminal roots of the Stoic and Augustinian traditions, as remnants and reminders of the light which shone in men's mind before the Fall. By these roots the famous preconceived notion 'That God exists' is naturally inscribed in the minds of all men. It is naturally innate and inscribed that 'God exists', as well as that 'God is to be worshipped' and that 'God punishes the sinners'.³³ So, Heereboord believes that the practical principle that God is to be worshipped is innate along with the idea of God.³⁴ Heereboord interestingly refers to the propositions: 'God exists' and 'God is to be worshipped' with the scholastic term *notiones*. By this term Thomas Aquinas refers to the awareness of colours in our mind in virtue of the sense of sight. Burgersdijk uses it in the traditional meaning of awareness (*hujus propositionis notitia*, 'the awareness of this proposition'). Heereboord's original use of the term might originate in his own reading of Descartes. *Notio/notus* occurs only twice in the *Meditations*. In the title of *Meditation II 'De natura mentis humanae: quod ipsa sit notior quam corpus'* (my emphasis), with the meaning of 'more known to us', and in paragraph 11 of *Meditation III*, where Descartes simply refers to 'innate notions'. These uses are traditional. According to Descartes, a proposition can be immediately evident to the mind, as in the paradigmatic case of the *Cogito*: arguably, Heereboord attributed the epistemic feature of the immediate awareness of the idea of God to the proposition 'God exists'. Upon grasping the term 'God' one can conclude that God exists because the essence of God includes existence: hence, one has immediate awareness of (the proposition)

31 John Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* (London 1690), I, iv, 7.

32 Heereboord, *Meletemata Philosophica*, VII: 'Et Dei notitiam insitam, ex Dei idea per creationem nobis indita, tanquam nota artificis operi suo impressa, subtilissime probat Renatus Des-Cartes, in sua primae Philosophiae meditatione tertia.'

33 Ibid., ch. II: 'rudera ac vestigia et amissae illius lucis, quae in hominis mente ante lapsum fulgebat, superstites quaedam ac sopitae scintillulae, per quas communis ille et anticipata notio, Quod sit Deus, omnium hominum mentibus naturaliter est insculpta. ... omnibus naturaliter est insitum et insculptum, Deum esse, Deum esse colendum, Deum esse scelerum vindicem.'

34 Daniel Carey discusses this point in relation to John Locke's criticism, see *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson*, 40.

‘God exists’, not just of (the idea of) God. In Thomas, Burgersdijk, and Descartes *notio* refers to content or awareness; in Heereboord, it also refers to propositions as content of which we are aware.

Heereboord contends that the idea of God is in our mind in different ways, which suggest different origins: ‘The notion of God is [in us] in different ways and degrees: it can be confused in common, distinct in particular, salvific or non salvific. I am discussing the notion of God which is confused and non salvific, because in no way the distinct and salvific notion can originate from nature.’³⁵ The innate idea of God is confused because we do not know God’s essence, nor can we go beyond a mere grasping of the divine perfections (the Cartesian distinction between grasping and understanding). It is not sufficient for salvation because, according to Calvinism, salvation does not come as a reward for men’s efforts, let alone for the universal possession of the idea of God. From an epistemic point of view, more than the grasp of the divine character of the idea is required for a theological and religious understanding of it; one which grounds faith, and moves the will and the passions. What the idea conveys, as stated by Heereboord in chapter II, is the awareness of the existence of a deity worth of worship.

The following passage contains Heereboord’s argument from universal consensus:

*That there is such an innate notion is proved by: (1) universal and perennial consensus of all people, because of a sense of divinity naturally innate in all men. (2) the beneficial moral rules and institutions present among the Gentiles, which originated only in the light of nature. (3) the awe of a supreme deity which rushes forth out of men’s hearts.*³⁶

Here, SoD is the source of the consensus among men that God exists, although Heereboord does not describe it as a specific feature of human nature, nor makes he any reference to a faculty of sense. Mankind has an innate faculty, arguably reason, which grasps the innate idea of God: both faculty and idea are present in all men.

35 Heereboord, *Meletemata Philosophica*, IV: ‘*Ratione modi et graduum notitia Dei est: confusa in communi, distincta in particulari, salutaris vel non salutaris. De notitia Dei confusa et non salutari quaestio est. (distincta et salutari ex natura nullo modo hauriri potest).*’

36 Ibid., V: ‘*Notitiam innatam probant. 1) universalis et perpetuus omnium populorum consensus. sensus divinitatis naturaliter omnibus insitus. 2) salutaria morum praecepta et institutiones apud Gentiles, quae ex lumine naturae proflexerunt. 3) timor supremi alicujus numinis naturaliter ex corde hominis prorumpens.*’

Heereboord and Burgersdijk alike adhere to the Calvinist tenets of the immediateness of the idea of God, his worthiness of worship, and the inexcusability of those who deny it, but the philosophical differences are profound. In chapter V, Heereboord attacks his master's view:

Against those who deny this conclusion [that the idea of God is innate], as Burgersdijk, in book II of his *Metaphysics*, chapter 4, thesis 1 and 2: from Aristotle, he gathers that *the soul is a tabula rasa, on which nothing is written, and on which anything can be written*. He is not careful enough when he dismisses the view that this proposition, *God exists*, is known by itself, and by the very grasping of the words, which, once it is brought forth, compels our assent in the same way as *the whole is bigger than its parts* does. That *God exists* is equally known to us in virtue of the knowledge of the terms, if not of the simple awareness of them; the latter conclusion seems to be more compelling to us because its truth is closer to our senses, whereas the truth of the former is closer to our intellect.³⁷

Hence, 'the whole is bigger than its parts' is confirmed by (the evidence of) the senses; 'God exists' is confirmed by (the evidence of) the mind: 'in the same way as we know that *the whole is bigger than its parts* once we see and understand what *whole* and *part* are, likewise we know that *God exists* once we understand what the name of God means.'³⁸ Heereboord draws an interesting distinction between two grounds of evidence: the senses and the mind. What is remarkable is that the traditional example of an analytic judgment ('the whole is bigger than its parts') is claimed to be grounded on sensible experience as well as on reasoning. Perhaps Heereboord was influenced by Burgersdijk's empiricism that even principles have to be inductively tested on the ultimate truth-maker: the regular course of nature around us.

37 Ibid., V: *Burgersdicius lib. 2 Metaph. c. 4 th. 1 et 2.: ex Arist. animam esse tabulam rasam, in qua scriptum nihil est, sed quidvis inscribi potest. Non satis caute dicitur hanc propositionem, Deus est, non esse per se notam, nec intellecta significatione vocum, qui effertur, assensum imperare, sicut haec facit, Totum est majus sua parte. Aequè notum est ex terminis cognitis, si non notis, Deum esse, quam alterum istud; nam postremum hoc notius esse videtur, quia sensibus ejus veritas est vicinior: at prioris veritas intellectui est proprior.'*

38 Ibid., V: *'et sicut viso aut cognito, quid sit totum, quid pars, statim scitur, totum esse majus sua parte, ita etiam, intellecto quid significet hoc nomen, Deus, statim habetur et scitur, quod Deus est.'*

Burgersdijk and Heereboord agree on the immediateness of the awareness of the idea of God but disagree on how to understand its innateness. Calvin himself did not speak of an innate idea, but of an immediate conclusion produced by an innate faculty or disposition. Analogue positions to those held by Burgersdijk and Heereboord will feature in the discussions on innateness by John Locke, Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, including the famous image of the *tabula rasa*. I am referring to passages like the following in Locke's *Essay*: 'If it were true in matter of fact, that there were certain truths, wherein all mankind agreed, it would not prove them innate'; or that '[a]ssenting as soon as proposed and understood, proves them [the ideas] not innate.'³⁹ John Locke seems to be speaking Burgersdijk's language in these passages: they agree that a shared faculty among men is a better explanation for universal consensus and immediate awareness than innate ideas are. There is thus a similar intent in Burgersdijk and Locke to deny innate ideas and pursue an empiricist theory of knowledge. On the contrary, Heereboord's argument marches in the direction of Locke's criticism, for he holds that the idea of God is innate, not only the process or faculty by which we obtain it.

Burgersdijk's moral philosophy is in the *Idea Philosophiae Moralis*, published in Leiden in 1623. The *Idea* is a typical example of early seventeenth-century textbooks. While it retains the structure of a commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, it arranges the chapters thematically and goes beyond the textual interpretation of Aristotle. Burgersdijk's own voice can be heard at crucial instances. In chapter I, paragraph XVII, Burgersdijk endorses the Aristotelian and scholastic conviction that good and evil are apprehended and judged by *recta ratio*, right reason: a tenet of intellectualism in moral philosophy, which was the dominant paradigm in pre-Enlightenment philosophy. Hutcheson was schooled in this tradition which was still strong in the Scottish universities in the late seventeenth century. Alasdair MacIntyre contends that this tradition played a great influence on Hutcheson, though he famously departed from it in favour of sentimentalism. Hutcheson, following Shaftesbury, placed the original of moral perceptions in a faculty of sense, rather than in reason, as in the Aristotelian and scholastic traditions. MacIntyre also argues that Hutcheson was keen to minimise the disagreement between Aristotle's and his own views. He remarks that 'intellectualism had already been rejected to a significant degree at quite another level [other than Shaftesbury's], that of the practices of seventeenth-century religion'; and that, according to Henry

39 Locke, *Essay*, I, ii, 3 and 17.

Sidgwick, ‘the duality of the regulative principles in human nature ... marked “the most fundamental difference between the ethical thought of modern England and that of the old Greco-Roman world”’.⁴⁰ Leaving aside the oblique remark to ‘England’ which arguably stands for England and Scotland, the quote by Sidgwick hints at a fundamental shift in moral conceptions taking place thanks to, among others, Hutcheson: from scholastic intellectualism to the sense–reason dualism. As a testimony of the longer influence of Aristotle on moral subjects than on physical ones in the modern period, MacIntyre believes that much of the issue here is still on how the *Nicomachean Ethics* was interpreted.

If we accept that ‘Hutcheson [saw] in Aristotle’s text what eyes informed by Shaftesbury’s vision of the moral life allowed him to see’,⁴¹ and that Hutcheson’s persuasion that his views coincided with Aristotle’s is incorrect,⁴² one interesting place to look at in Aristotle is the role of perception and sensibility in moral judgments. Is Aristotle’s sensible perception of the morality of particular actions similar or comparable to Hutcheson’s moral sense? What Reformed scholastic philosophers understood Aristotle to be saying on these matters can also suggest to what extent intellectualism has already been rejected. We can now look into the role of sensibility in Burgersdijk’s commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Book II of the *Idea* is on the definition of *bonum*. The good is defined as that which is *congruum et conveniens* (fitting, agreeable) to someone, and that which gives rise to desire and love by its own nature (paragraph III). Burgersdijk addresses the question of how this good is apprehended:

And indeed there are things which are drawn towards the good by an innate appetite, without a previous understanding of it, and which run away from the bad: they do so, striving for the good and restraining from the bad, by elicited appetite, in virtue of the presented notion of the objected thing ... Such innate appetite cannot diverge from its goal, and it flows from the nature of each individual thing.⁴³

40 MacIntyre, *Whose Justice*, 269, 268.

41 *Ibid.*, 269.

42 Maria Elton, ‘Moral Sense and Natural reason’, *Review of Metaphysics*, 62 (2008), 79–110, 83.

43 Burgersdijk, *Idea*, III. V–VI: ‘Etenim res quaedam sunt, quae innato appetitu, sine praevia cognitionem in bonum feruntur, aut a malo refugiunt: sunt, quae in bonum feruntur, et a malo refugiunt appetitu elicitu, praeeunte objectae rei notitia. ... appetitus innatus non possit a scopo aberrare. Fluit enim a cujusque rei natura.’

This interesting passage is balanced by the remark, in chapter X.V, that our moral virtue cannot be exerted without dianoetic virtue, because our appetite is blind without the light of reason which judges the objects. Burgersdijk is still within the intellectualist approach of Aristotelian and scholastic philosophy, and we have here no interpretation of a sense in Hutchesonian fashion. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that Burgersdijk argues for the existence of a specific innate appetite towards good and evil which activates itself upon the simple presentation of an object, without the intervention of reason. Such an innate appetite is both descriptive and normative, because it furnishes the mind with a perception that a certain thing is good (or bad), that the thing ought to be desired (or loathed), and that finally inclines the will towards (or away from) it. Though it is reason which judges the good, it is a sensible faculty which first perceives it, and already apprehends it as good – once the virtuous habit takes hold of one's character.

Burgersdijk's position seems to be of a mixed nature: on the one side, reason necessarily supports our appetite and presents it with the natures of good and evil; on the other, men have an innate appetite towards good which is not simply an inclination towards good, rather it is an immediate perception of the goodness (or badness) of an object. The underlying debate is on *synderesis* as the universal grasp of moral principles. Let us see the difference between Burgersdijk and Aquinas on this matter. In order to account for the universal grasp of moral principles and the actuality of practical error, 'Aquinas . . . identifies *synderesis* with the Aristotelian intellect that grasps first principles. He believes that Aristotle himself recognizes this function for practical intellect. *Synderesis* is always correct because it grasps the ultimate first principles, and we cannot be mistaken about them.'⁴⁴ A remarkable difference from Hutcheson:

Practical *nous* grasps the relevant features of particular cases . . . and allowing the application of universal principles. This distinction marks a very important difference between Hutcheson and Aristotle, because from Aristotle's point of view, it means that the morality of actions is known by understanding – that is, *nous* –, a principle of knowledge that is intellectual, not sensible like Hutchesonian moral sense.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Terence Irwin, *The Development of Ethics. From Socrates to the Reformation* (Oxford, 2007), 574.

⁴⁵ Elton, 'Moral Sense and Natural reason', 88.

What is the role of sensibility? Simply to convey by means of sensible perception the particular actions in which the principles are intuited. Like Aquinas, Burgersdijk believes in the guiding role of reason in moral philosophy. Nonetheless, he seems to attribute a richer role to sensibility in the judgments of practical reason. The sensible appetite evaluates the object in a conscious way, and moves the will accordingly. Burgersdijk's position seems to anticipate the awareness among later British philosophers that the 'experience of virtue is sensory as well as intellectual'.⁴⁶ Arguably, this reflects the evolving epistemic status of the Calvinist sense in the seventeenth century.

5 From Calvin to Hutcheson: a comparison

The conclusive part of the paper seeks to highlight the assonances between the Reformed scholastic views and Shaftesbury, Locke, and Hutcheson. The most immediate source for Hutcheson's Calvinism is the teaching he received in his youth. As mentioned above, MacIntyre and Broadie have commented on the philosophical formation of Hutcheson as one dominated by the relation with Calvinism, often in the form of a constant struggle with its negative understanding of human nature. The universities and academies of the period in Scotland and Ulster were Reformed institutions where the Westminster Confession of Faith (1648) was an influential document. The regents taught a form of Reformed scholasticism which, after the 1660s, was heavily influenced by Cartesianism.⁴⁷ The young Hutcheson was taught a combination of Aristotelian intellectualism in moral philosophy and the Calvinist doctrine of the Fall with the addition, later at university, of Carmichael's lectures on natural law. The extent of Hutcheson's own departure from the Aristotelo-Reformed scholastic teaching is remarkable, though I wish to suggest that there are assonances between Hutcheson's sense and the Calvinist sense. I am not aware of a specific treatment of SoD in the philosophy curriculum of the universities, although some theses introduce the concept. Robert Forbes, regent at King's College, Aberdeen, in his *Theses philosophicae* (1684) criticises the Cartesian a

46 Hutton, 'From Cudworth to Hume', 11. Hutton refers in particular to the Henry More and Adam Smith.

47 See Shepherd, *Philosophy and Science*, 337; Giovanni Gellera, 'The Philosophy of Robert Forbes: a Scottish Scholastic Response to Cartesianism', *Journal of Scottish Philosophy*, 11 (2013), 191–211; and idem, 'The reception of Descartes in the Seventeenth-Century Scottish Universities: Metaphysics and Natural Philosophy (1650–1680)', *Journal of Scottish Philosophy*, 13 (2015), 179–201.

priori demonstration of the existence of God and contends that ‘it is necessary that those who approach God also believe that God exists.’⁴⁸ This seems to be a reference to Calvin’s SoD, a point reinforced by the fact that the overall thrust of Forbes’s critique of Descartes is the belief that Cartesianism is at odds with Calvinism. Forbes seems to contend that belief in God has logical and chronological priority over any rational proofs. Descartes’ proofs fail because a sense of deity is necessary to complete the rational argument. Only a prior ‘belief that God exists’ can produce ‘knowledge that God exists’, reason alone cannot. Regent John Loudon in his *Theses philosophicae* (1697) writes that: ‘*God exists*, and his light, without any other arguments needed, seizes the mind and compels its assent.’⁴⁹ Loudon’s point is that the idea of God innate in our mind compels our assent to the existence of God.

In what follows, I first draw a comparison between Hutcheson’s main influences (Shaftesbury and Locke) and Calvin and Burgersdijk; then I draw a closer view of the epistemology of sense in Hutcheson, Calvin, and Burgersdijk.

The first possible assonance is, perhaps surprisingly, about the positive conception of human nature. In Shaftesbury, Hutcheson must have seen a confirmation of the ideas that our nature is God-given, and that we have good affections and the natural capacity to feel attraction for them.⁵⁰ The central aspect here is a normative view of human nature: how we are dictates what good and evil are, not just what is beneficial and hurtful to us. Shaftesbury and Hutcheson were following a long-held scholastic view, albeit admittedly not a Calvinist view. Burgersdijk is willing to accord importance to reason and to its accompanying sentiment in natural theology, and to reason and sensibility in moral judgments. Calvin’s negative understanding of human nature limits his acceptance of the role of sense to the inexcusability of the atheist. Burgersdijk seems to hold a more positive account of human nature in coping with his Reformed faith. Hutcheson might have picked on this Reformed scholastic anthropology, as well as on the Cambridge Platonists’ ‘affirmation of the

48 Section VI: ‘*Accedentem ad Deum, oportet credere Deum esse.*’ I have analysed this text and remarked its vicinity to Burgersdijk’s proof elsewhere: Gellera, ‘The Philosophy of Robert Forbes’, 200–1.

49 Section XII: ‘*Deus existit, ut luce sua, absque argumentis aliunde adductis, mentem in assensum rapiat.*’

50 The exposition of the key features of Hutcheson’s sense are taken from Luigi Turco, ‘Moral Sense and the Foundations of Morals’ in Alexander Broadie (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 2003), 136–56, 136.

innate human ability to grasp important truths independent of the benefit of Christian revelation'.⁵¹

A second possible assonance is on what counts as 'innate'. From Descartes and Locke, Hutcheson took the ideal theory. From Locke he also took the fundamental assumption that innate ideas are dead to philosophers. Hutcheson extensively worked on how to combine his belief in a normative sense (hence in a normative human nature) and the implausibility of innate ideas.⁵² Burgersdijk seems to be on Lockean ground when he rejects innate ideas and seeks to frame SoD within an empiricist theory of knowledge. As remarked above, the innateness of the idea of God was always spelled out in terms of the innateness of a faculty or disposition which produces such an idea, and not of the innateness of the actual idea (with the exception of Heereboord). Notwithstanding the corruption caused by the Fall, human nature is capable of at least belief in God, because both SoD and reason are 'innate' in men. The Calvinists were far from the internal harmony advocated by Hutcheson but Hutcheson could have felt for the potentialities of the Calvinist sense freed of the Calvinist negative conception of human nature. A second decisive Lockean influence on Hutcheson is the idea that pleasure and pain always accompany our thoughts. We can trace, again, a possible assonance with Reformed scholasticism. Burgersdijk argues that in the perception of the idea of God we are immediately moved by piety, respect, and awe. Likewise, in moral matters, sensibility delivers to us an immediate perception of good and evil within the habit of virtue.

Hutcheson's (moral and aesthetic) sense(s) is characterised by the following: (1) it is internal and produces simple ideas (of beauty, of good and so on); (2) it is independent of our will, immediate, and common to all mankind; (3) it cannot find further justification (in reason) than can the sense of taste for distinguishing between sweet food and bitter food; and (4) reason can correct the sense, but it is not reason which perceives the simple ideas which are the

51 Gill, 'From Cambridge Platonism', 21. Gill calls this affirmation the 'platonism' of the Cambridge Platonists.

52 The Scottish universities were less impressed than Hutcheson with Book I of Locke's *Essay*. John Locke is rarely cited in the graduation theses only to criticise his rejection of innate ideas as a favour to the atheists. See for example Alexander More, *Theses philosophicae* (Aberdeen, 1691), III; and John Loudon, *Theses philosophicae* (Edinburgh, 1697), X; George Peacock, *Theses philosophicae* (Aberdeen, 1711), V. What the regents defend is a version of Cartesian innatism.

object of sense.⁵³ Let us now look at these points in Calvin, Burgersdijk, and Heereboord.

(1) Hutcheson's sense furnishes the mind with simple ideas. Likewise, in Aquinas the notions/awareness of colours only originate in the senses. Yet, the traditional scholastic senses, either external or internal, are only conducive of sensible species, not of Hutchesonian simple ideas. Senses are not a faculty of knowledge. Calvin's influential intuition is that the idea of God arises from *sensing* that the experience of the external world is incomplete without transcendence. This sensing is irresistible, immediate, spontaneous, original. It is a principle of the unity of experience. 'Sensing' is now suggestive of propositional content. Similarly, in Burgersdijk the experience of the external world raises a sentiment for the deity which directs towards, and gives strength to, the proofs of the existence of God. With Calvin, we see the introduction of a source of truth other than reason, although human nature is not yet conceived of as a duality of reason and sensibility in the early modern sense. The natural idea of God, as opposed to the theological/religious idea, is produced immediately by SoD. It is not an object of experience: rather, our experience of the external world is such that the idea of God is naturally inferred. In the same way as Hutcheson's sense is internal because it arises only if certain other ideas have arisen in the external senses, SoD produces an idea only on the experience of the external world, without which it would be a blind sense. On Burgersdijk's view, the 'internal' aspect lies in that the sense accompanies the inference of a novel idea (of God) on the grounds of external experience. On Heereboord's innatist view, on the contrary, the word 'God' is enough for us to grasp its self-evidence, and the sense amounts to this immediate awareness.

(2) It is crucial to Calvin that SoD is universal and beyond our will in order to ground theism's appeal to universality and its epistemic force on both the believer and the atheist. Similarly to Hutcheson, Calvin believes that the deliverances of sense are natural to mankind because the sense is one of men's faculties/dispositions. Burgersdijk and Heereboord have a more modest understanding of sense. There is no faculty of sense at work: reason is the true universal principle of human knowledge and sense is understood in relation with the activity of reason. All agree that SoD is beyond our will: because sense is part of our nature (Calvin), because it is how the mind works (Burgersdijk), or because the mind is compelled by the self-evidence of the idea of God (Heereboord). SoD is not vincibile: the denier of SoD is not

53 Turco, 'Moral Sense', 136–8.

in a justifiable epistemic condition because her only ground for denial is a malevolent disposition, and not lack of evidence. SoD is original, although it requires illumination by faith (and, on Burgersdijk's and Heereboord's views, arguments by natural reason) to guide from 'belief that God exists' to 'knowledge that God exists'.

(3) In Hutcheson, sense is justified without appeal to reason. Matters of sense are not of reason to judge on. The belief in God produced by SoD, according to Calvin, is strong enough to be invincible (hence inexcusably rejected), but also weak enough not to argue against the total depravity of the human faculties. SoD has to provide awareness of God but no proper knowledge of God. As a 'judgment of a highly unself-conscious and automatic kind' as Paul Helm describes it, SoD is a judgment which is foundational but not rational. In Hutchesonian terms, the 'independence from reason' of sense does not seem to apply to Reformed scholasticism. Burgersdijk and Heereboord are foundationalists of the rationalist kind within their respective Aristotelian and Cartesian positions. In varying degrees, sense always refers to the activities of reason. Reformed scholasticism and Hutcheson display fundamentally different anthropologies here, whereas more common ground can be found between Hutcheson and Calvin.

(4) In Hutcheson, sense is constantly engaged in practical judgments. This contemplates the possibility of error, which is corrected by reason.⁵⁴ In Calvin, Burgersdijk, and Heereboord SoD is a quasi-background awareness which sets a fuller understanding of God in motion. SoD is not 'constantly engaged in practical judgments' because it is limited to the specific and individual relation to the deity and to the understanding of the external world from this perspective only. SoD is constitutional of human nature but not all-encompassing in our perceptual life. SoD makes a "new" idea, that of God, available to us: the harmony and design of created things, as well as the impossibility that they constitute the whole of reality, direct the mind towards the idea of God. This idea is later refined by study of the Scriptures, practice of faith, natural theology, but it is not 'corrected' by reason in any meaningful sense.

⁵⁴ See Alexander Broadie, 'Hutcheson on Connoisseurship and the Role of Reflection', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 17 (2009), 351–64. Broadie investigates reflection as the 'antidote to associationism' in that it corrects the intellectual and practical harmfulness of the associations of ideas. Reflection takes part in the formation of moral and aesthetic judgments, it works on the deliverances of the sense, its role is different from the sense's and it is not always beneficial. There are two concepts of reflection: it is a notice we take of something in the mind, or it is a discursive cognitive act. In the latter sense, it is comparable to scholastic reason.

6 Conclusion

The influences of Shaftesbury and Locke on Hutcheson are well documented and are acknowledged by Hutcheson himself. He is indebted with respect to the fundamental intuitions of sentimentalism and the novel epistemology of ideas. The role of Henry More and of the Cambridge Platonists has attracted recent attention, in the direction of the Moral Self-Governance View and the stress on the importance of sentimentalism. Regarding religion, the traditional narrative tells us of Hutcheson's rejection of certain aspects of Calvinism: if not of Calvinism as a private matter of faith, certainly of Calvinism as a philosophical source.

Contrary to this interpretation, I hope to have shown that Calvin and Reformed scholasticism played a role in shaping Hutcheson's philosophy along with Descartes, the Cambridge Platonists, Shaftesbury, and Locke. Hutcheson rejected the Calvinist negative account of human nature, with all its implications in moral psychology, anthropology, and epistemology. My contention is that his rejection of Calvinism was not a wholesale rejection. Calvinism was a lively and fecund tradition and Reformed scholastics such as Franco Burgersdijk, arguably guided by philosophical as well as by religious concerns, gave a philosophical mould to Calvin's intuitions which produced more moderate (and more systematic) views on human nature, natural reason, psychology, and epistemology. Hutcheson was acquainted with Reformed scholasticism as the dominant philosophy in the seventeenth-century Scottish universities. Hence, aspects of the original intuition of Calvin and the epistemology of sense developed by the Reformed scholastics, such as Burgersdijk and Heereboord, might well be a so far unrecognised thread in the complex fabric of Hutcheson's sentimentalism.

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Francis Hutcheson and the Emerging Aesthetic Experience

Endre Szécsényi

‘There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion.’
(Sir Francis Bacon: *On Beauty*, 1625)

1 Introduction

To speak about the significance of Francis Hutcheson’s aesthetics does not seem to be unproblematic.¹ Though we can certainly find several analyses and interpretations of this topic, the odd fact that the only book-length study on this subject written by Peter Kivy was published in 1976 (and he could moreover re-issue this monograph in an *unchanged* form in 2003²) is quite telling. The peculiarity of the situation becomes even more visible, if we consider the consensual and deep-seated opinion of Hutcheson scholarship according to which he was the very first philosopher who systematically dealt with aesthetics in Europe. In his canonical *History of Modern Criticism*, René Wellek claims that ‘Hutcheson ... wrote the first formal treatise on aesthetics in English’;³ then, it is true, Wellek provides a further three sentences in total about Hutcheson’s aesthetics. In his oft-cited book, George Dickie writes that Hutcheson ‘was the first to give a systematic, philosophical account’ of taste;⁴ and – some two decades earlier – Dickie added to this that Hutcheson’s ‘theory served as a prototype for subsequent British thinkers.’⁵ Most recently, in the

1 This Research was supported by a Marie Curie Intra European Fellowship within the 7th European Community Framework Programme.

2 Though supplemented by some papers he later published about Hutcheson. Peter Kivy, *The Seventh Sense. Francis Hutcheson Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetics* (Oxford, New York, 2003; 2nd edn).

3 René Wellek, *A History of Modern Criticism: 1750–1950. Vol. 1: The Later Eighteenth Century* (London, 1961), 107.

4 George Dickie, *The Century of Taste. The Philosophical Odyssey of Taste in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, Oxford, 1996).

5 George Dickie, ‘Taste and Attitude: The Origin of the Aesthetic’ in idem, *Art and the Aesthetic: an Institutional Analysis* (Ithaca, 1974), 53–77, 60.

first volume of *A History of Modern Aesthetics*, Paul Guyer writes: ‘the history of what we now call aesthetics as a specialty within academic philosophy began in Britain with ... the first part of [Hutcheson’s] *Inquiry [into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue]*.⁶ These and many other similar sentences may suggest that Hutcheson’s aesthetics, primarily the first part of his *Inquiry* of 1725⁷, is worth serious study and it must have an eminent place in the history of modern aesthetics, it must be a corner stone at least. After surveying some significant and influential historical narratives of aesthetics, however, we will be disappointed, because Hutcheson’s aesthetics is either ignored or discussed briefly and one-sidedly. Tensions can always be inspiring, as is the one between the seemingly high appreciation of Hutcheson’s aesthetics and its relatively poor discussion in the histories of modern aesthetics. It seems that we should opt for an approach between the two following ways. We can acknowledge, or are forced to acknowledge, at least tacitly, that Hutcheson’s aesthetics has only some “historic” significance, that is, it was the first attempt to treat the aesthetic in a philosophical language, indeed, but it turns out, somewhat unexpectedly, that its “doctrine” is neither too profound (it is mainly an interpretation of some of Lord Shaftesbury’s ideas and a more or less skilful application of John Locke’s epistemological method), nor particularly interesting in itself.⁸ All right, let us mention ‘the sense of beauty’ as his terminological invention, ‘the unity amidst variety’ as his notorious formula of beauty, or his far-reaching endeavour to bind together aesthetics with morality, then, having left these compulsory subjects behind, let us speak about more complex and more intriguing figures like David Hume, Edmund Burke or Immanuel Kant, instead. The other way to resolve this tension, or to show it from a different perspective, would be the elaboration of a new – or at least a partly new – strategy in the understanding of Hutcheson’s aesthetic theory within the framework of the genealogy of modern aesthetics.

In my paper, I would like to contribute to the latter. In section 2, I will point at some methodological problems of the treatment of Hutcheson in

6 Paul Guyer, *A History of Modern Aesthetics. Volume 1: The Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2014), 98.

7 Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue in Two Treatises*, ed. Wolfgang Leidhold (Indianapolis, 2004). (Hereafter: *An Inquiry*.)

8 As, for example, Norton evaluates: ‘Hutcheson’s opinions about the actual nature of beauty ... and his ideas about the mechanism of the “moral sense,” which responds to the pleasing perception of such an ordered regularity, are not particularly new or illuminating.’ Robert E. Norton, *The Beautiful Soul. Aesthetic Morality in the Eighteenth Century* (Ithaca, London, 1995), 42.

the histories of modern aesthetics which somewhat hinder us in grasping the complexity of his attitude. In section 3, I will show that theology (the theological interest) is a significant and inseparable part of the emerging aesthetic discourse, and that we can identify different theological or religious layers even in Hutcheson's aesthetic thinking. In order to demonstrate this, I will utilize some of Joseph Addison's essays as significant – albeit in the recent scholarship by and large neglected – inspirational sources for Hutcheson. In section 4, I shall outline an aesthetic alternative, called the aesthetics of shades, to Hutcheson's explicitly elaborated theory of "philosophical beauty", and I will suggest that the former is the genuine form of the modern aesthetic experience, and as such, it is a broader, richer and more profound type of perception than that of the "philosophical beauty". In section 5, I will show that behind the main stream of "philosophical beauty", this broader notion of "the aesthetic" can also be discerned in Hutcheson's writings; and, in section 6, that Hutcheson acknowledges the existence of other types of aesthetic experience, moreover, he also contributes to the enrichment and the extension of the Addisonian 'pleasures of the imagination' in his philosophical essays on laughter. Finally, in section 7, I will briefly interpret an intriguing passage in which Hutcheson speaks of the fundamental religious experience in the terms of "the aesthetic".

2 Some lessons from historiography

Briefly, two main points can be raised, if one wants to explain – at least in part – the "ill-treatment" of Hutcheson's aesthetics in the majority of the frequently consulted narratives. I do emphasize that I am not writing about particular studies or book-chapters analyzing certain aspects of Hutcheson's aesthetics of which there are quite a few; and many of them are excellent, critical and insightful. I am mostly referring to narratives or (intellectual) histories which apply a broader perspective to this topic, and try to find some features which can characterize the rise of modern aesthetics during the period which more or less coincides with Hutcheson's lifetime. If, for instance, a 17th–18th-century history of aesthetics, for some historical or theoretical reason, considers Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz as the central figure in the emergence of modern aesthetics, we can be almost absolutely sure that Hutcheson will be completely ignored or barely mentioned in that work. In such narratives, it is generally claimed or suggested that modern aesthetics, at least in its full-fledged

philosophical form, is fundamentally a German enterprise. One conspicuous example is Alfred Baeumler's influential *Irrationalität*-book of 1923 ranging roughly from Leibniz to Kant in which Hutcheson is mentioned only once as an 'englisch Psycholog'⁹ in the context of the young Kant's use of the word 'sense.' The other patent example could be Joachim Ritter's high-ranking article 'Aesthetik, aesthetisch' of 1971 from the first volume of his monumental *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*¹⁰ which also overlooks Hutcheson (and, with him, of course, several other British philosophers). But even in his paper entitled *From Addison to Kant*,¹¹ M. H. Abrams (who passed away a few months ago at the age of 102) also stresses the role of Leibniz in the rise of modern aesthetic discourse, which he presents as a historical development from the traditional construction paradigm to the perceptual paradigm of the arts; and does not acknowledge Hutcheson's significance at all. Neither does Jeffrey Barnouw in his otherwise excellent and informative paper, where he ignores Hutcheson, while he elaborates a detailed history from the 17th-century modes of subtle and sensitive perception in the works of Baltasar Gracián, Dominique Bouhours and others to Alexander von Baumgarten's aesthetics. What he is saying about Leibniz's role in this story is quite characteristic:

Understanding Leibniz's conception of sensation is essential to an appreciation of the original meaning and intention of aesthetics, not simply in the sense that Baumgarten gave explicit and systematic form to something that was suggested at various points in Leibniz, but further in that what is formulated in outline and envisaged as a whole by Baumgarten can be given richer content and a deeper, broader foundation by a return to Leibniz.¹²

So, for Barnouw, Leibniz and his 'conception of sensation' are the issues which have eminent significance in the emergence of modern aesthetics. However,

9 Alfred Baeumler, *Das Irrationalitätsproblem in der Aesthetik und Logik des 18. Jahrhunderts bis zur Kritik der Urteilskraft* (Darmstadt, 1967), 262.

10 Joachim Ritter et al. (eds.), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (Basel, 1971–2007; 13 vols), I, 555–80.

11 M. H. Abrams, 'From Addison to Kant: Modern Aesthetics and the Exemplary Art' in Ralph Cohen (ed.), *Studies in Eighteenth-Century British Art and Aesthetics* (Los Angeles, London, 1985), 16–48. His famous and influential *Mirror and the Lamp* (New York, 1953) is some thirty years earlier.

12 Jeffrey Barnouw, 'The Beginnings of "Aesthetics" and the Leibnizian Conception of Sensation' in Paul Mattick (ed.), *Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics and the Reconstruction of Art* (Cambridge, 1993), 52–95, 82.

this seems to be at odds with the fact that Leibniz was not even sufficiently or properly exploited by Baumgarten and other Wolffian philosophers. Without embarking upon the issue of Leibniz's reception, I would just like to make one remark. In the early 18th century, of all Leibniz's book-length writing it was only his *Theodicy* of 1710 and the Latin edition of his brief and enigmatic *Monadology* of 1721 that could be read; his ideas were not well-known, or known at all, so they could hardly make a noteworthy impact on late 17th and early 18th century proto-aesthetic or aesthetic theories.¹³ Leibniz's philosophy would take a new lease of life in the Wolffian school, with Baumgarten making a reference to Leibniz already in his dissertation of 1735 in which he coined the word 'aesthetics,' but it only means that Leibniz's metaphysical and epistemological ideas became effective in the aesthetic thinking from the 1730s on, and at first mainly in Germany and Switzerland.¹⁴ If, however, we look at some of the most notable British authors of the period, we can see that certain writings of Lord Shaftesbury, Joseph Addison or Hutcheson were both published and widely-read (some of them went through several editions, were translated into French and later into German).

Moreover, in the historical studies which acknowledge Hutcheson's contribution to modern aesthetic thinking, we can discern a tendency of overshadowing, as it were, either from the direction of his father's generation, especially from John Locke and Lord Shaftesbury, or from that of the younger generation, especially from David Hume, Thomas Reid, Adam Smith, or Edmund Burke. And another tendency, which has desperately held its position since at least the time of Baeumler and Ernst Cassirer, exacerbates the situation. It is to create the history of 17th–18th-century aesthetics with an eye on Immanuel Kant's third *Critique* as its *telos*, as if every – at least worthy or viable – earlier theoretical insight would be summarized and advanced in the *Critique of Judgement*.¹⁵ This teleological structure can be found in Dabney

13 To be sure, Leibniz's principle of 'a sufficient reason', probably known from his *Monadologie*, is mentioned by Hutcheson under the head 'Fantastick Beauty' (Hutcheson, *An Inquiry*, 39), as an example for one of 'the Inconveniences of [the] Love of Uniformity' in theory. The adjective 'fantastick' already expresses a critical tone. And in a footnote of his *A Synopsis of Metaphysics*, he also recommends Leibniz's *Théodicée* as further reading (in the company of other philosophers' works) to his students. cf. Francis Hutcheson, *Logic, Metaphysics, and the Natural Sociability of Mankind*, eds. James Moore and Michael Silverthorne (Indianapolis 2006), 178, n3.

14 Leibniz's reception is traceable only in Germany during this period, cf. Catherine Wilson, 'The Reception of Leibniz in the Eighteenth Century' in Nicholas Jolley (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Leibniz* (Cambridge, 2006), 442–74, 443–4.

15 Of course, several scholars have already called the attention to the indefensibility of

Townsend's paper of 1987, in which he writes that 'at the beginning is Lord Shaftesbury ... , in the middle are Francis Hutcheson, who has Shaftesbury explicitly in view, and David Hume. ... At the end stands Immanuel Kant who sums up the movement.'¹⁶ The chronological order is not the point in this list, but that it was a 'movement' to be accomplished by Kant. Guyer's study of 2004 is another example: despite the fact, that it concerns the period between 1711 and 1735, and that Guyer comments on Lord Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Jean-Baptiste Du Bos, Addison, and Baumgarten in a sequence, we also get a section with the title 'A glimpse ahead: Kant.' It is not accidental, because the whole conception is evidently Kantian, since Guyer claims that 'the moment of the origin of modern aesthetics' can be found in the second and third decades of the 18th century, and it can be explained around an emerging 'central idea ... of the freedom of the imagination', because 'the attraction of this idea ... provided much of the impetus behind the explosion of aesthetic theory of the period.'¹⁷ In other words, Guyer has a definite interpretation of the Kantian aesthetics which would grow out of the concept of the freedom of imagination, and he wishes to discover retrospectively its antitypes in the philosophical texts of the period in question. In his recent monumental enterprise, the (also Kantian) 'free play of our mental powers' phrase (as one element of his tripartite interpretive scheme) has a very similar function in his pre-Kantian narrative.¹⁸ It seems to me that Guyer's method is very similar, in a certain regard, to an earlier widely-known approach to the origin of modern aesthetics which focused on the concept of disinterestedness.¹⁹

this teleological narrative, for example: '[s]uch a story invokes a teleology, explicitly casting the British discussion as a kind of dress rehearsal for the full-fledged philosophical aesthetics of Immanuel Kant and his heirs.' Andrew Ashfield and Peter de Bolla, 'Introduction' in idem (eds.), *The Sublime: a Reader in British Eighteenth-Century Aesthetic Theory* (Cambridge, 1996), 1–16, 2.

16 Dabney Townsend, 'From Shaftesbury to Kant. The Development of the Concept of Aesthetic Experience' in Peter Kivy (ed.), *Essays on the History of Aesthetics* (Rochester, 1992), 205–23, 205.

17 Paul Guyer, 'The Origins of Modern Aesthetics, 1711–35' in Peter Kivy (ed.), *The Blackwell Guide to Aesthetics* (Malden, 2004), 15–44, 15 and 16.

18 Hutcheson's aesthetics 'pointed toward the idea that this response [to beauty] is a form of free mental play that has only indirect cognitive and moral benefits.' Guyer, *A History of Modern Aesthetics*, 100. There could be a double intention in this approach: to put Hutcheson aesthetic discourse into a progress ending in Kant's *Third Critique*, and to make a distance between the aesthetic interest and the moral, devotional, etc. ones. The stress on 'indirectness' serves the latter function all along in Guyer's narrative.

19 This approach was developed, primarily, by Jerome Stolnitz and George Dickie in a

Both the narratives of Jerome Stolnitz, George Dickie and that of Guyer are built around a single concept or a ‘central idea’: they try to outline the emergence of modern aesthetics as a *progress* from the obscure, accidental or fragmented first appearance of their chosen concept to its clear, full-fledged state in Kant, or sometimes in Arthur Schopenhauer. I think these kinds of teleological narratives make a significant reduction in the scope (and meaning) of earlier aesthetics for the sake of the autonomy of “the aesthetic” found in disinterestedness, in the freedom of imagination, of the genius artist, of the work of art for its own sake, etc. – or, simply, for the sake of a story which can be told easily.

We can draw some lessons from the treatment of Hutcheson’s aesthetics as it appeared in this rather incomplete outline of historiography. Neither those approaches which regard modern aesthetics as presenting a fundamentally epistemological issue²⁰, nor those which concentrate on the rise of one ‘central idea’ in pre-Kantian aesthetics, that is, which apply a teleological narrative to interpret the emergence of “the aesthetic”, offer the proper intellectual

discussion about 18th- and 19th-century taste theories and attitude theories (I would omit here the long list of papers written from the early 1960s to the early 1980s). Despite the sharp debate between the two, they seem to agree that the concept of disinterestedness is the characteristic feature of modern aesthetic experience. It is, however, worth mentioning Miles Rind’s paper, in which he convincingly argues that the Kantian disinterestedness as the defining feature of taste cannot be found in 18th-century British philosophers, cf. Miles Rind, ‘The Concept of Disinterestedness in Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetics’ *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 40 (2002): 67–87. Ronald Paulson also claims that there were two conceptions of disinterestedness in the 18th century, a ‘strong’ and a ‘weak’ one; the former is the Kantian or Nietzschean version, the latter can be found in the works of ‘English theorists with the exception of Hutcheson, who held to the strong sense.’ Ronald Paulson, *The Beautiful, Novel, and Strange. Aesthetics and Heterodoxy* (Baltimore, London, 1996), 23. Though I disagree with the clause concerning Hutcheson, since he does stress the function of a ‘superior Interest’: ‘if both [our own Happiness and publick Affections] are *natural Dispositions* of our Minds, and nothing can stop the Operation of *publick Affections* but some *selfish Interest*, the only way to give publick Affections their full Force, and to make them prevalent in our Lives, must be to remove these *Opinions of opposite Interests*, and to shew a superior Interest on their side.’ Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense*, ed. Aaron Garrett (Indianapolis, 2002), 5. (Hereafter: *An Essay*.)

20 Certainly, there are epistemological dimensions of Hutcheson’s aesthetic theory too, cf., for example, David Paxman, ‘Aesthetics as Epistemology, Or Knowledge Without Certainty’, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 26 (1992–3): 285–306. But, as for me, Hutcheson’s and several of his contemporaries’ *primary* aim was not to look for answers to epistemological questions when they pursued, one way or another, “the aesthetic”.

historical framework and the means to grasp the peculiarities and the significance of Hutcheson's contribution to modern aesthetics. Their poor or one-sided treatment of Hutcheson's theory may be a symptom of their inability to map and to explain the origins of modern aesthetics in its complexity and richness, too. If we want to understand its origins in order to gain an interpretative frame for Hutcheson's aesthetics, it would not be enough to begin with Lord Shaftesbury, as many later narratives do: we would have to go back at least to the middle of the 17th century as many historians have suggested since the time of Heinrich von Stein.²¹ I regard "the aesthetic" as a result of the interaction and interference of several discourses; this process was multi-disciplinary, having to do with theology, moral philosophy, natural sciences, rhetoric, epistemology (psychology), philosophical anthropology, conversational literature, etc. Then, the historical process in which it was gradually rising cannot be confined to one "discipline" or reduced to a mostly teleological history of one or two philosophical concepts which are to be found finally in Kant or Schopenhauer.

Furthermore, I agree with those who – implicitly or explicitly – claim that the major characteristic features of the emerging aesthetic are not artistic or art theoretical; it is rather a new "look" upon the whole world which eventually includes also the artistic sphere.²² Art criticism and theory would gain great profit from the new aesthetics, but only later, from the second half of the 18th century onward. Literature and the fine arts rather served as illustrative examples in early proto-aesthetic and aesthetic discourse, as in Hutcheson's case. For him, and others of the time, the paradigmatic examples or occasions for the "aesthetic" experience were natural scenes and things,²³ which at the same time were somewhat distinguished places or examples of the Creation. By no means was the rising aesthetics identical with a growing philosophical reflection on arts and literature or were the new phenomena or movements in arts the chief inspirational or stimulating source for the emerging "aesthetic"

21 K(arl) Heinrich von Stein, *Die Entstehung der neuen Aesthetik* (Stuttgart, 1886).

22 Cf., for example, Emily Brady, *The Sublime in Modern Philosophy. Aesthetics, Ethics, and Nature*. (Cambridge, 2013), 3.; Brian Michael Norton, 'The Spectator, Aesthetic Experience and the Modern Idea of Happiness', *English Literature*, 2 (2015), 87–104, 89–90.

23 Similarly to Joseph Addison, Hutcheson sometimes connects the primacy of the experience of nature to its universality (suggesting with this that not everyone may have access to the refined pleasures of the arts and culture): 'It is true indeed, that the Enjoyment of the noblest Pleasures of the internal Senses, in the Contemplation of the Works of Nature, is expos'd to every one without Expence ...' Hutcheson, *An Inquiry*, 77.

thought. To be sure, the paradigmatic scenes and examples from nature were not “purely” sensual perceptions in many cases, in the sense that they were genuinely but sometimes unconsciously inspired by traditional literary patterns, and they served other, mostly moral-theological, interests as well. In other words, the paradigmatic natural scenes and things were *ab ovo* built on the basis of “artificial” examples: still these scenes were regarded as “natural”.

And there appeared another significant “movement” in the 17th century, which originated from and was inspired by a new social practice and a new mode of social interaction and self-expression. Its direct connections to arts were more conspicuous: literature played a major role in this process which Elena Russo describes as the transition from the ‘aesthetics of *galanterie*’ to ‘the aesthetics of the *goût moderne*’, and which took place roughly from the time of Madeleine de Scudéry, La Fontaine, and Molière to the first part of the 18th century. In Russo’s words: ‘the moderns were exploring the key notions of sensibility, taste, and grace, which welded literary imagination, theories of perception, and a conception of social interaction as an art form.’²⁴ Still both the “natural” and “social” roots of modern aesthetic experience relied on, or directly referred to examples and scenes outside of the artistic sphere: the new images of nature or the new modes of existence in society. We might also say that the primary subjects of the emerging “aesthetic” experience are nature: either as physical nature grasped through its sensual (sensory) appearances or as human nature manifested in social interactions and commerce. Although both of them had an impact on Hutcheson’s aesthetics, now I am mostly dealing with the first thread, bearing in mind that the two are inseparable in certain cases, for example, in the late 17th-century conception of the *je-ne-sais-quoi*.²⁵

I think that the most fruitful approach to the genealogy of modern aesthetics must be the study of a special, unprecedented, experience which was invented and developed in different texts created during the 17th and early 18th centuries. Generally speaking, this experience means a new type of interconnection between the sensual / sensuous and the transcendental, in which the former is not merely a disposable “means” toward the latter, but an indispensable and constitutive “frame” for it. The modern aesthetic was invented

24 Elena Russo, *Styles of Enlightenment: Taste, Politics, and Authorship in Eighteenth-Century France* (Baltimore, 2007), 36–7.

25 There were much earlier appearances of this phrase (originally in Italian, then in Spanish), but Dominique Bouhours’ *je-ne-sais-quoi* from 1671 was perhaps the most influential formulation of this conception within the “proto-aesthetic” language of *délicatesse*. For this, see, for example, Richard Scholar, *The Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi in Early Modern Europe. Encounters with a Certain Something* (Oxford, New York, 2005).

as a promise to humans that they would be able to regain the harmony or compatibility between the worldly and celestial, between the human and the divine, between the individual and society, between felicity and virtue in a re-shaped form fitted to the radically new spiritual, intellectual and cultural climate. Hutcheson played an important role in this enormous enterprise.

3 Aesthetics and theology: an embarrassing issue

It has been noticed by many scholars that in the first part of Hutcheson's *Inquiry* the longest section (v) deals with natural theology and the closing section (viii) returns to theology with the examination of the final causes of the internal senses, so Hutcheson devoted a relatively large space to discussing theology within his so called "aesthetics". In his early editorial introduction to the first part of the *Inquiry*, Kivy briefly admits that 'theology is as proper an ingredient in Hutcheson's philosophy of beauty as epistemology of Kant's, or metaphysics in Schopenhauer's',²⁶ but this statement is hardly more than an empty compliment. By 1976, Kivy became more intolerant: 'Hutcheson's aesthetic theology seems like deplorable backsliding to me; and I have not been able to disguise my impatience with it.'²⁷ Dickie explicitly states that Hutcheson's 'excursion into theology is not essential to the understanding of his theory of taste.'²⁸ Guyer does not formulate it so sharply, but he writes: 'Hutcheson, after all originally a minister, argues that it is twofold evidence of the benevolence of God that he has given us a world that is replete with objects that both gratify our sense of beauty and lead us to develop our mental powers in a way that is to our advantage in nonaesthetic contexts.'²⁹ With the phrase 'after all originally a minister', however, Guyer clearly suggests that theological or religious aspects do not constitute an indispensable part of Hutcheson's aesthetics.

Amongst these historians, Kivy devoted, though reluctantly, a whole chapter to analyzing the relationship between aesthetics and theology.³⁰ On occasion, he criticizes the design argument³¹ presented by Hutcheson

26 Peter Kivy, 'Editor's Introduction' in Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry concerning Beauty, Order, Harmony, Design* (The Hague, 1973), 5–22, 22.

27 Kivy, *The Seventh Sense*, 123.

28 Dickie, *The Century of Taste*, 6.

29 Guyer, *A History of Aesthetics*, 113.

30 Kivy, *The Seventh Sense*, 111ff.

31 He also criticizes Hutcheson's providential or teleological explanations of the perception of beauty as 'uniformity amongst variety' (or of the harmonious system

in section v of his *Inquiry* in quite an ironic tone, mostly on the basis of David Hume's *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* or of Immanuel Kant's criticism of physico-theology in his *Critique of Judgement*. The design argument is retrospectively an easy prey, but it is not the point here. Instead, we ought to realize Hutcheson's effort to show the interconnection between "the aesthetic" and (natural) theology. He was interested in demonstrating this interconnection, and the design argument – or broadly speaking: physico-theology – might have seemed to him to be compatible to one aspect of the experience of beauty, which aspect has to do with regularity, order, design and intelligence, in other words, with a kind of (rational) transparency. (The aesthetics which he elaborated in the *Inquiry* is basically an aesthetics of sight; when he reaches the territory of hearing, a problem occurs, as we shall see.) But even for Hutcheson, physico-theology, or even 'an aesthetic version' of the design argument³², was far from being identical with the theological dimensions of modern aesthetics. Beside the physico-theological, moral theological and theodicean layers,³³ there is something else in Hutcheson's

of human faculties in general). Cf. *Ibid.*, 118ff. (The ground of criticism may seem to be illegitimate for Hutcheson, since Kivy raises such questions as why Hutcheson does not explain or discover God's particular intention when He chose a particular solution or order of things, etc.)

32 *Ibid.*, 112.

33 It is customarily said about the relationship between "the aesthetic" and theology that in the case of Lord Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and his contemporaries the aesthetic theories 'emerged out of debates about the foundation of morality with roots in theological controversies', and that they supposed a 'natural predilection of human beings to take pleasure in virtue' which 'can lead them to become genuinely virtuous without any need for guidance by revealed truth or for motivation by the threat of divine punishment and promise of divine rewards'. Simon Grote, 'Theological Origins of Aesthetics' in Michael Kelley (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics* (Oxford, 2014; 2nd edn), V, 51–4, 53. At the same time, it is a somewhat negative relationship, because from this perspective what emerges is mostly an emancipatory process in which moral philosophy is striving to get rid of the tutelage of the established church and theology, and "the aesthetic" is a handy means to this end. And to say that 'these reformers asserted that human beings naturally contain within themselves the capacity for virtue, granted to them by God in order that they may find happiness in this world' (*Ibid.*, 54.) suggests that this relationship is a little bit distant and formal, or perhaps too general. Moreover, there is a broader theological frame which seems to be applicable to the understanding of Hutcheson's whole enterprise. In this, providence and human happiness are of primary importance. In his *System of Moral Philosophy*, for example, he clearly composes 'a *system* of a particular kind: a theodicy, in which Divine Providence is shown to have made provision for the happiness of the human race. Such provision is evident ... in the constitution of human nature, where the various appetites, affections, senses, and powers ... conspire and work together to promote human happiness.' James Moore, 'Hutcheson's Theodicy: The

thinking about “the aesthetic” to which Joseph Addison, and the Addisonian links in Hutcheson, can shed some light.

The relationship between Addison and Hutcheson may seem too evident, and something which must have been exhausted. Yet, the interpretation of Hutcheson’s aesthetics from the perspective of Addison’s approach to “the aesthetic” is fairly rare and not fashionable at all. In the relatively recent histories of modern aesthetics, Addison and Hutcheson are sometimes analysed in different chapters, sometimes under different heads, moreover, Hutcheson is occasionally treated *before* Addison,³⁴ though Addison’s essay-series under the title *The Pleasures of the Imagination* was published in *The Spectator* in 1712, while the first edition of Hutcheson’s *Inquiry* was issued thirteen years later. At best, we get some fleeting references to the parallelism between the conceptions or distinctions of Addison and those of Hutcheson, without deeper comparison. In his now eighty-year old article, however, Clarence DeWitt Thorpe convincingly and philologically accurately argues that Addison made a significant and deep influence on Hutcheson and on his Dublin friend, James Arbuckle. Thorpe shows the traces of an Addisonian impact on Hutcheson from his *Inquiry* to the posthumously published *System of Moral Philosophy* concerning the aesthetic faculty ‘imagination’ or, in Hutcheson, the ‘internal sense.’ Thorpe’s main goal is to demonstrate the tight theoretical connection between Addison and Hutcheson at the expense of that between Lord Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, and he concludes that Hutcheson’s internal sense of beauty ‘derived quite as likely from Descartes, Hobbes, or Locke [and, consequently, Addison] as from Shaftesbury.’³⁵ I would like to point at one of the parallels Thorpe discussed. He claims, rightly, that both Addison and Hutcheson prefer nature to art in the experience of the polite imagination, moreover the former seems to prefer ‘bare Nature or at least an Artificial rudeness in garden and landscape to the “Neatness and Elegancy”

Argument and the Contexts of *A System of Moral Philosophy* in Paul Wood (ed.), *The Scottish Enlightenment. Essays in Reinterpretation* (Rochester, 2000), 239–66, 241.

34 For example, in Guyer’s ‘The Origins of Modern Aesthetic’ or in his article ‘Eighteenth Century Aesthetics’ in Stephen Davies et al. (eds.), *Blackwell Companion to Aesthetics* (Chichester, 2009; 2nd edn), 32–51, Addison is treated after Hutcheson; or in Costelloe – who borrowed his division of internal sense, imagination and association theorists from an article by James Shelley at the on-line *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* –, Hutcheson belongs to the first and Addison to the second group, and, thus, are separately discussed. Cf. Timothy Costelloe, *The British Aesthetic Tradition. From Shaftesbury to Wittgenstein* (Cambridge, 2013).

35 Clarence DeWitt Thorpe, ‘Addison and Hutcheson on the Imagination’, *A Journal of English Literary History* 2 (1935), 215–34, 233.

of English gardens' (quoted from *The Spectator* No. 414).³⁶ The parallel *locus* in Hutcheson is a passage from his 1728 *Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections*:

may not a Taste for Nature be acquired, giving greater Delight than the Observations of Art? ... Must an *artful Grove*, an *Imitation* of a Wilderness, or the more confined *Forms* on *Ever-greens*, please more than the real *Forest*, with the *Trees of God*? Shall a *Statue* give more Pleasure than the *human Face Divine*?³⁷

In spite of the cultural and social importance of arts, it seems clear that the “aesthetic” experience of nature had at least a theoretical priority in both Addison and Hutcheson.³⁸

Not following Thorpe further, two additional elements can be discerned by means of this particular comparison. On the one hand, Addison explains his preference for nature or the natural to art (or the artistic) with the features of ‘Vastness and Immensity’, ‘August and Magnificent [qualities] in the Design’, ‘bold[ness] and masterly [character]’ in the strokes of nature, and especially with the experience that ‘in the wide Fields of Nature, the Sight wanders up and down without Confinement, and is fed with an infinite variety of Images’.³⁹ That is, from his famous “aesthetic” triad of the pleasures of the imagination (greatness, novelty and beauty), the first two qualities are much more attributed to nature and natural scenes than to art, and the freedom of wandering and the richness of variety support ever-new and inexhaustible experiences in comparison with the tranquil and relatively “narrow” and (perhaps) “static” contemplation of beauty. Thus with this distinction – implicitly – we get another preference too, which concerns the manner of the experience and can be characterized as a certain vividness, dynamism and an inexhaustible and unconstrainable character. And in the above cited paragraph of his *Essay* in

³⁶ Ibid, 221.

³⁷ Hutcheson, *An Essay*, 114–15.

³⁸ There are convincing arguments, though, supporting the fundamental significance of the secondary pleasures of the imagination in Addison, cf, for example, William H. Youngren, ‘Addison and the Birth of Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics’, *Modern Philology*, 79 (1982): 267–83. Still, I am insisting on the *theoretical* primacy of the primary pleasures of the imagination and of original beauty in regard to “the aesthetic”, even if not in cultural, social or, evidently, art- and literary theoretical sense.

³⁹ *The Spectator*, ed. Donald F. Bond (Oxford, 1965; 5 vols), III, 548–9.

which Hutcheson expresses a similar preference, he explicitly starts off from Addison's 'Pleasures of *Imagination*'.⁴⁰

On the other hand, we cannot miss the conspicuous religious connotations in Hutcheson's phrases 'the Trees of God' and 'the human Face Divine.' The pleasure stimulated by these natural objects can hardly be subsumed under the innocent delight felt upon the recognition of a divine order or design in nature, and it is hardly identical with the eventually intellectual (or at least intelligible) pleasures obtainable through physico-theology. In the background of the above cited passage may be, for example, *The Spectator* No. 393 by Addison:

The Creation is a perpetual Feast to the Mind of a good Man, every thing he sees cheers and delights him; Providence has imprinted so many Smiles on Nature, that it is impossible for a Mind, which is not sunk in more gross and sensual Delights, to take a Survey of them without several secret Sensations of Pleasure. The Psalmist has in several of his Divine Poems celebrated those beautiful and agreeable Scenes which make the Heart glad, and produce in it... vernal Delight...⁴¹

Addison's 'aesthetic contemplation – as Thorpe also remarks – frequently merges into the religious.'⁴² It is true. Addison adds to this passage that 'Natural Philosophy quickens this Taste of the Creation, and renders it not only pleasing to the Imagination, but to the Understanding'; nevertheless, this 'rational Admiration in the Soul' which 'is little inferior to Devotion' is not for every one.⁴³ A few weeks later, in his essay No. 411 (from his series of *The Pleasures of the Imagination*), Addison makes a similar distinction between the pleasures of the imagination and those of understanding, saying, first, that the former 'are as great and as transporting as' the latter, but then that the former has an advantage over the latter: 'they are more obvious, and more easie to be acquired.'⁴⁴ Moreover, Addison mentions 'secret sensations of

40 Hutcheson, *An Essay*, 114.

41 *The Spectator*, III, 475.

42 Thorpe, 'Addison and Hutcheson on Imagination', 224. – According to Thorpe 'there is in him at times a strong suggestion of a mystical aesthetic experience' (Ibid.), but I think this formulation is not really apt. For, unbeknownst to him, Addison is working on the invention of modern "aesthetic" which is a new form of the interconnection between the sensual and the transcendental – it has nothing to do with mystical experience.

43 Ibid.

44 *The Spectator*, III, 538.

Pleasure' stimulated by the 'so many Smiles' Providence imprinted on nature. This effective "secretiveness" of the imaginative pleasures contrasts with the evident clarity of the understanding. Addison, at the end of essay No. 393, suggests a 'practice' (available to everyone):

to moralize this natural Pleasure of the Soul, and to improve this vernal Delight ... into a Christian Virtue. When we find our selves inspired with this pleasing Instinct, this secret Satisfaction and Complacency, arising from the Beauties of the Creation, let us consider to whom we stand indebted for all these Entertainments of Sense, and who it is that thus opens his Hand and fills the World with Good ... The Cheerfulness of Heart which springs up in us from the Survey of Nature's Works is an admirable Preparation for Gratitude. The Mind has gone a great way towards Praise and Thanksgiving that is filled with such a secret Gladness: A grateful Reflection on the Supreme Cause who produces it, sanctifies it in the Soul, and gives it its proper Value. Such a habitual Disposition of Mind consecrates every Field and Wood, turns an ordinary Walk into a Morning or Evening Sacrifice, and will improve those transient Gleams of Joy, which naturally brighten up and refresh the Soul on such Occasions, into an inviolable and perpetual State of Bliss and Happiness.⁴⁵

A quasi-"aesthetic" state of mind, cheerfulness⁴⁶ over the works of nature stimulates the feeling of gratitude which leads us to 'a grateful Reflection' on the 'Supreme Cause': it is not a rational insight or a scientific reflection from the order and design of the Creation (since not everyone is capable of such kind of intellectual efforts). The whole experience is a process, in which some intentionality of the beholder is also needed ('let us consider...'), and is characterized with some emotional attractiveness and a kind of "secretiveness" ('secret Satisfaction and Complacency', 'secret Gladness'). Actually, Addison suggests a direct route, which is available through a special state of mind ("the aesthetic" in a sense), from 'transient Gleams of Joy' to 'an inviolable and

⁴⁵ Ibid, III, 475–6.

⁴⁶ Addison wrote three essays on cheerfulness in *The Spectator*: on cheerfulness as a beneficent 'Moral Habit' (No. 381), and on 'how aesthetic experience itself can promote cheerfulness' (Nos, 387, 393). Norton, 'The Spectator, Aesthetic Experience and the Modern Idea of Happiness', 92–3. At the same time, cheerfulness was treated as moral category also by Richard Steele, cf. Michael G. Ketcham, *Transparent Designs. Reading, Performance, and Form in the Spectator Papers* (Athens, 1985), 66–7.

perpetual State of Bliss and Happiness’, that is, from a (sensual but innocent) worldly joy to celestial bliss. The ‘practice’ Addison recommends is like a “spiritual exercise”⁴⁷ which results in ‘a habitual Disposition of Mind’. What, then, Addison suggests here is a ‘practice’ or a ‘walk’, not a (singular) contemplation, or some meditation in a closet. All of these need a permanent activity from the spectator, who is therefore not merely a spectator. Nevertheless, her mind’s disposition (as a result of her “aesthetic” practice originally inspired by ‘vernal delight’ or ‘secret satisfaction’ over natural beauty) is capable of consecrating the world; in other words, “aesthetic” exercises become genuinely spiritual ones. The consecrated reality around the “aesthetic” beholder is created nature and, at the same time, it is her own creation, too. Her higher level compatibility with the created world is achieved through a permanent, so to speak, “co-creative”⁴⁸ – more cautiously: re-shaping or superadding – activity.⁴⁹ At any rate, this is what we can call “the aesthetic” which is deeply interested in spirituality. It does not presuppose any intellectual construction or reflection on the order, regularity, or design of the created world, nor does it utilize the theodicean or providential arguments (at least the general reference to the existence of a benevolent supreme cause is far from being a detailed argument). At the same time, Addison uses the verb ‘moralize’ not to express an elevation but rather an inevitable broadening and deepening of ‘vernal delight’.

Viewed from this angle, I think the frequently-cited lines of essay No. 411 in which Addison is constructing the modern “aesthetic” beholder regain a significant layer of their meaning, and it will not appear as a description of a profane (and purely disinterested) experience:

47 In the omitted sentences of the above citation, Addison explicitly mentions the ‘religious Exercise’ which is ‘particularly comfortable’ to our individual temper, as ‘the Apostle instructs us’: let sad people pray, and let merry people sing psalms.

48 Addison used the derivatives of “create” to describe human activities only in the context of artistic productivity in his Imagination-series (cf. *The Spectator* Nos. 417, 419, 421). A few decades later, however, David Hume would write about taste that it ‘gives the Sentiment of Beauty and Deformity, Vice and Virtue ... [it] has a productive Faculty, and gilding or staining all natural Objects with the Colours, borrow’d from internal Sentiment, raises in a Manner, a new Creation.’ David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* (London, 1751), 211.

49 To be sure, it is only one aspect of Addison’s imagination (when he discusses it explicitly in Lockean terms, he usually emphasizes its passive, sense-like nature, with the exception of ‘polite imagination’).

A Man of a Polite Imagination is let into a great many Pleasures that the Vulgar are not capable of receiving. He ... often feels a greater Satisfaction in the Prospect of Fields and Meadows, than another does in the Possession. It gives him, indeed, a kind of Property in everything he sees, and makes the most rude uncultivated Parts of Nature administer to his Pleasures: So that he looks upon the World, as it were, in another Light, and discovers in it a Multitude of Charms, that conceal themselves from the generality of Mankind.⁵⁰

Addison speaks about by and large the same experience of nature with the terms “aesthetic” faculty or imagination as he did earlier in the case of cheerfulness (it is true, the man of polite imagination is also attentive to fine arts and literature). The ‘Multitude of Charms’ of the world can be discovered and seen only if it is viewed ‘in another Light’.⁵¹ The source of this light remains unknown here, but I am inclined to think that it is that ‘habitual Disposition of Mind’ which actively ‘consecrates’ our world.

Though Hutcheson explicitly claims that his ‘internal sense’ is identical with Addison’s pleasures of the imagination⁵², when he uses the words ‘taste’ or ‘fine genius’ (even if they usually appear interchangeable with internal sense

50 *The Spectator*, III, 538.

51 Norton remarks that this ‘particular way the subject regards or contemplates the object’ defines ‘the aesthetic’ in Addison, and this idea has a less-known precedent in an essay written by Steele in 1709. Norton, ‘*The Spectator*, Aesthetic Experience and the Modern Idea of Happiness’, 90. – *The Tatler* No. 89 is really intriguing, but for us it is important because of its wording: ‘a person of fine taste ... is capable of enjoying the world in the simplicity of natural beauties.’ He ‘is blessed with that strong and serious delight which flows from a well-taught and liberal mind.’ This gentleman’s ‘calm and elegant satisfaction’ is regarded as melancholy by the vulgar. ‘The pleasures of ordinary people are in their passions; but the seat of this delight is in the reason and understanding. Such a frame of mind raises that sweet enthusiasm which warms the imagination at the sight of every work of nature, and turns all around you into picture and landscape.’ *The Tatler*, ed. George A. Aitken (New York, London, 1899; 4 vols), II, 277–8. Though Steele attributes the origin of this sublimer kind of satisfaction to the understanding to avoid its association with the passions (or ‘sensual delights’ as Addison says above), and not to an “aesthetic” faculty, the natural beauties (which evidently have superiority over the urban entertainments of the vulgar) mean the fundamental experience for a gentleman of fine taste, who is ‘blessed’ with this delight, and his ‘frame of mind’ is the source of that ‘sweet enthusiasm’ which, through the activity of imagination, transforms the works of nature ‘into picture and landscape’, that is, into an abode for a Christian man of virtue. The terms ‘blessed’ and ‘enthusiasm’ may refer to the religious significance of this experience over natural beauties even in this secular context.

52 Hutcheson, *An Essay*, 17.

or the sense of beauty), the closeness of his position to Addison's is even more conspicuous. As Thorpe already notes: 'Hutcheson's man of "a fine Taste" ... is obviously equivalent to Addison's man of "polite imagination."' ⁵³ and he cites the following also:

Let every one here consider, how different we must suppose the Perception to be, with which a Poet is transported upon the Prospect of any of those Objects of natural beauty, which ravish us even in his Description; from that cold lifeless Conception which we imagine in a dull Critick, or one of the Virtuosi, without what we call a fine Taste.⁵⁴

It is quite probable, indeed, that this passage was inspired by Addison's No. 411, and that in the transportation of the poet, i.e. the "aesthetic" beholder *and* artist, this 'fine Taste' can preserve the religious connotations of Addison's imagination. At the same time, it is not an accident that Hutcheson mentions 'a Poet' (and virtuosi with fine Taste, who are also a kind of artist) here. 'The internal Sense is, a passive Power of receiving Ideas of Beauty from all Objects in which there is Uniformity amidst Variety.'⁵⁵ This explicit passivity is in accordance with Addison's Locke-inspired conception of imagination, but not compatible with his "co-creative" 'polite imagination'; so the philosophically more coherent Hutcheson needs to refer to a beholder who is also an *artist* to be able to grasp this warm, lively and perhaps spiritual ravishment 'upon the Prospect of any of those Objects of natural beauty'. The poet perceives these views differently (with transport), and although her perception could be interpreted as the operation of a highly accurate and attentive internal sense, still it seems to be rather an Addisonian reminiscence from Nos. 393 and 411. There are many significant features of the internal sense listed in the same section of the *Inquiry*: it does not presuppose any innate idea, it is a natural power, a determination of the mind to receive *necessarily* certain ideas from certain objects; amongst them there is this "passivity". By contrast, both greatness (or grandeur) and novelty need some kind of activity of the mind already at the level of the internal sense, when the beholder is not only a "passive" perceiver, but a "co-creator" (or at least discoverer or co-author) of the experience of nature. But in a philosophical system in which Hutcheson is thinking from his *Inquiry* to his *System of Moral Philosophy*, there is no room

⁵³ Thorpe, 'Addison and Hutcheson on Imagination', 218.

⁵⁴ Hutcheson, *An Inquiry*, 24.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 67.

for the external and internal senses to be “co-creatively” active. His systematic approach determines (actually confines) the manner and the extent of his treatment of “the aesthetic”.⁵⁶

4 The aesthetics of shades

In section ii of the first treatise of his *Inquiry*, Hutcheson introduces the conception of ‘Original or Absolute Beauty’. From geometrical beauty – in which the ‘Uniformity amidst Variety’ formula as the foundation of the ideas of beauty seems to be simply and clearly demonstrated –, through the beauties of physical nature (discovered by astronomy and geography) and of biological nature, to the unimaginable uniformity of water and other basic material elements of this Globe, Hutcheson offers a vast panorama. In his *Moralists* of 1709, Lord Shaftesbury gives a similar but much more elaborated scenery of the admirable physical world. At the end of this long imaginative flight or journey from the immense and distant regions of the cosmos down to the Earth,⁵⁷ we see the travellers entering into a ‘vast wood’ of ‘deep shades’:

The faint and gloomy light looks horrid as the shade itself, and the profound stillness of these places imposes silence upon men, struck with the hoarse echoings of every sound within the spacious caverns of the wood. Here space astonishes. Silence itself seems pregnant while an unknown force works on the mind and dubious objects move the wakeful sense. Mysterious voices are either heard or fancied, and various

⁵⁶ Later, however, Hutcheson’s conception of ‘reflexive or subsequent sensations’ from his *A Synopsis of Metaphysics* of 1742 shows a small step toward the acknowledgement of a kind of spontaneous activity of the “aesthetic” senses. He mentions ‘novelty’, ‘grandeur’ and ‘similarity ... when difference and variety are also present’, and ‘harmony’, that is, by and large, the novelty, the sublime and the beautiful, as cases of the operation of ‘reflexive sense’: some things which affect our ‘external sense and would seem to be neutral to it are pleasing ... to a kind of reflexive sense, when the mind pays attention not only to its external sensations but also to the ideas which accompany them, and is also moved by a kind of impression that is different from the pleasing external sensations.’ Hutcheson, *Logic, Metaphysics, and the Natural Sociability of Mankind*, 118. It is not elaborated, but it seems that the mind’s own simultaneous attention to the sensual perceptions and the accompanying ideas (associations?) can make the originally neutral experience pleasing, as it were, from inside, some natural instinct is stimulated and becomes active in these cases.

⁵⁷ Otherwise the journey is going on into the more familiar and human spheres of the world.

forms of deity seem to present themselves and appear more manifest in these sacred sylvan scenes, such as of old gave rise to temples and favoured the religion of the ancient world. Even we ourselves, who in plain characters may read divinity from so many bright parts of earth, choose rather these obscurer places to spell out that mysterious being, which to our weak eyes appears at best under a veil of cloud.⁵⁸

This is the only context where Lord Shaftesbury applies the word ‘sublime’ to the experience of (physical) nature. And indeed, this passage offers another view on nature where the striking, astonishing and uncanny effect is emphasised, where ‘deep shades’ and ‘mysterious sounds’ arise from some ‘unknown force’ which overwhelms the mind of the beholder whose fancy still remains very active. This experience has nothing to do with the tranquil contemplation of the idea of beauty, nor with any clear transparency. And there is a direct and explicit connection to divinity and religion, too. God appears in this view as a ‘mysterious being’ who hides himself from ‘our weak eyes’; he is definitely neither the God of natural religion, nor Providence. Lord Shaftesbury clearly indicates the difference and his – somewhat surprising – preference when he makes an opposition between ‘the many bright parts of earth’ from where natural theologians (or, the beholders of Hutcheson’s beauty) can draw their conclusions about the nature of God and ‘these obscurer places’ where God can be experienced ‘under a veil of cloud’, or “aesthetically” in the modern sense of the word. The latter is preferred, i.e. that aesthetics which is based on an ‘unknown force’, the activity of fancy, shades and obscurity (or special sounds and silence) and astonishing effects of perception. From this angle, it might seem that Hutcheson, at least with his *Inquiry* and with those later texts which apparently maintain the same position concerning beauty (order, harmony, design), stands always on the bright side of this distinction when he speaks about the contemplation of nature.

The opening description from *The Spectator* No. 565 of 1714 which is the first piece of the series entitled *Essays Moral and Divine* by Addison, can also be instructive for us.

I was Yesterday about Sun-set walking in the open Fields, till the Night insensibly fell upon me. I at first amused my self with all the Richness and Variety of Colours which appeared in the Western Parts

⁵⁸ Lord Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, ed. Lawrence E. Klein (Cambridge, 1999), 316.

of Heaven: In Proportion as these faded away and went out, several Stars and Planets appeared one after another, till the whole Firmament was in a Glow. ... The *Galaxy* appeared in its most beautiful White. To compleat the Scene, the full Moon rose at length in that clouded Majesty, which *Milton* takes Notice of⁵⁹, and opened to the Eye a new Picture of Nature, which was more finely shaded, and disposed among softer Lights than that which the Sun had before discovered to us.⁶⁰

Let us regard this metaphorically: with the sunset we can get the representation of the decline of light, reason, *clare et distincte* visibility and intelligibility, the daylight of intellect and knowledge, and the aesthetics of (classical) beauty with (visible and transparent) order, symmetry, proportion, etc. The rise of the stars and especially of the Moon creates a new opportunity for the spectator: it offers 'a new Picture of Nature'. And this new view is featured by 'clouded Majesty' (which can also be an allusion to the 'veil of cloud' of *The Moralists*), an immensely deeper perspective of the sky, infinitely fine shades and softer lights. All that could represent the kind of delicate richness and abundance of nature which strike the sensitive mind through some "aesthetic" sense (and this kind of abundance is not identical with the multitude of species and the like known from the physico-theologies).

In this description, the Moon-rise has a direct connection to the metaphysical or theological status or destination of the human being; the beholder is touched in his full personality with the question concerning his own existence, he is not merely an intelligent being here. Addison claims that the view of a Moon-rise immediately stimulates 'a Thought ... which ... very often perplexes and disturbs Men of serious and contemplative Natures'⁶¹, and it reminds us of David's questions: 'When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?'⁶² Thus, the stars and the Moon are traditionally associated with the ultimate issues (or mysteries) of human existence, here, additionally, their shine can be interpreted as a metaphor of that 'another light' which makes the world "aesthetically" felt and lived. And this "aesthetic" experience appears as an

59 '...Hesperus that led / the starrie Host, rode brightest, till the Moon / Rising in clouded Majestie, at length / Apparent Queen unvaild her peerless light, / And o're the dark her Silver Mantle threw.' John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, iv. 605–10.

60 *The Spectator*, IV, 529.

61 *Ibid.*

62 Ps. viii. 3–4.

inherently religious or spiritual one: a feeling of the presence of the deity who is evidently a wise and benevolent God, but here his directly felt presence is the point. In the rest of this essay, Addison offers a series of philosophical and theological reflections starting with a Pascalian anxiety about the loss of the individual ‘amidst the Immensity of Nature’, and ‘among [the] infinite Variety of Creatures’ but, eventually, it will be solved in the ‘Consideration of God Almighty’s Omnipresence and Omniscience’. I dare not say that this resolution is purely and wholly an “aesthetic” one, not even that it is an “aesthetic” version of Blaise Pascal’s distinction – which is well-known from his *Pensées* (1669) – between the God of the philosophers and the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but at least the starting point of this meditation was a particular experience of nature which Addison could easily exploit because of the affinity between “the aesthetic” and the spiritual or religious.

Both of Lord Shaftesbury’s and Addison’s scenes could be called early formulations of the natural sublime, but I think they are better characterized as being the genuine paradigm of modern “aesthetic” experience. The ‘brightest parts’, or the sun-light, represent the realm of the intellect and the aesthetics of beauty, harmony and proportion, while the ‘faint and gloomy light’, the shining of the stars and the Moon introduces the realm of heart, and the aesthetics of shades, abundance, secret and striking effects on the soul. And these highly emotional and sentimental motions lead directly to the transcendental. It is quite telling that Hutcheson also mentions similar examples in his *Inquiry*, but in another way:

Cunning of the Heathen Priests might make such obscure places [like Groves and Woods] the Scene of the fictitious Appearances of their Deities; and hence we join Ideas of something Divine to them. ... The faint Light in Gothic Buildings had the same Association of a very foreign Idea, which our poet [i.e. Milton] shews in his Epithet, ‘A Dim religious Light.’⁶³

Hutcheson portrays this (mysterious) effect as unnatural and merely the product of associations which are foreign to his philosophical aims and ideals. From this angle, Hutcheson’s “philosophical beauty” (as I will call it), which he elaborated in the *Inquiry*, i.e. the type of perception which is conceived for the sake of the ‘Uniformity amidst Variety’, represents only one aspect of

⁶³ Hutcheson, *An Inquiry*, 67–8.

the modern aesthetic experience. Hutcheson's merit, at first sight, is to integrate the traditional philosophical or metaphysical features of beauty into a language which is at least not incompatible with the modern "aesthetic". At the same time, this "philosophical beauty" is far from being exhaustive if we take into consideration the surprising richness and plurality of "aesthetic" perceptions. Hutcheson's "aesthetic" perceptions – which belong mostly to the 'bright parts of earth' – can easily be connected to physico-theology⁶⁴ and to some theodicean arguments, and, consequently, they seem to be inevitably blind to the 'obscurer places' of a 'mysterious being'. At least he does everything to banish these strange phenomena into the "unphilosophical" realm of associations.

This new view on nature, exemplified by the two passages from Lord Shaftesbury and Addison above, can be associated with not only with the emerging natural sublime, but also with the influential proto-aesthetic term of *je-ne-sais-quoi*. Undoubtedly, the most influential discussion of this notion was Dominique Bouhours' fifth dialogue from his *Les Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène* of 1671. Already, in the first conversation which is about the sea, we can find this phrase in the descriptions of the striking (emotional) effects caused by the immense physical entity, which the walking interlocutors gaze constantly. One of them remarks that the Sun is quite ordinary for us, whereas the ocean is ever-changing and, consequently, cannot be boring. 'On ne regarde presque plus le Soleil que quand il s'éclipse, parce qu'on le voit tous les jours, & qu'après l'avoir une fois vu, on n'y découvre plus rien de nouveau. Il n'en est pas de même de la mer; elle paraît toujours nouvelle, parce qu'elle n'est jamais en un même état.'⁶⁵ It seems, then, that the traditionally high status of the Sun (and all of its noble and lofty associations) is shaken⁶⁶, Ariste and Eugène prefer

64 It has had always "emotional" aspect: the innocent joy in the recognition of the divine order has been widely acknowledged from the 17th century on. Cf. Lisa M. Zeitz, 'Addison's "Imagination" Papers and the Design Argument', *English Studies: A Journal of English Language and Literature*, 73 (1992), 493–502.

65 Dominique Bouhours, *Les entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène*, eds. Bernard Beugnot, Gilles Declercq (Paris, 2003), 55.

66 The Sun has a very strong position in neo-Platonic and Christian mystic traditions – though in this respect they are far from being exceptional –, and from this angle it seems that the rising proto-aesthetic discourse constitutes a current against the neo-Platonic and mystic ones. Nonetheless, Bouhours' proto-aesthetics can be interpreted as part of the neo-Platonic discourse, cf. Jean Lafond, 'La beauté et la grâce: L'esthétique "platonicienne" des "Amors de Psyché"', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, 69 (1969), 475–90, 484–8, though it is quite difficult to show explicit neo-Platonism in Bouhours' texts.

the inexhaustible experience of the sea, instead, with its variety of colours, forms, and conditions, which offer a richer and more profound perception. And the same sea is a metaphor of (or even the way to) God, as well as of the world. So already in Bouhours, in the context of the *je-ne-sais-quoi*, we can find an “aesthetic” shift in which the traditional role of the Sun is replaced by an ever-changing physical immensity, while this experience preserves the connection with the transcendental, and offers its new form. The shades, the dim and softer lights, the mysterious sounds and the like of Lord Shaftesbury and Addison can express the same new perception of nature, and the same new self-experience of the beholder in her (“aesthetic”) relationship with the deity.

5 Different versions of beauty in Hutcheson

Hutcheson is aware that there are different aspects of beauty, and that “philosophical beauty” is not the only kind. In his and James Moor’s translation of the *Meditations* (1742), for example, Marcus Aurelius says:

This also should be observed, that such things as ensue upon what is well constituted by nature, have also something graceful and attractive. ... So when figs are at the ripest, they begin to crack. Thus in full ripe olives, their approach to putrefaction gives the proper beauty to the fruit. ... Thus, to one who has a deep affection of soul, and penetration into the constitution of the whole, scarce any thing connected with nature will fail to recommend itself agreeably to him. Thus, the real vast jaws of savage beasts will please him, no less than the imitations of them by painters or statuaries. With like pleasure will his chaste eyes behold the maturity and grace of old age in man or woman, and the inviting charms of youth. Many such things will he experience, not credible to all, but only to those who have the genuine affection of soul toward nature and its works.⁶⁷

Interestingly, Hutcheson had already referred to this passage in the third edition of his *Essay*⁶⁸ but, as the editors rightly remark, in a ‘strictly moral’

⁶⁷ Marcus Aurelius, *The Meditations of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius*, trans. Francis Hutcheson and James Moor, eds. James Moore and Michael Silverthorne (Indianapolis, 2008), 40–1.

⁶⁸ Hutcheson, *An Essay*, 93.

argumentation, while ‘Marcus’s point in this section appears rather to have been an aesthetic observation: he was reminding himself and his readers that everything in nature, however rugged or aging or deformed, is beautiful if one considers the nature of things as a whole.’⁶⁹ I may, however, add that Marcus’s thoughts have hardly anything to do with ‘the beautiful’ (at least not in the terms of ‘Uniformity amidst Variety’, or in the Emperor’s terms of ‘beautiful conduct’ of life), rather, it may remind us of the “proto-aesthetic” *je-ne-sais-quoi* which – if this quality is regarded generally, not only in the view of the sea – is a sort of charm, grace, attraction, some special or secret asymmetry, etc. (both in natural things and their imitations) which needs ‘a deep’ or a ‘genuine affection of soul toward nature’ in the beholder. This ‘affection’ means both a special sense (that is, not an intellectual power), probably deeper and broader than the sense of order, symmetry, harmony, etc., and a claim for a position from where the beholder is capable of keeping (metaphorically) her eyes on the whole, more exactly, she somehow feels the whole. Nevertheless, in his reference to this *locus* in the *Essay*, Hutcheson ignores the “aesthetic” reading of this passage, probably because it would not be compatible with his “philosophical beauty”.

Still, similar observations (maybe inspired by Marcus) can be found already in the *Inquiry* about the types of ‘comparative beauty’, e.g.: ‘the Deformity of old Age in a Picture, the rudest Rocks or Mountains in a Landskip, if well represented, shall have abundant Beauty, tho perhaps [!] not so great as if the Original were absolutely beautiful, and as well represented.’⁷⁰ (Or perhaps it is just as great, after all.) It seems that this kind of beauty, manifested in irregularity, deformity, rudeness and still in richness and a kind of special attractiveness, is located in the sphere of imitation (of comparative beauty), though in Marcus it was fundamentally an experience of nature. It is as if Hutcheson had considered this type of beauty theoretically dangerous for his philosophical discourse, and would have tried to domesticate it by sending it into exile into the man-made sphere of imitation (all in all, however, it is treated much better than the ‘dim religious light’ above). For Hutcheson, on the basis of the *Inquiry*, the irregular in nature is (“aesthetically”) unbearable, it can only be appreciated “aesthetically” in imitation, and only when it is well

69 Marcus Aurelius, *The Meditations of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius*, 172.

70 Hutcheson, *An Inquiry*, 42. – In the 3rd edition he adds to this: ‘Nay, perhaps, the novelty may make us prefer the representation of irregularity.’ Or: ‘strict Regularity in laying out of Gardens in Parterres, Vista’s, parallel Walks, is often neglected, to obtain an Imitation of Nature even in some of its Wildness.’ Ibid, 44.

represented (that is, properly regulated). Or, in other words, in Hutcheson the beholder herself is not bestowed with the capacity for taming these natural views and objects, it takes an artist to accomplish this task.

At the end of the section on the ‘Original or Absolute Beauty’, harmony is discussed; in other words, after the visible pleasures of absolute beauty, Hutcheson turns to those belonging to hearing. After this shift, new elements appear in his discussion: ‘Harmony often raises Pleasure in those who know not what is the Occasion of it’,⁷¹ then, more generally, he concludes that ‘in all these Instances of Beauty ... the Pleasure is communicated to those who never reflected on this general Foundation ... We may have the Sensation without knowing what is the Occasion of it’.⁷² This is exactly the structure of the 17th-century *je-ne-sais-quoi* which can be considered an alternative conception to traditional beauty (to which the philosophical formulation of ‘the Uniformity amidst Variety’ refers).⁷³ The *je-ne-sais-quoi* is *per definitionem* not transparent; its mysterious and powerful effect stems from its essential obscurity, and the fine taste or relish, which is needed to perceive it, does not necessarily co-operate with reason as, for example, Lord Shaftesbury’s ‘internal sensation’ or ‘inward eye’, or even Hutcheson’s internal senses. In a sense, sounds could be more patent examples of the *je-ne-sais-quoi* than images.⁷⁴ And though Hutcheson does list the well-known classical ratios of the concords (as ‘natural proportions’), he also acknowledges that

There is indeed observable, in the best Compositions, a mysterious Effect of Discords: They often give as great Pleasure as continu’d Harmony; whether by refreshing the Ear with Variety, or by awakening

71 Ibid., 34.

72 Ibid., 35.

73 Addison’s first approach to “aesthetic” experience was quite similar: ‘It is but opening the Eye, and the Scene enters. The Colours paint themselves on the Fancy, with very little Attention of Thought or Application of Mind in the Beholder. We are struck, we know not how, with the Symmetry of any thing we see, and immediately assent to the Beauty of an Object, without enquiring into the particular Causes and Occasions of it.’ *The Spectator*, III, 536. – And though he mentions only ‘Symmetry’ and ‘Beauty’ here, still, in the light of the following essays and with the stress on ‘struck’ and ‘we know not how’, we may suppose that he is applying the scheme of the *je-ne-sais-quoi* in the general description of the pleasures of the imagination.

74 For example, in the second letter of 1734 from his *Cabinet du philosophe*, Marivaux associates the beauty with the (living) statue of the Goddess in her garden, while the *je-ne-sais-quoi* with a voice in her infinitely more charming garden. Cf. Pierre Carlet de Chamblain de Marivaux, *Journaux et oeuvres diverses*, eds. Frédéric Deloffre and Michel Gilot (Paris, 1988), 342–51.

the Attention, and enlivening the relish for the succeeding Harmony of Concords, as Shades enliven and beautify Pictures, or by some other means not yet known: Certain it is however that they have their place, and some good Effect in our best Compositions.⁷⁵

This observation, on the one hand, is very similar to Marcus Aurelius's in the sense that both point at some irregularity, discord, asymmetry or obscurity (non-transparency) as the source of attraction and peculiar pleasure; and, on the other, with its mysteriously 'refreshing', 'enlivening', 'awakening' features, well known from the "proto-aesthetic" vocabulary of the *je-ne-sais-quoi*, it can elevate the beauty and the harmony, and can transform them into an incomparably more efficacious state.

In other words, these passages and observations may indicate an aesthetics of imperfections and shades beside (and surprisingly within) the aesthetics of "philosophical beauty" which was based on a unified formula and on its "unconsciously" sensed (felt) and/or intellectually recognized transparent order. Moreover, there is another token of the unravelling in Hutcheson's conception of beauty in the same section, where he speaks about animals: 'to that most powerful Beauty in Countenances, Airs, Gesture, Motion, we shall shew in the second Treatise, that it arises from some imagin'd Indication of morally good Dispositions of Mind.'⁷⁶ This 'most powerful Beauty' of airs and motions, with all of its dynamism and vividness, and with its delicate, elusive and transient nature cannot be considered under the head of 'the Uniformity amidst Variety'. When somebody charms us, when we become inevitably and irresistibly enchanted by the way she looks, walks, and talks, etc., it does not have to do with a compound ratio between uniformity and variety in her gestures, or at least we cannot rationally discern those nuances in which her attractiveness might be grounded. As La Rochefoucauld had already briefly summarised it in the century before, when speaking about the distinction between 'beauty' and 'charm': 'We may say that attractiveness [*l'agrément*], as distinct from the beauty, is a harmony whose rules are quite unknown, a subtle interrelationship between a person's various features, and also between those features and the colouring and the person's manner.'⁷⁷ Nevertheless, it is

⁷⁵ Hutcheson, *An Inquiry*, 35.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁷⁷ François de la Rochefoucauld, *Collected Maxims and Other Reflections. New Translations with Parallel French Text*, trans. E.H. and A.M.Blackmore, and Francine Giguère (Oxford, 2007), 69.

quite strange that ‘the most powerful Beauty’ is not discussed in the so called “aesthetics” (i.e. in the first treatises), but only in the context of moral sense.

If we look at this passage in the second treatise where the ‘most powerful Beauty’ is discussed, the deep impact of the *je-ne-sais-quoi* discourse will be obvious, since already the marginal title of the section is: ‘The Charm in Beauty’. Here we have to consider ‘the External Beauty of Persons, which all allow to have great Power over human Minds. Now it is some apprehended Morality, some natural or imagin’d indication of concomitant Virtue, which gives it this *powerful Charm above all other kinds of beauty*.’⁷⁸

Let us consider the Character of Beauty, which are commonly admir’d in Countenances, and we shall find them to be Sweetness, Mildness, Majesty, Dignity, Vivacity, Humility, Tenderness, Good-nature; that is, that certain Aires, Proportions, *je ne scai quoy’s*, are natural Indications of such Virtues, or of Abilities or Dispositions toward them.⁷⁹

When Hutcheson wants to express the effective and lively interconnection between beauty and virtue, he abandons the model of the Uniformity amidst Variety, and utilizes and exploits an alternative one, that of the *je-ne-sais-quoi*. At least this superior kind of beauty does not seem to be a case of ‘the perceptions of Beauty, Order, Harmony’, about which a few pages earlier Hutcheson wrote: ‘how cold and joyless are they, if there be no moral Pleasures of Friendship, Love and Beneficence?’⁸⁰

So Hutcheson clearly sees that there are ‘other kinds of beauty’, and amongst them ‘the powerful charm’ is the highest because of its affinity to personal relationships and to the higher spiritual state which he identifies here as the virtuous. While his “philosophical beauty” also has a potential for promoting virtue, he seems to recognize that the *je-ne-sais-quoi* is more efficacious, both because of its immediate contact to the deity, and of its power over the will. In his above-mentioned *Entretiens*, the Jesuit Bouhours devoted the whole fifth conversation to the topic of the *je-ne-sais-quoi* which starts with a discussion about the interlocutors’ personal relationship, their friendship as a charming and unique human bond, then the conversation touches different worldly (occasionally frivolous) subjects, finally, however, it ends with the

⁷⁸ Hutcheson, *An Inquiry*, 167, my emphasis.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 167–8.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 164.

theological or moral-theological themes of divine grace⁸¹ and the freedom of the will. The *je-ne-sais-quoi* is a particular experience which ‘surprises us, which dazzles us, which charms us.’ And this is ‘the focal point of most of our passions’: especially desire and hope ‘have practically no other foundation.’ Because ‘beyond the goal we have set for ourselves there is always something else to which we unceasingly aspire and which we never attain.’

[T]o speak in a Christian fashion of the *je ne sais quoi*, is there not a mysterious something in us which makes us feel [*sentir*] ... that our souls are immortal, that the grandeurs of the earth cannot satisfy us, that there is something beyond ourselves which is the goal of our desires and the centre of that felicity which we everywhere seek and never find? Do not really faithful souls recognize ... that we were made Christians not for the goods of this life but for something on an entirely different order [*pour je ne sais quoi d'un autre ordre*], which God promises to us in this life but which man cannot yet imagine [*concevoir*]? Then ... this mysterious quality partakes of the essence of grace [*le je ne sais quoi est de la grace*] as well as of nature and art.⁸²

Bouhours definitely claims that the most significant experiences which determine or enchant our desire and hope – that is, our will – without constraints are to be felt, tasted, sensed, and cannot be grasped or comprehended by reason or conceived by means of its concepts. I think that the close and intense relationship between the *je-ne-sais-quoi* experience and the moral actions (cf. freedom of the will), the immortality of the soul or the divine grace were not unknown by Addison and Hutcheson. At least I suggest on the basis of the above examples that the “proto-aesthetic” discourse of the *je-ne-sais-quoi* can be discerned behind the main stream of “philosophical aesthetics” already in Hutcheson’s *Inquiry*, even if he is somewhat reluctant to lay bare this influence.

81 For the ardent debate around this, see Scholar, *The Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi in Early Modern Europe*, 63–9.

82 Dominique Bouhours, ‘The Je Ne Sais Quoi from the *Conversations of Aristo and Eugene*’, Donald Schier (transl.) in Scott Elledge and Donald Schier (eds.), *The Continental Model. Selected French Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century, in English Edition* (Minneapolis, 1960), 228–38, 237.

6 Other types of “the aesthetic” in Hutcheson

Beside the plurality of the conceptions of beauty, Hutcheson frequently claims that other “aesthetic” categories also exist, and he almost always refers us back to Addison’s pleasures of the imagination; furthermore, he never says that his idea of beauty or our experience through the sense of beauty described in his *Inquiry* would have any priority or eminence in comparison with other types of “the aesthetic”. “There are many Conceptions of Objects which are agreeable upon other accounts [than the Uniformity amidst Variety], such as Grandeur, Novelty, Sanctity, and some others, which shall be mention’d hereafter.”⁸³ Without making the link explicit, this is a clear reference to Addison’s *Spectator*-essay No. 412, even if, notably, ‘Sanctity’ is not amongst Addison’s aesthetic categories, and the third category in Addison, i.e. beauty, is not conceived as a ‘compound Ratio of Uniformity and Variety’. Moreover, Hutcheson suggests that there are several “aesthetic” categories, not only the three major ones which Addison discussed. Unfortunately, Hutcheson will never accomplish their detailed description or analysis (he just offers some fleeting remarks at the end of section vi). In the cases of ‘Grandeur’ and ‘Novelty’⁸⁴ he refers us back very briefly to *The Spectator* No. 412 to demonstrate why these are completely ‘foreign to the present Subject.’⁸⁵ So there are other different types

83 Hutcheson, *An Inquiry*, 28–9.

84 As we have seen above in footnote 56, in the *Synopsis of Metaphysics*, beside beauty and harmony, Hutcheson puts these two categories into the context of the reflexive sense. Moreover, in his posthumously published *A System of Moral Philosophy*, on which he worked already in the 1730s, he affirms that ‘To these pleasures of the imagination [i.e. the sense of beauty in forms] may be added two other grateful perceptions arising from novelty and grandeur. The former ever causes a grateful commotion when we are at leisure; which perhaps arises from that curiosity or desire of knowledge which is deeply rooted in the soul ... Grandeur also in generally a very grateful circumstance in any object of contemplation distinct from its beauty or proportion. Nay, where none of these are observed, the mind is agreeably moved with what is large, spacious, high, or deep, even when no advantage arising from these circumstances is regarded. The final causes of these natural determinations or senses of pleasure may be seen in some late authors.’ Francis Hutcheson, *A System of Moral Philosophy, in three Books*, ed. William Leechman (Glasgow, 1755; 2 vols), I, 19. Hutcheson adds a footnote to this passage, referring to *The Spectator* No. 412 (though No. 413 would be more appropriate) and the last section of his own *Inquiry*. Perhaps this is the longest description of the other two Addisonian categories in Hutcheson’s *oeuvre*.

85 Hutcheson, *An Inquiry*, 69. – Later, in 1747, Hutcheson already emphasizes their similarity: ‘there’s superadded to the human Eye and Ear a wonderful and ingenious Relish or Sense [*judicium*], by which we receive subtiler pleasures; in material forms

of “aesthetic” experience which are somewhat ‘foreign’ to the “philosophical beauty” – and amongst them there is ‘Sanctity’.

Addison’s “aesthetic” triad discovers and maps a new and rich sphere of experience, and Addison seems to think that his major categories cover the whole territory of “the aesthetic”. Still, between *The Pleasures of the Imagination* and the first edition of the *Inquiry*, several essays were also published which tried to extend, to enrich, and, with all these efforts, to re-interpret this newly discovered sphere ranging from natural scenes to architecture and belles-lettres as presented by Addison. For example, in *The Spectator* No. 454, Steele expands the realm of “the aesthetic” to urban life and environment, which is one of the first formulations – if not the first – of modern *flânerie* from 1712.⁸⁶ In the *Guardian* No. 49, George Berkeley publishes his *Essay on Pleasures, Natural and Fantastical* in 1713, in which he expands “the aesthetic” to urban scenes, to home interiors, to fair weather, to natural prospects, and, finally – and most importantly – to the presence of the Deity in our everyday lives. The latter can be understood as an exploitation of the ever implicit devotional content of Addison’s pleasures of the imagination. It is not simply the benevolent Providence as the final cause of the “aesthetic” experience that is discussed here, and the design argument is not touched either. Instead, we see a course of natural pleasures which ends in (or at least can potentially lead to) the experience of transcendence as its utmost perfection. This is a pleasure ‘which naturally affects a human mind with the most lively and transporting touches’, i.e. it is:

the sense that we act in the eye of infinite Wisdom, Power, and Goodness, that will crown our virtuous endeavours here, with a happiness hereafter, large as our desires, and lasting as our immortal souls. This is a perpetual spring of gladness in the mind. ... Without this the highest state of life is insipid...⁸⁷

So in the case of the accomplishment of “the aesthetic”, we (as moral agents)

gracefulness, beauty and proportion ... And the very *grandeur* and *novelty* of objects excite some grateful perceptions not unlike the former, which are naturally connected with and subservient to our desires of knowledge.’ Francis Hutcheson, *Philosophiae Moralis Institutio Compendiaria, with A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy*, ed. Luigi Turco (Indianapolis, 2007), 32–3.

86 See Brian Michael Norton, ‘*The Spectator* and Everyday Aesthetics’, *Lumen*, 34 (2015), 123–36, 131–2.

87 *The Guardian*, ed. Robert Lynam (London, 1826; 2 vols), I, 194.

are perceived by God; this state can be described as an aesthetic-spiritual community with God which, at the same time, has tremendous effects on everyday life: everything would be tasteless without this experience.

Finally, Hutcheson's three letters for the *Dublin Journal* on laughter are also fitted to this course of different extensions of Addison's categories. With these essays of 1725 Hutcheson contributes to the vast philosophical (theological and medical) literature on laughter in a significant way, 'the emphasis shifts: it is the benign laughter that becomes the norm and the malevolent that is not properly to be called laughter'.⁸⁸ It was traditionally thought that 'while laughter is derisive, smiling is taken to be a natural sign of pleasure ... of affection and encouragement'.⁸⁹ At the same time, Hutcheson adds an "aesthetic" turn to the reflections on laughter. In the second essay, he clearly defines the frame of his interpretation: 'The ingenious Mr. Addison ... has justly observed many sublimer sensations than those commonly mentioned among philosophers: he observes, particularly, that we receive sensations of pleasure from those objects which are great, new, or beautiful'.⁹⁰ Through (true) laughter, we can get a sense of our social nature: 'our whole frame is so sociable, that one merry countenance may diffuse cheerfulness to many ... Laughter is none of the smallest bonds to common friendships, though it be of less consequence in great heroic friendships'.⁹¹ This cheerful state of mind, which cannot be independent from its moral-theological version we have seen above, helps establish and maintain the community. Moreover, '[t]his pleasure must indeed be a secret one', we are never conscious of its cause, but we do feel it, our desire for it comes 'from a kind instinct of nature, a secret bond between

88 Stuart Tave, *The Amiable Humorist: A Study in the Comic Theory and Criticism of the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Chicago, 1960), 55. – In his 1755 preface to *A System of Moral Philosophy*, William Leechman, the editor, writes: 'he wrote some philosophical papers accounting for Laughter, in a different way from Mr. Hobbs [sic], and more honourable to human nature'. Hutcheson, *A System of Moral Philosophy*, ix–x. At the same time, this is also a criticism of Addison's more or less Hobbist position he exposed in *The Spectator*, like in No. 47, which is referred to by Hutcheson, cf. Francis Hutcheson, 'Reflections Upon Laughter' in idem *An Inquiry Concerning Beauty, Order, Harmony, Design*, 102–19, 103, 105; but furthermore in *The Spectator* Nos. 35, 249 and 381.

89 Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics. Volume 3: Hobbes and Civil Science* (Cambridge, 2002), 150.

90 Hutcheson, 'Reflections Upon Laughter', 108.

91 Ibid., 113. – The decline of the significance of 'great heroic friendship' (and with this, implicitly, the rising importance of 'common friendship') was already detected by Lord Shaftesbury in his *Sensus Communis*. Cf. Lord Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, 46–8.

us and our fellow-creatures.⁹² Quite interestingly, however, Hutcheson speaks here about our rising compassion when we regard ‘tragical representations’ or sights, but he does this through a close analogy with laughter. Nevertheless, this analogy also evidently refers us to the *je-ne-sais-quoi* and links laughter to “the aesthetic”, but not to its limited version in Hutcheson’s “philosophical beauty”. Thus, in Hutcheson laughter becomes an aesthetic-social experience in a double sense: it can be enjoyed to the fullest only in an assembly, and it manifests and maintains social cohesion in a secret and joyful way.

Hutcheson does not attempt to find a universal formula behind the diverse phenomena of laughter,⁹³ which changes according to our various ‘ideas of dignity and wisdom’,⁹⁴ and which can be best described in its operation and its beneficial effects. He accepts its plurality to the extent that he is no longer certain in which category it would fit: ‘sensation, action, passion, or affection’.⁹⁵ He presents it, at least in its true form, as a social or sociable version of the aesthetic experience: on the occasion of laughter we experience our sociableness, the most honourable aspect of our nature, in a direct, innocent and pleasant way.⁹⁶ We always laugh together with others, even if this community is sometimes only virtual; the true laughter – compared to the ‘sedate joy’ from the ‘opinion of our superiority’⁹⁷ – is the ‘cheerful conversation among friends, where there is often an high mutual esteem.’⁹⁸ From this angle, maybe it is not far-fetched to suggest that Hutcheson’s conception is a worldly version of Berkeley’s highest pleasure: in true laughter we can feel the presence of other human beings, who are like us, in a way which

92 Hutcheson, ‘Reflections Upon Laughter’, 107.

93 I do not think that the formula of the ‘uniformity amidst variety’ can be applicable to the manifoldness of laughter as Kivy suggests, cf. Kivy, ‘Editor’s Introduction’ in Hutcheson, *An Inquiry Concerning Beauty, Order, Harmony, Design*, 97–101, 99. (And I also disagree with Kivy’s remark that this piece of Hutcheson be ‘aesthetic’ because ‘it deals with a major category of fine arts.’ Ibid., 97.)

94 Hutcheson, ‘Reflections Upon Laughter’, 111.

95 Ibid., 108.

96 ‘It is plainly of considerable moment in human society. It is often a great occasion of pleasure, and enlivens our conversation exceedingly, when it is conducted by good-nature. It spreads a pleasantry of temper over multitudes at once...’ Ibid., 116.

97 The position Hutcheson attributes to Thomas Hobbes all along the essays can be regarded as a simplified interpretation of Hobbes’ conception of laughter, cf. Clarence DeWitt Thorpe, *The Aesthetic Theory of Thomas Hobbes* (Ann Arbor, London, 1940), 146–7. For example, in his *Elements of Law* Hobbes speaks about a version of laughter which is possible ‘without offence’, indeed, but later he never recurs to this possibility, cf. Skinner, *Visions of Politics. Volume 3: Hobbes and Civil Science*, 147.

98 Hutcheson, ‘Reflections Upon Laughter’, 107.

accomplishes the highest form of our humanity. In other words, Hutcheson's 'benign laughter' may keep (at least implicitly) a profound relationship to Berkeley's aesthetic-spiritual community. Moreover, it is also interesting that for Hutcheson improper laughter aiming at 'the phrases of holy writ' always appears amongst those gentlemen whose 'imagination have been too barren to give any other entertainment.'⁹⁹ This 'barren imagination' is the exact opposite of the Addisonian "aesthetic" imagination which offers the richness and diversity of 'innocent pleasures', and which may be – implicitly – an antidote to the improper versions of laughter, too.

In the second letter, Hutcheson writes: 'I shall now [after rejecting Hobbes' account] endeavour to discover some other ground of that sensation, action, passion, or affection, I know not which of them a philosopher would call it.' Then he refers to Addison's aesthetic observations which remained unnoticed by philosophers.¹⁰⁰ These passages indicate that here he writes from the position of an Addisonian essayist, that of an "aesthete", and not from that of a philosopher. I think this can illuminate why Hutcheson is able to accept and express the richness and profoundness of an "aesthetic" experience – which happens to be about laughter –, in these letters, and why he cannot do the same in his systematic philosophical writings. In positive terms, we may say that perhaps the reason why Hutcheson uses a universal formula for the explanation of "philosophical beauty" (which is compatible both with natural religion and with morality) is that he may consider this reduced, "philosophical" beauty appropriate to both the Lockean and the Neo-Platonic philosophical language. In those days, neither the sublime (*grandeur*), nor novelty have been admitted to the philosophical language or vocabulary; these terms as well as others referring to other "aesthetic" categories could be treated only in the genre of the essay. All this suggests that in the reconstruction of Hutcheson's aesthetic views his essays on the experience of this 'secret pleasure', and his frequent – implicit or explicit – references to others' essays in "the aesthetic" may have much more significance than it is accorded in the scholarship.

Ritter remarks that earlier the philosophical reason claims a thorough grasp of the essence of being by means of its general concepts and rules, but in laughter the limitation of this reason becomes manifest because the infinite depth and wealth of being can never be reached by reason and its concepts. So humorous laughter, which, according to Ritter, was born around the 16th century, is a kind of philosophical criticism by which we realize the extreme

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 110.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 108.

ambition of reason and the order of seriousness, and we recognize that reason is not divine anymore, but only human.¹⁰¹ From this perspective, we may say that Hutcheson discovers rather the positive, and only implicitly the critical side of this humorous laughter by describing and mapping the complex phenomenon of laughter and by binding it together with the accomplishment of our humanity in the form of the “aesthetic” experience. But although it is an “aesthetic” experience, it maintains an intense relationship with the theological and the religious (e.g. through Addison’s or Berkeley’s interpretations), so, in a sense, it maintains the ‘divine’ character of even the “aesthetic” sense. Laughter is a quasi-action, or even an action (we have seen that this is amongst its possible meanings): it is not a deliberate act though, but not contemplation either: we do something when we laugh heartily, we express our mirth stimulated by the ridiculous via our ‘sense of the ridiculous’¹⁰², while, at the same time, we are also confirming our social and cultural bonds to others with whom we are laughing together. When we perceive the ridiculous, it is the spectatorial side of the experience that is in the foreground; and when we laugh together with our fellow creatures, it is an action which, because we are laughing at some meanness, has moral content too. Therefore, laughter seems to be an excellent bridge between “aesthetic” pleasure and moral action.

Moreover, the ‘sense of the ridiculous’ will have a counterpart in the system of human senses in the *Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy* of 1747. After describing the ‘superadded’ ‘Relish or Sense [*judicium*]’ by means of which ‘subtler pleasures’ become available to us,¹⁰³ Hutcheson discusses the reflex senses ‘by which certain new forms or perceptions are received, in consequence of others previously observed by our external or internal senses’: sympathy or fellow-feeling is already more noble and more useful, but finally we reach the highest state: ‘the noblest and most divine of all our senses, that *Conscience* [sense] by which we discern what is graceful, becoming, beautiful and honourable [*decorum, pulchrum, et honestum*] in the affections of the soul, in our conduct of life, our words and actions ... What is approved by this sense we count *right* and *beautiful*, and call it *virtue*...’¹⁰⁴ This moral or ‘Divine Sense’¹⁰⁵ is the counterpart of the sense of the ridiculous¹⁰⁶, and the former

101 Cf. Joachim Ritter, ‘Über das Lachen’ in idem *Subjektivität* (Frankfurt am Main, 1974), 62–92.

102 Hutcheson, ‘Reflections Upon Laughter’, 116.

103 Cf. Hutcheson, *Philosophiae Moralis Institutio Compendiaria*, 32–3.

104 *Ibid.*, 35.

105 *Ibid.*, 40.

106 Cf. *ibid.*, 43.

was introduced as ‘a certain [deeply implanted] *sense* or natural *taste* to attend and regulate each active power’.¹⁰⁷ ‘Divine Sense’, then, appears, on the one hand, as a somewhat elevated version of the Shaftesburian taste, understood as *sensus communis*,¹⁰⁸ and, on the other, Hutcheson also connects it – not without some eclecticism – to the long theological tradition of the divine senses (also including both the concept of *gustus spiritualis*¹⁰⁹ and John Calvin’s *sensus divinitatis*¹¹⁰) from Origen onward. Thus, the systematic pair of the ‘Divine Sense’ and the sense of ridiculous can be read as another link between theology (an *ab ovo* “aesthetic” moral theology, cf. *decorum, pulchrum, et honestum*) and “the aesthetic” (in the form of laughter).

7 The inward devotion

Finally, I would like to point at a passage of the *Essay* which may offer an opportunity to gather together at least the majority of the threads discussed above and to show that Hutcheson was influenced by such “aesthetic” or aesthetic-theological thoughts as we have seen in Lord Shaftesbury, in Berkeley, and especially in Addison.

We cannot open our Eyes, without discerning *Grandeur and Beauty* every where. Whoever receives these Ideas, feels an inward *Veneration* arise ... wherever a superior MIND, a governing INTENTION or DESIGN is imagined, there *Religion* begins in its most simple Form, and an inward *Devotion* arises. Our Nature is as much determined to this, as to any other Perception or Affection. How we manage these Ideas and Affections, is indeed of the greatest Importance to our Happiness or Misery.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 34.

¹⁰⁸ Lord Shaftesbury writes in his *Sensus Communis*: ‘Nor can the men of cooler passions and more deliberate pursuits withstand the force of beauty in other subjects. Everyone is a virtuoso of a higher or lower degree. Everyone pursues a grace and courts a Venus of one kind or another. The *Venustum*, the *Honestum*, the *Decorum*, of things will force its way.’ Lord Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, 64.

¹⁰⁹ See my ‘*Gustus Spiritualis*: Remarks on the Emergence of Modern Aesthetics’, *Estetika: The Central European Journal of Aesthetics*, 51 (2014), 62–85.

¹¹⁰ See, for example, Paul Helm, ‘John Calvin, the *Sensus Divinitatis* and the Noetic Effects of Sin’, *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 43 (1998): 87–107.

¹¹¹ Hutcheson, *An Essay*, 116–7.

The beginning of this passage is reminiscent of an essay by Addison from the series *The Pleasures of the Imagination* (cf. footnote 73). Here, however, beauty and grandeur are mentioned together which is quite exceptional in Hutcheson. We open our eyes, and the “aesthetic” qualities immediately and without any voluntary or reflective action enter into our minds (into our fancy or imagination, Addison would say). Surprisingly, however, it is not ‘innocent pleasure’ or ‘secret joy’ but ‘inward Veneration’ that arises in us. Veneration could be an appropriate response in the case of grandeur, but not in the case of beauty (taken either in the primary sense of the *Inquiry* or in that of the *je-ne-sais-quoi*). Then, and it is a crucial point, the second phase comes in which we *imagine* a superior mind and a design (in the created nature around us) inspired by this veneration. And these new ideas generate a new sentiment in us: ‘an inward Devotion’, which thus accompanies with the ‘most simple Form’ of religion. Here the superior mind and the design are not rational or intellectual constructions abstracted from the regularities of our (sensory) perceptions, but products (ideas)¹¹² of the imagination, where ‘imagination’ is similar to Addison’s “co-creative” faculty of ‘polite imagination’: it adds something to the perception from inside. This something is eventually the ‘inward Devotion’. Let us remind ourselves of *The Spectator* No. 393: “The Mind has gone a great way towards Praise and Thanksgiving that is filled with such a secret Gladness: A grateful Reflection on the Supreme Cause who produces it, sanctifies it in the Soul, and gives it its proper Value. Such a habitual Disposition of Mind consecrates every Field and Wood”: Addison was perfectly clear that this ‘grateful Reflection’ is not from some intellectual activity, it is rather an emotional response available to everyone. In other words, Hutcheson here speaks about the religious or spiritual content of the “aesthetic” experience which cannot be grasped in the terms of his “philosophical beauty”. He reaches a conception of the aesthetic experience which is beyond any rational control or regulation of the intellect (such operations manifest themselves in the design argument, in theodicean reasoning or in the ‘uniformity amidst variety’ formula). A truly aesthetic experience binds together directly the perception of the inner sense with the transcendence, and in this process, both the perception and the transcendence are being transformed: the former becomes spiritual, the

112 In the previous passage, Hutcheson uses the words ‘opinion’ and ‘apprehension’: a natural effect of the internal (“aesthetic”) sense is ‘that it leads us into *Apprehensions* of a DEITY. Grandeur, Beauty, Order, Harmony, wherever they occur, raise an Opinion of a MIND, of *Design*, and *Wisdom*.’ Ibid., 116. There is a marginal subtitle: ‘Ideas of Divinity arise from the internal Senses’.

latter “sensual”. When, eventually, Hutcheson establishes the most simple, i.e. genuine form of religion in the experience of the sublime and the beautiful, the modern aesthetics is emerging.

Here is a hopefully illustrative parallelism. In 1733, Berkeley formulated a distinction very clearly which – *mutatis mutandis* – can shed light on Hutcheson’s “aesthetic” enterprise: ‘the contemplation of the mind upon the ideas of beauty, and virtue, and order, and fitness, being one thing, and sense of religion another.’ ‘Contemplation’ in this passage is what “aesthetic” moral philosophy is for Lord Shaftesbury, while ‘sense of religion’ contains the principles of morality, fears and hopes concerning future life, etc. Berkeley misses ‘any religious sense of God’ in those who emphasize only the ‘vital principle’, the ‘order, harmony, and proportion’.¹¹³ Around that time, especially in his *Alciphron*, Berkeley also elaborated an “aesthetics” of invisibility, that is, of the sublime words of mysteries as a deeper and more fundamental counterpart of the “aesthetics” of vision, that is, of beautiful images (based on physico-theology). Meanwhile, Hutcheson seems to supplement his explicit aesthetics of “philosophical beauty” with a more profound aesthetics of the ‘sense of religion’, though that part remained unelaborated.

In the conclusion, I would like to summarize briefly the major claims of my essay. First of all, Hutcheson’s aesthetics is not identical with his theory of “philosophical beauty”, as elaborated in the first part of his *Inquiry*. His reflections on a broader and more profound experience of “the aesthetic” can be found both in his philosophical treatises (including the *Inquiry*) and in his essays. On the basis of these – sometimes scattered – remarks, we can see that, on the one hand, his conception of beauty is not a uniform one, but it is at least bifurcating into “philosophical beauty” and the pattern of the *je-ne-sais-quoi*, and that, on the other, he acknowledges the existence and the importance of other kinds of aesthetic experiences; all this refers to the fact that Hutcheson was well aware of the plurality and richness of the emerging aesthetic experience. Addison’s gentleman of polite imagination, Steele’s urban Rambler, Berkeley’s tranquil and cheerful spectator, as well as Hutcheson’s man of true laughter are types of the *homo aestheticus* who is sensible to a kind of manifoldness and inexhaustible delicacy of the human existence. Moreover, by means of the parallelism between Addison’s and Hutcheson’s interests and efforts, indispensable theological layers can be discerned in this “aesthetic” experience: that of physico-theology, that of theodicean arguments and that

113 George Berkeley, *The Theory of Vision Vindicated and Explained*, ed. H. V. H. Cowell (Cambridge, London, 1860), 6.

of 'inward devotion'. Without lessening the significance and the far-reaching influence of Hutcheson's theory of "philosophical beauty", I suggest that his understanding of "the aesthetic" in the form of a theologico-aesthetic experience makes his intellectual achievement even more noteworthy; and, indirectly, his intellectual enterprise called the attention to an urgent need for a proper philosophical language of "the aesthetic", that is, to the fact that neither Platonism, nor Lockean epistemology could provide appropriate tools for grasping this new type of experience in its fullness. It is true that Hutcheson was well aware of the 'unique model of experience',¹¹⁴ its novelty, its richness, its theological, existential and moral significance, but the philosophical system he was able to build could absorb only some features of this experience.

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114 As Kivy quotes Jerome Stolnitz, cf. Kivy, *The Seventh Sense*, 122.

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