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'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 2003[2]) 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 1725[7], 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 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]

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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 issue[20], 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 multidisciplinary, 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 neuren 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 argument[31] 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 argument[32], 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 chears 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 Chearfulness 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, cheerfulness[46] 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 imagination[52], 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 of[59], 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 Deitys; 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-theology[64] 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 shaken[66], 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'historie 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 Deformitys 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 treaties), 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 grace[81] 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.

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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 lation* (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 arsing 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)

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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 'imaginations 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 'subtiler 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 ridiculous[106], 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' "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.