THE INFLUENCE OF HOBBES, LOCKE, AND BERKELEY ON THE ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH AESTHETICIANS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

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C O N T E N T S

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P R E F A C E.

My aim in this thesis has been to try to show how English and Scottish aestheticians in the eighteenth century drew upon certain ideas prominent in the writings of Hobbes, Locke, andBerkeley, and used them in formulating solutions to problems facing them. In doing this, I have tried to exclude all issues, even closely related ones, which might distract attention from my principal theme. Questions of such moment as the influence of Bacon on Hobbes, the relation of eighteenth century aesthetic theory to ancient aesthetics the influence of French philosophers and aestheticians on their English counterparts, and the effects of the work of Shaftesbury and Hume have therefore received no special attention.

The field I have tried to cover is a large one, and is still relatively speaking unexplored, though there has been a re-awakening of interest in it in the last fifteen years, chiefly in the United States and in Italy. But an enormous amount of work remains to be done, and I can claim to have done no more than touch upon the many outstanding problems.

The scheme I have adopted is as follows. The first part I have devoted to individual problems which may be classed as psychological in nature, and some at least of which had to be investigated before any aesthetic could be developed. The second part deals with questions more purely philosophical - the nature of perceptions, ideas, and language. Finally, in the third part, I have tried to trace the growth of two of the most important schools of aesthetic thought, both of which seem to have grown out of suggestions made by Hobbes and Locke. An all too short introduction is provided in the hope of supplying

what is necessarily lacking in a thesis of this nature - an over-all view of the period concerned, such as can not unfortunately be found in any other book in English. The nearest approach to a history of eighteenth century English aesthetic theory is Dr. Rossi's introduction to his recent work, L'Estetica dell'Empirismo Inglese.

INTRODUCTION

THE DEVELOPMENT OF AESTHETIC THEORY IN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

1.

Although Aesthetic is a branch of philosophy, it is not easy to regard most of the eighteenth century aesthetic theorising in England and Scotland as such. The reason for this is not very hard to find: the leading philosophers did not often display very great interest in aesthetics, and the leading aestheticians were not, on the other hand, often qualified to consider their subject in a philosophic manner. The truth is that interest was in artistic questions rather than in aesthetic philosophy; and that this is so is amply confirmed by the examination of any one of the bibliographies of the subject published subsequent to the pioneer work of Professor Draper in 1931. Books on a wide variety of subjects all contain references to problems that can, sometimes with perhaps a little stretch of the imagination, be classed as aesthetic in nature. Consequently we find such different works as Nettleton's *Treatise on Virtue and Happiness*, Ferguson's *History of Civil Society*, and Henniker's *Two Letters on the Origin, Antiquity and History of Norman Tiles stained with Armorial Bearings* all finding their way, at one time or another, into bibliographies of eighteenth century aesthetics.

If any preliminary conclusion can be drawn from the study of such

bibliographies, it is that interest in certain aesthetic problems must have been very widespread during this period. In the second half of the eighteenth century, there is hardly one writer or artist of note who has not left a pronouncement on one or other aspect of these problems. It is scarcely less striking how few of these men ever tried to work out anything in the nature of an aesthetic system of their own: and most of those who did attempt to do so, accepted almost without question the assumptions and even the methods of their predecessors. There is therefore about the development of eighteenth century aesthetic something of a 'jig-saw puzzle' quality. The pieces remained the same: and they were tried sometimes in one position, sometimes in another, yet somehow never managing to form a complete and satisfactory picture.

It is interesting, and almost certainly no coincidence, that the growth of interest in aesthetics should overlap one of the great ages of British philosophy, which lasted roughly from 1650-1750, and during which appeared nearly all the principal works of Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. Their work aroused a new interest in and awareness of philosophy that made possible the steady growth of an aesthetic based on many of the principles which they had tried to establish. The attention paid by all four philosophers to questions of psychology was in itself of considerable importance for the development of aesthetic theory, which had perforce to consider the reactions of the individual to beautiful or sublime objects. When we add to these factors the increasing interest in art criticism of every sort which manifested itself during the eighteenth century, it becomes clear that conditions were unusually favourable for the consideration of aesthetic problems, and that the widespread interest in such questions was under the circumstances a natural development.

The history of aesthetic theory in England may be said to start with Shaftesbury, who was certainly the first writer consciously to develope anything approaching an aesthetic system of his own. Shaftesbury's aesthetic ideas appeared in a series of short treatises which were later collected under the title of Characteristics. The source of these ideas has been the subject of some controversy, but they certainly derive ultimately from ancient philosophy, and are in some points similar to Platonic and neo-Platonic theories. Shaftesbury insisted on the substantial identity of the true, the good and the beautiful, and accounted for man's ability to perceive the beautiful and the good by the supposition of a sense of beauty, and of a moral sense, between which he did not however distinguish. Shaftesbury's aesthetic suffered to some extent from its constant conjunction with his system of ethics, of which it formed an integral part: it is probable that Shaftesbury saw this himself, for his Second Characters, unpublished until 1912, show that he was moving towards the formulation of a purer aesthetic which his early death prevented him from working out in detail.

Shaftesbury's theory of a sense of beauty was adopted by Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746), who made use of his knowledge of Locke's philosophy to develop the conception of a number of internal senses, including the moral sense and the sense of beauty, which enable man to perceive immediately cetain non-sensible qualities in external objects. According to Hutcheson, a beautiful object causes an instantaneous feeling of pleasure in an observer, and he suggested that the only objects capable of rousing this pleasure were those in which there existed a "compound ratio of uniformity

and variety:"[1] he also however allowed of a second class of relative beauty, or beauty of art, when the pleasure is caused by man-made imitations of objects in nature.

The theory of an internal sense of beauty became popular almost at once, and is adopted by Nettleton writing as early as 1729 and by Stubbes two years later. Avison, one of the first men to write a treatise on the aesthetic reactions to music, made it the basis of his explanation of the pleasure given by music, and Gerard in his Essay on Taste made it an important constituent of the faculty of taste. The theory was also accepted, in one form or another by Duff, Ogilvie and Stedman, all of whom held with certain reservations that taste was an internal sense, by Monboddo, who preferred to talk of an "intellectual sense," and by Reid, who divided it into an instinctive part and rational part. Hume also allowed the existence of an internal sense of beauty, but argued that it consisted in man's ability to perceive that relationship between his faculties and certain external objects in which beauty consists: and this view was also held by Lancaster and Kames.

Most supporters of the theory however agreed with Hutcheson that the sense perceived a beauty which depended on certain sensible qualities of the object, and many different opinions were advanced as to the properties concerned. Hutcheson's original suggestion of uniformity amid variety found a good deal of favour, and Hartley, Gerard, Kames, Blair, Alison and Mangin among others admitted that it was a source of aesthetic pleasure, though few were ready to agree that it was the only principle of beauty.

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1 Beauty and Virtue, p.17

Many other principles of beauty were proposed, and in his Analysis of Beauty Hogarth lists as chief among them fitness, simplicity, intricacy, and quantity: and to these we may add utility, symmetry, proportion, and regularity. Hogarth himself tried to explain beauty by what he called the line of beauty; that is, a line, serpentine in shape and possessing a certain degree of curvature, which gives rise to beauty, wherever it is perceived. This however, obviously the solution of a working artist, did not prove acceptable to most of his contemporaries, though Hogarth's authority was sufficient to lead many to include the 'curving line of beauty' in their lists of the qualities giving rise to the perception of the beautiful.

An interesting case is that of Burke, who tried to shift the emphasis from the sentimental to the physiological, by proposing a theory that perception of beauty was accompanied by a certain relaxation of fibres in the body. This part of his theory however attracted less attention than his listing of such qualities as smoothness or delicacy as characteristics of beautiful objects, and when Jeffrey early in the following century claimed that the sense of beauty was supposed in all theories that attributed the perception of beauty to the existence of certain sensible qualities in the objects concerned, he clearly had Burke foremost in his mind. Jeffrey also refers to the doctrine of relaxation of fibres, but it does not seem to have occurred to him or to any of his predecessors that Burke was trying to develop a theory of beauty more in accordance with the physiological aspects of sensation. Burke's Inquiry has many merits: it is far more painstaking than most contemporary aesthetic treatises which tended to confuse aesthetic, moral, critical and philosophical questions, largely because of the failure to perceive that aesthetics was in itself a

separate department of philosophy. Burke tried to set certain limits to his enquiries, and took considerable trouble to pick out the qualities which he considered to be causes of the feeling of 'delight' or aesthetic pleasure. The result is that his work remained influential for many years after publication, and Price writing forty years later could still talk of the sytstem of Burke as a living influence.

3.

Though in modern times the sense of beauty was first proposed by Shaftesbury, credit for the subsequent popularity of the theory is generally given to Hutcheson. Other aspects of Shaftesbury's aesthetic however had an influence which can be more directly traced to him as source. Notable among these is the moralistic tendency by which the beautiful and the good were considered as essentially the same. Many of those who dealt with aesthetic questions were interesed primarily in moral philosophy, and it was only this identification of the good with the beautiful that justified them in paying any attention to the latter. Thus we find Fiddes attributing the beauty of external objects to their power to give expression to beauty of mind, while both Nettleton and Arbuckle insist on the importance of moral beauty. This had its effect on the general attitude to aesthetic questions, which was not altered to any extent by Hutcheson's treatment of beauty and virtue as separate subjects. Consequently most treatises on aesthetics which had any pretensions to completeness included a section on moral beauty, and this is reflected in Blair's view of taste as a moral and purifying influence.

The ethical system of Shaftesbury was formulated very largely in reaction to the then popular 'selfish' philosophy of Hobbes, ~~and~~ to counter ~~it~~ which

Shaftesbury advanced the theory that there is common to all men a feeling of universal benevolence which prompts them to sympathise with the feelings of others whether it is in their interest to do so or not. This idea was taken up and propagated by Hutcheson, who made it a part of his ethical teaching, thus helping to popularise the idea that positive pleasure could be obtained from sharing the emotions of others. The possibility of a man feeling for the joys and sorrows of others through some form of sympathy was admitted by Dr. Johnson and by Hume, who suggested sympathy as a probable explanation of the beauty men perceive in inanimate objects. Burke too held that it was by means of sympathy that such arts as poetry and painting were able to cause emotion in those contemplating them.

The doctrine of sympathy received its fullest expression in The Theory of Moral Sentiments of Adam Smith, who made use of it to explain many forms of human emotion, among them the pleasures received from music and from tragedy. This work at once became extremely popular and may have helped to weaken the hold of the internal sense theory. It should be noted however that there are strong similarities between the doctrines of sympathy and the internal sense; and neither was able to solve at once the two problems that prove so baffling to the eighteenth century - the variety of tastes, and the universality of beauty. It was however often employed as an explanation of single aesthetic difficulties; Campbell explained by sympathy the orator's ability to work on the passions of his audience while Blair declared that it was by sympathy that we are able to appreciate figures of speech expressive of the passions or emotions of others. As late as 1805 a writer in the Edinburgh Review accounts for the pleasure taken in dramatic performances by an extension of our sympathy from real emotion to that represented before us on the stage.

4.

Addison's papers on *The Pleasures of the Imagination* which appeared in 1712 were, though perhaps lacking in profundity, of great importance to the subsequent development of aesthetic theory. Addison left unanswered, and in some cases unasked, many of the questions that were to engage the attention of later aestheticians, but his division of the objects giving aesthetic pleasure into the beautiful, the great, and the uncommon had considerable influence on his successors, and gave rise to the threefold classification of beauty, sublimity, and novelty. Many of Addison's theories were accepted by Hutcheson who, however, did not consider the sublime and the new, and instead referred his readers to Addison's *Spectator* paper on the subject. Addison's classification, along with most of his other theories, was adopted by Akenside in his poem on *The Pleasures of Imagination*, the very title of which was taken from Addison. Akenside thus helped to establish the three categories in the popular mind.

The sublime was the subject of quite a literature of its own, and therefore deserves separate consideration. Interest in the sublime was largely due to the re-discovery of Longinus in the 17th century, and more than one translation of him appeared within measurable distance of the turn of the century. Addison certainly knew Longinus, and drew on him to some extent in his remarks on grandeur. The first treatise devoted exclusively to consideration of the sublime was that by John Baillie, which appeared in 1747, and thereafter most considerable works on aesthetic dealt with the sublime as distinct from beauty. Burke, Priestley, Kames, and Blair were among those who considered the subject, but of their theories the most striking is undoubtedly that of Burke, who held that the sublime was not

inconsistent with ugliness, and that it gave rise to no positive pleasure. Thus to Burke the sublime becomes what is almost the antithesis of beauty, and in view of this it is interesting to note that Burke considered novelty in itself no source of aesthetic pleasure. Consequently for Burke only two opposed categories, the sublime and the beautiful, remain; and this twofold division later became classic through the work of Kant.

The attitude to novelty varied very considerably. Hartley held that it was continually necessary even to beauty, since without it all beauty tended to become insipid, but Dr. Johnson while admitting that it was necessary to the pleasures of sense, argued that mere rarity or novelty had in itself no value. Hume agreed that novelty was pleasing, but added that it could increase the force of painful as well as pleasurable emotions. Reid classed novelty as a mere relation: anything seen for the first time is new, and need not on that account give to us any pleasure. Aikin on the other hand, writing in 1793, considered that the pleasure we take in art and nature has its source in novelty, which he considered as "practically ultimate,"[1] and capable of arousing a desire that nothing else can satisfy.

In the second half of the century a new category known as the "picturesque" was evolved, largely by bringing together objects which were popularly regarded as beautiful, but did not possess the qualities which Burke had laid down as giving rise to beauty. The new category was probably the result of increased interest in romantic scenery, but the founder of the "picturesque" school of aestheticians was William Gilpin, who published a series of travel books between 1768 and 1791: Gilpin was not however interested primarily in aesthetic problems, and therefore the clearest exposition of the

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1 Essays, vol.i,p.65

ideas which he had helped to popularise is found in the Essays on Picturesque Beauty of Sir Uvedale Price. Price adopted a more extreme attitude than Gilpin by arguing that picturesque objects formed a class wholly distinct from those which are beautiful, but he received little support, though as late as 1811 a writer in the Critical Review referred to the picturesque as a "minor sublime".

The classifications mentioned above are a clear sign of the tendency to regard beauty as purely objective, for they are based on the idea that there are certain qualities in objects that render them beautiful, or sublime, or picturesque. The objective attitude prevailed for a large part of the century, and the first sign of revolt against it was probably Hume's view of beauty as arising out of the relation between the object and the subject. Eventually however, as will be seen, the subjective view triumphed, and the categories established by Addison at the outset of the period were abolished.

5.

The rise of the theory that beauty is subjective is chiefly attributable to the steady growth of the doctrine of association of ideas, different aspects of which were considered by both Hobbes and Locke, and which made its first appearance in an aesthetic treatise in the works of Hutcheson. Hutcheson found association a useful ally to the internal sense of beauty, as it allowed him to account for variety of tastes as well as the universality of beauty. Hutcheson saw that the most telling argument against his aesthetic was the undeniable fact that tastes for beauty differ; and he explained the difference as the effect of associated ideas, which deceive the mind, and lead it away from the true beauty to some form of false beauty.

Associationist doctrine received considerable development in the hands of Hume, who did not however apply his theories in his few essays on aesthetic subjects. Hume laid down certain laws which governed, though not invariably, the succession of thoughts in the mind: and then proceeded to extend associationism to make it provide an explanation for man's emotions and passions. Hume also accepted the internal sense of beauty, and it is perhaps a little surprising to find him nevertheless deciding that the only possible basis for a standard of beauty is the recognition of an object as beautiful by men of different countries and periods, all of whom must however be qualified judges. This none too satisfactory solution received a certain amount of support later in the century, and appears again in the writing of Beattie and Blair, and also in the Discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds, who concluded that the standard of beauty must therefore be established in the very nature of things.

Meanwhile, the associationist doctrine continued to find favour, and was propagated zealously by Hartley and his follower Priestley, both of whom used association to explain a variety of facts, many of which were connected with artistic and literary matters. Association was opposed in rather a half-hearted way by Burke, but was made increasing use of by aestheticians to evade difficulties in the application of the internal sense theory. It is found in one form or another in the works of Kames and Gerard, and became almost central in the works of Beattie, who, however, despite the fact that he had evolved a theory of association sufficient to account for all the phenomena which he considered, retained the theory of an internal sense of beauty.

It was at about this time (1770-90) that what is often called the

"common sense" school grew up in Scotland. It was headed by Reid, who held that as the philosophy of Locke, Berkeley and Hume had led to sdepticism, a new foundation for philosophy would have to be sought. This Reid found in a series of invariable first principles, which allowed him to assume as fundamental truths dogmatic solutions of many of the problems which had so puzzled the minds of philosophers during the past century. Common sense meant in fact a common judgment based on the first principles, and it had many of the features of the internal sense. Reid was thereby enabled to consider taste as an original power in man, and he went on to explain beauty as an expression of the original perfections of mind.

Reid's theories, despite their obvious weaknesses, had at least the merit of directing attention towards the reactions of the mind rather than the qualities of the object, and may therefore have had some influence on the Essays of Alison, which appeared in 1790. Alison held that the perception of beauty results from the exercise of imagination caused by the arousing of a train of closely related thoughts, consequent on the presentation of certain objects to the senses. The train of thought always originates in some idea connected with the object by association, and so the object concerned, though it may be referred to as beautiful, has in itself no claim to be called so. Beauty is therefore the result of a certain activity of mind in the percipient, and is purely subjective. Alison's doctrine is carefully and methodically worked out, and may be described as the culmination of nearly a century of flirtation between aesthetics and associationism.

Alison's theories obtained some support from Knight, Mangin, and Dugald Stewart, but their most enthusiastic advocate was Francis Jeffrey.

Jeffrey first noticed Alison's Essays in an article in the Edinburgh Review on the appearance of a second edition in 1810, and he then acclaimed them as quite the best aesthetic theory known to him. Fourteen years later he wrote an article on Beauty for the Encyclopaedia Britannica, and though the source of his ideas is clearly and avowedly Alison, Jeffrey has now worked out a slightly different theory of his own. Beauty is the emotion roused in the observer by an association between the object and one of the simple human emotions, as the result of a connection established between them by experience. Beauty remains subjective and the "substantial identity" of the sublime, the picturesque, and the beautiful is proved: we are left however without a really satisfactory explanation of the universality of beauty. Thus eighteenth century aesthetic ends, much as it had begun, with two irreconcilable facts which cannot be made to harmonise - the problems of the universality of beauty, and the diversity of tastes. Sometimes one is explained, sometimes the other, but there is no one aesthetic treatise which appeared between 1700 and 1825 of which it can be said that it provides an even superficially unanswerable solution to both problems.

6.

Dr. Rossi has given English aesthetic theory in general the title of the "Aesthetic of English Empiricism," and I think that it would be very difficult to find a better title to cover the period under review. The emphasis is placed from first to last on the interpretation of observed facts, whether these facts are the distinguishing qualities of objects called beautiful, or the sentiments felt by a human being on the perception of what is known as beauty. When interest is directed primarily towards the former of these facts, we get what is known as objective aesthetics: when the

latter attracts more attention, we have subjective aesthetics. Between the two extremes are many intermediate grades, most of which received notice at one time or other in the course of the eighteenth century. Always however the problems remain the same, and what is more extraordinary so do the examples quoted. It is by no means rare to find the same case brought forward to support opposing points of view.

Perhaps the greatest weakness of the empiricist aestheticians was their inability to escape from the particular instances which they always felt it their duty to consider. The result was that they seldom or never succeeded in agreeing upon general principles which might have formed the basis of a more philosophical aesthetic. Most of them seem to have regarded aesthetic as a branch of art criticism, and there is consequently a lack of proper method in their approach to the problem. As Bosanquet has pointed out in his History of Aesthetic, they tried to work up to aesthetic by observing the trained artistic sense. The result is that they approach the problem from countless different angles without ever managing to see it as a whole. Their remarks are often acute and their treatises interesting, but they never wholly succeeded in shaking off the bonds imposed upon them by their empirical view of aesthetics.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF WORKS ON

AESTHETICS AND THE FINE ARTS, 1650-1825

Year	Work
1650	Davenant: Preface to Gondibert
	Hobbes: Human Nature
	" Elements of Law
	" Answer to Davenant
1651	" Philosophical Rudiments
	" Leviathan
1656	" Elements of Philosophy
1657	" De Homine
1664	Dryden: Rival Ladies
1667	" Annus Mirabilis
1668	" Dramatic Poesy
1671	" Evening's Love
1672	" Heroic Plays
	" Defence of the Epilogue
1677	Hobbes: Virtues of a Heroic Poem
	Dryden: Author's Apology
1679	" Troilus and Cressida
1680	" Ovid's Epistles
1681	Hobbes: Art of Rhetoric

1689	Locke: Letter on Toleration
1690	Sir William Temple: Miscellanea, pt.II
	Locke: Essay on the Human Understanding
	" On Civil Government
	Athenian Gazette (or Mercury)[1]
1695	Blackmore: Preface to Prince Arthur
	Dryden: Poetry and Painting
1696	Dennis: Prince Arthur
1698	Dryden: The Aeneis
1699	Shaftesbury: Virtue and Merit
1700	Locke: Essay (4th ed'n)
	Dryden: Preface to the Fables
1701	Dennis: Advancement of Modern Poetry
1704	" Grounds of Criticism in Poetry
1706	Locke: Conduct of the Understanding
1708	Shaftesbury: Letter concerning Enthusiasm
1709	" Wit and Humour
	" The Moralists
	Berkeley: New Theory pf Vision
1710	" Principles of Human Knowledge
	Shaftesbury: Advice to an Author
1712	" (Language of Forms)[2]
	Addison: Pleasures of the Imagination
1713	Shaftesbury: Judgment of Hercules
	Berkeley: Hylas and Philonous
1714	Shaftesbury: Miscellaneous Reflections
1715	Richardson: Theory of Painting
	de Crousaz: Traité du Beau
1716	Blackmore: Essays
1719	Richardson: Art of Criticism
	" Science of a Connoisseur
	du Bos: Reflexions critiques
1724	Fiddes: Treatise of Morality
	Welsted: Translation of Longinus

1 Periodicals are given opposite the year in which they were first/published.

2 In form of notes for a work Shaftesbury never completed. It was first published in 1912.

1725	Hutcheson: Beauty and Virtue
	" Moral Good and Evil
	Vico: Scienza Nuova
1727	Hutcheson: The Passions
	" The Moral Sense
1728	(Mayne): Sense and Imagination
	Young: On Lyric Poetry
1729	Collins: Ridicule and Irony
	Nettleton: On Virtue and Happiness
	Arbuckle: Hibernicus's Letters
	Echo or Edinburgh Journal
1730	Lamotte: Poetry and Painting
1731	Stubbes: Dialogue on Beauty
	Gentleman's Magazine
1732	Berkeley: Alciphron
	Shaftesbury: Letter on Design
1733	Berkeley: Theory of Vision Vindicated
1734	Jacob: The Sister Arts
1738	Hume: Treatise of Human Nature
1739	Browne: On Design and Beauty
1740	Turnbull: On Ancient Painting
1741	Hume: Essays vol. I
	André: Sur le beau
1742	Hume: Essays vol. II
1744	Berkeley: Siris
	Akenside: Pleasures of Imagination
	Harris: Three Treatises on Art
1746	Batteux: Les Beaux Arts
1747	Baillie: On the Sublime
1748	Hume: Inquiry concerning Human Understanding
	Lancaster: Essay on Delicacy
1749	Hartley: On Man
	Monthly Review
	Melmoth: Fitzosborne's Letters
1750	(Mr. H.) Four Odes
	The Rambler
	Baumgarten: Aesthetika
1751	Avison: Musical Expression
	Brown: Essays on the Characteristics
	Byrom: Enthusiasm
	Harris: Hermes
	Hume: Principles of Morals
1752	Spence: Crito
1753	Hogarth: Analysis of Beauty
	(Ramsay): Essay on Ridicule

1755	(Cooper): Letters on Taste
	Sharpe: On Genius
	Edinburgh Review[1]
1756	Burke: On the Sublime and Beautiful
	Critical Review
1757	(Anon.): Of Beauty
	Hume: Four Dissertations
1758	Price: Principles of Morals
	Temple: Sketches
	The Idler
	Annual Register
1759	Gerard: On Taste
	Smith: Moral Sentiments
	" The Imitative Arts
	Young: On Original Composition
	Moor: Essays to a Literary Society
1760	Webb: Beauties of Painting
1762	Kames: Elements of Criticism
	Warburton: Doctrine of Grace
	Priestly: Theory of Language
	(Anon): Letters to a Young Nobleman
	Ramsay: Dialogue on Taste
1763	Brown: Poetry and Music
1764	Shenstone: Works Kant:Beobachtungen
	Winckelmann: Kunst des Alterthums.
1765	Tucker: Light of Nature Pursued
	Batteux: Cours de Belles-Lettres
	Spoletti: Saggio sopra Bellezza
1766	Pye: Beauty
1767	Duff: On Original Genius
	Usher: Clio
	(Cosmetti): The Polite Arts
	Ferguson: Civil Society
1768	Gilpin: On Prints
1769	Webb: Poetry and Music
	Herder: Kritische Wälder
1770	Duff: Critical Observations
	(Bethune): The Human Faculties and Passions (2nd ed'n)
	de Ghuy: Essai sur la Beauté
1771	Sülzer: Theorie der Schönen Kunste, vol.I (vo.II, 1774)
1772	Akenside: Pleasures of the Imagination.[2]
	Plumer: Letter from a Gentleman
	Jones: The Imitative Arts
1773	Monboddo: Origin of Language, vol.I
1774	" " " vol.II
	Gerard: Essay on Genius
	Ogilvie: On Composition
	Kames: History of Man

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1 After two numbers publication ceased. The Review was started again in 1802

2 A revised version of the 1744 poem, with a new but unfinished fourth book.

1775	Barry: Obstructions to the Arts
1776	Beattie: Essays
	Monboddo: Origin of Language, vol.III
	Campbell: Philosophy of Rhetoric
	Hawkins: History of Music
	Burney: History of Music
	Lessing: Laocoon
1777	Priestley: Oratory and Criticism
1778	Cozens: Beauty of the Head
	Knox: Essays
	Encyclopedia Brittannica (2nd edition)[1]
	Herder: Plastik
1779	Monboddo: Ancient Metaphysics, vol.I
1780	Donaldson: Elements of Beauty
	Gerard: On Taste (2nd edition)[2]
	" The Imitative Nature of Poetry
1781	Harris: Philological Inquiries
	Knox: Liberal Education
	Sherlock: Letters
	Barnes: Characteristics of Poetry (MLPSM)[3]
	Falconet: Sur le Beau dan l'Art
1782	Monboddo: Ancient Metaphysics, vol.II
	Stedman: Laelius and Hortensia
	Hall: Taste and Morals (MLPSM)
	de Polier: Pleasures of Taste (MLPSM)
	Maxwell: Essay on Tune
1783	Beattie: Dissertations
	Blair: Lectures
	Jackson: Thirty Letters
	Kirkshaw: Ancients and Moderns (MLPSM)
1784	Robertson: The Fine Arts
	Percival: Dissertations
	Monboddo: Ancient Metaphysics, vol.III
1785	Reid: Intellectual Powers of Man
	(Anon.): Taste and Beauty, Principles of
1786	Donaldson: The Human Mind
	Stack: Sublimity in Writing (TRIA)[4]
1787	Monboddo: Origin of Language, vol.IV
	Roscoe: The Sciences and Arts (MLPSM)
	Sharp: The Nature of Eloquence (MLPSM)
1788	Knox: Winter Evenings
	Preston: Wit and Humour (TRIA)
1789	Monboddo: Origin of Language, volV
	Belsham: Essays
	Bayly: Music, Poetry and Oratory
	Twining: Translation of Aristotle's Poetics[5]

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1 It appeared in several parts in the years 1778-1783.

2 Including an additional book.

3 Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester.

4 Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy.

5 Including "Two Dissertations on Poetical and Musical Imitation.

1790	Alison: Essays on Taste
	Kant: Kritik der Urtheilskraft
	Heydenreich: System der Aesthetik
1791	Gilpin: Picturesque Beauty
	Malespina: Delle Legge del Bello
1792	Stewart: The Human Mind
	Monboddo: Origin of Language, vol.VI
1793	Knox: Personal Nobility
	Bromley: History of the Fine Arts
	Aikin: Letters, vol.I
	Sayers: Disquisitions
1794	Miller: Essay on the Sublime (TRIA)
	Burrowes: On Style in Writing (TRIA)
	Price: Essay on the Picturesque, vol.I
1795	Monboddo: Ancient Metaphysics, vol IV
1796	Gibbon: Miscellaneous Works
1797	Reynolds: Discourses[1]
	Drake: Literary Hours
	Hurdis: Lectures
	Monboddo: Ancient Metaphysics vol.V
1798	Barry: Letter to a Dilettante Society
	Jackson: Four Ages
	Aikin: Letters, vol.II
	Price: Essay on the Picturesque, vol.II
1799	Monboddo: Ancient Metaphysics, vol.VI
1800	Scott: The Fine Arts
	Thomson: Elementary Principles of Beauty
1802	Edinburgh Review
1803	Arthur: Discourses
1805	Knight: Principles of Taste
1809	Mangin: On Literary Pleasure
1810	Harpur: Principles of Criticism
	Stewart: Philosophical Essays
1812	Barrett: Pretensions to a Final Analysis
1824	Jeffrey: On Beauty[2]

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[1] Published separately after delivery between 1769-1790, See bibliography.

[2] In the 1824 supplement to the 4th edition of the Encydlopedia Brittanica.

EDITIONS USED

In the bibliography, the editions consulted are marked with an asterisk. The following works are however cited so frequently that I think it better to note here the editions to which I refer.

Hobbes: Works, ed.Molesworth: except Leviathan, ed. Oakeshott, Oxford, 1946.
Alison: Essays on Taste, 1811 ed'n.
Beattie: Essays, 1779 ed'n.
Blair: Lectures, 1809 ed'n.
Burke: Works (World's Classics), 1925.
Shaftesbury: Characteristics, 1723 ed'n.
Kames: Elements of Criticism, 1817 ed'n.
Hume: Treatise, ed. Selby-Bigge 1888. Enquiry, ed. Selby-Bigge, 1894.
Hutcheson: Beauty and Virtue, 1726 ed'n.
Price: Essay on the Picturesque, 1810 ed'n.

PART I

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

CHAPTER I

HOBBES AND THE IMAGINATION

1. The Function of the Imagination.

Hobbes can fairly claim to have been the first English thinker to attempt to analyse the imagination and its workings. It is true that some of the functions which he attributed to the imagination had already been suggested by Burton and Bacon, and had probably existed in the popular consciousness for some time before that, if we are to accept Shakespeare's famous lines in A Midsummer Night's Dream as representing a prevailing view of the imagination. Hobbes however in his several descriptions of man and all his faculties did what none of these men had ever attempted. He tried to show how the imagination gathers its materials, and how it is able to make use of them: and in the course of his philosophical and critical writings he gradually formulated a comprehensive and on the whole consistent theory of the workings of the imagination.

Hobbes's theories of the imagination, like all the other departments of his philosophy, were based on the assumption that everything in the universe, including the processes in the mind of man, could be explained on a purely mechanistic basis. For Hobbes the imagination was, like everything else in the universe, capable of being reduced to a system of laws to which it was in the nature of things subject. The dangers which obviously threaten such a conception of imagination are in practice very often avoided by Hobbes

because of his interest in artistic questions, which led him to make allowances that we might not expect to find in such a ~~materialistic~~ deterministic system. The result is that we have, if not exactly an aesthetic which is "clear and logical throughout,"[1] a tentative mental philosophy which considers many questions that must be answered in some way before any aesthetic at all can be developed.

The definition of imagination given by Hobbes does not differ substantially from that found in his English predecessors; he considers it as "sense decaying or weakened by the absence of the object."[2] Hobbes believed that there could be no ideas in the mind unless they had first been introduced into it by external objects acting upon the organs of sense: such action causes an impression on the sentient which remains there even after the object itself is no longer present to sense. This remaining impression is memory or imagination, which Hobbes considers as "but one thing which for divers considerations hath different names."[3] The difference between them is that when we consider an impression as something which has already happened in the past, with relation to the circumstances which then accompanied it, it is called memory: if on the other hand we consider the impression as it is in itself, abstracted from its concomitant circumstances, it is called imagination. Thus despite the view just quoted memory can be regarded as in a sense subservient to the imagination, and Hobbes seems to recognise this when he states that "memory begets judgment and fancy."[4]

This explanation suggests another problem. In memory, since ideas are remembered with relation to the past, they must recur in the order in which they were originally imprinted on the senses. But there can be no

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1 Spingarn: Critical Essays of the 17th Century. Introduction, p. xxxii
2 Elements of Philosophy; Wks. vol. i, IV, xxv, 7(p.396)
3 Leviathan I, ii, p. 10
4 Answer; Wks. vol. iv, p. 449

such regularity in the ideas of the imagination if the distinction just made is valid. Hobbes was again ready with a solution. It is true that imagination is not confined to the exact original order of events, but nevertheless we can "have no transition from one imagination to another whereof we never had the like before in our senses."[1] This is not so severe a limitation as may at first appear; for as we may have the same idea more than once, but on each occasion followed by a different idea, a time will soon come when "there is no certainty what we shall imagine next: only this is certain, that it shall be something that succeeded the same before, at one time or another."[2] It follows that there is some form of connection between the ideas of the imagination, and Hobbes goes on to try to analyse this connection.

The succession of ideas in the imagination, which Hobbes calls a "train of thoughts or mental discourse,"[2] may be either regulated or unregulated. The latter is that "ranging" of the mind when the thoughts seem to wander from one idea to another, and are governed only by their "first coherence or consequence at that time when they were produced by sense,"[3] or by "the conception of cause and effect"[3] succeeding one another in the imagination as in sense. A regulated train of thought is given direction by some dominating desire or purpose, for "the thought or phantasm of the desired ~~or purpose, fo~~ end brings in all the phantasms that are means conducing to that end, and that in order....But this supposes both appetite and judgment to discern what means conduce to the end,"[4] and constitutes for Hobbes "nothing but seeking or the faculty of invention."[5] Hobbes thus recognises

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1 Leviathan, I,iii,p.13 2 ibid. p.14
3 Human Nature; Wks. vol. iv: IV, ii, p.15
4 Elements of Philosophy; Wks. vol. i: IV, xxv, 8(p.398)
5 Leviathan, I,iii,p.15

a certain conscious control over the imagination, and he is at all times careful to stress the need for judgment to exercise a restraining influence on the imagination.

Hobbes also notes that the imagination is able to give pleasure and pain and may thus have suggested, directly or indirectly, the title of Addison's Spectator papers on The Pleasures of the Imagination. According to Hobbes, "anything that is pleasure to the sense, the same also is pleasure in the imagination,"[1] though as he points out elsewhere the pleasure given by imagination is weaker than that given by sense. It should here be noted that Hobbes accepted the traditional belief that the real object of perception is always a sense-image or phantasm in the mind, caused by the effect of external objects on the organs of sense and eventually on the sentient. Only when we realise this can we understand fully the significance of the definition of imagination as "decaying sense," and the attempts made by certain eighteenth century aestheticians to confine the imagination to phantasms of objects of sight. This explains Addison's desire to limit the pleasures of the imagination to "such as arise from visible objects."[2]

In the first quarter of the eighteenth century, there was curiously little discussion of the theories of Hobbes as to the workings of the imaginative faculty. Occasional echoes of his ideas are found in some of the late seventeenth century writers, but there was no effort made to criticise his conclusions or to carry his investigations further. The first real attempt at re-defining the imagination did not come until 1724, when Zachary Mayne published his Two Dissertations, and even Mayne has little to add to what Hobbes has already said. Imagination presents to the mind the images of external

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1 Leviathan I,xi,p.65 2 Spectator. no. 411

objects, whether these objects are themselves present to sense or not, and it may therefore be considered as a kind of "secondary sense",[1] which represents all the other senses to the mind. It is however subject to decay, and is therefore quite a distinct faculty from sense. This theory is clearly founded upon the philosophy of Hobbes, although certain innovations indicate that Mayne was also influenced by the work of later philosophers. The same may be said of the theory of James Harris, who considers sense and imagination as complementary faculties of the soul, sense being "its receptive power, imaginat its retentive"[2] power. We may therefore, he concludes, "call sense a kind of transient imagination; and imagination on the contrary a kind of permanent sense."[2] Harris goes on to distinguish between imagination and memory in terms that show clearly his acquaintance with the philosophy of Hobbes.

Hartley too was probably indebted to Hobbes for his definitions of imagination and memory. According to his theory, in memory ideas recur in the same order as they had in sense; but when "ideas or trains of ideas occur, or are called up, in a vivid manner, and without regard to the order of former actual impressions and perceptions, this is said to be done by the power of imagination or fancy."[3] Gerard likewise considers imagination and memory together, and finds that "recollection is very akin to the exercise of the imagination in producing a work of genius."[4] Recollection he attributes to man's power of recalling ideas by means of their associations with other ideas, for "we search as if for something lost, we know not where. This last passage is very reminiscent of the Hobbesian concept of "seeking" for ideas in invention.

The belief that images were "lively pictures of the things which they represent"[5] was far too widely held to be put forward as a sign of the

1 Two Dissertations, p.70 2 Hermes: Wks. p.219
3 Observations on Man, vol. i,p.3 4 On Genius: p.259 5Critical Wks. of John Dennis i,p.

influence of Hobbes. It is nevertheless interesting to find in Gerard the statement that "all the objects which affect taste and excite its sentiments are certain forms or pictures made by fancy."[1] Taken in conjunction with other aspects of Gerard's doctrine of the functions of the imagination, it lends added probability to the ~~theory~~ hypothesis that Gerard may have been directly influenced by the philosophy of Hobbes.

Most aestheticians writing after 1750 accept the theory that the imagination has the power, subject to certain laws or principles, of associating ideas. It is true that the doctrines of association had been considerably developed during the first half of the eighteenth century, but the chief developments were made in following up the initial suggestion made by Hobbes that the operations of even the imagination are in some way regulated. It would therefore be less than justice to deny that the later extensions of this theory owed a great deal to the pioneer work done by Hobbes. This particular aspect of the problem will be more fully dealt with at a later stage. At present it is sufficient to note that Hobbes's doctrine of association, however elementary, formed an intrinsic part of his theory of the imagination, and must therefore be taken into account when we come to estimate the extent of his influence on the ideas of imagination current in the eighteenth century.

2. Imagination and Fancy.

One of the less satisfactory parts of Hobbes's account of the imagination is his use of the word fancy, which at one moment he seems to regard as synonymous with imagination, and which elsewhere seems to have a

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[1] On Taste, III,i,p.169

a distinct meaning of its own. In Leviathan when describing man's power of retaining the image of an object after the object itself has been removed, Hobbes talks of the faculty that "the Latins call imagination from the image made in seeing; and (they) apply the same, though improperly, to all the other senses. But the Greeks call it fancy; which signifies appearance, and is as proper to one sense as to another."[1] Here Hobbes gives us no grounds for supposing that he himself draws any sharp distinction between the two terms. In the Answer to Davenant however he recognises as a special function of the fancy the provision of ornament for a poem; and Professor Thorpe has pointed out that at other times he seems to regard fancy as an image-forming faculty, an image-retaining faculty, and a constructive faculty.[2] It is therefore extremely difficult to say for certain whether Hobbes wanted to identify fancy and imagination, or to keep them apart as separate powers of the mind.

A like failure to distinguish clearly between the two words is observable almost throughout the following century. Dryden, perhaps remembering a hint given in Hobbes, had talked of fancy as a "part of the poet's imagination,"[3] which implies the recognition of some peculiar function. Few later writers however committed themselves even to this extent, and Addison, who himself claims to use the word "promiscuously", complains that "there are few words in the English language which are employed in a more loose and uncircumscribed sense than those of the fancy and the imagination."[4] The general tendency in the first half of the eighteenth century was to use the words indiscriminately, but it soon becomes apparent that there was an uneasy feeling abroad that they should be in some

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[1] Leviathan, I,ii,p.9
[2] The Aesthetic Theory of Thomas Hobbes, p.40
[3] Essays, vol.i,p.14
[4] Spectator, no. 411

way distinguished from one another. This revealed itself, as has been pointed out in a recently-published article[1], in the usage of certain writers who gave fancy a semi-derogatory and imagination a complimentary sense.

The basis for a proper distinction between fancy and imagination was at last supplied by Duff when he noted as the characteristics of the imagination vigour, extensiveness and plasticity, and of the fancy quickness and liveliness.[2] As the writers of the above-mentioned article point out, this would seem to attribute wit to fancy and genius to imagination; and the same distinction is clearly in Beattie's mind when he writes that "a witty author is a man of lively fancy: but a sublime poet is said to possess a vast imagination."[3] The way was thus prepared for Dugald Stewart's view of fancy as the power of "summoning up at pleasure"[4] the materials required for the work of artistic creation. According to Stewart, fancy is subordinate to the power of imagination, for "the latter power presupposes the former, while the former does not necessarily suppose the latter."[4]

It is thus evident that credit for first distinguishing clearly between fancy and imagination, long supposed due to Coleridge and then more recently to Dugald Stewart, belongs largely to Duff and Beattie. It is not extravagant to suggest, however, that even these earlier aestheticians did little more than give definite expression to what had long been half-recognised by nearly all writers on the subject. The whole history of the two words during the eighteenth century can moreover be traced back to the original vagueness of Hobbes on this point, and it is significant that the solution eventually arrived at should be consistent with the distinction often

1 Modern Language Notes, LX(1945),p.8
2 Original Genius, p.58
3 Dissertations, p.194
4 Human Mind, V.i.1(p.258)

implied by him in books written over a century earlier.

3. The Creative Imagination and Genius.

Another and perhaps the most important aspect of Hobbes's theory of the imagination is his conception of it as a creative or inventive faculty. This, like many other features of Hobbes's aesthetic theory, came to be regarded almost as a commonplace in the eighteenth century. It is therefore necessary to keep in mind that the significance of Hobbes's doctrine of the creative imagination lies not so much in his developing a new theory, as in his providing an acceptable philosophical basis for what was already to a large extent a popular belief. Hobbes showed that invention could be accounted for by an examination of the processes of the mind, and went on to relate his theories to artistic creation, thus giving some justification to those who consider him the first Englishman to develop an aesthetic theory of his own.

Hobbes considers the imagination as simple or compound. Simple imagination is the recalling of a whole object just as it appeared to sense: compound imagination is the piecing together of parts or wholes of past imaginations so as to conceive of an object never before perceived, which may have no real existence. Thus a fabulous creature such as a unicorn is the work of the compound imagination, made by abstracting certain qualities from known objects, and re-uniting them in something entirely new. Hobbes further points out that we are not limited to the mere imagining of things never seen in nature. We can also make material representations of them in "wood, clay, or metal. And these are also called images....for the resemblance of some fantastical inhabitants of the brain of the maker. But in these idols, as they are originally in the brain, and as they are painted, carved, moulded or molten in matter, there is a similitude of the one to the other, for which

the material body made by art may be said to be the image of the fantastical idol made by nature."[1]

How Hobbes related his theory of the connection of ideas to his conception of the imagination as an inventive faculty has already been very briefly touched upon. When the trains of thought passing through the mind are directed or regulated by a design or end, we have what is known as the faculty of invention. The regulated trains of the thoughts are of two kinds: the first is when "of an effect imagined we seek the causes or means that produce it,"[2] and the second is "when imagining any possible thing whatsoever, we seek all the possible effects that can by it be produced."[2] This has clearly a possible application to the theory of art, and Hobbes has himself related it to the process of artistic creation in his <u>Answer to Davenant</u>. In a most interesting paragraph on the relation of judgment to fancy, Hobbes shows that imagination depends ultimately on strength of memory. It is memory that by amassing ~~on-strength~~ the materials provided by education and experience, provides something for the creative fancy to work on when it comes to select its images. Hobbes points out the necessity for supervision by the judgment, but nevertheless insists upon the primacy of the fancy, especially in poetry; for although both it and the judgment are necessary to good poems, fancy is the more so, because poems please "for the extravagancy."[3]

But it is not only in poetry that fancy takes the lead. "All that is beautiful or defensible in building, or marvellous in engines or instruments of motion ... and whatsoever distinguisheth the civility of Europe from the

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1 Leviathan, IV,xlv,p.426
2 ibid. I,iii,p.15
3 ibid. I,viii,p.44

barbarity of the American savages, is the workmanship of fancy, but guided by the precepts of true Philosophy,"[1] or sound reason. This is quite clearly a conception of imagination that differs in more than degree from that which Shakespear found common to "the lunatic, the lover, and the poet." It does no less than allow to imagination the highest place among the human faculties. Such a conception could scarcely fail to attract notice, if only for its originality; it did in fact do more, for like the other aspects of Hobbes's theory of imagination already discussed, it was taken to be true in essentials, and so came in time to be accepted almost generally as the traditional view of the offices of the creative imagination.

The comparative neglect of the problem of the creative imagination is probably due largely to the difficulty in reconciling the theories of imagination proposed by Hobbes with the determinism of his philosophy. There are references to the faculty of invention in the critical essays of Dryden, but while these indicate an acquaintance with the theories of Hobbes, there is no attempt to follow any further the lines of thought proposed by him. The case of Dennis is more complicated, for his theory of genius is composed of such diverse elements that it is difficult to say how far when forming it he drew upon the philosophy of Hobbes. Professor Hooker, in his edition of Dennis's _Critical Works_, and Professor Thorpe agree that Dennis was influenced by Hobbes, but differ as to the extent of his indebtedness. Shaftesbury at no time tries to work out a comprehensive theory of the processes of artistic creation, and Addison's interest is rather in the pleasure given to the imagination by nature and works of art than in the active imagination.

Once again therefore Mayne's _Two Dissertations_ is the first work in which it is possible to discern clearly the influence of the theories of

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1 Answer; Wks., vol.iv,p.449

Hobbes. Mayne attributes to the imagination when under the control of reason "that noble faculty of the mind called invention,"[1] and adds that, though men's ideas of external objects are in all probability the same, "there is no end of the changes and variations that may be made in ideas by men's imaginations operating differently in them."[2] Mayne accepts almost without examination the exalted position given to the imagination in the system of Hobbes. "A lively or sprightly imagination....when it hath great natural parts joined with it....is what denominates a genius for poetry....or any other performances that require a quick and lively invention, and where imagery is made use of."[3]

The identification of imagination and artistic genius brings together the Hobbesian conception of the imagination, and the idea of genius which became current at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and which may fairly be represented by Sir William Temple's definition of it as "the pure and free gift of heaven and of nature."[4] Temple had also, it is true, observed that a "sprightly imagination or fancy" and an "universal genius"[4] were qualities necessary to a poet, but he did not identify them. Mayne then has some claim to be considered the first to assign genius to the imagination, though he did so almost casually, and did not try to analyse genius as a separate faculty as did Duff and Gerard later in the century. Both these writers worked out theories of genius which could still in all essentials be reconciled with the fundamental positions of Hobbes, and which therefore deserve special attention.

Duff held that genius consists in the combination of the three powers of imagination, judgment, and taste; no one of the three taken by itself

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1 Two Dissertations, p.72
2 ibid. p.74
3 ibid. p.76
4 Wks. vol. i,p.236

constitutes genius, but imagination is the most essential, for all discoveries in science and art, except such as are made by chance, are due to its exertions. Duff defines imagination as that faculty which "assembles the various ideas.... treasured up in the memory....and which by its plastic power of inventing new associations of ideas and combining them with infinite variety, is enabled to present a creation of its own."[1] This agrees with the theories of Hobbes to a remarkable extent, and almost certainly derives from them. How Duff came to inherit these ideas is less evident, but direct knowledge of the works of Hobbes, which certainly cannot be ruled out, is not absolutely necessary. The task of tracing such ideas to their sources is made no easier by the fact that eighteenth century aestheticians do not abound in acknowledgments of their debts to other writers.

Gerard, in his Essay on Genius, considers genius as a "distinct intellectual power,"[2] and identifies it with the faculty of invention, or "the capacity of producing new beauties in works of art, and new truths in works of science."[3] This capacity is, according to Gerard, generally referred to the imagination as one of its sources: and there are obvious similarities between Gerard's idea of genius and the earlier conceptions of the creative imagination. His view of the power of genius in collecting materials for its ends and disposing of them in an effective way differs little from Hobbes's idea of imagination working under the supervision of judgment. Gerard does however introduce a new factor by making these powers work together, for "genius arranges its ideas by the same operation, and almost at the same time that it collects them."[4] This keeps genius quite distinct from imagination, and provides some justification for Gerard's recognition of

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1 Original Genius, p.6
2 On Genius, p.6
3 ibid. p.27
4 ibid. p.63

genius as a gift from heaven.

Other writers too define genius in terms of the creative imagination, though all do not attach the same importance to the need for a controlling judgment. Shenstone considers that men of genius are those possessed of a "true and genuine fancy....whether assisted or not by cultivation,"[1] and contrasts them with men of understanding, in whom "sound judgment"[1] predominates. Bethune writes that "the joint exercise of the understanding and the imagination, exploring the region of possibilities, and collecting materials for accomplishing or facilitating some end, otherwise unattainable, is called invention,"[2] and adds that an exceptional natural capacity for invention is called genius. Sherlock believes that anyone who has enough strength of imagination to produce something new, however small, deserves the name of genius, which consists in the "union of a sound judgment and a superior imagination."[3]

It is not however only in the development of a theory of the creative imagination par excellence, or genius, that traces of Hobbes's doctrines can be found. Whenever the imagination is recognised as a distinct faculty with creative powers, we shall find that the conception is consistent with, even if it is not always based on, Hobbes's analysis of the powers of imagination. As early as 1724, Fiddes refers to the creative power of the imagination, which he attributes to its capacity for "painting" in the mind representations of objects, and supposing things that have no existence: thus the imagination "makes new worlds and annihilates them again at pleasure, in a moment."[4] Burke too considers that imagination can "represent at pleasure

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1 Wks. vol. ii,p.311
2 A Short View (2nd ed'n), pp.19-20
3 Letters, vol. i,p.21
4 Of Morality, pp.184-5

the images of things in the order and manner in which they were received by the senses,"[1] or can combine them in a "new manner, and according to a different order."[1] It is therefore the source of "whatever is called wit, invention, fancy, and the like."[1] When Dr. Johnson writes that "imagination selects ideas from the treasures of remembrance, and produces novelty only by varied combinations,"[2] he is adding nothing to Hobbes's "memory begets fancy, and fancy begets the ornaments of a poem."[3] Lord Monboddo says much the same thing in a new way when he divides imagination into a retentive part, which keeps the ideas which we have received from sense, and an active part which calls up ideas, unites them in various combinations, and presents them to the mind on particular occasions.[4] Beattie considers that, in the language of modern philosophy, imagination may be either the "power of apprehending or conceiving ideas as they are in themselves, without any view to their reality: and secondly, the power of combining into new forms....those thoughts, ideas, or motions which we have derived from experience or information."[5] And Harpur, writing in 1810, believes that imagination "actively combines the various images suggested by the senses and treasured in the memory, and thence creates numerous objects, entirely original."[6]

If it is justifiable to hold that the attribution to the imagination of the ability to make discoveries in both art and science has its source in the doctrines of Hobbes, there is further cause to see in his theory of imagination the basis of nearly all speculation on the subject during the eighteenth century. Thus Hartley defines the faculty of invention as the art

1 Wks. vol.ii,p.71
2 Idler no.44
3 Answer: Wks. vol.iv,p.449
4 Ancient Metaphysics; vol.ii,p.259
5 Dissertations, p.74
6 Essay, p.240

of producing new beauties in works of imagination, and new truths in science, and Reid notes that it may be applied to mechanics, science, life, poetry, wit or the fine arts. The unknown author of Letters to a Young Nobleman held that as the genius of Newton could not be explained by "depth of judgment" alone, "the strongest imagination must have been necessary."[1] Dugald Stewart remarks that the faculty of invention in the arts and sciences has a striking resemblance to the powers of wit and fancy, and Harpur defines genius as a power which may either invent something new or discover something unknown, and then refers the two capacities to the arts and sciences respectively.

A quotation from Dugald Stewart conveniently sums up the results of much of this speculation in a way both interesting and significant:

"Imagination is a complex power. It includes conception, or simple apprehension, which enables us to form a notion of those former objects of perception or of knowledge, out of which we are to make a selection; abstraction, which separates the selected materials from the qualities or circumstances which are connected with them in nature: and judgment or taste which selects their materials, and directs their combination: and....we may add fancy, which presents to our choice all the different materials which are subservient to the efforts of imagination, and which may therefore be considered as forming the groundwork of poetical genius."[2]

Dugald Stewart was not a notably original thinker, and his views may fairly be taken as representative of general opinion on the subject at the end of the century. This passage shows, therefore, how very little the basic positions of Hobbes had been altered by over a hundred years of aesthetic

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1 Letters to a Young Nobleman, p.198

2 Human Mind, V,ii,p.206

speculation, and reinforces my argument that Hobbes's conception of imagination is accepted, implicitly or explicitly, by nearly all inquirers into relevant aesthetic subjects during the eighteenth century.[1]

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1 It is important to remember that the steady growth of romanticism during the eighteenth century may have had much to do with the contemporary attitude to imagination. It has not been possible to discuss this problem here, as to do so might have distracted attention from the main argument.

CHAPTER II

HOBBES, LOCKE, AND THE FUNCTIONS OF JUDGMENT

1. The Rational Control of Fancy.

As we have already seen, Hobbes considered that "fancy without the help of judgment is not commended as a virtue."[1] This view was unquestioningly accepted by the vast majority of eighteenth century writers, who tended to believe in the absolute supremacy of reason, and therefore insisted that imagination should be subordinated to it. The qualities of imagination have already been dealt with, and I now propose to try to isolate the complementary and restraining faculty which is considered along with imagination in all the aesthetic speculation of this period, and which is called at different times judgment, understanding, and reason. This again involves discussion of a theory that was in popular circulation long before it was expressed in terms of mental philosophy, and again Hobbes is the first to consider the faculty concerned from a philosophic angle.

One of Hobbes's clearest definitions of this particular aspect of the functions of judgment is to be found in the well-known passage beginning, "Memory begets judgment and fancy: judgment begets the strength and structure and fancy begets the ornaments of a poem."[2] In Leviathan too however he deals

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1 Leviathan, I,viii,p.44
2 Answer; Wks., vol.iv,p.449

with this subject at some length in a passage in which he gives to his theories a more general application. The arguments there advanced point out the extreme danger of ungoverned fancy, which can at times be little better than madness. The judgment must always be at hand to save it from such extravagance; sometimes, as in the writing of History, it must be allowed to take complete control, but at other times it must serve rather as a restraint on the imagination, and must prevent it from indulging in what Hobbes calls "indiscretion."[1] Finally, in the introduction to his translation of Homer, written a quarter of a century later, Hobbes again defines the function of judgment in writing poetry. "Fancy flies abroad swiftly to bring in both matter and words, but if there be not discretion at home to distinguish which are fit to be used and which not....their delight and grace is lost."[2]

Thus Hobbes insists on the constant co-operation of imagination and judgment in the creative artist; sometimes the one will predominate, sometimes the other, but both are always necessary. As Professor Thorpe has shown,[3] this theory was at once adopted by Hobbes's contemporaries, as for example by Walter Charleton, who often uses almost the same words as Hobbes when repeating that the judgment must maintain control over the fancy. Dryden, in his Dedication of the Spanish Friar, says that no really great play can be "produced at a heat, or by the force of fancy, without the maturity of judgment,"[4] and Sir William Temple considers that as well as the power of invention, there is necessary "a great calm to judge and correct."[5] Thus by the end of the seventeenth century the need for imagination and judgment to work together in the work of artistic creation was widely acknowledged.

It is at this point necessary to note that Hobbes is not wholly

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1 Leviathan, I,viii,p.44
2 Heroic Poem: Wks. vol.x,p.iii
3 op. cit., p.179
4 Essays, vol.i,p.245
5 Wks., vol.i,p.237

consistent in his use of the word judgment. It is frequently employed in the sense in which we are now considering it - that of a faculty possessing discretionary powers which may be invoked in cases of imaginative extravagance. But he also uses it on occasion for man's ability to distinguish clearly between ideas which seem identical to the casual observer; and in this sense it will be considered more fully when we come to deal with wit. It is in this latter sense, however, that the word is generally used in the philosophy of Locke, by whom judgment is clearly regarded as of less importance than either understanding or reason.

The place of honour among the human faculties, allotted to imagination in the system of Hobbes, is given by Locke to the understanding. "Whatsoever faculties (a man) employs, the understanding with such light as it has, well or ill-informed, constantly leads; and by that light, true or false, all his operative powers are directed."[1] For Locke the chief instrument of the understanding is reason; by it alone can we set about enlarging our stock of knowledge. Locke classes the operations of reason under four heads or "degrees"[2]; these are the discovery of truths, the regular and methodical disposition of them when discovered, the perceiving of their connections, and the drawing of correct conclusions from them. As Locke showed little interest in aesthetic matters, we find no specific attempt on his part to apply his analysis of the understanding to the arts. It would nevertheless be surprising if Locke's emphasis on reason had not in some way affected speculation on the relations between judgment and imagination, and traces of such influence are undoubtedly found. But on the whole the basic relationship between the two

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1 Conduct of the Understanding, 1.
2 Essay, IV,xvii,3

faculties as it had been defined by Hobbes remained unchallenged (by aestheticians) throughout the century, with only very occasional deviations in one direction or another.

One of the more unusual theories is that advanced by Leonard Welsted, one of the earliest translators of Longinus. Welsted, a firm believer in the primacy of reason, had the original idea of representing imagination as a component part of reason. He begins by laying down that "everything depends on reason and must be governed by it,"[1] but adds that "reason operates differently when it has different things for its object: poetical reason is not the same as mathematical reason."[1] Having thus prepared the way, Welsted proceeds to consider the special case of poetry. "Poetry depends much more on imagination than the other arts; but it is not on that account less reasonable than they: for imagination is as much a part of reason as is memory or judgment, or rather a more bright emanation from it; as to paint and throw light upon ideas is a finer act of the understanding than simply to separate or compare them."[1] This rather extreme statement can certainly not be attributed to the direct influence of Locke, but it may fairly be argued that it represents an attitude, that of trying to reduce all mental activity to the operations of reason, which may have found some encouragement in the rationalist parts of his philosophy.

Welsted's theory was an isolated phenomenon without parallel in the eighteenth century, and Richard Fiddes, writing in the same year as Welsted, expresses the more orthodox view that imagination should be laid under some "wholesome and convenient restraints if we would not suffer ourselves to be carried away with it, with a blind impulse,....beyond all bounds."[2] This is also the opinion of Edward Young, author of Night Thoughts, who in his short

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1 Epistles, Odes, etc., p.xxii
2 Of Morality, p.187

essay On Lyric Poetry argues that judgment, "that masculine power of the mind,"[1] should reign supreme over all poetical composition, for only when the imagination is thus subordinated can we look for "the fairest offspring of the human mind."[1] The same idea recurs in David Hume who says, less picturesquely than Young, that "without judgment as well as taste and invention a poet cannot hope to succeed."[2]

It is just after the middle of the century that the first clear signs of the influence of Locke are to be found. John Brown, perhaps better known as 'Estimate' Brown, comes in his Essay on Ridicule to consider the relation between reason and imagination, and though he distributes his favours fairly evenly, he eventually decides that the reason is the superior faculty, for it alone is the "detector of falsehood and the test of truth."[3] Reason cannot however attain to any degree of perfection unless it is united with a strong imagination, for alone it "can not search out new ideas, but only compare and distinguish those which sense and imagination present to her."[4] Therefore, Brown concludes, just as some form of rational control is necessary to the "perfection of works of imagination: so....it is evident that a full union of imagination is necessary to the perfect operations of reason."[5] That this is not a mere change in terminology involving the substitution of reason for judgment seems apparent from the functions Brown has allowed to reason, all of which are consistent with Locke's definition of it: once ideas are presented to it, reason can compare and distinguish them, and arrive at truth.

Duff's description of the functions of judgment in composition also

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1 Young's Conjectures, p.61
2 Four Dissertations, p.227
3 Essays on the Characteristics, I,p.41
4 ibid., I,p.39
5 ibid., I,p.40

~~also~~ seems to derive from Locke's reason rather than from the more usual conception of judgment, for Duff holds that, in addition to comparing the ideas collected by imagination and observing their "agreement or disagreement,"[1] the judgment must "determine the truth and utility of the inventions or discoveries produced by the power of the imagination."[1] It is therefore "in every respect a counter-balance to the rambling and volatile power of imagination."[2] This tendency to amalgamate the functions of judgment, reason, and understanding is further illustrated in Ogilvie, who allots to the understanding the work of disposing the parts of a composition in an orderly manner, and adds that it must also "curb even the most eccentric imagination with so strong a rein as to fix it to one place as long as may be expedient."[3] Later in the same work, Ogilvie argues that "there is no surer test of a good judgment in composition than when a comprehensive memory and a luxuriant imagination are subordinate to the understanding."[4] The direct influence of Locke seems again probable in the case of Stedman, who defines judgment as "that faculty of the mind by which it discriminates its ideas, discovers their agreements, their differences, and relations to one another, and thereupon draws conclusions."[5] Stedman regards the imagination, whose task it is to collect materials for this faculty, as the "handmaid to the genius and to the judgment."[6]

An even more determined attempt than any of these to bring the Lockean reason within the ambit of the almost universally accepted "judgment and imagination" formula is found in Gerard's Essay on Genius. Gerard ~~actually~~ attacks Locke's statement of the four degrees of reason, and re-allocates two

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1 Original Genius, p.8
2 ibid., p.9
3 On Composition; vol.i,p.32
4 ibid., vol.ii, p.247
5 Laelius and Hortensia, p.332
6 ibid., p.333

two of them, the discovery and the disposition of truths, as functions belonging more properly to the imagination. This leaves to reason the offices of connecting truths and drawing conclusions from them, and on the basis of this new division Gerard establishes the relation between reason and imagination in cases of genius: reason when alone "implies not genius but capacity; without it, no inventions can be completed; but without imagination they can not be begun."[1] Thus even the declared doctrine of Locke is converted to conform with the old division of labour by which imagination provides the materials and judgment disposes them.

This part of the problem is easily summed up. The union of judgment and imagination was one too popular not to receive a good deal of attention, and if the credit must go to Hobbes for first expressing it philosophically, it is well to remember that these faculties had been considered as complementary for some time before he did so. Their interdependence was almost unanimously recognised by the eighteenth century aestheticians, and it provided for that rational control of imagination that was demanded in what has come to be known as the "Age of Reason." Locke's influence did not disturb this already-established harmony, although it did at times encourage a change of emphasis by making men take a slightly different view of the relationship between the two faculties. But it is interesting to note that Harpur, writing more than a decade after the appearance of the <u>Lyrical Ballads</u>, still considered that "reason is therefore the supreme faculty, by whose superintendance the other two (i.e. memory and imagination) are guided, and on whose influence their utility depends."[2] This proves, if anything, that Jeffrey was by no means alone in adopting a strictly commonsense attitude in literary criticism.

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1 On Genius, p.35
2 Essay, p.241

2. The Rational Element in Taste.

When at the beginning of the eighteenth century aestheticians first tried to answer the difficult question "What is taste?", the recognised conjunction of taste and imagination suggested a possible solution too obvious to be entirely overlooked. Addison found himself faced by the problem in a form that was to cause his successors a considerable deal of perplexity; "we find one transported with a passage which another reads over with coldness and indifference."[1] As he could assume the existence of a standard of taste with an ease that would scarcely have been possible fifty years later, Addison was able to propose a solution based simply on the union of judgment and imagination. "This difference in taste must proceed either from the perfection of imagination in one more than in another, or from the different ideas that several readers affix to the same words....The fancy must be warm, to retain the print of those images it hath received from outward objects, and the judgment discerning, to know what expressions are most proper to clothe and adorn them to the best advantage."[1] If taken out of its context, this might well be misinterpreted as a reference to the creative rather than to the receptive faculty. This is not altogether surprising, as this is what had been intended by Hobbes when he first defined the relationship between imagination and judgment; and he can therefore claim some of the credit for Addison's attempt at analysing taste. But it can not be said with any certainty that Addison got the hint direct from Hobbes, and it is at least equally probable that it came to him from one of the writers who had accepted and made use of the connection suggested by Hobbes.

This account did not meet with a very good reception, and few writers

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1 Spectator, no.416

followed Addison's example of trying to explain taste on the basis of the union of judgment and imagination. There are however exceptions. One of these is Gerard, who considered that taste "consists in certain excellences of our original powers of judgment and imagination combined."[1] Stedman holds that in "acquiring, correcting, or improving taste,....the senses, the judgment, and the imagination have their shares;"[2] and an anonymous essayist writing in 1785 argues that though taste is composed of all the human faculties, "its perception seems to be shared between the judgment and the imagination."[3] A partial exception may also be made in the case of Burke, whose introductory essay On Taste is largely derived from Addison's theories, which are frequently referred to throughout. After a good deal of preliminary discussion Burke, having rejected sense and imagination, selects judgment as the essential characteristic of taste; he does however add that a "degree of sensibility is requisite to form a good judgment."[4] Thus for Burke wrong taste can be due only to defects in the judgment arising from natural weakness of understanding, want of practice in judging, or perversion of the judgment from either ignorance or prejudice.

Burke's emphasis on judgment finds an echo in certain of the accounts of taste which appeared in the second half of the century, and it is interesting to set beside it Hume's view, published in the same year, that "reason if not an essential part of a good taste is at least requisite to its operations."[5] Sherlock considered that taste was "a combination of judgment and feeling,"[6] and Reid too held that judgment was a necessary constituent of taste. On

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1 On Taste, II,iii,p.104
2 Laelius and Hortensia, p.36
3 Enquiry concerning the Principles of Taste, p.35
4 Wks., vol.ii,p.79
5 Four Dissertations, p.226
6 Letters, vol.i,p.94

the whole, however, opinion tended to favour the view that taste was a form of sensibility. This was a not unnatural consequence of the popularity of the theory of an internal sense of beauty which had been developed by Hutcheson and others, and not until this theory was shown to be untenable do we get a serious attempt to re-define taste in terms of judgment. Thus though many writers note that taste is subject to the control of reason, judgment plays a far smaller part in the many theories of taste than might have been expected.

3. Judgment as opposed to Wit.

Professor Thorpe has rightly said that "Hobbes's use of terms is often tantalizing."[1] This is in certain cases so true as to be a serious defect in Hobbes's expression of his philosophy, but fortunately the terms concerned are often used in such a way as to make the sense apparent on closer examination. This may be said to be the case in his use of the word judgment, and we are seldom left in much doubt as to whether Hobbes is employing the word in its loose or in a more specific sense. The latter use is defined very clearly by Hobbes himself when he says that men who "observe their differences and dissimilitudes (i.e. of phantasms), which is called distinguishing, and discerning, and judging between thing and thing, in case such discerning be not easy, are said to have a good judgment."[2] Elsewhere he repeats that "he who thinketh, compareth the phantasms that pass, that is, taketh notice of their likeness or unlikeness to one another. And as he that observes readily the likeness of things of different natures....is said to have a good fancy: so he is said to have a good judgment that finds out the unlikenesses or differences of things that are like one another."[3] Here

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1 op. cit., p.116
2 Leviathan, I,viii,p.43
3 Elements of Philosophy, Wks., vol.i:IV,xxv,8(p.399)

the judgment is placed in direct opposition to the fancy, and the definition of it is at the same time a narrowing-down of the functions of the faculty that "begets the strength and structure of a poem, or which after examining all the parts of nature, is able to register by letters their order, causes, uses, differences and resemblances."[1] The function of judgment when taken in the more limited sense is clear: it is the faculty whose duty it is to discriminate between seeming similitudes discovered and submitted to it by the fancy, and which rejects those figures or images which it considers extravagant.

This conception of judgment became almost immediately popular, and was common currency before the end of the seventeenth century. It is found in both Dryden and Sir William Temple, the latter of whom sums up a discussion as to the respective functions of wit and judgment by remarking that "it is the true wonder of poetry that such contraries must meet to compose it."[2] Nor is it surprising to find the same definition of judgment in Locke, for a faculty with functions thus limited could be made to serve a very useful purpose in his doctrine of the understanding. Hence Locke takes judgment as man's ability to have ideas which are unconfused, and "to distinguish one thing from another where there is but the least difference;"[3] and he goes on to emphasise the fact that it is naturally opposed to wit, which he defines in terms similar to Hobbes's description of fancy. This distinction, which will be examined in more detail in the next chapter, was approved and adopted by Addison, and owing to the long-continued popularity of the Spectator in the eighteenth century, was thus given even more prominence than it might otherwise have had.

The result of this emphasis on the contrasting functions of judgment

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1 Answer: Wks., vol.iv,p.449
2 Wks., vol.i,p.237
3 Essay, II,xi,2

and fancy is interesting, because out of it, alongside the generally accepted idea that judgment and imagination worked in comparative harmony, there grew up an opposite school of thought which held that these two faculties were in fact irreconcilable, and worked against each other rather than together. Hence we find Sir Hildebrand Jacob lamenting that the "fancy and judgment are differently employed: while the first is busied in throwing things together, the other is perpetually dividing them again."[1] Burke too in his introductory essay notes that "the judgment is for the greater part employed in throwing stumbling blocks in the way of imagination, in dissipating the scenes of its enchantment, and in tying us down to the disagreeable yoke of our reason."[2] It is no doubt the acceptance of this point of view that led him to maintain that "no work of art can be great but as it deceives: to be otherwise is the prerogative of Nature."[3] The same opposition is pointed out by a writer in the Gentleman's Magazine for November, 1787, but in this instance the more popular view eventually triumphs. "The offices of imagination and judgment are not only distinct, but contrary to each other. It is the business of imagination either to collect ideas already adopted, or to create new images: but the work of judgment is to separate what may have been collected, and to reject many conceptions of a productive genius. Yet....where they both unite, there is excellence."[4]

The opinion that imagination and judgment are opposed one to the other is, admittedly, held rarely. The interesting thing is that it should have been held at all when the majority of writers accepted unhesitatingly the more usual view that imagination and judgment were necessary and mutually helpful constituents of man's power to create by means of art. The survival

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1 Sister Arts, p.17
2 Wks., vol.ii,p.80
3 ibid., p.126
4 Gentleman's Magazine, LVII,pt.2(1787)p.969

of the contrary idea may well be connected with an earlier distrust of the imagination, seen to a certain extent in the works of Locke, and expressed with some emphasis by Mayne. "The imagination is almost continually, in some degree or other, hurtful and prejudicial to the understanding,"[1] and, Mayne, adds, "the mind suffers very much in its moral capacities from the imagination."[1] In general, however, the attitude to judgment and imagination varies remarkably little from that of Hobbes. Opinions often differ as to the exact role to be played by judgment, and there is a good deal of confusion over the question of the spheres of fancy and imagination; but imagination remains the venturesome and creative power, and judgment has always the task of either superintending or restraining its operations.

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1 Two Dissertaions, p.82

CHAPTER III

HOBBES, LOCKE, AND THE THEORY OF THE COMIC

1. The Nature of Wit.

Though Hobbes is clear enough in his definition of wit, it is perhaps unfortunate that the rather overworked terms _fancy_ and _judgment_ had to occur again. Both words are used in the limited sense referred to at the beginning of the third section of the last chapter, as will be quite obvious from the following passage:

"The contrary hereunto (i.e. to dullness) is that quick ranging of mind which is joined with curiosity of comparing the things that come into the mind, one with another: in which comparison, a man delighteth himself either with finding unexpected similitudes of things otherwise much unlike, in which men place excellency of fancy....or else in discerning suddenly dissimilitude in things that otherwise appear the same (judgment)....:and both fancy and judgment are commonly comprehended under the name wit."[1]

The definitions of wit in _Leviathan_ do not differ materially from this, but it is emphasised that the similitudes discovered by fancy must be "such as are rarely observed by others,"[2] and that judgment is good only if "such discerning be not easy."[2] The gist of what follows is that fancy, unless tempered with discretion, is not wit; but that judgment, which presupposes such discretion,

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[1] Human Nature; Wks., vol.iv:I,x,p.4

[2] Leviathan, I,viii,p.43

may be a source of wit without the help of fancy.

At the same time, while the above probably represents the considered view of Hobbes, it must be remembered that in one passage in Leviathan he seems to identify wit with good fancy. As Hobbes may have assumed that a "good" fancy included a measure of discretion, this is not necessarily an inconsistency, and Hobbes in other places refers to the opinion that wit consists in fancy rather than in any other "intellectual virtue" as being a popular one. It is interesting to note that in his early criticism, at any rate, Dryden seems to have inclined to the popular theory, for in 1667 he states that written wit is "no other, than the faculty of imagination in the writer,"[1] and illustrates his point with a metaphor which is manifestly a borrowing from Hobbes.

Locke too has left us a definition of wit, and by doing so has given Professor Thorpe an opportunity to compare his acumen in aesthetic matters with that of Hobbes, much to the latter's advantage. Wit, according to Locke, consists chiefly in assembling ideas, and putting them together with quickness and variety when they resemble each other, so as to make agreeable pictures in the fancy. Thus Locke, like Dryden in the passage just quoted, makes wit consist solely in what Hobbes would have called fancy - that is, in the ability to find similitudes, but omits the important proviso that such similitudes must be unexpected or rare, and must occasion a feeling of delight in whoever perceives them.

The absence of these qualifications from Locke's definition lends a particular interest to Addison's treatment of wit in the Spectator.[2] Addison opens his paper by quoting Locke's "admirable reflection upon the difference of

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1 Essays; vol.i,p.14
2 Spectator, no.62

wit and judgment" in its entirety, and praises it as the "best and most philosophical account" of wit that he knows; but hastens to point out that though wit generally consists in the resemblance and congruity of ideas, such is not always the case. He then adds to Locke's account, "by way of explanation, that every resemblance of ideas is not that which we call wit, unless it be such an one that gives delight and surprise to the reader." Whether or not this most important modification in Locke's theory is due to the influence of Hobbes is a very open question; but I cannot believe that Addison had not in mind the passage from Human Nature quoted above.[1] It must be remembered that less than three weeks earlier, in his paper on laughter, Addison had claimed familiarity with Hobbes's Human Nature, and had indeed referred to it as "much the best of all his works."[2] In view of this, it is highly probable that the credit for Addison's "explanation" of Locke's account of wit is due to Hobbes.

Moreover, Addison concludes his paper on wit by admitting that "not only the resemblance but the opposition of ideas does very often produce wit." This may be a concession to Hobbes's judgment, or the discerning of dissimilitudes between ideas: and taken with the other details which Addison has added to Locke's definition of wit, makes the latter so like that of Hobbes as to be almost indistinguishable from it. The importance of this as regards the extent of Hobbes's influence on eighteenth century views of wit is very considerable. If Addison had been content to accept Locke's ideas as they stood, it is certain that wit as conceived by Hobbes would have been paid far less attention than it in fact received, though open acknowledgments of

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1 See page 32 note 1
2 Spectator, no. 47

such influence are very rare. As it is, we may say with some truth that eighteenth century speculation on the subject of wit owed much to the work of both Hobbes and Locke; but that their theories were, more often than not, known through the intermediacy of Addison's papers in the Spectator, though there were no doubt cases of writers who went straight to the original sources.

There are two other points in Addison's account which deserve some notice. The first is his approval of Locke's dictum that men who have great wit and prompt memories have not always the clearest judgment or deepest reason, for "wit lies in the assembling of ideas, while judgment is shown in separating them carefully." The other is his refusal to allow that any form of verbal wit is true wit; plays on words, or quibbles, are unhesitatingly classed as false wit. The only correct form of wit is that whose objects are ideas. This too in all probability derives from Locke, who had insisted that words in themselves were meaningless unless they stood for distinct ideas.

The doctrines provided by the efforts of Hobbes, Locke, and Addison were the starting-point for most of the theories of wit advanced during the eighteenth century. When Sir Richard Blackmore, writing as early as 1716, defines wit as "the accomplishment of a warm, sprightly and fertile imagination, in which is a great variety of ideas," and which "always conveys the idea in a pleasing but foreign dress,"[1] he has clearly benefitted from the analyses made by his predecessors; and his support for the view that wit is the work of the imagination was echoed by many other writers. Likewise, when Dr. Johnson holds that wit is a "combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things unlike,"[2] he is not really adding anything to what has already been said on the subject.

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1 Essays, p.193
2 Lives of the Poets, p.9

The importance of the elements of surprise and delight received varying emphasis. Hartley accounts for the pleasure arising from figurative language as due to the surprise consequent on the sudden discovery of propriety in what was at first sight an example of impropriety. Kames, in his definition of wit, argues that it should occasion some degree of surprise by singularity,[1] and Beattie too stresses the fact that the relation discovered by wit must be an unexpected one.[2] Sherlock agrees with Addison that delight and surprise are both essential, and expresses the opinion that delight is "more particularly necessary."[3] Dugald Stewart also insists on the necessity for surprise, and suggests that it is to a large extent caused by the "unusual command which a man of wit has acquired over a part of the constitution which is so little subject to the will."[4] Campbell is more explicit than any of these: the end of wit, he says, is "to excite in the mind an agreeable surprise,"[5] which may arise either "from the imagery she employs, or the strange assemblage of related ideas presented to the mind."[5]

Recognition of the need for surprise is found even in conceptions of wit which in other respects are beginning to develop along new lines. Thus Jackson considers wit as "the dexterous performance of a legerdemain trick, by which one idea is presented and another substituted. In the performance of this trick, an opposition of terms is frequently though not always necessary. The effect produced is an agreeable surprise, arising from expecting one thing and finding another, or expecting nothing and finding something."[6] And Mangin, writing in 1809, considers that

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1 Wks. (1817), vol.iv,p.342
2 Dissertations, p.586
3 Letters, vol.i,p.60
4 Human Mind, V,i,4(p.270)
5 Philosophy of Rhetoric, vol.i,p.42
6 The Four Ages, p.122

"wit consists in combining apparently incongruous objects by means of unexpected relations."[1] These examples show that the quality of unexpectedness, with the consequent production of surprise, received adequate notice in Addison's successors, and this may justifiably be traced back to Hobbes's insistence on this element in all his definitions of wit.

On the other hand, Hobbes's attempt to unite fancy and judgment under the common name of <u>wit</u> does not seem to have found much favour, perhaps because Addison paid no attention to it. There may be a reminiscence of this idea in Berkeley's "wit without wisdom, if there be such a thing, is hardly worth finding;"[2] but there is no reason to connect it with Hobbes. Sherlock, writing in 1781, thinks that before any resemblance discovered by the fancy can be considered just, it must be examined by the judgment, for "otherwise the fancy will act at random, and for one just trait of wit will produce ten false ones."[3] Jackson quotes Sterne, with whom he agrees on this point, as saying that wit and judgment go together in that wit is often governed by judgment, though the converse is not true.[4] These are however such isolated instances that we can safely assume that Locke's distinction between wit and judgment was more influential than Hobbes's partial identification of them.

Confirmation of this may be found in the support given to the contra-:distinction made by Locke. Blackmore considers that wit and discretion are rarely found together, and that it is only with great difficulty that both can ever be "incorporated in the constitution of any individual."[5]

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1 Pleasures from Literary Compositions, p.363
2 Alciphron, III,16
3 Letters, vol.i,p.58:note
4 The Four Ages, p.120
5 Essays, p.195

Burke refers with approval to Locke's distinction, and adds that wit and judgment are so different that a union of them is "one of the rarest things in the world."[1] This view is accepted by Kames, who says that wit and memory go together, but not wit and judgment:"wit....is in a good measure incompatible with solid judgment; which neglecting trivial relations, adheres to what are substantial and permanent."[2] Finally Knight, whose Principles of Taste appeared in 1805, expresses the old opinion that the two faculties are opposite, because wit is concerned with resemblances and judgment with differences; and he appeals to both Locke and Burke as supporters of this view.

A natural outcome of the recognition of an opposition between the functions of fancy and judgment is the tendency to confine wit to the discovery of resemblances between ideas. Hence Nettleton says that "wit by happy allusions shows us a surprising agreement between things which are thought to be quite different."[3] Melmoth, without making use of the word wit, refers to the pleasure given to the imagination by "comparing distinct ideas and discovering their various resemblances."[4] Burke prefers wit to judgment because "by making resemblances we produce new images: we unite, we create, we enlarge our stock."[1] Beattie who like Burke, refers to Locke's definition with approval, defines wit as the "unexpected discovery of resemblance between ideas supposed dissimilar,"[5] and agrees with Locke that it consists chiefly in the assemblage of ideas. Stedman also quotes Locke as an authority, and considers that wit "readily discovers the relations and

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1 Wks., vol.ii,p.72
2 Wks., vol.iv,p.20
3 Treatise, p.156
4 Fitzosborne's Letters, p.106
5 Essays, p.586

resemblances of things; and by collating these, and framing from their assemblages....figures, thus suggests new and pleasant ideas to the imagination."[1] After so much ready and often uncritical acceptance of Locke's opinion, it is quite refreshing to find Knight pointing out that wit, if taken in the sense proposed by Locke, means "not merely pleasantry but the power of imagination in general."[2]

Despite Knight's criticism, it is clear that Locke had far more direct influence on the eighteenth century conception of wit than had Hobbes, and this despite the fact that of the two views that of Hobbes has a far sounder psychological basis. Few of the critics and aestheticians were unaware of Locke's views, even if only at second-hand through the passage quoted by Addison in the Spectator. At the same time, the adoption by Addison of certain of Hobbes's theories as explanations meant that the older philosopher too influenced speculation on this subject. Perhaps the fairest way of summing up would be to say that though Locke's idea of wit provided a basic and widely accepted definition, the survival of these Hobbesian ideas served as a corrective that was very frequently applied.

2. Hobbes's Theory of Laughter.

It is safe to say that no other single feature of Hobbes's philosophy attracted so much interested attention in the eighteenth century as did his theory of laughter. Although an intrinsic part of the "selfish philosophy" which proved so unpopular in that century, it provided a coherent and logical explanation of the phenomenon of laughter which no one examining the question could afford to overlook. Moreover, Hobbes's

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1 Laelius and Hortensia, p.72
2 Principles of Taste, p.413

theory was noticed and, what is more, upheld by Addison in the Spectator, and that alone was almost sufficient to ensure that it would not be ignored.

The most complete account of laughter given by Hobbes is to be found in his Human Nature, and the later passage on the same subject in Leviathan adds nothing essential to it.[1] Hobbes begins by noting that every case of laughter can be accounted for by the same basic fact, which is a sudden and unexpected realisation of some superiority in ourselves. This realisation may come to us in various ways, but it always involves an act of comparison with a past or even imagined weakness of our own, or with the infirmities of other people: jokes please only in so far as they tell of absurdities in others which rouse such a feeling of superiority in our minds. Hobbes therefore concludes that "the passion of laughter is nothing else but a sudden glory arising from some sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves by comparison with the infirmities of others, or with our own formerly."[2] This is so clear that it is unnecessary to enlarge upon it; the following short extract from Leviathan serves only to emphasise the stress Hobbes lays on unexpectedness. "In all cases both laughter and weeping are sudden motions, custom taking them both away. For no man laughs at old jests, or weeps for an old calamity."[3]

Addison's comments on Hobbes's theory are favourable,[4] despite his opening remark that in the light of what Hobbes has said we should, when

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[1] Hobbes has also a passage on laughter in his De Homine, but I can find no evidence that it was known to later writers. The closing sentence is, however, sufficiently interesting to be quoted here. "Quae risum ergo movent tria sunt conjuncta; indecorum, alienum, et subitum." Opera Latina, vol.ii,p.108

[2] Human Nature; Wks., vol.iv:I,ix,13

[3] Leviathan, I,vi,p.36

[4] See Spectator, no.47

we hear a man laugh excessively, tell him not that he is merry, but that he is very proud. In what follows, Addison ignores Hobbes's insistence on "suddenness," and we must conclude either that he failed to realise the importance attached to it by Hobbes, or that he considered it a relatively unimportant point. Addison adds very little to what Hobbes has said: his chief contributions are, first, that we may laugh at our superiors in matters in which they compare unfavourably with us; and second, that no man is regularly made a butt by others unless he has "a good deal of wit and vivacity, even in the ridiculous side of his character." In support of the latter contention, Addison brings forward as example Sir John Falstaff, who had thus described himself: "I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is in other men."

The first real opposition to Hobbes came from Hutcheson in a series of three letters which first appeared in the Dublin Journal in 1725, and were republished four years later in a collection called Hibernicus's Letters, made by James Arbuckle. Hutcheson's principal argument was that men often laugh without comparing themselves to anything at all, so that "sudden glory" could not be a sound basis for an explanation of laughter. He put forward an alternative theory of his own, which was very probably suggested by his reading of Hobbes, and instead of rejecting Hobbes's ideas outright, Hutcheson admitted that they might explain cases of ridicule, which he considers as merely one species of laughter.

Hutcheson's theory was based on the idea of contrast or incongruity. He began by pointing out that by associations of ideas made early in life we come to connect certain abstract ideas such as beauty or meanness with objects or actions to which they have no real relation. Hutcheson then

discloses his own theory of laughter. "Any little accident to which we have joined the idea of meanness, befalling a person of great gravity, ability, dignity, is a matter of laughter."[1] From this it follows that men's ideas of the ridiculous will vary greatly, with respect to both actions and characters, according to their ideas of what constitutes dignity. Hutcheson then goes on to consider ridicule in particular, but his remarks on this aspect of the subject will be considered in the next section.

Hartley, too, dealt with the problem of laughter, but unlike Hutcheson he emphasised the necessity of surprise. Thus children laugh by way of relief, when "a momentary fear occasioned by surprise"[2] is removed. Adults laugh "only at such strokes of wit and humour as surprise by some more than ordinary degree of contrast or coincidence, and have at the same time a due connection with pleasure and pain"[2] and their various associations, as for example fitness or absurdity. Thus Hartley's theory is, like Hutchesons's, a modification of Hobbes's system rather than an essentially new one, for it retains the same basic features of comparison and surprise.

Kames distinguishes between the ludicrous, which includes everything that is sportive or jocular, and the risible, which causes laughter, and is only a species of the ludicrous. He points out the part played by imagination, which multiplies without end the objects which cause laughter. According to Kames, an object must fulfil two conditions before it can be classed as risible : it must appear trivial, and it must be in some way deformed by excess or defect. Nothing that is beautiful or becoming can

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1 Hibernicus's Letters, p.91 (1734 ed'n.)
2 Observations on Man, vol.i,p.437

be a fit subject for laughter. Improper actions, on the other hand, not only raise in us contempt, but also cause us to think more highly of ourselves; and this is a fruitful source of the pleasure that we take in ridiculing others. From this Kames deduces that "those who have most vanity are most prone to laugh at others."[1] Here again the theory advanced modifies the previous explanations instead of putting forward something new.

The next exhaustive treatment of the subject was Beattie's Essay on Laughter (1776). Beattie carefully distinguishes laughter from the emotion giving rise to it, and at once rejects the view that it can be due to a feeling of pride or superiority. He emphasises the difference between animal laughter, such as that caused by tickling, and sentimental laughter, to which he confines his inquiry, and which is the expression of an emotion excited by certain objects or ideas when they are presented to the mind. Beattie's investigations lead him to the conclusion that "an uncommon mixture of relation and contrariety exhibited or supposed to be united in the same assemblage"[2] will provoke laughter unless a more powerful emotion is also felt at the same time.

The subject of laughter was considered in two other books which appeared in the same year, namely Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric, and the third volume of Lord Monboddo's Origin and Progress of Language. Monboddo holds that laughter is always caused by some kind of deformity, and he related it to the feeling of contempt: pleasure in laughter proceeds from a conviction that we ourselves are free from the defect which we laugh at in others, and that we are therefore, in that respect at least, superior to them. Thus Monboddo has in effect restored Hobbes's

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1 Wks., vol.i,p.311
2 Essays, p.682

explanation, but he goes on to make one or two interesting remarks. Natural deformities, whether physical or mental, are no proper subjects for laughter; a deformed thing, to be laughable, must not have the power to do mischief; a deformed person is ridiculous only if he is vain and affected. Campbell's view is just the contrary. Laughter arises, not from contempt, but from the perception of oddity: and as this is only occasionally mixed with a feeling of contempt, there must often be laughter without contempt and contempt without laughter. Campbell attributes the "error" of Hobbes to his failure to realise that laughter may exist independently of contempt, and he concludes that the genuine object of laughter is always a group of things "in which there is some striking unsuitableness."[1]

Priestley, in a course of lectures published in the following year, has nothing new to suggest. "An object that is purely and simply risible, is anything in which there is perceived a great incongruity or disproportion, provided the object at the same time that it is of some consequence, be not capable of exciting a more serious emotion."[2] He allows that laughter may be mixed with contempt, and that when it is so the man who laughs does have an agreeable sense of his own superiority. But like Hutcheson he considers that when there is an admixture of contempt, the feeling is to be classed as ridicule and not pure laughter or mirth.

The theory of Hobbes is once again revived and upheld by William Preston, in a paper read to the Royal Irish Academy in 1788. Preston considers Hobbes's findings "conformable to the definition of Aristotle", and "founded in nature;"[3] and he underlines the use of the word <u>sudden</u> in Hobbes's

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1 Philosophy of Rhetoric, vol.i,p.93
2 On Oratory and Criticism, p.205
3 Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, vol.ii(1788),p.71

definition. Then, after advancing a theory that laughter is caused by some actual irritation of the nerves, Preston goes on to consider the sources of the ridiculous: these in no way differ from the usual explanations of defect, disparity, disproportion, and mischance which is not of a serious nature. He allows contempt to be a principal source of the pleasure we receive from mirth (the emotion accompanying laughter), thus disagreeing with Hutcheson and Campbell who have, Preston considers, very improperly confounded mirth with laughter.

Knight, writing in 1805, also seems to accept Hobbes's explanation; laughter is, according to him, "an expression of joy and exultation, which arises not from sympathy but triumph; and which seems therefore to have its principle in malignity."[1] If this is Hobbes's "glory," his "suddenness" too may be found here: "all ludicrous combinations must be new and uncommon, though just and natural."[2] Still later, in 1809, Mangin supported Hutcheson's theory "that the ludicrous consists in the contrast of dignity and meanness,"[3] and held that neither Campbell nor Beattie had made any real improvements in it. He added that laughter raised by an exhibition of quizzing is quite consistent with Hutcheson's theory.

What has been quoted from eighteenth century speculation on the subject of laughter should suffice to show that most writers were content to keep within the bounds marked out by those who first dealt with the problem. Hobbes's "sudden glory," the subsequent discussion of it in Addison's paper in the Spectator, and the modifications made in Hobbes's theory by Hutcheson provided the material drawn upon in all later investigations; and very little that was new was added during the eighty

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1 Principles of Taste, p.410
2 ibid, p.413
3 Pleasures from Literary Compositions, p.292

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1 Principles of Taste, p.410
2 ibid, p.413
3 Pleasures from Literary Compositions, p.292

year period that we have just been considering.

3. Ridicule.

We have seen that Hutcheson considered that Hobbes's theory of laughter was applicable only in cases of ridicule. The position accorded to ridicule in Shaftesbury's Characteristics had already given rise to a certain amount of discussion. Shaftesbury had believed that before anything could be accepted as genuine, it should have undergone the test of ridicule to prove that there was nothing false in its composition. "Where an unnatural humour has crept in, ridicule is the best weapon against it, and if it is ill-placed at first, it will certainly fall at last where it deserves."[1] This assertion was the cause of the controversy as to whether or not ridicule is a proper test of truth, that went on for the next half-century, and considerably complicated the discussion of ridicule during that period.

Hutcheson was a follower of Shaftesbury, so it is not surprising that their views of ridicule should be similar. Hutcheson held that "when any object, either good or evil, is aggravated and increased by the violence of our passions, or an enthusiastic admiration or fear, the application of ridicule is the readiest way to bring down our high imaginations to a conformity to the real importance of the affair."[2] It is to this method of ridicule that Hutcheson wants to limit the application of Hobbes's theory of laughter, and the problem thus raised was by no means a merely theoretical one, for, as Akenside was to say later, "ridicule....is the foundation of the comic manner in all the arts."[3] Hence Hutcheson's remark that the

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1 Characteristics (1723 edition): vol.i,p.10
2 Hibernicus's Letters, p.99
3 Poetical Wks., p.3

smaller vices "are often more effectually corrected by ridicule than by grave admonition" has an obvious significance for comedy; and it is not hard to see how the identification of Hobbes's "sudden glory" with ridicule can be made to serve moral purposes in comic theory. If perception of the weaknesses of others can give a man a feeling of moral superiority, we have almost ready-made a justification of comedy.

Akenside's theory of ridicule, which is set forth in a very long note in his Pleasures of Imagination, is based on the idea of incongruity. Objects are ridiculous when they reveal an excessive disproportion either between intrinsic excellence and accidental meanness, or between intrinsic meanness and accidental excellence. Akenside makes a few interesting additional remarks. The inconsistent properties may exist "either in the objects themselves or in the apprehension of the person to whom they relate;" they must belong "always to the same order or class of being," and must imply "sentiment or design;" and they must excite "no acute or vehement emotion of the heart."[1] This theory has very obvious affinities with the speculations of Hutcheson with regard to laughter, and probably derives from them.

The next positive contribution was made by John Brown in his Essay on Ridicule. Brown connects ridicule with the passion of contempt, which he describes as "mixed", that is, partaking of both pleasure and pain;[2] but ridicule has the special aim of exciting contempt with laughter.[3] In doing this, however, it must be subject to reason, whose duty it is to decide whether contempt be just in the particular circumstances. Brown then classes ridicule as a species of eloquence,[4] because it applies wit to the

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1 Poetical Wks., p.78
2 Essays on the Characteristics, p.13
3 ibid., p.43
4 ibid., p.41

end of persuasion. In working out this system, it is probable that Brown had Hobbes in mind, and that "contempt" is his name for the "sudden glory" that men feel when they see the infirmities of others.

Certain of Brown's ideas were taken up and developed in another Essay on Ridicule, which appeared anonymously in 1753, and which has since then been attributed to Allan Ramsay. Ramsay divides ridicule into two classes, which have either matters of enquiry or actions and manners for their respective provinces. The first is "the art of showing to be ridiculous what is imagined to be so," and is called argumentative ridicule; the second is simple ridicule, and its task is to expose the ridiculous.[1] The latter is therefore to be considered along with the mimic arts, and its merit lies in such exact imitation as will raise laughter against actions that deserve to be ridiculed.[2] This does not however depend on awakening a feeling of contempt; when people laugh at vice or folly, they do so because they feel pleasure at the art displayed, and want to applaud the artist.

Ramsay's theory has clearly not been directly influenced by that of Hobbes, although it probably derives from it. Both Kames and Priestley, however, go back to the idea of a feeling pf personal superiority, and make use of it in their theories of ridicule. Kames, who was probably influenced also by Hume, finds that ridicule generally rises from the selfish passion of pride, and classes it as a gross pleasure which will not satisfy refined tastes. Those who have a talent for it are quick to see improprieties and to expose them.[3] Priestley, too, finds that a certain self-esteem "enters into the feeling of ridicule,"[4] and as proof of this he adduces our "peculiar pleasure in repeating diverting incidents in company."[4] He then

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1 Essay on Ridicule, p.6
2 ibid., p.71
3 Wks., vol.iv,p.339
4 On Oratory and Criticism, p.207

considers the popular distinction between the risible and inanimate, on the one hand, and the ridiculous and active, on the other; and suggests that even in the case of risible objects, laughter may be due to our personifying the objects concerned. This, by indicating a possible means of uniting the risible and the ridiculous, opens up an interesting avenue of thought; but Priestley does not explore it further, having attained his immediate end of discrediting ridicule as a test of truth.

It was left to Blair to formulate what had been implicit in the theories of many of his predecessors. Ridicule is the "chief, or rather the sole, instrument" of comedy, which treats of the follies and minor vices of men, and "those parts of their character which raise in beholders a sense of impropriety, which expose them to be censured, and laughed at by others, or which render them troublesome in civil society."[1] Blair stops at this point, making no effort to work out a comprehensive theory of comedy; and his treatment is in many ways less satisfactory than that given to the subject in Preston's paper on Wit and Humour. Preston defines ridicule as "that branch of the fine or mimetic arts which proposes to excite the emotion of mirth,"[2] and remarks that while its effect is more forcible in poetry and painting, whose imitations are more general and more pointed, it may be found in the other arts, including even music. Preston then classifies the sources of the ridiculous in a way that could provide quite an interesting basis for a discussion of eighteenth century comic theory. There is nothing of outstanding originality in Preston's classification, but it brings usefully together many earlier suggestions, and on the whole provides a far greater stimulus to further research than does the account of Blair, who is content to rest in his definition without speculating further.

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1 Lectures, vol.iii,p.332
2 Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, vol.II(1788), p.69

Enough has been said to make it clear that both Hobbes and Locke had considerable influence on the course of eighteenth century discussion of the comic. Hobbes's theories of wit and laughter and Locke's definition of wit were all widely known, and their later history is a subject worthy of a more detailed examination than I have been able to give it here.

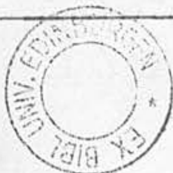
CHAPTER IV

HOBBES, LOCKE, AND PLEASURE.

1. Hobbes, Pleasure, and Passion.

Hobbes's doctrine of the passions is a logical extension of his mechanistic philosophy, and is one of its most consistently developed branches. Hobbes opens his account of the passions in Leviathan by laying down that all our animal or voluntary motions are but the carrying out of conceptions which already exist in the mind, and that all our actions therefore originate in the imagination. An external object when presented to our senses can affect us in one of three ways; it may attract, it may repel, or it may fail to interest us in any way. In either of the first two cases, some form of animal motion results. This motion, if it be towards an object, is called appetite or desire, and the object is described as good; if it be away from an object, the motion is called aversion, and we say that the object is bad. Consequently, according to Hobbes, nothing is "simply and absolutely" good or evil; "for these words....are ever used with relation to the person that useth them."[1] If a thing is evil, it causes us pain; and if it is good, it causes us pleasure, so that "all appetite, desire, or love is accompanied with some delight, more or less."[2] Hobbes then distinguishes between pleasure of sense, or love, which arises from the sense of an object present; and pleasure of mind, or joy, which arises from the

1 Leviathan, I, vi, p.32
2 ibid., I, vi, p.33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expectation that proceeds from foresight of the end or consequence of things; whether those things in the sense please or displease."[1]

Hobbes goes on to draw the very logical conclusion that temporal happiness "consisteth not in the repose of a mind satisfied."[2] The mere attaining of an object of desire does not make a man happy; by man's very nature, fresh appetites are continually rising and calling for satisfaction, "nor can a man any more live, whose desires are at an end, than he whose sense and imaginations are at a stand."[2] We find happiness only in the "continual progress of the desire from one object to another, the attaining of the former being still but the way to the latter."[2] When therefore Hobbes says that pleasure is "the appearance or sense of good,"[3] he means that it consists in the desire for what seems at that time good to ourselves; that is, in our appetites. And, as he points out elsewhere, appetites so affect the mind that it instantly calls up in order all the phantasms that can serve as means to gaining the desired end. Thus the passions and appetites are of prime importance in Hobbes's scheme of things; they are conditions rather than accompaniments of living, and their position in his psychology is fundamental.

It is evident that Hobbes's theory of the passions is capable of application, and that in a most interesting way, to aesthetic questions. The extent to which Hobbes has in fact made such application is comparatively small, for he does so specifically only in the case of Rhetoric, and for the other arts we have to rely on a few hints scattered through his works. The most important of these last is in <u>Human Nature</u>, when Hobbes states that "not

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1 Leviathan, I,vi,p.34
2 ibid., I,xi,p.63
3 ibid., I,vi,p.33

truth but image maketh passion: and a tragedy affecteth no less than a murder if well acted."[1] Here, as Professor Thorpe has pointed out, Hobbes definitely attributes the power of raising passion to the imagination. Elsewhere, Hobbes notes that the ability to speak powerfully consists in an acquired habit of "putting together passionate words, and applying them to the present passions of the hearer."[2] Finally, he defines Rhetoric as "a commotion of the passions of the mind, such as are hope, fear, anger, pity,....(which) derives from a metaphorical use of words fitted to the passions."[3] These few utterances indicate a consistency on this subject that makes it all the more regrettable that Hobbes did not see fit to try to evolve a more comprehensive philosophy of art.

The first English critic to show the influence of Hobbes's theories was John Dennis. This has already been pointed out by Professor Thorpe, who has treated this aspect of the subject very fully; but, more recently, Professor Hooker has suggested that Dennis may also have been indebted to Pascal and La Rochefoucauld, and has uttered a caution against "attaching too much weight to the effect of Hobbes."[4] As regards Dennis's views of passion and pleasure, however, there can be no doubt that the influence of Hobbes was strong, and also in his aesthetic taken as a whole it was probably reinforced by ideas from Aristotle, Longinus, and Milton. Dennis's defence of the stage in his first reply to Collier seems to be very largely deduced from the theories of Hobbes; for his argument is based on the assumption that happiness consists in pleasure, and is the result of passion. Since man is a reasonable creature, the passions must be raised in a way that is agreeable also

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1 Human Nature; Wks., vol.iv,XIII,vii,p.75
2 De Corpore Politico; Wks., vol.iv,p.211
3 Philosophical Rudiments; Wks., vol.ii,p.162
4 Critical Works of John Dennis: Introduction

to reason; and according to Dennis this can nowhere be done so well as in tragedy, which fulfils all the necessary conditions. "To be happy is to be pleased; and to be pleased is to be moved in such a manner as is allowed of by reason....Tragedy moves us thus, and consequently pleases us."[1]

Dennis's criticism displays a strongly religious bent, and by adopting the theories just quoted, and relating them to man's destiny of eternal felicity, Dennis found himself with a satisfactory starting-point for the aesthetic doctrine he proceeded to build up. "The soul was created by God to find its happiness in him: and all happiness consists in pleasure and all pleasure in passion."[2] Dennis's merit is that he worked ideas taken from Hobbes and others into a system which he can justly claim to be one of the first attempts in English to explain poetry on an aesthetic basis. He accepted from the first what were then almost unanimously considered the two chief ends of poetry, to delight and to instruct. Instruction makes man better, so is the final end to which delight, which makes him happier, is subordinate. Both these ends are to be achieved by exciting passion, which thus becomes the characteristic mark of poetry: and even passions which disgust in life please in poetry.[3]

Dennis finds that either action or contemplation, so long as they please, can rouse passion. This would seem to correspond to a similar, though only implicit, division in Hobbes; that which puts in one class both tragedy and murder, and in another joy from the foresight of the end of things. Dennis goes on to parallel this division by distinguishing passions into those that are vulgar and those that are enthusiastic; of these, the former are "moved by the objects themselves, or by the ideas in the ordinary course of life,"[4] and

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1 Critical Works of John Dennis: vol.i,p.151
2 ibid., vol.i,p.366
3 This seems to be an adaptation of Hobbes's theory that joy may arise from the consequences of things whether they please or displease in the sense.
4 Critical Works of John Dennis, vol.i,p.338

are therefore preferable because they appeal to a wider public. They tend to prevail in tragedy, and Dennis suggests that this may explain why Aristotle prefers tragedy to epic. Enthusiastic passion, or enthusiasm, is moved by "ideas in contemplation, or the meditation of things that belong not to common life;"[1] it is more subtle than vulgar passion, and most men are unable to appreciate it. It is seen to most advantage in great religious poetry, and is therefore the source of the epic and the noblest achievements of poetry. This in turn links up with Dennis's conception of poetic genius, which is highest when inspired by enthusiastic passions, and manifests itself in the adequate expression of a great thought, or the sublime.

The same fundamental conception of pleasure, which he may have inherited from Dennis, though it may equally well come direct from Hobbes, probably lies behaind an early attempt to account for varieties of taste, made by Jonathan Richardson in 1715. Richardson first lays down that "all created beings seek pleasure....as their chiefest good,"[2] and from this he deduces that as men find pleasure in widely different things, there must be an infinite variety of tastes for pleasure. This Richardson considers, is no bad thing, as it prevents us from being perpetually at variance with one another, and he goes on to develop a not very original theory of the sublime as "the perfection of human nature."[3]

A more fruitful example of Hobbes's influence may be seen in Hutcheson's friend, James Arbuckle, who certainly knew the work of Hobbes, and probably accepted some of his theories on the passions, though modifying their general spirit. For example, he agrees that all our passions and faculties are calculated to promote the happiness of the individual, but insists that they also contribute to the universal good of the whole intellectual system, which

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1 Critical Works of John Dennis, vol.i,p.338
2 Wks.(1773), p.119
3 ibid., p.144

may be an echo of Shaftesbury. Appetites, of no matter what kind, are man's first motive to action, and we can have no happiness without appetite; but the satiety often consequent on their gratification shows that they are not the ultimate principle of pleasure. Arbuckle goes on to affirm that all our rational pleasures come from either "the contemplation of beauty, the endearments of society, or self-approbation."[1] Elsewhere, Arbuckle agrees that the passions of all men are alike,[2] then goes on like Dennis to attribute the power of poetry to its design, and ability to work on the passions.

After such a promising start, it is rather disappointing to find that the lead given by Hobbes and Dennis was not followed by later aestheticians, and there are very few attempts to show a relationship between passion and art. In 1760 Daniel Webb writes that the pleasure we receive from painting "is itself a passion, founded on the love of what is beautiful, and the delight we feel in having our passions moved;"[3] and more than twenty years later Jackson argues that man's greatest pleasure arises from the gratification of his passions. These are however isolated opinions and it would be difficult to show that they derive from either Hobbes or Dennis. The truth probably is that Hobbes's doctrine of the passions failed to survive because it ran counter to the spirit of an age of reason. Even Dennis had felt the necessity of trying to make passionate pleasure subject to reason, and if his successors felt that this last contention was unjustifiable, it is easy to understand their looking askance at Hobbes's view of pleasure as the result of indulging passion.

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1 Hibernicus's Letters, p.40
2 cf. Leviathan, Introduction p.6: "passions....are the same in all men."
3 Beauties of Painting, p.37

2. Hobbes and the Pleasure of Novelty.

As Professor Thorpe has shown, novelty is an important factor in Hobbes's aesthetic theories, and indeed in his whole system of psychology. According to Hobbes, the desire for novelty is natural to man; but this is a novelty very different from the ordinary conception of it which prevailed in the eighteenth century. It derives from Hobbes's belief that knowledge originates in experience: whence it follows that new experience, or novelty, gives new knowledge by awakening a hope of future knowledge which may be either a passion, in which case it is called admiration, or an appetite, when it is called curiosity. "And from this beginning is derived all philosophy,"[1] and the degrees of knowledge among men. It is small wonder that Hobbes concludes that "because curiosity is delight, therefore also all novelty is so."[1] Alongside this it is interesting to set Shaftesbury's remark that the love of novelty and surprise is a stronger passion than the love of truth, which expresses an idea more in keeping with what we now mean by novelty.

Hobbes's conception of novelty, therefore, is a far more exalted one than was current at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and it is surely here that we are to seek Addison's reason for ranking it along with the beautiful and the sublime as one of the three supreme pleasures of the imagination. This receives confirmation in Addison's explanation of the final cause of the pleasure we receive from novelty. "(God) has annexed a secret pleasure to the idea of anything that is new or uncommon, that he might encourage us in the pursuit after knowledge, and engage us to search into the wonders of his creation; for every new idea brings such a pleasure along with it as

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[1] Human Nature, Wks., vol.iv:IX,xviii,p.50

rewards any pains we have taken in its acquisition, and consequently serves as a motive to put us upon fresh discoveries."[1] This comes closer to Hobbes's ideas than anything else of the period that I have read, and seems to justify Addison in giving novelty the important place which it has among the pleasures of the imagination.

At the same time it must be recognised that Addison included in his idea of 'novelty' certain features of the more popular conception, which tended to become more and more closely identified with variety. In his original account of novelty, Addison says that "Everything that is new or uncommon raises a pleasure in the imagination, because it fills the soul with an agreeable surprise, gratifies its curiosity, and gives it an idea of which it was not before possessed."[2] Further on he claims that it helps to give variety to life, by providing an occasional relief from our ordinary everyday entertainments. "It is this that bestows charms on a monster....that recommends variety, where the mind is every instant called off to something new....that improves what is great or beautiful, and makes it afford the mind a double entertainment."[2] Thus although like Hobbes he has given to novelty a more important place than was usually allotted to it, Addison has in a sense also started the process of debasing it from that eminence. His successors were many of them ready on his authority to allow novelty to hold its place beside beauty and the sublime; but very few were ready to attribute to it such important functions as those common to the accounts of Hobbes and Addison, though Blackmore's remark that "novelty is the parent of admiration"[3] may indicate knowledge of Hobbes. This is made more probable by the fact that Blackmore was born before the Restoration, and therefore belonged to a generation

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1 Spectator, no.413
2 ibid., no.412
3 Essays, p.36

entertain, and himself answers that it is novelty. "Practically, it is ultimate, and the desire it excites nothing else can satisfy."[1] We seek it in both nature and art, and are at last compelled to withdraw from the material world into an imaginary one where we can satisfy our appetite for novelty. Aikin sums up his critical doctrine by attributing a great share of our pleasure in both art and nature to novelty.

The importance attached to the effects of novelty in the speculations of aestheticians naturally led them also to examine it from the standpoint of the creative artist. An early example of this is Hume's complaint that authors' attempts to please by novelty lead them to abandon the simplicity of nature for affectation and conceit; and Blair, in a lecture on The Eloquence of the Pulpit admits that "nothing within the reach of art is more difficult, than to bestow on what is common, the grace of novelty."[2] Beattie agrees with Hume that the chief danger is that new ideas may "seduce from Nature,"[3] but feels that novelty is to be sought as it is a help to fancy. The obvious solution to this difficulty is eventually proposed by Knight; "as long as the restless desire of novelty can restrain itself, in imitative art, to the imitation of real genuine nature, it will only tend to real improvement."[4]

The tendency already indicated to identify novelty with variety often led writers to enter upon discussions as to the means of producing novelty when they were considering beauty as a compound ratio of uniformity and variety. Thus Gerard explains the need for variety by saying that in some measure it gratifies man's sense of novelty, and Shenstone attributes a large part of the effect of variety to novelty. On the other side, Monboddo argues that desire for singularity may corrupt the taste of an

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1 Letters, vol.i,p.65
2 Lectures, vol.ii,p.278
3 Dissertations, p.169
4 Principles of Taste, p.434

artist, and Reynolds utters a warning against carrying the pursuit of novelty and variety too far, sometimes to the extent of destroying the pleasure from uniformity and repetition. This all goes to show that the question of novelty continued to figure prominently in aesthetic speculation throughout the century. The extent and manner in which it did so can be attributed largely to the emphasis laid upon it in the systems of Hobbes and Addison.

3. Locke and Pleasure.

The importance of the part played by pleasure in Locke's system can be estimated by the fact that he makes not only happiness but also good depend on it. Happiness he defines as the "utmost pleasure we are capable of,"[1] and he considers that "things are good or evil, only in reference to pleasure or pain."[2] This does not mean however that Locke is to be classed as a hedonist: for pleasure was to him but a means by which man is helped towards his ultimate end. God has given to certain "objects, and the ideas which we receive from them, as also to several of our thoughts, a concomitant pleasure, and that in several objects, to several degrees...."[3] If it were not for this, men would have no way of establishing the relative values of thoughts, actions, or even the objects surrounding them: as it is, thanks to this act of divine wisdom, we are enabled to choose those things which tend to our good, for from the "very first instances of sense and perception, there are some things that are grateful, and others unwelcome"[4] to us. Finally Locke points out that although we may speak of pleasures of mind and pleasures of body, all pleasures are "only different constitutions in the

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1 Essay, II,xxi,42
2 ibid., II,xx,2
3 ibid., II,vii,3
4 ibid., I,iii,3

mind,"[1] whether their causes be physical or mental.

Locke's conception of pleasure differs radically from that of Shaftesbury, who considered it changeable, and therefore "no rule of good."[2] Hutcheson, however, who derived most of his ideas from either Locke or Shaftesbury, chose in this instance to follow Locke by making pleasure an act of divine providence, helping man to choose more easily between objects which would otherwise be indifferent to him. Hutcheson's views on pleasure are of great importance in his own aesthetic system, and indeed in the history of aesthetics in this country during the whole eighteenth century, for he may be regarded as one of the leading exponents of what Croce has called the hedonistic aesthetic. Hutcheson agrees with Locke that nearly every object is a necessary occasion of either pleasure or pain, but adds that this pleasure or pain arises from "the contemplation of the idea, which is then present to our minds, with all its circumstances."[3] Moreover contemplation of the complex idea is a far more fruitful source of pleasure than is contemplation of a simple idea, and as an example Hutcheson suggests that the enjoyment obtained from musical harmony is greatly superior to that given by single notes. Elsewhere, he adds that the sense of pleasure is the foundation of self-interest, for when a man desires something, he does so because of the pleasure that he knows he will receive from it.

Hutcheson bases his theory of the internal senses on a wholly new conception of the senses as "determinations to be pleased with any forms or ideas"[3] which occur to them and he then distinguishes the sense of beauty, or the capacity of receiving pleasure from beauty, from the external senses by calling it an internal sense. As he can find no necessary

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1 Essay, II, xx, 2
2 Characteristics, vol. i, p. 309
3 Beauty and Virtue, p. xiii

connection between the objects and the pleasures of the internal sense, Hutcheson concludes that there must be some "great moral necessity"[1] behind the divine constitution by which uniformity amidst variety is made the occasion of the pleasure man receives from beauty. For our present purpose, however, the most significant feature is that "the presence of some objects necessarily pleases us, and the presence of others as necessarily displeases us....By the very frame of our nature the one is made the occasion of delight and the other of dissatisfaction."[2] Hutcheson thus states clearly his belief that there is a certain quality inherent in objects which gives rise to the pleasure which accompanies perception of the beautiful; though it is important to note that he at no time confuses the pleasure with beauty.

The same conception is found in Hume when he comes to consider the difference between beauty and deformity. This can, he holds, be best stated by defining beauty as "such an order and construction of parts, as either by the <u>primary constitution</u> of our nature, by <u>custom</u>, or by caprice, is fitted to give a pleasure and satisfaction to the soul. This is the distinguishing character of beauty, and forms all the difference betwixt it and deformity, whose natural tendency is to produce uneasiness. Pleasure and pain, therefore, are not only necessary attendants of beauty and deformity, but constitute their very essence."[3] This is one of the most uncompromising statements of the identity of beauty and pleasure to be met with in the whole century, and is probably reflected in Baillie's recognition of a natural aptitude to give pleasure "from a certain harmony and disposition of....parts" as one of the two sources of delight in

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1 Beauty and Virtue, p.104
2 ibid., p.xii
3 Four Dissertations, p.141

beautiful or sublime objects. Baillie here exemplifies a common tendency to discuss beauty purely in terms of pleasure, and this is also seen in Hartley's references to the pleasures given by "gay colours of all kinds"[1] or by "the beauties of nature."

Daniel Webb expressed the same point of view in his treatise on The Beauties of Painting, but adds what might be interpreted as a caution against the danger of confusing beauty and pleasure. "As it is the nature of beauty to excite in the beholders certain pleasing sensations, we apply indiscriminately the same title to everything which produces a like effect."[2] Usher, too, holds that we generally consider beautiful that which gives us pleasure, but like Webb seems to utter a warning against identifying beauty and pleasure when he remarks that "complaisance, that is so engaging, gives an agreeableness to the whole person, and creates a beauty that Nature gave not to the features."[3] Arthur, writing some twenty years later, insisted on the necessity for distinguishing between beauty and "everything else that excites agreeable sensations,"[4] but otherwise differs little from Webb and Usher. His main thesis is that if certain objects give rise to a feeling of pleasure, "there must be certain qualities in these objects fitted for exciting agreeable sensations in the mind,"[5] and in the case of beauty, he believes those qualities to be "colour and figure alone."[6]. Jeffrey, on the other hand, does not seem too confident on the question of beauty and pleasure, at least in his earlier article

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1 Observations on Man, vol.i,p.207. Elsewhere Hartley notes gay colours as one of the sources of the pleasure afforded by beauty.

2 Beauties of Painting, p.134

3 Clio (1803 ed'n.), p.66

4 Discourses, pt.II,p.201

5 ibid., p.190

6 ibid., p.201

on aesthetics. He allows that "mere organic or physical delight....appears in some cases to procure the appellation of beautiful to the objects that produce it,"[1] and quotes as examples certain combinations of sounds or colours.

It is therefore clear that the insistence of Locke and Hutcheson on the annexation of pleasure to certain objects, when combined with the view that beauty was objective, tended to encourage a view that beauty was a mode of pleasure. More important, however, is the fact that the same theory had much to do with the popularity of the theory of the internal senses; and this in turn strengthened the view that beauty is objective. Beauty could not, in fact, be easily conceived of as objective until the internal sense theory and its implications - which will be examined in a later chapter-had been rejected, and in view of this Jeffrey's later disavowal of the views quoted in the previous paragraph has an obvious significance.

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1 Edinburgh Review, XVIII,no.35(1811),pp.35-36

PART II

THE PHILOSOPHICAL INFLUENCES

CHAPTER V

LOCKE, BERKELEY, AND THE QUALITIES OF MATTER

1. Locke and Primary and Secondary Qualities.

Although the distinction between the "primary" and "secondary" qualities of matter had already been made by Descartes and indicated by Hobbes, it became known to eighteenth century England chiefly through the medium of Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding. Locke approached the problem of the limits of human knowledge very gradually, and devoted his first two books to an investigation of the nature of ideas, which he considered the only objects of knowledge. But if nothing can be known but ideas, it follows that external objects are known only in so far as they have power to produce ideas in the minds of men. "Thus a snowball having the power to produce in us the ideas of white, cold, and round, the powers to produce those ideas in us, as they are in the snowball, I call qualities; and as they are sensations or perceptions in our understandings, I call them ideas."[1]

Locke then went on to distinguish between the primary and secondary qualities of material objects. Primary qualities are those which are inseparably and essentially present in the object, and which remain in it, no matter what changes it may undergo, and whether it is perceived or not. As examples of primary qualities, Locke gives bulk, number, figure and motion. Secondary qualities are "nothing in the objects themselves but the powers to produce various sensations in us by their primary qualities;"[2]

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1 Essay, II,viii,8
2 ibid., II,viii,10

examples of these are colours, sounds and tastes. Further, there is no property inherent in the object which resembles the ideas we have of secondary qualities, and these ideas are produced in our minds simply and solely by the action of an occult power in the body. Our ideas of primary qualities, on the other hand, correspond to real and existing properties of objects, and therefore resemble the powers producing them. Thus when we see a blue ball, the "blueness" being a secondary quality is but an idea in our minds, and has no corresponding existence in matter. The ball, however, does really exist in the bulk and shape perceived by our senses, and under certain conditions possesses the power of conveying to us the idea of "blueness." Our knowledge of bodies is moreover severely limited by our inability to discover any "conceivable connection between any secondary quality and any primary quality"[1] of which the secondary quality is an effect.

When in the following century aestheticians began to ask themselves what qualities in objects could render these objects beautiful, it was almost inevitable that the distinction drawn between primary and secondary qualities should attract attention. It was equally inevitable that sooner or later somebody would inquire, whether beauty was a primary or a secondary quality; in other words, is beauty inherent in the object perceived, or is it merely an affection of the sentient? Hence we find Hutcheson declaring that beauty and harmony are sensible ideas excited by primary qualities, and that there _may_ therefore be nothing in the objects resembling the ideas. Kames, after affirming that the distinction between primary and secondary qualities is almost universally accepted, adds that it "suggests

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[1] Essay, IV, vi, 7

a curious inquiry, whether beauty be a primary or only a secondary quality of objects."[1] On this occasion Kames seems rather unwilling to commit himself to either view, but in his later Sketches of the History of Man he lays down quite unequivocally that beauty and ugliness are secondary qualities.[2] Reid too considers this question, and finds that "though some of the qualities that please a good taste resemble the secondary qualities of body, and therefore may be called occult qualities,....this is not always the case."[3]

It is clear from the foregoing examples that the doctrine of the primary and secondary qualities of matter could have been made the basis of at least two almost diametrically opposite aesthetic systems. Beauty could be regarded as either inherent in the object, or objective; or inherent in the percipient, or purely subjective. There was in fact a third possibility, which was adopted by Hume, who held that beauty consists in the relation between the percipient and the object perceived. Neither this last view, or the purely subjective theory, however, obtained much support. Thus, although Locke had himself displayed little or no interest in aesthetic problems, his theories could have been quoted in support of three very different solutions to the problem of the nature of beauty.

Few of the eighteenth century aestheticians showed an intimacy with Locke's philosophy equal to that of Francis Hutcheson, who had the good fortune, when he came to consider aesthetic problems, to find that much of the preliminary work had already been done, notably by Shaftesbury and Addison. One of Hutcheson's chief merits is that he succeeded in assimilating and blending the theories of his predecessors in such a way as to make him

1 Wks., vol.iv, p.187
2 Wks., vol.iii, p.110
3 Essays, vol.ii, p.498

the first important focal point in the history of the development of aesthetic theory in this country. When in his first major treatise Hutcheson came to consider what rendered objects beautiful, he at once turned for help to Locke, who had given long and careful consideration to the question of matter and its qualities. His study of Locke led him to class beauty as a secondary quality, dependent for its existence on the primary or permanent qualities of the object. Beauty thus becomes, according to the definition of Locke, nothing in the object but a power to produce certain sensations in us, and as "there is nothing like our ideas existing in the bodies themselves,"[1] it would seem to follow that beauty is purely subjective.

Faithful to Locke's philosophy, however, Hutcheson did not rest here. In the Essay Locke had stated that secondary or sensible qualities were "but the powers of several combinations of the primary qualities when they operate without being distinctly discerned."[2] Any system then which made beauty a secondary quality, and was to conform with Locke's doctrines, had to acknowledge that the sensation of beauty was caused by certain combinations of the primary qualities in the object denominated beautiful. Moreover, as Locke had shown, no certain connection between the primary qualities and the dependent secondary qualities could ever be proved: at best, as a result of observation, we could conclude that certain qualities were found frequently to co-exist, and were therefore probably but not certainly united by some necessary connection. If, therefore, his explanation of beauty as a secondary quality was to have any practical value, Hutcheson had to find

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1 Essay, II,viii,15
2 ibid., II,viii,22

between the primary qualities of objects some relationship, which could be shown to occur in each object that appeared to him beautiful. It was with this in mind that Hutcheson suggested that "what we call beautiful in objects seems to be in a compound ratio of uniformity and variety."[1]

It is important to realise that Hutcheson was not putting forward a theory that beauty consists in uniformity amidst variety. His immediate successors generally misunderstood his aesthetic doctrines, and partly out of deference to him included uniformity and variety in the ever-growing list of such qualities as utility, proportion, and regularity which were then popularly supposed to be causes of beauty: but Hutcheson himself must have known that his solution was no more than a hypothesis based on experience. His aim had been to find "what quality in objects excites these ideas (of beauty and harmony), or is the occasion of them,"[2] and in order to do this, he began by considering the simplest kind of beauty - that of regular figures. Starting off with the assumption that a square is more beautiful than an equilateral triangle, Hutcheson deduced that when figures are equally uniform, greater variety results in greater beauty. He then applied his formula of "uniformity amidst variety" to such objects, and even theorems, as were generally considered beautiful, and as in each case the formula seemed sufficient, Hutcheson proposed his theory that the secondary quality of beauty is dependent upon a ratio of variety and uniformity among the primary qualities of the object designated beautiful.

The qualities of uniformity and variety were probably, as Scott has pointed out,[3] suggested to Hutcheson by Shaftesbury's "order, harmony,

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1 Beauty and Virtue, p.17
2 ibid., p.16
3 W.R.Scott: Francis Hutcheson

and proportion," and this may serve as an example of the way in which Hutcheson adapted the work of his predecessors to the philosophy of Locke. The result was that Hutcheson constructed a system of beauty which is based on and entirely consistent with Locke's doctrine of the primary and secondary qualities of matter, and then came to the conclusion that beauty is "the idea raised in us,"[1] and is therefore subjective. Hutcheson completed his system by describing man's power of receiving that idea as an internal sense of beauty, and it is interesting to note that this last theory, which later in the century was regarded as almost inseparable from the idea that beauty is partly or wholly objective, originally formed part of a system based on the belief that beauty was subjective.

Paradoxically enough, the weight of Hutcheson's influence fell almost entirely on the side of that school of thought which believed that beauty was objective. The reason for this was that most of Hutcheson's successors wrongly believed that he had taught that uniformity and variety were qualities which themselves gave rise to an immediate perception of beauty. This was a natural enough consequence of Hutcheson's doctrine of an internal sense of beauty, but as this will be considered at a later stage, the "internal sense" school need not be dealt with at present. Not everyone however misunderstood Hutcheson to such an extent, and the most notable exception is that of David Hume.

Though the volume of Hume's writings on aesthetics is comparatively small, he often realised more clearly than did his contemporaries the difficulties inherent in some of the problems facing them. His attitude to beauty is a good example of this. Hume dismisses as absurd the

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1 Beauty and Virtue, p.7

suggestion that beauty may consist "wholly in the perception of relations,"[1] and then with particular reference to the circle, he defines beauty as "the effect which that figure produces upon the mind, whose peculiar fabric of structure renders it susceptible of such sentiments."[1] Later, in his essay Of the Standard of Taste, Hume considers the question with some care. He begins by referring to a certain school of thought which, by holding that beauty is completely subjective, made it impossible to establish any standard of taste; because if beauty is subjective, it is a mere sentiment, and is not subject to any fixed standard. Hume then advances his own relativist theory. Although it can not be denied that beauty and deformity are "not qualities in objects, but belong entirely to the sentiment, internal or external, it must be allowed that there are certain qualities in objects which are fitted by nature to produce those particular feelings."[2]

Hume thus rejects both the objective and the extreme subjective theory, and follows a via media which, however, commended itself to very few later aestheticians. It is probably his influence that led Kames to his earlier conclusion that beauty, "which for its existence depends on the percipient as much as on the object perceived, cannot be an inherent property in either."[3] The opinions of Abraham Tucker may also derive from the theories of Hume. Tucker begins by defining beauty as "an aptness of things to please immediately upon sight."[4] But not everybody is pleased with the same objects, for beauty depends on the response of the beholder, and is therefore relative. Consequently the same thing may appear "charming to one, indifferent to another, and disgustful to a third."[4] Tucker allows a sense of beauty, but as he means by it no more than man's capacity to be

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1 Principles of Morals, ed. Selby-Bigge: p.292
2 Four Dissertations, p.217
3 Wks., vol.iv,p.188
4 Light of Nature Pursued, vol.ii,p.147

affected by beauty, it does not help him to fix on a standard of beauty; and so he concludes that nothing is in itself beautiful.

A later expression of the view of beauty as purely subjective is to be found in an extremely interesting article in the Critical Review for 1807. The reviewer starts off by declaring that "beauty is a relative and secondary quality which like that of cold or colour has no existence except in the sentiment which we have of it," but adds that "though beauty be an impalpable abstraction, the sentiment is a physical reality."[1] He goes on to argue that the sentiment of beauty is the same in everyone, but that, as it may be caused by a variety of sensations, it is only to be expected that men's opinions respecting beauty will differ widely.

This shows to what extent Locke's original distinction between the primary and secondary qualities of matter had maintained its place throughout the century. It may even be regretted that his theories on this point were not better understood: if they had been, a great deal of rather unprofitable speculation, which was given considerable encouragement by the doctrines of Hutcheson, might have been avoided. As it is, however, the distinction can be shown to have been the source, directly or indirectly, of quite surprisingly different aesthetic theories. The implied failure to interpret Locke correctly may be brought forward as evidence of the philosophical incompetence of many of those who undertook to work out aesthetic systems.

2. Berkeley and Visible and Tangible Qualities.

The common eighteenth century attitude to Berkeley unfortunately differed little from that of Dr. Johnson, who considered that by kicking a stone out of his way, he had refuted Berkeley's theory of the non-existence

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[1] Critical Review, N.S.XII, (1807), p.520

of material substance. This complete inability to understand Berkeley's philosophy is not perhaps surprising in an age which had little respect for metaphysical subtlety, and few other than trained philosophers gave any serious consideration to the problems raised by Berkeley. There were however certain theories put forward by Berkeley in his New Theory of Vision which did not like his idealism run violently counter to the comfortable assumptions of his age, and which were yet sufficiently original to arouse immediate interest. Chief among these is his insistence on the fact that ideas received simultaneously through the different senses are yet quite different and distinct from each other.

Berkeley first points out that we are under no temptation to confuse ideas of sight and hearing, and can easily separate the noise made by an object from its appearance to the sight. It is however quite otherwise with the ideas of sight and touch, which we tend to confuse almost continuously. It is impossible for a man to see all six sides of a cube at the same time: how then can we know at sight that a cube is before us? Berkeley answers that we become acquainted with the peculiar shape of a cube through the sense of touch, and on doing so note that a certain visible appearance always accompanies this shape. When we say that we see a cube, therefore, we are not speaking accurately. We are in fact making, as a result of our experience of the tangible body of a cube, a deduction that the visible body before us is cubular in shape.

Berkeley goes on to apply his discovery to two particular cases of distance and magnitude. In the case of distance he finds that "neither distance nor things placed at a distance are themselves, or their ideas,

truly perceived by sight,"[1] but that they are deductions based upon our previous knowledge of the appearance of the object when clearly seen, and of the modifications observed in that appearance as the object approaches or recedes from the eye. Magnitude can be explained on the same principles; and we estimate the size of an object, not by its visible but by its tangible magnitude. If this were not the case, we might believe it possible for ourselves to hold in the palm of our hands houses seen at such a distance as to appear very small. There is, concludes Berkeley, "no discoverable necessary connection between any given visible magnitude and any one particular tangible magnitude; it is entirely the result of custom and experience and depends on foreign and accidental circumstances, that we can, by the perception of visible extension, inform ourselves what may be the extension of any tangible object connected with it."[2]

It is not to be expected that such a distinction should influence the course of aesthetic speculation to any extent, but it was undoubtedly made use of by certain aestheticians; and traces of Berkeleian influence in this field are so very few that it is worth while examining those that exist with some care. The first point of interest occurs in the opening paragraph of the first paper of Pleasures of the Imagination; Addison opens with the statement that the sight is the most perfect ~~of man's~~ and delightful of man's senses, and continues; "It fills the mind with the largest variety of ideas, converses with its objects at the greatest distance....The sense of feeling can indeed give us a notion of extension, shape, and all other ideas that enter at the eye, except colours....but is confined in its operations to the number, bulk and distance of its particular objects. Our sight seems designed to supply

1 Theory of Vision, 45
2 ibid., 104

all these defects, and may be considered as a more delicate and diffusive kind of touch."[1] This passage is clearly based on the 'Metaphysics' of Aristotle, but as Dr. Rossi ppints out, the use of "ideas" is Lockean,[2] and so probably is the use of "notions." But is there not, in the intimate connection suggested between sight and touch, also a link with Berkeley, whose early work was, as Dr. Rossi has elsewhere argued, probably known to Addison?[3] If so, the relation is a very slight one, as Addison certainly does not show any interest in the finer points raised by Berkeley; but it is interesting as showing how even thus early this particular aspect of Berkeley's theory was to command attention.

If there is some doubt with regard to Addison, none can be felt regarding Hartley, who in one passage explicitly refers to Berkeley when making the statement that "we judge of tangible qualities chiefly by sight, which therefore may be considered....as a philosophical language for the ideas of feeling."[4] But Hartley was also acquainted with Addison, as later passages indicate, and it is worthy of note that in passages which seem to derive more directly from Addison there might still have been doubt as to whether or not Hartley knew Berkley's theories. Hartley points to the superior vividness of the ideas of sight, which tend to obscure even strong tangible impressions, and "quite overpower" the fainter ones. "Sight communicates to us at once the size, shape, and colour of objects: feeling can not do the last at all, and the two first only in a tedious way."[5] Later he adds that

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1 Spectator, no.411

2 L'Estetica dell'Empirismo Inglese, vol.i,p.255 note

3 ibid., vol.i,303 note on Spectator no.421, where Dr. Rossi suggests that the use of "notions" by Addison is based on the restricted definition of the term given by Berkeley. He ends, "E vero che i Principi pubblicate nel 1709 non ebbero buona accoglienza in Inghilterra, ma in quell'anno Addison era a Dublino come segretario di Lord Wharton e certo conobbe personalmente Berkeley il quale non si allontano dall'Irlanda che nel 1713."

4 Observations on Man, vol.i,p.137

5 ibid., vol.i,p.146

the ideas of sight are "far more vivid and definite than any other; agreeably to which the word 'idea' denoted these alone in its origin."[1]

Hartley, however, does go beyond Addison in practical application of Berkeley's doctrines to aesthetic problems, though not unnaturally he tends to introduce his own favourite theory of association in partial explanation of them.. Thus when with regard to painting he suggests that it is from the associations connected with sight that pictures can give "such exact ideas of shapes, figures, magnitudes, and distances,"[2] or when he says that "our stock of visible ideas may be considered as a key to a great part of our knowledge, and a principal source of invention in poetry, painting, mathematics, mechanics, and almost every other branch of the arts and sciences,"[3] he is clearly benefitting by Berkeley's clarification of the relations between these two kinds of ideas, the visible and the tangible.

Gerard was certainly acquainted with the distinction, and it is difficult to regard his reference to it without a certain feeling of amusement. After mentioning the fact, "well-known to philosophers," that visible ideas are often confused with tangible ideas, Gerard argues that "just so a man may have feelings in the fine arts which he knows to be wrong, and which his knowing to be wrong can not hinder his continuing to have."[4] Beattie's application of the theory is reminiscent of Hartley's. He insists on the necessity for distinguishing visible from tangible magnitude and distance, and shows how knowledge of the difference between them can serve an artist. If a painter can imitate visible distance, "the objects he draws in an artificial landscape will seem to be some of them near and others remote, though all really at the same distance from the

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1 Observations on Man, vol.i,p.209
2 ibid., vol.i,p.203
3 ibid.,vol.i,p.213
4 On Taste (1780),pt.IV,p.218

eye."[1] Similarly, by imitating other visible qualities, we can give apparent solidity and depth to the representation of a body painted on a flat surface.

Alison, too, makes use of Berkeley's distinction to support his acceptance of what had already become a popular opinion - that more beautiful objects are perceived by the sense of sight than by any other sense; but develops it in quite an interesting way. The other senses can inform us only of single qualities of objects: but sight can present to us the object in something like its real completeness, and the "visible qualities of objects accordingly become to us not only the distinguishing characteristics of external bodies, but they also become in a great measure the signs of all their other qualities; and by recalling to our minds the qualities signified, affect us in some degree with the same emotion which the objects themselves can excite."[2] The result of this is that visible qualities come not only to signify to us other sensible qualities, but even to produce in us by association the same emotions as would be produced by the qualities signified. Hence Alison, like Hartley, has been attracted to this distinction originally made by Berkeley because of its suitableness as a link in a system based on association of ideas.

Berkeley's ideas are again drawn upon, this time by Price, in his attempt to show that the picturesque, as distinct from the beautiful, is dependent largely upon the quality of roughness in objects. Price believes that "all broken, rugged, and abrupt forms and surfaces, have also by sympathy somewhat of the same effect on the sight as on the touch. Indeed, as it is generally admitted that the sense of seeing acquires all its perceptions of

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1 Dissertations, p.99 note
2 Essays, vol.i,p.291

hard, soft, rough, smooth, etc. from that of feeling, such a sympathy seems almost unavoidable."[1] Price admitted that his conception of the picturesque was valid only if Burke was correct in holding that smoothness is an essential quality of beauty, and it is a minor co-incidence that Knight too should have had Burke's theories in mind when he appealed to Berkeley's distinction between visible and tangible magnitude. Burke had held that greatness of dimension was one cause of the sublime, but, Knight argues, visible magnitude varies according to the distance between the object and the spectator. Man is thus able to estimate visible magnitude only very imperfectly, and as it is with visible magnitude that we are concerned when discussing the causes of the sublime we may, concludes Knight, "learn how to estimate the theory"[2] of Burke.

It is therefore clear that Berkeley's distinction between the visible and tangible qualities of objects was well known in the eighteenth century, and that it was quite frequently made use of by aestheticians to help them to solve particular problems. It had, for example, an obvious connection with such questions as that of perspective, and it would not have been surprising to find more use made of it in this connection. This doctrine, however, marks the only noteworthy contribution made by Berkeley to the development of aesthetic theory in the eighteenth century, and tends rather to draw attention to the general lack of interest in his philosophy shown by aestheticians than to illustrate the small influence Berkeley did have in this field.

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1 Essays, vol.i,p.118
2 Principles of Taste, p.59

CHAPTER VI

LOCKE AND IDEAS

1. Innate Ideas.

One sign of the pains taken by Locke in the preparation of his Essay is the careful ordering by which, before going on to discuss the origin and nature of our ideas, he refutes the doctrine of innate ideas. Campbell-Fraser, in his edition of the Essay, has pointed out that the motive of Locke's attack on innate ideas was to "explode prejudices, dispel empty phrases, and substitute rational insight for blind dependence on authority."[1] This, which might well be put forward as the purpose of the whole Essay, was thoroughly in keeping with the spirit of the "age of reason"; and Locke's criticisms of the doctrine seem to have been soon recognised as in the main just. The result was that nine out of every ten eighteenth century speculative writers hastened to declare their opposition to innate ideas and principles, though not a few then go on to admit them under a less compromising denomination.

Locke's denial of innate ideas has therefore considerable importance, though of a rather negative description, for the eighteenth century writers on aesthetic theory, because the weight of his authority thrown so definitely into the scale on one side almost in itself sufficed to discredit any systems which involved belief in innate ideas. If we grant Locke his premisses, and accept his definition of innate, we must also allow that his arguments are thorough, and even unanswerable. The main strength of the case for

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[1] Locke's Essay (ed. A. C. Fraser): vol.i,p.87,note 2

innate ideas lay in its appeal to the doctrine of universal assent, which held that all men without exception agree to the truth of certain ideas; and this Locke was able to show false with the greatest of ease. He then deals with the other arguments that had been advanced in support of innate ideas or principles until he has to his own satisfaction proved the doctrine illusory, and can proceed to consider the true origin of ideas.

The effects of Locke's assault were not long in showing themselves, and its power is seen in the way that the contrary opinion of Shaftesbury, who was not without a considerable following, went down before it almost without resistance. As has already been indicated, Hutcheson's work as an aesthetician consisted largely in the blending of the aesthetics of Shaftesbury and the philosophy of Locke into a coherent system. But Shaftesbury had more than once stated his belief in innate ideas, and had even hinted that the dispute about them was little more than verbal: "if you dislike the word innate, let us change it if you will for instinct; and call instinct that which nature teaches, exclusive of art, culture or discipline."[1] Elsewhere he had spoken rather scornfully of certain men who had to admit, despite arguments that religion and beauty were vain, "that they were yet in a manner innate, or such as men were really born to and could hardly by any means avoid."[2]

Hutcheson took from Shaftesbury the conceptions of a moral sense and a sense of beauty, and made them fundamental principles in his systems of ethics and aesthetics respectively. He was also however convinced by Locke's denial of innate ideas, and had to make this quite clear if his theories were not to become generally connected in men's minds with the doctrine

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1 Characteristics, vol.ii,p.411

2 ibid., vol.iii,p.36

of innate ideas; which, it must be apparent, they resembled with an almost embarrassing closeness. Hutcheson had therefore to anticipate criticism by claiming at the very outset that his internal senses in no way implied innate ideas. This was to a large extent accomplished by insisting on the substantial similarity between internal and external senses: "an internal sense no more supposes an innate idea or principle of knowledge than the external. Both are natural powers of perception."[1] In the accompanying inquiry into Virtue or Moral Good, speaking of the moral sense, he warns his readers not to "suppose that this moral sense, more than the other senses, supposes any innate ideas"[2] or knowledge. And elsewhere he refers with evident approval to "those who after Locke have shaken off the groundless opinions about innate ideas."[3]

The result of the joint efforts of Locke and Hutcheson was that the doctrine of innate ideas was scarcely even a controversial issue for many years afterwards. Most writers of treatises on related questions assumed that there were no such things, and seldom went to the trouble of repeating the arguments on either side. The general attitude is well represented by a footnote in Kames's Elements of Criticism, when he is explaining the terms he has used. "If the original perception of an object be not innate, which is obvious; it is not less obvious, that the idea or secondary perception of that object cannot be innate. And yet, to prove this self-evident proposition, Locke has bestowed a whole book of his Treatise upon Human Understanding. So necessary is it to give accurate definitions, and so preventative of dispute are definitions when accurate."[4] Whatever the

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1 Beauty and Virtue, p.82
2 ibid., p.135
3 ibid., p.81
4 Wks. vol.v,p.461 note

intrinsic merit of this passage, it is certainly revealing if taken as an effect of Locke's opposition to innate ideas, and alongside it we may consider Knight's statement, made as late as 1805, that "the doctrine of innate ideas has been so completely confuted and exploded that no person in his senses can now entertain it."[1]

Nevertheless many writers who paid lip-service to the point of view expressed by Kames held theories which were distinguished from innate principles by little more than their names. It was, for example, more or less taken for granted that taste, no matter how explained, was never to be regarded as an innate idea. Yet an exception is found even here, and Blair brought down on his head the wrath of a contributor to the Critical Review by repeating the widely-held opinion that taste was undoubtedly "ultimately founded on a certain natural and instinctive sensibility to beauty."[2] The reviewer held that this supposed the existence of innate ideas, and wrote that "as we are no advocates for the doctrine of innate ideas, we cannot agree with our author when he derives taste from feeling, from a certain natural and instinctive sensibility."[3] As Blair would no doubt have been in complete agreement with the reviewer's opinion of innate ideas, it is possible to deduce how uncritically the doctrines of the non-existence of innate ideas, and of taste as an instinctive sensibility or innate sense must have been accepted, when they could apparently be held together without a thought as to the possibility of their being inconsistent with each other.

An exception must be made in the case of James Usher, who was one of the few to see that these two doctrines could not as they stood be logically united in one system, and who therefore sought for a solution which would

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1 Principles of Taste, p.33
2 Lectures, vol.i,p.19
3 Critical Review, LVI(1783),p.46

involve the rejection of neither. Locke had undoubtedly been right in his denial of innate principles, but this had had the unforeseen result of strengthening arguments for scepticism and materialism: for many had gone on to deduce that there could be no real foundation in nature for taste, morality, and conscience, which were therefore wrongly ascribed to the effects of custom, or "the apparent interests of men."[1] Usher went on to offer his solution; where Locke and his successors had erred was in failing to admit the existence of innate sentiments of truth, beauty and good. These were quite distinct from innate principles, and represented man's natural predisposition to love of virtue and beauty; deviations, being the result of human imperfections, could not be taken as proofs that these sentiments were not universal. Thus the denial of innate principles did not mean that taste and conscience had no real existence in man; for these being sentiments, the arguments against innate ideas and principles were in their case irrelevant. And if man be "enlightened and directed by innate sentiments, or intellectual tastes, then he has some fixed boundaries of judgment (and) he is singled out and distinguished from the brute by something more than mere capacity."[2]

It does not appear however that Usher's solution received a very favourable reception. Few of his contemporaries paid any attention to him, and the Critical Review referring to the 1770 edition of Clio, though it allows the work to be very proper and pious, fears that "the author has taken some premises for granted that remain to be proved."[3] Still, Usher can claim a certain amount of credit for putting his finger on a weak point in many of the systems of his day, even if his own endeavours were not always wholly successful.

1/2 Clio (1803 ed'n), p. xix ff.
3 Critical Review, XXIX (1770), p.152

2. Sharpe's Theory of Genius.

Certain eighteenth century conceptions of genius have already received some attention, and we now come to one of the few theories in which genius is considered as neither divine inspiration nor unusual strength of imagination. At the very outset of his Dissertation upon Genius (1755), Sharpe acknowledges that he had received certain hints on his subject when studying the doctrine that sensation is the only original source of all our ideas, including those of reflection.[1] This is patently a reference to Locke, who is also quoted as an authority later in the essay. It is therefore well to recall that Locke held that all our ideas spring from either sensation, or reflection on the operations of our own minds; and that these original ideas can be almost infinitely multiplied by analysing them, or rejoining them in new combinations. Thus, according to Locke, the mind is capable of comprehending far more than the ideas originally furnished to it by sensation and reflection.

Sharpe's professed intention is to work out a theory of genius, based on the assumption that as at birth the mind of every man is a tabula rasa, all mental development must be attributable to the effects of the ideas received through the normal channels of sensation and reflection. Sharpe further assumes that the faculties of all men are equal, and that it is therefore possible for any man to become a genius, provided that he is not unduly handicapped by disadvantages of environment and education. Sharpe holds that genius consists in the power of thinking which, though potentially the same in all men, may come to differ in them very considerably, through causes which may be physical as well as mental. Thus diversity of genius, and the varying degrees of

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[1] Dissertation on Genius, p.2

it, are easily accounted for; since men may differ originally in their capacity for thought, and the difference may later be increased by favourable and unfavourable circumstances. Moreover, the ideas of some men are more "adequate"[1] than others, and this too will contribute to variety of genius.

The common view is considered by Sharpe as due to a very natural error, for genius is indeed "fixed so strongly by the propensities of an early habit, and withal so imperceptibly, that it is mistaken for the constitutional character of our being."[2] Genius in fact begins to form at an age when man has certainly no control over it, and so is in its origin largely due to accident: but once it is implanted in a man, he has the power to develop it into greatness, or to neglect it so that it may "sink into insignificancy."[3] This partial control is possible for three reasons. A man may be fitted to receive certain ideas and to reject others, and can therefore take care that his genius develops along the lines to which it is suited: this is consistent with Locke's remarks that unless sufficient attention is paid to organic sensation, no idea may result, and that ideas once received may or may not be firmly and clearly established in the mind according to the application of the individual concerned. Secondly, genius may be cultivated through man's "active power of revolving, examining, and conferring together the ideas thus severally and distinctly received:"[4] and finally, the ideas resulting from the comparison just mentioned may be so united as to make it possible for men with an aptitude to do so to "investigate their consequences and conclusions."[4] This again bears an obvious relation to Locke's theory of knowledge, which

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1 cf. Locke's Essay , II,xxxi,I. Adequate ideas "perfectly represent those archetypes which the mind supposes them taken from; which it intends them to stand for and to which it refers them."

2 Dissertation on Genius, p.87

3 ibid., p.129

4 ibid., p.19

begins with the entrance of ideas and proceeds, through the contemplation and comparison of these ideas, to that perception of their connection and agreement, or disagreement and repugnance, which for Locke constitutes knowledge.

Sharpe's theories might fairly be described as an application of Locke's "new way of ideas" to the particular problem of genius. There is at least one specific reference to Locke's essay, and nothing in the Dissertation is contrary to any of Locke's main theses: a detailed study of the exact relation between the two works would therefore be interesting, in that it would bring out clearly the theory of genius that is latent in Locke. It is at the same time noteworthy that the conception of genius implicit in Locke and explicit in Sharpe was not one which gained much support in the eighteenth century, and Sharpe was alone in working out a theory of genius on empirical principles. Nearly all other contemporary writers on this subject have preferred to refer genius to imagination, and have based their theories on the effects rather than on the cause; on the productions of men of recognised genius rather than on the possibility of the growth of genius in a human being born in favourable circumstances.

A partial exception may be made of Abraham Tucker who, though he follows the majority by referring genius to the imagination, says that it "proceeds chiefly from the turn imagination has taken in our early youth"[1] rather than from unaided nature; and he adds that our "aptness to run into this or that particular course of exercise depends on some accident or lucky hit, or the company we converse with....'Tis art and knowledge which draw forth the hidden seeds of native worth."[2] Tucker goes on to discuss, as Sharpe had done,

1 Light of Nature Pursued, vol.ii,p.145
2 ibid.,vol.ii,p.146

the reasons for the emergence of genius at particular times and places, and for the fact that "men ingenious in a particular way generally arise together in clusters," and draws from this the conclusion that example has "at least as great a share as nature in the formation of genius."[1] It appears likely that Tucker knew the work of Sharpe, and he therefore provides a solitary additional example of a theory of genius based on the philosophy of Locke. But on the whole Sharpe's system stands outside the general trend of speculation on this particular aspect of aesthetic theory.

3. Locke's Theory of Consciousness.

The chief interest of Locke's theory of consciousness lies in his use of it to explain personal identity, and that is not relevant to the present discussion. In itself, Locke's definition is not very original, and is distinctly reminiscent of that of Descartes. "Can the soul think, and not the man? or a man think, and not be conscious of it?....thinking consists in being conscious that one thinks....Consciousness is the perception of what passes in a man's own mind."[2] This, simple as it may be, is clearly fundamental to Locke's whole system, for as was well said by Mayne, who wrote a short paper on this subject, "it follows that consciousness is indeed the basis and foundation of all knowledge whatsoever;"[3] without it, we could have no idea of any object at all.

The chief use made of Locke's conception of consciousness by later aestheticians was as an argument in favour of the existence of the internal senses. Thus George Turnbull writes, in the long and interesting introduction to his Treatise on Ancient Painting, that "whether we have those (internal)

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1 Light of Nature Pursued, vol.ii,p.146
2 Essay, II,i,19
3 Two Dissertations, p.147

senses that have been mentioned....can only be known by consciousness, and therefore in speaking of them an appeal must be made to what we feel and perceive. It is the same with regard to all our other faculties and perceptions. There can be no other way of convincing one that he hath certain powers, ideas and feelings but by endeavouring to make him turn his eyes inwards, look attentively into his own mind, and observe what passes in it."[1] A similar argument is found in Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric. Campbell begins by attributing to consciousness our knowledge of the fact that we ourselves exist; this knowledge implies certainty of the reality of our sensations and passions and "of everything whose essence consists in being perceived."[2] Campbell then goes on to account in the same way for our infallible judgments "concerning the feelings, whether pleasant or painful, which we derive from the....internal senses."[2] The danger of such a theory is too obvious to need comment, even if this were the place to make it: but it should be noted that the difficulty had been foreseen by Hume when he criticized the idea that "all sentiment is right, because it has a reference to nothing beyond itself."[3] The truth is that the theory of consciousness laid down by Locke was from the outset too temptingly catholic in its possible application, and could therefore be used as a justification for many extravagances.

A unique case is the attempt of Duff to make the Lockean consciousness a mere department of the imagination. In defining imagination at the beginning of his Essay on Original Genius, Duff notes that it is "that faculty whereby the mind....reflects on its own operations."[4] This is clearly

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1 On Ancient Painting, p.136
2 Philosophy of Rhetoric, vol.i,p.107
3 Four Dissertations, p.208
4 On Original Genius, p.6

derived from Locke's theory of consciousness, and can best be explained by assuming that Duff considered that the work of imagination in assembling the ideas of sensation and memory and then in "compounding or disjoining them at leisure"[1] necessarily involved the operation of consciousness. He therefore in all probability decided that this function, being essential to the processes of genius, was best considered as an integral part of imagination.

4. Locke's Analysis of Ideas.

Though Locke's analysis of ideas has not in itself any aesthetic significance, it is nevertheless important in that it forms the basis of the analysis of words and language to which Locke proceeded in the third book of the *Essay*. As this theory of language, with its relation to later eighteenth century speculation on the same subject, is to be discussed in the next chapter, it will be convenient to review now the main features of Locke's classification of ideas.

The definition of *idea* given by Locke at the beginning of his *Essay* is "that term which....serves best to stand for whatsoever is the object of the understanding when a man thinks."[2] Locke's primary division of ideas is into simple and complex. Simple ideas are such original ideas of sensation or reflection as cause one single conception in the mind, and cannot be further analysed because they are in themselves pure and uncompounded: Locke gives as examples knowledge, faith, pleasure, pain and unity. Complex ideas on the other hand are such combinations of simple ideas as will when united appear to the mind as a single idea, as does for example the idea of a *garden*, though this obviously includes a great variety of simple ideas.

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1 On Original Genius, p.6

2 Essay, I,i,8

Locke proceeds to subdivide complex ideas into modes, substances, and relations. The last of these arises from the "consideration and comparing one idea with another,"[1] and hence the ideas of husband, wife express relations while those of man and woman do not. Substances are "such combinations of simple ideas as are taken to represent distinct particular things subsisting by themselves; in which the supposed or confused idea of substance....is always the first and chief."[2] If therefore we consider together certain simple ideas we shall be able to form conceptions of such substances as metal or animal. Modes have no existence in the real world of things, but are "dependences on or affections of substances; such as are ideas signified by the words triangle, gratitude, murder, etc."[3] Locke recognises two sorts of modes; the simple mode which involves the extension of one simple idea only, as in the cases of number, duration of time and space, or even artificial infinity; and the complex mode, which may combine a variety of simple ideas to give compounded ideas such as those of beauty or crime.

Furthermore, ideas may be considered as particular or general. Each separate individual man will give rise to the particular idea of this man; then by the process of abstraction, or considering all these ideas freed from the circumstances which determine their individuality by character, time, place, etc., the mind arrives at the general idea of man, by which it considers only what is common to all its particular ideas of men. This may then be considered as the genus man; and by including the qualification of black skin, we may then arrive at the species called negro if we so desire. It is important in reading Locke to remember that he considers that all these genera and species are but "an artifice of the understanding,"[4] made by man for his convenience.

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1 Essay, II,xii,7
2 ibid., II,xii,6
3 ibid., II,xii,4
4 ibid., III,v,9

Thus we have in summary the foundations on which Locke erected his theory of language.

CHAPTER VII

LOCKE AND THE THEORY OF LANGUAGE

1. The Nature and Use of Language.

Locke's view of language is very obviously coloured by his epistemological aims, and it is well to keep this in mind when considering his statement that "the end of language is to mark, or communicate men's thoughts to one another with all the dispatch that may be."[1] Locke like Bacon does not linger overlong in the theatre; poetry receives no attention at all; and rhetoric is quickly dismissed with a sarcastic reference to men's apparent pleasure in being deceived. Language is for Locke primarily a means to knowledge, and it is as such that he investigates it in his Essay: consequently, his treatment of the subject can have no claim to completeness, and his omisions gave rise to almost as much discussion as his conclusions. Locke's theory of language is interesting, not only intrinsically as presenting a new viewpoint, but also historically, for few of the writers on the subject in the next hundred years could afford to ignore Locke, and many of them were directly influenced by him.

In the Essay, Locke refers to language as a "system of articulate sounds," and this may serve as a starting-point for the examination of his theory. Our ideas are the marks by which we remember the reality of things, and as marks of our ideas we can set aside arbitrarily certain articulate sounds. When men mutually agree to use the same marks for the same ideas, the marks become signs by which we can convey to others our ideas and conceptions, and

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[1] Essay, II,xxii,5

we have the beginnings of language. Thus an object and the name given to it should rouse in men the same idea. But it is clearly impossible for every thing and every idea to have a proper name, and so by the process of abstraction we arrive at first abstract ideas, then general names, and later genera and species, the sole purpose of which is so to classify ideas that men will require to learn many fewer names than would otherwise be possible. This classification is made on the basis of what Locke calls the nominal essence, or that collection of properties which the mind combines into a complex idea with a specific name: it is to be distinguished from the real essence, which is based on the reality of things and is in many cases unknowable. Nominal essences are therefore no more than a creation of the mind, having no relation at all to particular existence, and so from them we have no knowledge of real existence.

There can moreover be no guarantee that men will always have exactly the same combination of properties in mind when they use the name which designates the nominal essence, and even such a simple word as <u>chair</u> may cause very different ideas in several men. Thus Locke tends to insist on the defects of language. "For he that shall well consider the errors and obscurity, the mistakes and confusion that are spread in the world by an ill use of words will find some reason to doubt whether language, as it has been employed, has contributed more to the improvement or hindrance of knowledge among mankind."[1] At the same time language is, as he admits, the "tie of society," in that it makes it possible for man to satisfy his natural desire for closer relations with other human beings on the mental, as well as the merely physical or animal plane.

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[1] Essay, III,xi,4

Such a theory could not go long unchallenged, and Berkeley's criticisms of it represent a very natural reaction, which must have been shared by many others. Berkeley in the introduction to his Principles of Human Knowledge makes an attack on Locke's doctrine of abstraction, at the end of which he points out that the doctrine is based on the opinion that the only end of language is to communicate ideas, with the consequent assumption that "every significant name stands for an idea,"[1] and that therefore names which do not stand for particular ideas, must stand for general or abstract ideas. In reply to this Berkeley argues that many common words do not call up distinct ideas, and that in any case it is quite possible to understand a speaker without each of his words calling up a specific idea in our minds. Moreover, "the communicating of ideas marked by words is not the chief and only end of language, as is commonly supposed. There are other ends, as the raising of some passion, the exciting to or deterring from an action, the putting the mind in some particular disposition."[2] This last statement is very important as supplying a very necessary corrective to the too one-sided theory of Locke; although it is not original, something of the sort being found in Hobbes, and indeed in Aristotle.

Berkeley thus makes room in his system for the arts which employ language, for if the "raising certain passions, dispositions or emotions" in men's minds be a legitimate end of language, poetry and rhetoric are to be not only admitted but even encouraged as ways par excellence of accomplishing this purpose. Where he and others holding similar views differed essentially from Locke was not so much in theory as in attitude; Locke did not deny that rhetoric possessed beauties, but these were not in his view alone sufficient

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1 Human Knowledge; Introduction, 19.
2 ibid.; Introduction, 20.

to justify the perversion of language to the ends of deception. "All the art of rhetoric, besides order and clearness, all the artificial and figurative application of words eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong ideas, move the passions, and thereby mislead the judgment, and so indeed are perfect cheats."[1] There are therefore at the very beginning of the eighteenth century two clear statements of opposite points of view: that of Locke, which cannot but recall Plato's exclusion of the works of some of the greatest Greek poets from his republic, and that of Berkeley, representing a reaction to the narrow view expressed by Locke.

It is only to be expected that the latter view should prevail among writers on aesthetic subjects, and it is therefore very rare to find in them any express approval of Locke's general theory. Such agreement as may occasionally appear is not necessarily a sign of Lockean influence; for example, Warburton's views on eloquence are probably in the main his own, though his conclusion that the end of eloquence is "but to stifle reason and inflame the passions" would no doubt have won Locke's approval. Stedman's definition of language as a "vehicle or machine by which ideas are conveyed from one mind to another"[2] may have been suggested by Locke: as may the assumption of Kames that "communication of thought is the chief end of language." But there is scarcely one aesthetician who would have been likely to come forward to defend the thesis that the communication of ideas was the "chief and only end of language."[3] In so far as they were concerned with language, it was its beauties that they wished to analyse, and they were therefore necessarily one with Berkeley in holding that "there may be another use of words besides marking ideas."[4]

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1 Essay, III,x,34
2 Laelius and Hortensia, p.435
3 Human Knowledge: Introduction, 20.
4 Alciphron, vii, 7

2. The Classification of Words.

Locke's classification of words is clearly made in conformity with his belief that communication of ideas is the only end of language. His main division is into names of simple ideas, modes, and substances, all of which are given careful and detailed consideration, and what Locke calls "particles," or words used to show the connection which the mind gives to its ideas. According to Locke, particles show "what connection, restriction, distinction, opposition, emphasis, etc.," a man wants to give to the different parts of his discourse, and are therefore "of constant and indispensable use in language."[1] The chapter on particles is one of the shortest in the whole essay. This is not because Locke fails to recognise their importance, for he sees that without them his analysis of language would have been notably defective, but because he considers that an exhaustive inquiry into their full scope is not essential to his immediate purpose.

Locke's theory of language has very obvious limitations, and suffers from his insistence that words which do not stand for ideas are but empty and insignificant sounds. His classification of words was however influential as regards both method and detail, and was made the basis of more than one fresh classification during the succeeding century. Even writers like Harris and Monboddo, who made interesting contributions of their own to the discussion of language, show knowledge of Locke; while others, like Hartley and Burke, seized on those aspects of Locke's theory which seemed most germane to their own purposes, and largely based their accounts on them.

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1 Essay, III,vii,2

Harris, when he comes to treat more generally of language in Book III of his Hermes. has clearly got Locke in mind when he declares that words, being the symbols of neither "external particulars, nor yet particular ideas," can be the symbols of nothing else "except of general ideas." From this Harris deduces that language can be the means of expressing general truths of every kind, and that the essential use of words is to stand for general ideas, though they can also represent particular ideas "secondarily, accidentally, and mediately."[1] Hence language is an adequate medium of both arts and sciences, and Harris shows that this is due to its use of symbols, which has made possible the comparative simplicity of language as we know it. The relation of this particular passage to Locke's belief in the prime importance of general ideas is clear enough without further comment.

Monboddo's remarkable work on language, though it cannot be denied the title of original in a wider sense, drew to a great extent on the learning of the past. Monboddo's references to Locke are not on the whole complimentary; nevertheless what might be called the preamble to Monboddo's statement of his own theory bears an obvious relation to Locke's work on the same subject. His initial definition of language as the expression of the conceptions of the mind by articulate sounds is itself reminiscent of Locke; and his later division of the art of language into accurate and distinct expression of ideas, brevity, the marking of the connections of words one with another, and choice of agreeable and varied sounds[2] adds little to Locke's views that the "use of language is by short sounds to signify with ease and dispatch general conceptions,"[3] and that particles or connections are

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1 Wks.,p.215
2 Origin and Progress of Language, vol.ii,p.6
3 Essay, III,v,7

"indispensable." Monboddo's fourth point was not overlooked by Locke, who did not, however, consider it a legitimate use of language.

Monboddo claims that the first and most fundamental part of an art of language is classing things into genera and species, because it helps to prevent such multiplication of particular terms as would plunge a language into confusion. This done, language is rendered fit for its task of communicating to others "the operations of our minds"[1] by the invention of means to show the connections of words with one another. This is so clearly derived from Locke that it seems reasonable to look to the same source for Monboddo's classification of all that is expressed by language under the two heads of things themselves and the relations or connections of things.[2] The latter in fact parallels Locke's particles: and the first when subdivided into substances and their properties (Locke's substances and simple ideas), and actions and their circumstances (modes and more simple ideas) are not so different from Locke's classification as to contradict the belief that the one theory suggested the other.

Hartley's primary interest was in the association of ideas, and his theory of language is merely a variation on his main theme, in which he holds that words are connected with ideas by means of association. He has elsewhere, however, a fourfold division of words into those that have ideas only; those that have definitions only; those that have both ideas and definitions; and those that have neither ideas nor definitions.[3] As Hartley is in this passage meaning sense ideas, the division has an obvious affinity with Locke's chapter Of the Names of Simple Ideas, in which he states that only simple ideas can not be defined; in a broader sense, the division suggested

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1 Origin and Progress of Language, vol.ii,p.16
2 ibid., vol.i,p.328
3 Observations on Man, vol.i,p.279

by Hartley may be compared with Locke's simple ideas; modes, which have their patterns in the human mind, and do not therefore correspond to any real existence; and substances, which have counterparts in the reality of things. Hartley's fourth class, as an example of which he gives the word _of_, supplies what he probably considered an obvious deficiency in the theory of Locke, who had omitted to explain how such words could raise determinate ideas in the minds of listeners.

The relation of Burke's analysis of language to the theories of Locke was first noticed some years ago, when Mr. Wecter suggested in a short article[1] that Burke's division of words into what he calls aggregate, simple abstract, and compound abstract words is based on Locke's distinction between the three types of complex idea - modes, substances, and relations. It is I think undeniable that Burke was, in making his classification, influenced by Locke's _Essay_ but it seems in every way more probable that it was on Locke's division of words rather than ideas that he founded his theory. In the third book of the _Essay_, Locke considers words as names of simple ideas, modes, and substances, but at no time refers to relations. This is in itself a trivial point, but it will, when taken in conjunction with certain other facts, be seen to indicate a conclusion different from that arrived at by Mr. Wecter, who argues that aggregate words correspond to substances, simple abstract words to modes, and compound abstract words to relations.

The relevant passage from Burke is as follows: "Words may be divided into three sorts. The first are such as represent many simple ideas _united by nature_ to form some one determinate composition, as man, horse, tree, cattle, etc. These I call aggregate words. The second are they that stand for one

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1 See Publication of the Modern Language Association, (1940), LV, p. 167

simple idea of such compositions, and no more; as red, blue, round, square, and the like. These I call simple abstract words. The third are those which are formed by an union, an arbitrary union of both the others, and of the various relations between them in greater or lesser degrees of complexity; as virtue, honour, persuasion, magistrate, and the like. These I call compound abstract words."[1] Aggregate words, undoubtedly correspond to Locke's substances: but it is difficult to see any justification for the connecting of simple and compound abstract words with modes and substances respectively. Simple abstracts come far nearer to Locke's simple ideas, and the addition of abstract signifies that they represent ideas abstracted from particular things: this would account for Burke's first two examples, which are both colours, and the last two are easily explained as simple modes, which Locke describes as "the variation of one only simple idea combined,"[2] and as an instance of which he specifically mentions "figure". Burke's third class can have no possible connection with Locke's relations: but they may very well be derived from Locke's conception of mixed modes. These are complex ideas which are entirely the work of the mind, which gives quite arbitrarily to several simple ideas the "union of one idea."[3] Two of the ways in which such ideas may be formed are "by experience and observation of the things themselves,"[4] or "by invention, or voluntary putting together of several simple ideas in our minds."[4] The examples of mixed modes given by Locke are beauty, theft, obligation, drunkenness, a lie. This indicates that Burke had principally in his mind Locke's class of complex modes when he formed his own class of compound abstract words, and this is confirmed by his remark that such words,

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1 Wks., vol.ii,p.207
2 Essay, II,xii,5
3 ibid., III,xi,18
4 ibid., II,xxii,9

being compositions,"are not real essences, and hardly cause I think any real ideas."[1]

Burke has therefore in his short discourse on words, clearly drawn on the third book of Locke's Essay to a considerable extent, and has made use of all Locke's classes of words: the names of simple ideas, and that extension of them which Locke calls simple modes, become simple abstract words; mixed modes become compound abstract words; and the names of substances become what Burke calls aggregate words.[2] But it is notable that Burke does not go on to consider particles, and a reason for this is not hard to find. Burke's interest in language was confined to that power in words which renders them capable of raising in man beautiful and sublime emotions. Before he could satisfactorily account for this power, he had to consider the "common notion"[1] that words "affect the mind by raising in it ideas of those things for which custom has appointed them to stand."[3] The best way in which he could do this was by adopting, with convenient modifications, Locke's classification of words which was, as has been seen, based entirely on his system of ideas. Hence Burke, unlike Locke, admits that words are "capable of being classed into more curious distinctions,"[3] but adds that the classes he has adopted are sufficient for his purpose.

3. Language as an Aesthetic Medium.

It has already been made abundantly clear that Locke was not himself concerned with any other aspect of language than the one which first brought

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1 Wks., vol.ii,p.206

2 This is also the view taken by Dr. Rossi: L'Estètica dell'Empirismo Inglese, vol.ii,p.686,note 1.

3 Wks., vol.ii,p.207

him to consider it - its close connection with ideas and therefore with knowledge. His final opinion was that the only social use of language was the communication of ideas, and that words could do this only when they stood for distinct ideas, and excited the same distinct ideas in the mind of the listener. Berkeley's vigorous opposition to Locke on all these points seems to have been of little avail if we are to accept Burke's statement, already referred to, that "the common notion of the power of poetry and eloquence, as well as that of words in ordinary conversation, is, that they affect the mind by raising in it ideas of those things for which custom has appointed them to stand."[1] It is then probable that up to and even after 1750 Locke's view of language had so far held its ground that his main contentions remained almost unchallenged, thus making difficult any really satisfactory study of the use of language as an artistic medium.

There were however two possible loopholes in Locke's defensive wall, and both were exploited to some effect. The first was his failure to distinguish between ideas, and images in the popular sense of pictures in the mind: the second was his position with regard to words considered as sounds, which allowed of considerable development in several directions. It is notable that Locke is far less explicit in his references to images than is Hobbes, Shaftesbury, or Berkeley, all of whom state very clearly that images are representations of external objects, and go on to connect images with ideas. The nearest Locke comes to doing this is in his Conduct of the Understanding, when he writes that "the ideas and images in men's minds are the invisible powers that constantly govern them,"[2] and this seems to confirm

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1 Wks. vol.ii,p.207
2 Conduct of the Understanding, I

Reid's confident assertion that Locke among other philosophers believed that men formed images in their minds of the external objects they desired to perceive.[1]

The importance to aesthetics of such a concession on Locke's part is obvious. If words exercise over men's minds almost the same effect as the objects themselves, it is a legitimate deduction that they may raise in men's minds images of external objects. Thus Addison can claim that "words, when well chosen, have so great a force in them, that a description often gives us more lively ideas than the sight of things themselves."[2] The reason for this is partly Addison's strangely limited view of imagination as confined to objects of sight, which means that when a man looks at a scene, only that part of it which is visible pleases; whereas a poet may in his description also reveal parts of the scene which were not perceived by the first and perhaps restricted survey. Addison also draws upon Locke's philosophy; the casual observer may perceive only "two or three simple ideas,"[2] while the poet may be able to present more complex ideas, or to select such ideas as are better fitted to excite the imagination. The same theory is found a few years later in Blackmore, who however makes the interesting addition that when the poet has a "bright" idea of an object, his mind "stamps the impression on the proper words so strongly that the absent object seems as if present to the reader."[3] It appears unlikely that this conclusion would have appealed to Locke, who had discussed briefly and with typical detachment the connection between words and their sounds: "sounds have no natural connection with our ideas, but have all their signification fromthe

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1 Essays, vol.i,p.153
2 Spectator, no.416
3 Essays, p.136

arbitrary imposition of men,"[1] ~~and~~ so that no sound is better fitted than any other to signify any idea.

It was therefore possible, without committing oneself to an opinion which might be considered as hostile to Locke's philosophy in general, and his theory of language in particular, to consider words as signs, or sounds, or images which could evoke pictures in the mind. Harris in his essay on Music, Painting and Poetry (1744) was the first to consider all three aspects at once.[2] That he did so was due quite simply to his basic thesis that these three arts agreed in being imitative, and that there was therefore enough in common to permit of a comparison of them; and to the obvious enough facts that poetry imitates by sound significant, or signs, music by sounds, and painting by pictures or images. Harris is thus able to argue early in his essay that poetic imitation is superior to that of either painting or music, because "its materials are words, and words are symbols, by contract, of all ideas."[3] It may even by sounds attempt a direct imitation of nature, but is not often successful unless the sounds are also significant. But the greatest advantage of poetry is that it can by imitating discourse reveal the "characters, manners, and passions of men,"[4] and that it is therefore not only an "adequate medium of imitation, but in sentiment the only medium."[4]

Harris's treatise did much to prepare the way for the discussion of the imitative nature of poetry that was to occupy so prominent a place in aesthetic speculation in the second half of the eighteenth century. It was however less influential than the Inquiry of Burke, which appeared just over a decade later,

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1 Essay, III,ix,4

2 It is but justice to acknowledge that Sir William Temple had in his Essay on Poetry claimed that "in poetry are assembled all the powers of eloquence, music, and picture." The difference is that Harris's approach is that of an investigator and not that of a panegyrist: the resemblances between these arts had often been observed before, but not with reference to words as the "symbols, by contract, of all ideas."

3 Wks., p.32 4 ibid., p.38

and which brought to bear on the subject the methods of Locke himself, though it was far from accepting all his conclusions. Indeed, the first point that Burke makes in his sections on language is that poetry does not obtain its effects by raising the ideas of things, as might be supposed from the philosophy of Locke. Burke supports his argument by analysing the effects of compound abstract words; these are compounds made by the mind and are not real essences, so can not be held to raise determinate ideas in the mind. They might do so if we had time to analyse each into its component simple ideas; but even if we could do this the effect of the compound would then be lost, Hence, concludes Burke, such words are mere sounds; but sounds which have by long habit been connected with certain circumstances, and which will therefore when heard have on the mind the very effect produced by the original circumstances.

Having thus refuted Locke's argument that unless a word raises in the hearer a clear and distinct idea, it is a meaningless sound, Burke goes on to re-examine the whole question. There are three possible ways in which words may affect us; the first is by their sound, the second by the image of the thing signified by the sound, and the third is by "the affection of the soul produced by one or by both of the foregoing."[1] He then proceeds in the manner of Locke to apply these conclusions to the different classes of words; compound abstract words can affect by sound and sentiment only, but simple abstract and aggregate may affect by all three ways, though in practice the latter rarely do so. When aggregate words do in fact raise an image in the mind, it is nearly always due to conscious effort on the part of the imagination; and in general they operate just as do compound abstracts; that is, by reason of their producing in the mind the same effect as the

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[1] Wks., vol.ii,p.210

object named.

Burke then deals in some detail with the power of words over the passions, but has remarkably little to say on the third way in which words may affect men; he does however indicate that descriptive poetry operates largely by sounds," which by custom have the effects of realities. Nothing is an imitation further than as it resembles some other thing, and words undoubtedly have no sort of resemblance to the ideas for which they stand."[1] It is interesting to compare this with a passage in one of Dr. Johnson's Ramblers written several years earlier, in which Johnson had argued that "the general resemblance of the sound to the sense is to be found in every language which admits of poetry, in every author whose force of fancy enables him to impress images strongly on his own mind, and whose choice and variety of language readily supply him with just representations. To such a writer, it is natural to change his measure with the subject, even without any effort of the understanding, or intervention of the judgment."[2] This particular aspect of the general problem is also treated by Daniel Webb, who tried to place it on a more scientific basis by arguing that words were but modifications of sound and motion, the former by means of vowels, and the latter by consonants: and that therefore words were capable of imitating directly any ideas that are naturally related to either sound or motion.[3]

Burke's own conclusions were far different. Poetry, "taken in its most general sense,"[1] was not really an imitative art at all, though it could imitate dramatically, by showing men express their characters and passions in words which seem to be their own. Description was not the proper province of either poetry or eloquence, and could be done far better by painting: the business of poetry and rhetoric was "to affect rather by sympathy than

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1 Wks., vol.ii, p.216
2 Rambler, no.94
3 Poetry and Music, pp.63ff.

imitation; to display rather the effect of things on the mind of the speaker, or of others, than to present a clear idea of the things themselves."[1] This so far as it related to the imitative nature of poetry was generally accepted by Burke's successors, and it must be granted that Burke performed an important service to aesthetics by disposing finally of the belief that words necessarily called up images in the mind if they had any meaning at all. The effect of his speculations on poetic imitation was quickly apparent, and it was soon recognised as almost a commonplace that the only truly imitative types of poetry were dramatic or epic, which could present immediately to a listener the passions or sentiments of men. This view was endorsed in their different ways by Jones, Gerard, and Blair.

The allied question of how far language is imitative[2] was not however answered so easily, and as has been indicated speculation on this particular aspect of the problem continued to occupy men's attention. Against Webb's advocacy of the close connection between sound and sense can be set Campbell's view that "the resemblance or analogy which the sound can in any case be made to bear to the sense is, at best, when we consider it abstractly, but very remote. Often a beauty of this kind is more the creature of the reader's fancy than the effect of the writer's ingenuity."[3] Yet Campbell is ready to except from this general statement the effect which may be produced by such a resemblance in certain types of poetry, and which is stronger "than any other whereof language alone is susceptible." Even this concession

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1 Wks., vol.ii,p.215

2 The view of Thomas Robertson, Minister of Dalmeny, is quite unique, so should be referred to here. Robertson held that speech was a fine art of the same general nature as music. "The theory of speech as a fine art, treats of words as sounds....and gives the principles of prose and verse. It is the most general in its nature; and hence....the most extensive in its influence of all the fine arts." Unfortunately Robertson did not complete his scheme of An Inquiry into the Fine Arts, for only one volume was published, so his theory of speech was never fully expounded.

3 Philosophy of Rhetoric, vol.ii,p.257

is refused by Blair and Harpur; the former distinguishes sharply between imitation and description, and goes on to insist that words unlike pictures or statues, "have no natural resemblance to what they signify."[1] Elsewhere however Blair pays a good deal of attention to the possible music of words, and he has some interesting things to say on the subject, though many of them were probably suggested by his predecessors. At one point he even admits that there may originally have been a connection between words and their objects, but adds that any such connection has by now been obliterated by the development of language from its primitive state. Harpur on the other hand, writing in 1810, dismisses the subject as if there never had been any problem to consider; "As words have not any natural analogy to the things which they signify, language can be adequate to such mimetic representation, only as it is significant by compact."[2]

One of the best and clearest passages dealing with the relation of sound to sense is found in Thomas Twining's Dissertation on Poetry Considered as an Imitative Art, which is prefixed to his translation of Aristotle's Poetics. Twining was a scholar rather than a speculative thinker, and it is as such that he treats his subject. "In every imitation, strictly and properly so-called, two conditions seem essential: the resemblance must be immediate....and it must also be obvious."[3] Twining's expression of his opinion is so admirably concise that it is better to allow him to continue to speak for himself.

"The materials of poetic imitation are words. These may be considered in two views; as sounds merely, and as sounds significant, or arbitrary and conventional signs of ideas. It is evidently in the first view only that words

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1 Lectures, vol.i,p.107
2 Essay,p.20
3 Aristotle's Poetics, p.4

can bear any real resemblance to the things expressed; and accordingly that kind of imitation which consists in the resemblance of words considered as mere sound, to the sound and motions of the objects imitated, has usually been assigned as the instance in which the term imitative is in its strict and proper sense, applicable to poetry. But....even in such words, and such arrangements of words as are actually in some degree analogous in sound or motion to the thing signified or described, the resemblance is so faint and distant, and of so general and vague a nature, that it would never of itself lead us to recognise the object imitated. We discover not the likeness till we know the meaning. The natural relation of the word to the thing signified is pointed out only by its arbitrary or conventional relation."[1]
It follows from this that if we call poetry imitative, we can not be using imitation in the same strictly limited sense in which we apply it to works of painting or sculpture. Poetic imitation involves the use, not of simple sounds, but of sounds significant: and language is a proper medium for such imitation primarily as it is significant, and only secondarily as it bears a distinct resemblance, discoverable only through the meaning, to natural sounds.

Apart from this very complete discussion of words as sounds, Twining has little that is original to contribute; poetry can describe well only inasmuch as it can raise an "ideal image or picture, more or less resembling the reality of things,"[2] and is properly imitative only when dramatic or personative, as in epic or history. In Twining, therefore, as in Locke almost exactly

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1 Aristotle's Poetics, p.5
2 ibid., p.9

a hundred years earlier, there are three possible ways in which words may be considered; as signs, as sounds, and as images. The debt to Locke of all writers in these intervening years and indeed later on this subject is indeed great, not only because of the questions asked and the answers given by Locke, but also because of the very method of his inquiry, which encouraged a new approach to a subject that had already been very fully treated by the writers of antiquity.

PART III

TWO MAIN AESTHETIC CURRENTS

CHAPTER VIII

LOCKE AND THE INTERNAL SENSES.

1. The Development of the 'Internal Sense' Theory.

The credit for giving the theory of the internal senses the form in which it enjoyed such popularity for more than half of the eighteenth century, before it vanished almost as suddenly as it appeared, must go principally to Francis Hutcheson. At the same time, paradoxically enough, the theory as given shape by Hutcheson had little in it that was original, for all the necessary ingredients were to be found in the works of Locke and Shaftesbury. Hutcheson's importance is due to the fact that he perceived the possibilities latent in Shaftesbury's sense of beauty and his moral sense, and that he provided them with a convincing philosophical justification from the works of Locke.

Even the name "internal sense" came from Locke, who used the phrase when trying to explain what he meant by ideas of reflection as opposed to ideas of sensation. Sensation and reflection were for Locke the only sources of all man's ideas; the mind at birth is a _tabula rasa_, and its first materials are received through the organs of sense, and are therefore called ideas of sensation. Once provided with these ideas of sensation, the mind begins to operate on them by perceiving them, thinking about them, knowing them, and all the other activities attributed to the mind. But man has the power of observing these activities of his own mind, and his consciousness of them supplies him with a new set of ideas which Locke has called ideas of reflection. "This source of ideas every man has wholly in himself; and

though it be not sense, as having nothing to do with external objects, yet it is very like it, and might properly enough be called an internal sense. But as I call the other sensation, so I call this reflection, the ideas it affords being such only as the mind gets by reflecting on its own operations within itself."[1] Later in the Essay Locke again employs the phrase when he says that "external and internal sensation are the only passages that I can find of knowledge to the understanding."[2] It is important to note that for Locke reflection meant man's power of contemplating the operations of his own mind, and this he interprets in a very broad sense "as comprehending not barely the actions of the mind about its ideas, but some sort of passions arising sometimes from them, such as is the satisfaction or uneasiness arising from any thought."[1] In other words Locke allows that the perceptions of this internal sense may include the pleasure or pain rising from the "thoughts of our minds, or anything operating on our bodies."[3]

There is no evidence to show that Shaftesbury even contemplated the building up of a theory of internal senses akin to that of Hutcheson, though his doctrine of the sense of the good and the beautiful appears in his early work on Virtue and Merit, and is maintained in his later and more mature works. He does indeed once use the words "internal sensation,"[4] but with a writer so rhetorical as Shaftesbury too much importance cannot be attributed to a single instance, especially when nothing in the context indicates that Shaftesbury himself regarded the usage as significant. The

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1 Essay, II,i,4
2 ibid., II,xi,17
3 ibid., II,vii,2
4 Characteristics, vol.ii,p.284

chief interest lies, therefore, in Shaftesbury's accounts of the moral sense and of the sense of beauty, and in the examination of how far these contributed to the conception of the internal senses arrived at by Hutcheson.

The earliest and one of the clearest statements of Shaftesbury's position appears near the beginning of his Inquiry concerning Virtue and Merit. As the title of his inquiry indicates, Shaftesbury's approach to the problem is that of the moral philosopher, and his primary concern is with virtue, or moral beauty, though in his later work his point of view gradually changed till his last work, the long unpublished "Second Characters," reveals him as an aesthetician pure and simple. But even in this earliest work his incidental references to the beauty of the material world are in themselves striking enough with a view to the future development of aesthetic theory. One passage concerned is of such importance that it must be quoted in full.

"The case is the same in the mental or moral subjects as in the ordinary bodies or common subjects of sense. The shapes, motions, colours, and proportions of these latter being presented to our eye, there necessarily results a Beauty or Deformity, according to the different measure, arrangement, and disposition of their several parts. So in behaviour and actions, when presented to our understanding, there must be found, of necessity, an apparent difference, according to the regularity or irregularity of the subjects.

"The mind which is spectator or auditor of other minds cannot be without its eye and ear; so as to discern proportion, distinguish sound, and scan each sentiment or thought which comes before it. It can let nothing

escape its censure. It feels the soft and harsh, the agreeable and disagreeable, in the affections; and finds a foul and a fair, a harmonious and a dissonant, as really and truly here, as in any musical numbers, or in the outward forms or representations of sensible things. Nor can it withhold its admiration and ecstasy, its aversion and scorn, any more in what relates to one than to the other of these subjects. So that to deny the common and natural sense of a sublime and beautiful in things will appear an affectation merely, to anyone who considers duly of this affair."[1]

Shaftesbury proceeds to construct on this foundation his theory of a moral sense which, he holds, must consist in the love of what is truly and absolutely good, and the dislike of what is truly and absolutely bad. The soul "must needs find a beauty and a deformity as well in actions, minds, and tempers, as in figures, sounds or colours."[2] The ultimate identity of the good and the beautiful follows very naturally from what has been said; both are forms of beauty, and both have a necessary and real existence. If this be so, man must clearly be equipped with some means of discovering them. The obvious analogy, and that chosen by Shaftesbury, is with the bodily senses which permit man to perceive the external world all around him. The mind then must have something in the nature of senses to enable it to perceive the spiritual world; for Shaftesbury conceives of things as falling into the two great divisions of mind and body, or of action and figure: what is good in the first we perceive by the moral sense, and what is beautiful in the second we perceive by the sense of beauty.

It must be emphasised that Shaftesbury is most careful never to confuse

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1 Characteristics, vol.ii,pp.28-29
2 ibid., vol.ii,p.43

the good and beautiful with mere pleasure: the good and the beautiful are to be sought for their own sake, and are quite independent of pleasure "which may be very great and yet very contemptible."[1] That is not to say that Shaftesbury denied the validity of pleasure: he admitted the existence of pleasures of both body and mind, and allowed them to be when properly used a power for good. But he was determined not to fall into the Hedonism of those with whom, like Hobbes and Locke, it was "orthodox divinity, as well as sound philosophy, to rate life by the number and exquisiteness of the pleasing sensations."[2] Another point on which he disagreed with Locke was the existence of innate ideas, so vigorously attacked by Locke in the first book of his Essay. When in the Moralists, Theocles is asked if he maintains that "the notions and principles of fair, just, and honest with the rest of these ideas, are innate,"[3] he answers that they are undoubtedly implanted by nature, and are therefore innate. The only concession he makes is to agree to abandon the word innate for instinct, "and call instinct that which nature teaches, exclusive of Art, Culture, or Discipline."[3]

As has already been shown, Hutcheson supported Locke's condemnation of all innate ideas or principles, and this had no small influence in determining his conception of the internal senses. He could not like Shaftesbury argue that the principles of the good and the beautiful were innate in all men, enabling them to perceive immediately goodness and beauty. Moreover he agreed with Locke's definition of good as that which "has an aptitude to produce pleasure in us,"[4] and so unlike Shaftesbury had to show the relation between pleasure, and the good and the beautiful. The solution chosen by Hutcheson was to develop the idea of the internal senses hinted at by both

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1 Characteristics, vol.ii,p.230
2 ibid., vol.i,p.123
3 ibid., vol.ii,p.411
4 Essay, II,xxi,42

Locke and Shaftesbury, and it was perhaps with this in his mind that Hutcheson read what Locke had to say on the subject, before interpreting the doctrine of ideas of sensation and reflection in a way entirely new. Locke, he asserted, had not expressed himself with sufficient clarity, with the result that his ideas of reflection were wrongly interpreted to mean "reflex acts upon external sensations." Locke had really meant reflection to be understood as a proper internal sense, "an inward power of perception." His account of the external senses was clearly inadequate, as it did not explain how men perceive such common sensations as those of hunger and thirst, but he had been right in saying that almost all our ideas, whether of sensation or reflection, were accompanied by some degree of pleasure or pain.

Hutcheson's system must therefore be founded on the doctrine that all our ideas come to us through some kind of sense, and he names these senses as external, internal, public, moral and honour. Such a division clearly involves a new conception of what a sense is, and Hutcheson therefore defines it as any "determination of our minds to receive ideas independently of our will, and to have perceptions of pleasure and pain."[1] Elsewhere he indicates that he has given the name of senses to our "determinations to be pleased with any forms or ideas which occur to our observation," and adds that he distinguishes them "from the powers which commonly go by that name, by calling our power of perceiving the beauty of regularity, order, harmony, an internal sense."[2] Internal and other senses no more suppose innate ideas than do external senses; all kinds of senses are natural powers of perception, and the internal sense is but "a passive

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1 ~~Nature~~ On the Passions, p.4
2 Beauty and Virtue, p.xiii

power of receiving ideas of beauty from all objects in which there is uniformity amid variety."[1]

The genesis of the doctrine of the internal senses should now be quite clear. Locke had so definitely refuted the doctrine of innate ideas that it became difficult to explain why man should take a wholly disinterested pleasure in contemplating ideas like beauty, justice, virtue, and honour, which are often roused in him without any volition on his part. These ideas had been regarded by Locke as wholly relative, and without fixed standards: Shaftesbury's opinion was just the contrary, and it was adopted by Hutcheson. According to this view, certain actions, forms etc. were truly good, just or beautiful, and were therefore able to raise in a spectator the appropriate ideas of good or beauty. The difficulty as to how we perceived these ideas was solved by Hutcheson's interpretation of Locke's internal sense as an inward power of perception, enabling us to perceive the idea of beauty or virtue roused in us; the idea of beauty was accompanied with a feeling of pleasure which was inseparable from it, but not identical with it. Here Hutcheson called upon his knowledge of Shaftesbury, who provided him with explanations of the sense of beauty and the moral sense, and much of the material for his public sense: the sense of honour seems to have been Hutcheson's own idea, and the external senses as expounded by Locke and others could, with certain modifications serve his purpose perfectly.

The internal sense theory as expounded by Hutcheson became popular almost immediately, and remained so for the greater part of the eighteenth century, in the course of which it formed the basis for many accounts of

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[1] Beauty and Virtue, p.82

beauty. Generally speaking, the assumptions which accompanied acceptance of the theory differed very little, once it was taken for granted that the perception of certain relations between the different parts of an object gave rise to the perception of a beauty, which was itself a quality of the object. This, as has already been explained, was not the doctrine of Hutcheson, but it was the view held by most of those who adopted his theories. Exceptions should be made of Lancaster and Hume. Lancaster, writing in 1748, says that "nature has implanted in us an internal sense, which gives us a just perception of the relation between our faculties of apprehending, and the objects presented to them."[1] This was also the view of Hume, who argues further that beauty can not be the result of the mere perception of relations in the object.

Gerard introduced a certain variety by identifying the internal senses with what he calls the powers of imagination,[2] and by reducing them to the senses of novelty, sublimity, beauty, imitation, harmony, ridicule and virtue. A possible single source for all these is Akenside's Pleasures of Imagination, which had appeared fifteen years earlier, but it is more likely that Gerard drew on most of his predecessors on this subject. At all events, it is clear that we have here, united, Addison's and Hutcheson's sources of aesthetic pleasure, and that Gerard is only putting forward old theories under a new guise. He is followed by Beattie, who writes that "there is in our constitution such a thing as a musical ear, a sense of beauty, a taste for sublimity and imitation, a love of novelty, and a tendency to smiles and laughter."[3] Though all these are partly dependent on the external senses, they are also clearly distinct from mere sense perceptions, and are therefore

1 Fugitive Pieces, p.337
2 On Taste, p.1
3 Dissertations, p.172

distinguished by the title of secondary, or reflex, or internal senses. Beattie adds that the "pleasures derived from them are....the pleasures of the imagination."[1]

The sudden withdrawal of favour from the theory of the internal senses was probably due partly to the influence of Reid, who though he never objected to the phrase itself did much to discourage its indiscriminate application. Reid approves Locke's action in calling consciousness an internal sense as being very proper, but objects to later confusion in the use of the word sense which would seem to make the moral sense and the sense of sight similar powers. Moreover, he disliked the conception of any sense at all, internal or external, as being a passive or uncritical faculty; and insisted that an act of sense should always be accompanied by an act of judgement. Reid's dislike of the internal sense theory as expounded by his predecessors may well have influenced Alison when he came to propose in his Essays the alternative associationist theory which was soon to displace the "internal sense of beauty" as the deus ex machina of aesthetic theory.

2. The Sense of Beauty.

The sense of beauty being one of the internal senses, its early history is the same as theirs, so need not be repeated. It was one of the two senses which Shaftesbury specified by name in addition to the external senses, but Hutcheson was the first to develop fully the conception of an internal sense of beauty. This he did in his Inquiry into Beauty and Virtue, first published in 1725. In the Introduction Hutcheson laid down three facts which he looked on as incontrovertible and which could therefore be regarded

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1 Dissertations, p.172

as suitable starting points for his inquiry. First of all, he assumed that there must be some sense of beauty natural to man; secondly, he held that men's "relishes of forms"[1] were no less common to them than their external senses; and finally, in consequence of certain preliminary arguments, he concluded that pleasure and pain naturally accompany men's perceptions.

Hutcheson goes on to discuss whether the sense of beauty, and the closely related sense of harmony, are internal or external senses. At first he says, rather surprisingly, that it is "of no consequence"[2] which we consider them, though this is scarcely borne out by his later pronouncements on the same subject. But in the end he decides that it is better to call them internal senses, for otherwise they may be confused with the ordinary external senses of seeing or hearing from which they are certainly distinct. This distinction is, in the case of the sense of harmony, acknowledged in everyday speech by the different meanings attached to "a good hearing" and "a good ear". Hutcheson goes on to refer to a class of beauty which is certainly not perceivable by the external senses; that is, the beauty of "theorems, universal truths, general causes, etc.,"[3] and this helps him to decide to make the sense of beauty an internal sense.

He proceeds to analyse the pleasure that accompanies ideas of beauty, for the perceptions of the sense of beauty are necessarily accompanied by a pleasure which is immediate, and therefore antecedent to knowledge. It follows logically from this that certain objects exist which are the immediate occasions of this pleasure: and the function of the sense of beauty is to perceive them, with accompanying pleasure, whenever they are

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1 Beauty and Virtue, p.xvii.
2 ibid., p.8
3 ibid., p.9

presented. As this pleasure is immediate, we may have the sensation of beauty without knowing its cause; and the real difficulty facing an inquirer into the original of our idea of beauty is finding what in an object can cause this sensation in an observer. It is at this point that Hutcheson divides beauty into that which is relative, or the result of imitation, and that which is absolute, and dependent on some permanent principle: and, as has already been seen, Hutcheson fixed upon the principles of uniformity amid variety as the cause of absolute beauty.

One of the first of Hutcheson's successors to adopt this theory was George Turnbull who made rather an unusual use of it by attributing to the sense of beauty our ability to study Natural Philosophy, and thus understand nature more fully. This, at first sight rather surprising, is soon seen to be reasonable enough, for Turnbull like Hutcheson considers that the sense of beauty rises from uniformity amid variety or, as he also calls it, regularity and order. Consequently all the pleasure found by the natural philosopher in the "contemplation of nature's unity, beauty, and harmony is owing to this sense; that is, they belong to it as properly as those of hearing to the ear."[1] Turnbull also holds that "all the arts presuppose a natural sense of harmony, beauty, proportion, greatness, and truth: and that as necessarily....as tastes and smells presuppose faculties fitted to receive these sensations."[2]

Recognition of a special sense which had the power to perceive beauty was fairly general, and it was not questioned until late in the century when, with the other internal senses, it fell under suspicion. Melmoth considered that the sense of beauty was universal, though it did not always exist in the

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[1] On Ancient Painting, p.137

[2] ibid., p.36

the same degree; and that there were certain forms which were naturally fitted to excite the pleasurable sensation of beauty. Hume too in his Principles of Morals agreed that certain kinds of beauty, especially those of nature, won immediate approval; and added that if they did not give immediate pleasure, no demonstrations or arguments could make them agreeable. This is clearly a reference to Hutcheson's absolute beauty, for Hume goes on to argue that beauties in works of art can be appreciated in course of time when they were not at first approved. And an anonymous pamphleteer, writing a few years later, says that men perceive beauty by a "sense which they can not suddenly resist: it is antecedent to reflection, an impression quick as goodness makes. Indeed such impressions are rare, for great beauty is rare."[1]

Lord Monboddo, whose opinions on most subjects had at least the merit of being definite, spoke vehemently in favour of the sense of beauty, but unlike most of his contemporaries went direct to Shaftesbury himself for a definition of it. Monboddo believes that nothing "more eminently distinguishes the man from the brute than the sense of the fair and the beautiful,"[2] and expresses his amazement that anyone should even doubt that this sense was implanted in man by nature, and was not the result of education or habit. He concludes that Shaftesbury's proposition that the good and the beautiful are one is, in his opinion, "the basis both of morality and theology."[3] In one of the last volumes of his Ancient Metaphysics, published in 1797, at a time when the theory of a sense of beauty was no longer so generally accepted, Monboddo continues to defend it, and indeed includes in it most of the other internal senses quoted by Hutcheson. The

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1 Of Beauty, p.9
2 Origin and Progress of Language, vol.iv,p.363
3 ibid., vol.iv,p.367

sense of beauty is "the foundation of virtue and of every good action," and it is also the source of honour, or love of praise," that governing principle among men."[1] Finally it is the "source of every virtue, public or private, neither of which can be without the sense of beauty."[2]

Tucker, while accepting the fact that there is such a thing as a sense of beauty, opposes the usual view that it is born with us, holding rather that it "grows by time and may be moulded into almost any shape by custom, conversation, or accident."[3] James Usher expresses a similar opinion. "At an immature age, the sense of Beauty is weak and confused, and requires an excess of colouring to catch its attention."[4] But, he adds, as we grow older and more mature, "if the human genius be assisted by a happy education, the sense of universal beauty awakes."[4] Both opinions represent a changing attitude, which was unwilling to allow that beauty was a matter of mere sensation, and this school finds its first authoritative spokesman in Reid who, though he continues to use the title 'sense of beauty,' interprets it very differently from Hutcheson.

According to Reid, our <u>judgment</u> of beauty is, "by the constitution of our nature, accompanied with an agreeable feeling or emotion, for which we have no other name but the sense of beauty. This sense of beauty, like the perceptions of our other senses, implies not only a feeling, but an opinion of some quality in the object which occasions that feeling."[5] Reid proceeds to divide the sense of beauty into an instinctive and a rational sense of beauty: the former refers to beauties which are felt immediately and inexplicably, and therefore does not differ from the usual conception of

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1 Ancient Metaphysics, vol.v,p.125
2 ibid., vol.v,p.135
3 Light of Nature Pursued, vol.ii,p.149
4 Clio (1803 ed'n.), p.181
5 Essays, vol.ii,p.503

the sense. The rational sense, on the other hand, is always affected by a recognisable quality in the object, and its cause may be specified. This division bears but a superficial resemblance to Hutcheson's absolute and relative beauty, which may well have inspired it, as natural objects may appeal to either sense of beauty depending on their present circumstances.

The tendency in the last years of the century was to retain the name sense of beauty, but at the same time to abandon all pretence of treating it as a sense. One of the most direct statements of such a view is that which appears in an article in the Critical Review for 1807, which rejects the sense of beauty on the grounds that neither of the two conditions which such a sense presupposes does in fact exist; there is not a separate and recognisable class of objects of beauty, as there are objects of sight or objects of smell. This is evident from every man's experience. Moreover a sense of beauty implies an absolute standard of beauty, which would leave no room for disputes as to whether or not a certain object was beautiful; clearly, no such standard exists, and the idea of a sense of beauty is therefore chimerical. Similar arguments are used by Jeffrey,[1] who also shows that the lack of agreement as to what is beautiful in itself contradicts the theory of a special sense: and also argues that it would be quite impossible to find in all the many actions, forms, and ideas that are described as beautiful any quality which is common to them all, and might therefore act on a sense of beauty, even if such existed. Mangin contents himself with remarking that it is a pity that Hutcheson limited himself by "ascribing the pleasure which we receive from beauty to a peculiar sense distinct from the other faculties of the human mind, and did not consider how far this

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1 Article on Beauty in Encyclopaedia Britannica (1824)

pleasure results from the known principles of our nature, and how far it is similar to sensations which we experience upon other occasions."[1] This incidentally illustrates how for some aestheticians Alison was replacing Hutcheson as the final court of appeal.

There are two other matters connected with the sense of beauty which deserve some notice - the sense of harmony, and the problem of deformity. The first of these has already been mentioned in connection with Hutcheson, who noted it as one of the internal senses, on the grounds that just as there is a necessary perception of beauty in the presence of certain objects, so there is a perception of harmony on hearing certain sounds. In Hutcheson's own words, harmony "denotes our pleasant ideas arising from composition of sounds,"[2] which is in itself an original source of beauty, not usually "conceived as an imitation of anything else."[3] Nevertheless it too is based on a ratio of uniformity and variety, both of which may be attained in music by concord and by varied notes or discord respectively. The same idea is expressed perhaps more picturesquely, if less forcefully, by Isaac Browne in his poetic epistle on Design and Beauty:

> "In sound 'tis harmony that charms the ear,
> Yet discords, intermingled here and there,
> Still make the sweet similitudes appear."[4]

Charles Avison, one of the first to write an aesthetic treatise devoted specifically to music, has much the same to say on the subject: "As the proper mixture of light and shade....has a noble effect in painting, and is indeed essential to the composition of a good picture; so the judicious mixture of concords and discords is equally essential to a musical composition."[5]

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1 Pleasures from Literary Compositions, p.263
2 Beauty and Virtue, p.7
3 ibid.,p.27
4 On Design and Beauty(1739),p.7
5 On Musical Expression, p.20

This is certainly true, but the constant emphasis laid on it by all writers, musicians and others, is certainly the outcome of the original desire to translate uniformity and variety into musical terms.

Gerard by stating that the sense of harmony enables us to perceive a "kind of beauty in sound," allows an extension of its scope to "all the arts which employ language," as well as music, of which it "lays the sole foundation;"[1] it is, of course, dependent on uniformity and variety, and, Gerard adds, proportion in time. Gerard also notes a similarity between the principles of melody and the arrangement of parts in a beautiful figure, and decides that of the two harmony gives the greater pleasure because it is able to preserve a greater measure of uniformity, while still providing abundant variety. The same conception of the sense is found in Blair, who talks of style in terms of music when he says that it is better to introduce even a discord "than to cloy the ear with the repetition of similar sounds: for nothing is so tiresome as perpetual uniformity."[2] This sense like the others disappears in the face of the alternative explanations suggested by Alison.

Hutcheson's doctrine of deformity may have been connected with Locke's view that "the absence of good is not always a pain, as the presence of pain is."[3] It was based on the belief that "deformity is only the absence of beauty"[4] and that as far as the sense of beauty was concerned "no composition of objects which give no unpleasant simple ideas, seems positively unpleasant or painful of itself, had we never observed anything

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1 On Taste, p.56
2 Lectures, vol.i,p.241
3 Essay, II,xxi,31
4 Beauty and Virtue, p.73

better of the kind. Our sense of beauty seems designed to give us positive pleasure, but not positive pain or disgust, any further than what arises from disappointment."[1] Thus to Hutcheson there is nothing which is really ugly or disagreeable: the nearest we can come to it is when we compare an object void of all beauty with something very beautiful. This is what he calls deformity and his conception does not differ much from Stubbes's definition of it[2] as disproportion, disorder, and irregularity. On this point Gerard follows Hutcheson closely, attributing deformity to the lack of uniformity, variety and proportion, which is merely another way of saying <u>absence of beauty</u>; and it is difficult to see what else Reynolds can have meant when he said that it was not nature, but an "accidental deviation from her usual practice."[3] Barrett is in the same tradition when he says that deformity is the negation of beauty, just as falsehood is of truth.

Hutcheson's whole conception of deformity was rejected by Burke, who advanced a far more positive theory in its place. Deformity is the opposite not of beauty but of what Burke calls the "complete, common form."[4] Burke grants that it results from a failure to observe the common proportions, but points out that even where these are present, there may be no beauty. Ugliness, on the other hand, which Burke maintains to be the true opposite of beauty, may well co-exist with these correct proportions; and he also argues that it is consistent with the sublime for reasons which do not now concern us. Price has clearly got Burke's arguments in mind when he distinguishes between ugliness and deformity: the latter he describes as "some striking and unnatural deviation from what is usual in the shape of the face

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1 Beauty and Virtue, p.73
2 Dialogue on Beauty, p.19
3 Discourses, vol.i,p.204
4 Wks., vol.ii,p.149

or body,"[1] whereas ugliness arises from "that want of form, that unshapen lumpish appearance, which perhaps no word exactly expresses."[2] Sometimes, the two may combine, and then we have what Price calls "the hideous."[2]

Neither of these writers considers the problem with relation to any sense of beauty. The last to do so was Lord Monboddo, who attributes to the senses of beauty our power to perceive what is ridiculous, and goes on to identify the ridiculous with the deformed. This is however probably the result of his tendency, already indicated, to unite all the internal senses in the sense of beauty. A sense of the ridiculous had already been suggested by Akenside, who considered its existence "beyond all contradiction," and admitted by Gerard, who seemed as eager to multiply the number of internal senses as Monboddo apparently was to restrict it. Even so, Monboddo's views are interesting, because he not only affirms that the ridiculous (or deformed) is the opposite of beauty, but deduces from it that laughter is peculiar to man because no other animal has a sense of beauty. Hence, Monboddo concludes, "the higher our sense of beauty is, the more lively and correct will our perception of the ridiculous be" - an interpretation of the sense of beauty that might have astonished its founders!

3. The Object of the Sense of Beauty.

When the second edition of Alison's Essays on Taste appeared in 1811, it was acclaimed by Jeffrey, writing in the Edinburgh Review, as the "best and most pleasing work"that had yet been written on the subject. Before going on to consider Alison's theories, Jeffrey had some interesting remarks to make about the sense of beauty, which is, he declared, "obviously implied

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1 Essay, voli,p.189

2 ibid., vol.i,p.187

at all events, and we rather think occasionally expressed, in all the theories that resolve beauty into combinations of curve lines - into relaxation of the fibres - into smoothness - proportion - fragility, or any other physical qualities: the authors of such speculations....assuming it as a final principle and fixed law of our constitution, of which no account could be rendered, that those elements produced a distinct operation upon some inward sense of faculty, the result of which was the emotion or perception of beauty." Jeffrey's criticism may be justly applied to nearly all the aesthetic theories advanced between 1725 and 1790. The supposition of a sense of beauty implied a special class of beautiful objects just as the sense of sight implied visible objects. Consequently those who did not believe beauty to be an intrinsic quality had to find what quality or qualities in an object could be called beautiful; and a large proportion of eighteenth century aesthetic research was directed to the attempt to discover such qualities.

So far as the sense of beauty is concerned, then, the importance of Hutcheson's theory that beauty depends on "uniformity amid variety" is obvious. It was the first attempt to find a single principle which would satisfactorily account for every known example of beauty, and Hutcheson's successors did not, as he had done, try to work out the full philosophical implications of the theory.[1] Hutcheson's theory was based on the supposition that there exists in man a sense of beauty which determines him to receive the idea of beauty from certain objects, and that certain qualities in objects must give rise to this idea. Hutcheson deduces empirically that the qualities concerned are uniformity and variety in a "compound ratio," but

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1 See chapter V, section 1

he does not say that these are beautiful qualities, or even that they constitute beauty. Later aestheticians, on the other hand, overlooked the fact that the object of the sense of beauty was beauty itself, and introduced such qualities as proportion which, as was correctly pointed out by Burke, are immediate objects of the understanding, and are therefore nothing to do with beauty.

The common belief that by attributing beauty to uniformity amid variety Hutcheson was declaring himself in favour of a theory of objective beauty accounts for the irrelevant nature of much of the criticism directed at him. Hutcheson's claim that his formula was applicable in all cases of absolute beauty was not accepted, and we find Kames rejecting it on the grounds that it was not true with regard to every beautiful object, and that it might exist in objects that were actually ugly[1] - an argument which is brought forward again in the Critical Review in 1807. Blair too objects, because "even in external figured objects it does not hold that their beauty is in proportion to their mixture of variety with uniformity,"[2] and he triumphantly quotes beauty of colour in support of his contention. Alison certainly implies that uniformity and variety were often considered as qualities in themselves beautiful, when he says that "the composition of uniformity and variety in forms is agreeable, or is fitted by nature to excite an agreeable sensation in the sense of sight....; these qualities are also capable of conveying to us very pleasing and very interesting expressions and...in this manner they are felt as beautiful."[3] But, Alison adds, no such union of material qualities perceived by sight is of itself beautiful. His attempt later in the same volume to show how far uniformity and variety are the causes of beauty in the arts is

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1 Wks., vol.iv,p.292
2 Essays, vol.i,p.193
3 ibid., vol.ii,p.5

but another example of how far he and his contemporaries were from appreciating the principles of the aesthetic system worked out by Hutcheson.

Hutcheson's "uniformity and variety" were almost certainly the development of a hint given by Shaftesbury, and the many systems which adopted such principles of beauty as order, regularity, proportion, and the like, probably originate from the same source. The number of these principles tended to increase as the century went on, and we find Hogarth including in a list of the principles of beauty fitness, variety, uniformity, simplicity, intricacy, and quantity, all of which are supposed to "co-operate in the production of beauty, mutually correcting and restraining each other occasionally."[1] Kames notes that regularity, proportion, order and colour contribute to both beauty and grandeur, and singles out proportion of parts as "not only in itself a beauty, but ....inseparably connected with a beauty of a higher kind, that of concord or harmony."[2] At first sight, Abraham Tucker appears to have thought out a new set of sources for beauty, for he lists "composition, succession, translation, and expression"[3] as its principles; but on examination these prove to be but new names for the usual symmetry, proportion, order and variety. De Polier considers that regularity, contrast, proportion, congruity, uniformity, variety, and simplicity give agreeable exercise to the mind, and are therefore to be commended as "adding beauty to the objects that surround us, and....procuring us enjoyments far superior to those of the senses."[4]

These attempts to discover what qualities of objects might justly be named principles of beauty were always based on the study of objects which were generally recognised as beautiful, and it should be helpful to consider

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1 Analysis of Beauty, p.11
2 Wks.,vol.v,p.416
3 Light of Nature Pursued, vol.ii,p.149
4 On Taste;M.L.P.S.M., I(1785),p.131

some of the more common classes of these beautiful objects. Such objects may conveniently be considered under the general heads of nature, the mind, the human body and face, and external objects in general. Beauty of nature receives less attention from aestheticians than might have been expected, though an exception must certainly be made in the case of Shaftesbury, who does not however fall within the scope of the present inquiry. In the cases of Cooper and even Price, the principles suggested by Hutcheson for absolute beauty are sufficient explanation: Cooper considers that "a view at once gives pleasure if it provides unity in variety, with the individual parts related to each other,"[1] and Price writes that "Nature forms a beautiful scene by combining objects in such a manner as that no sudden or abrupt transition in form or colour should strike the eye."[2] He adds that though on occasion particular effects may be somewhat displeasing, "each scene as a whole impresses an idea of the most pleasing variety, softness, and union."[2] Gilpin however perhaps comes nearer than either to the original conception of a sense of beauty, when he says that we are most delighted when a grand though perhaps incorrectly composed scene strikes us beyond the power of thought, and makes an impression before any judgment is formed: such a scene "we rather feel than survey."[3]

Beauty of mind is another type which was given some attention, and once again we find that it is treated more fully in Shaftesbury than in most of his successors. It is however related to the internal senses by Nathaniel Lancaster, who suggests that if men believe that they receive pleasure from a sense of symmetry, order and proportion in nature, they must admit that there is also such a thing as beauty of mind, compared with which the beauty of nature

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1 Letters concerning Taste, p.3
2 Essay, vol.ii,p.101
3 On Three Essays, p.49

is "but of a subordinate and lower degree."[1] Blair too holds that there are certain qualities of the mind which when expressed by grimaces or actions will always "rouse in us a feeling similar to that of beauty."[2] Harpur, expressing a rather different point of view, argues that of the "combination of uniformity with variety which exists in all things beautiful, nothing but mind is capable. And therefore as all beauty is recognised by mind alone, so by mind alone can it be produced."[3]

It is very nearly true to say that we will learn more about beauty of mind by studying theories of the beauty of the human form, for many aestheticians believed that bodily beauty could exist only as a reflection of beautiful qualities of mind. Thus Hutcheson himself believes that human beauty is due to certain natural signs of virtue or dispositions towards virtue in the countenance, which give it a charm superior to that of any other kind of beauty. Consequently men's tastes for beauty will vary "according as it denotes the several qualities agreeable to themselves."[4] Beattie expresses a similar opinion, and after contradicting the traditional saying that beauty is only skin-deep, asserts that it "derives its origin and most essential characters from the soul."[5] Reid supports this view, holding that "the beauty of the human body is derived from the signs it exhibits of some perfection of the mind or person."[6] Alison too attributes "the whole beauty or sublimity which is to be found in the external frame of man"[7] to the expression of pleasing qualities of mind, and his follower Jeffrey considers that what we admire in a beautiful woman is "not a combination

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1 Fugitive Pieces, p.350
2 Lectures, vol.i,p.100
3 Essay, p.64
4 Beauty and Virtue, p.251
5 Dissertations, p.137
6 Essays,vol.ii,p.558
7 Essays,vol.ii,p.219

of forms and colours....but a collection of the signs and tokens of certain mental feelings and affections which are universally recognised as the proper objects of love and sympathy."[1]

There were also however many others who preferred to explain human beauty on such principles as symmetry, fitness, and others which had been made the basis of whole systems of beauty. Among these was Hartley, who gave symmetry as one possible source of permanent beauty, and suggested that it consisted in "such proportions of the face and of the head, trunk, and limbs to each other as are intermediate in respect of all other proportions."[2] The anonymous writer of the pamphlet Of Beauty, on the other hand, considered that "the perfection of the human body lies in its fitness for the uses of life,"[3] and Campbell holds the somewhat similar view that "the perfection of the human body consists....in its fitness for serving the purposes of the soul,"[4] but adds that it is also capable of "one peculiar excellence as a visible object,"[4] namely, beauty.

The most detailed account of the beauty of the human body is that given by Joseph Spence in Crito. Spence reduces all human beauty to the four heads of colour, form, expression and grace, and much of his subsequent analysis was quoted with approval by Reid in support of the opinion cited above. Spence believes that the "general cause of beauty in the form or shape in both sexes is proportion; or an union and harmony in all the parts of the body."[5] He has some interesting remarks to make on the subject of national beauty, and concludes that as "fancy has perhaps more to do with

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1 Encyclopedia Britannica(1824),p.182
2 Observations on Man,vol.i,p.436
3 Of Beauty, p.7
4 Philosophy of Rhetoric, vol.ii,p.3
5 Crito, p.12

beauty than judgment,"[1] everyone may appear beautiful to somebody, and there ma be as many beauties in the world as there are people to appreciate them.

The beauty of the human face had quite a literature of its own in the eighteenth century, but the theories advanced add little to what was written on the subject of beauty of form. Burke, Usher, Blair, Reid, Alison and Mangin all considered that, in the words of the last-named, "the human countenance derives by far the greater part of its beauty from expression of....the feelings and the character."[2] An interesting contrary view is that of Alexander Cozens, the painter, who after pointing out that there could be no disputes on the subject of absolute beauty, expressed his conviction that an example of it could be produced even in the human face, if a set of features could be "combined by a regular and determinate process in art, producing simple beauty, uncharactered and unimpassioned."[3] Cozens compares this "simple beauty of the face" to pure water, without any colour, taste or other distinguishing characteristic: it would be "one and the same at all times and in all places, and is void of any predominant mental character,"[4] and might correctly be termed an example of absolute beauty, as it would not be strictly speaking an imitation, no prototype being either in existence or likely to exist in the future.

The last class of things considered as possessing beauty is perhaps best, if loosely, described as external objects, and the line of investigation is suggested by Shaftesbury at the very beginning of the century when he says, with reference to the common subjects of sense, that "the shapes, motions,

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1 Crito, p.53
2 Pleasures from Literary Compositions, p.250
3 Principles of Beauty, p.2
4 ibid., p.6

colours, and proportions of these latter being presented to our eye; there necessarily results a beauty or deformity according to the different measure, arrangement and disposition of their several parts."[1] This is clearly what Hutcheson had in mind when working out his theories of the sense of beauty and of absolute beauty, and with the general principle laid down by Shaftesbury most later aestheticians would almost certainly have been in complete agreement. The difficulty was to find a formula for the disposition of parts which would be universally acceptable as a principle of beauty, and this is what the eighteenth century could not do. Consequently many systems were proposed, but few achieved any distinction; and it will be sufficient to examine briefly those of Hogarth and Burke, who were clearly the chief targets of Jeffrey's criticism in the Edinburgh Review.

Hogarth's professed aim in writing his Analysis of Beauty was to fix the "fluctuating ideas of taste," and as a preliminary to doing so he took one by one what were generally held to be the principles of beauty, and showed how each was in itself inadequate without the assistance of others. He insists particularly on the necessity for variety, and praises Shakespeare for having "summed up all the charms of beauty in two words, infinite variety."[2] Hogarth being a painter, the problem of beauty was to him a practical one, and his chief contribution to the discussion was likewise practical. Experience had suggested to him that in general the "waving line" is more productive of beauty than any other line, but it had to be admitted that it could also appear in something comparatively ugly. Hogarth's answer was what he called the "line of beauty," by which he meant the waving line

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1 Characteristics, vol.ii,p.28
2 Analysis of Beauty, p.v

par excellence: for though all such lines are "ornamental when properly applied, yet strictly speaking there is but one precise line, properly to be called the line of beauty."[1] This line, if used judiciously, and combined with sufficient variety and fitness, should result in beautiful objects, in nature or art. Thus Hogarth's view of beauty is entirely objective, and Hutcheson's distinction between absolute and relative beauty is deprived of any significance, for if the principle of beauty can be worked out with a pair of compasses, art can produce abolute beauty as well as can nature. It is true that Hogarth wrote as a practising artist rather than as a speculative thinker, but he had imbibed enough of the philosophy of his day to know that he had to find "solid principles"[2] as a foundation for taste, and his work shows how purely empirical and therefore often too superficial the approach to aesthetic questions was in the England of his day.

Burke was no more a philosopher than Hogarth, but he had at least studied philosophy and was well acquainted with Locke's Essay, the influence of which is apparent in many of the details of his theory. Burke begins by rejecting on various grounds explanations of beauty as the result of proportion, fitness, perfection or even the expression of virtuous qualities of mind, then proposes a theory of his own, based on the assumption that "beauty is, for the greater part, some quality in bodies acting mechanically upon the human mind by the intervention of the senses."[3] Thus, as Jeffrey points out, Burke is committed to the implications of the internal sense theory, although he nowhere accepts that theory explicitly. It is, after that admission, only a question of what qualities do thus act on the

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1 Analysis of Beauty, p.49
2 ibid., p.7
3 Wks., vol.ii, p.

mind; and Burke's investigations lead him to consider beauty as a quality which exists in certain objects, and is conveyed to the mind by various sensible qualities on which it depends. The qualities of beauty suggested by Burke are smallness, smoothness, gradual variation, delicacy or fragility, and moderate colouring; and on each Burke has some acute comments to make. His theory is completed by the proposal that the material cause of man's pleasure in beauty is a certain "agreeable relaxation" of the fibres of the body. This attempt to provide a physiological explanation was not taken very seriously by Burke's contemporaries, and was not further developed by them.

4. The Sublime: the Picturesque: Colour.

As has been pointed out by Monk and others, the eighteenth century interest in the sublime was very largely due to the rediscovery of Longinus, who was one of the sources of Addison's Pleasures of the Imagination. Addison was the first of many to draw a clear distinction between the sublime and the beautiful: the latter he described as diffusing " a secret satisfaction and complacency through the imagination."[1] The sublime he first mentions as a most essential part of the art of poetry, as "something that elevates and astonishes the fancy, and gives a greatness of mind to the reader, which few of the critics beside Longinus have considered."[2] Thereafter Addison points out three qualities in objects which he considers capable of giving aesthetic pleasure, and of these greatness clearly corresponds to the sublime.[3] Addison's implied distinction between the great and the sublime is one of the most original departures in his papers. The sublime is

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1 Spectator, no.412
2 ibid., 409

throughout reserved for the effect of art, as it was by Longinus, whose interest in the sublime was confined to the manner of expression and the effect produced by it. But Addison, by considering the "greatness" of objects, is laying the foundation of all future eighteenth century speculation on the sublime, for interest was generally in the sublime object rather than in the sublime style.

It was only to be expected that the inquiry into the sublime would be affected by the current view of aesthetics, and that it would, so long as the internal sense theory enjoyed unrivalled supremacy, proceed upon many of the assumptions inherent in that theory. The first and most obvious of these was the one just considered; that there must be certain qualities in objects which when contemplated give rise to certain feelings. The influence of this idea is apparent in Baillie's Essay on the Sublime, the first considerable work to appear on the subject in the course of the century. Baillie states at the outset that the effect of the sublime, whether in writing or in nature, is immediate, and he accounts for it by the fact that "every person, on seeing a grand object, is affected with something which as it were extends his very being and expands it to a kind of immensity."[1] A few lines further on he adds that an object is truly sublime only when it "in some degree disposes the mind to this enlargement of itself, and gives her a lofty conception of her own powers. This exalted sensation then will always determine us to a right judgment, for wherever we feel the elevated disposition, there we are sure the sublime must be."[1] Baillie sees the problem facing him as one requiring

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1 On the Sublime, p.4

investigation of sublime objects in order to find what quality in them is capable of rousing this sensation, and he is therefore to be classed with members of the 'internal sense' school. He finds a solution by identifying the sublime with greatness: "the sublime in writing is no more than a description of the sublime in nature;[1] and he then explains that the natural sublime consists in the vastness of objects allied with a certain degree of uniformity and novelty. Baillie's whole account of the subject is of quite exceptional interest, and merits a more detailed investigation than can be given to it here.

Burke's treatment of the sublime is what might be expected after the examination of his theory of the beautiful, to which he sets the sublime in direct opposition. As the beautiful has its original in a mode of pleasure, so for Burke "a mode of terror or pain is always the cause of the sublime."[2] Burke then proceeds to enumerate the qulities in objects which give rise to this feeling, and that these are such qualities as vastness, uniformity and magnificence, is here of less importance than the acceptance of the principle that there is in objects a power to produce a certain sensation or emotion, and that this power resides in certain recognisable qualities of the object. This attitude, which for many years was adopted almost without question by critics and aestheticians, is very clearly expressed by Kames who says that "grandeur and sublimity have a double signification: they commonly signify the quality or circumstance in objects by which the emotions of grandeur and sublimity are produced: sometimes the emotions themselves."[3]

Burke's sharp distinction between the sublime and beautiful on the grounds that one was founded on pain and the other on pleasure found little

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1 On the Sublime, p.3
2 Wks., vol.ii,p.181
3 Wks., vol.iv,p.191

or no favour, and the Critical Review made a point of reasserting what had previously in all probability been taken for granted - that the sublime is "never void of positive pleasure."[1] Previously it was probably assumed that sublime objects affected the sense of beauty, though this is nowhere specifically stated. Hutcheson paid no special attention to the sublime, and there is no mention of a special sense of the sublime until after Burke's Inquiry had appeared. It is clear enough, however, in the case of Baillie that the mechanism of the internal senses was presupposed. If the sublime was recognised by the internal senses, it followed from Hutcheson's accounts of these senses that the sublime must give pleasure; and therefore Burke's emphasis on pain was inconsistent with all earlier views on the subject. Burke's successors were therefore generally careful to disassociate themselves from his attempt to relate the sublime to pain. Thus Beattie and Blair both insist on the pleasure given by the sublime, though the former maintains that it differs from the gratification afforded by the beautiful. Stedman goes further, and maintains that there is no essential difference between the sublime and the beautiful, both being the cause of what we now know as "aesthetic pleasure." This view is supported by Gilpin and Dugald Stewart, who both condemn the attempt to separate the beautiful from the sublime, and by Barrett, who considers that the beautiful comprehends the sublime. Jeffrey once again pronounces a judicial decision on the dispute; "sublimity and beauty, in any just or large sense, with a view to the philosophy of either, are manifestly one and the same."[2] But Jeffrey said this on the authority of Alison, and

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1 Critical Review, III(1757),p.336
2 Encyclopaedia Britannica (1824),p.180

it is well to remember that it was the common appeal of the two classes to the internal senses that kept them close together for the majority of early writers.

The word <u>picturesque</u> originally meant "suitable as a subject for a painter," but towards the end of the eighteenth century there emerged a new school of aestheticians who held that the word should be reserved for a special class of objects intermediate between the sublime and the beautiful. The reasons for the sudden appearance of this new category are not far to seek: from the time when Hutcheson's internal sense was accepted as the basis of aesthetic speculation, the tendency had been to confine investigation to the quality in objects which excited the sensation. The first classification made by Addison, which divided the causes of the pleasures of imagination into the great, the beautiful, and the uncommon, had been made on the basis of the different emotions aroused in the spectator; astonishment, pleasure, and curiosity. The emphasis placed by the internal sense school on the qualities of the object almost inevitably led men to make a new division on the basis of the qualities of objects rather than on the reactions of the observer. When this tendency coincided with the new admiration for romantic scenery of the rough and mountainous type, it was at once felt that another category was needed, and the word <u>picturesque</u> was set aside to denote the new class.

Chief credit for the popularity of the picturesque must go to William Gilpin, although he had no intention of trying to establish the picturesque as an entirely new category. Gilpin's fundamental argument was that "a distinction certainly exists between such objects as are beautiful and such as are picturesque - between those which please the eye

in their natural state: and those which please from some quality, capable of being illustrated by painting."[1] The quality selcted by Gilpin as being most characteristic of the picturesque was roughness; and he gives as an example old cart-horses, "whose harder lines and rougher coats exhibit more the graces of the pencil."[2] This is clearly in deference to Burke's definition of beauty, which included smoothness as one of its qualities: but it must be remembered that later in the same essay Gilpin has remarked that when we talk "of a sublime object, we always understand that it is also beautiful."[3] For Gilpin therefore the sublime and the picturesque were variations on the beautiful rather than categories essentially different from it.

Gilpin's distinction was accepted by Price, who considered that "the picturesque not only differs from the beautiful in those qualities which Burke has so justly ascribed to it, but arises from qualities the most diametrically opposite."[4] These qualities Price elsewhere describes: "where an object or a set of objects is without smoothness or grandeur, but from their intricacy, their sudden and irregular deviations, their variety of forms, tints, and lights and shadows, are interesting to a cultivated eye, they are simply picturesque."[5] Price's relation to Gilpin and to Burke, to the latter of whom he openly acknowledges his debt, is obvious, as is his acquiescence in the assumption that certain properties of objects are fitted by nature to call up a specific aesthetic pleasure in those who perceive them. His advocacy does however show that

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1 Three Essays, p.3
2 ibid., p.14
3 ibid., p.43
4 Essay, vol.i,p.49
5 ibid., vol.i,p.90

the picturesque was recognised by many as a distinct class, and it is interesting to notice that in 1811 a writer in the Critical Review criticised Mangin quite sharply for failing to pay any attention to the picturesqye, which the reviewer regarded as a "minor sublime" which "should have had an essay devoted to it on account of its great importance and extent."[1]

The question of colour probably caused eighteenth century aestheticians more trouble than any other single problem, and this is foreshadowed by Addison's remark, made very early in the century, that "the ideas of colours are so pleasing and beautiful in the imagination that it is possible the soul will not be deprived of them."[2] in the next world. Richardson's statement that some colours are less agreeable than others, made a few years later, is an early example of the temptation to regard colours objectively. This tendency could not but be strangthened by the internal sense school's efforts to show that certain properties were immediately productive of the sensation of beauty, and Burke by referring to the beauty of "both shape and colouring"[3] would seem to allow colour as one of these qualities. Beattie notes that it is possible to account for all our ideas of beauty by associations of ideas except in the case of "colours giving pleasure and being called beautiful because they are bright....or delicate."[4] It was probably Burke's example that encouraged Price to affirm that "the beautiful in colour is of a positive and independent nature....A beautiful colour is a common and just expression."[5] This was carried even further by Knight, who maintained that colours could, when separated in the mind from the

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1. Critical Review, XXII(1811),p.178
2. Spectator, no.413
3. Wks., vol,ii,p.165
4. Dissertations, p.142
5. Essay, vol.i,p.169

qualities accompanying them, possess real beauty of their own. This theory was not however well received, and was criticised by Jeffrey in his article on Beauty. It does however show to what extent prevailing tendencies had made it possible for aestheticians to conclude that beauty was objective.

5. Taste and the Internal Senses.

It is perhaps more surprising that the eighteenth century aestheticians kept taste and the sense of beauty for the most part separate from each other than that they occasionally identified the one with the other, in whole or in part. Shaftesbury regarded them as essentially different faculties; as we have seen, he considered internal senses as innate, or instinctive. Taste on the other hand he identifies with judgment, and says that "just taste can neither be begotten, made, conceived or produced, without the antecedent labour and pains of criticism."[1] Nor does Hutcheson make any attempt to define taste as an internal sense: for him it is "a greater capacity of receiving such pleasant ideas"[2] of beauty and harmony.

The theory of an internal sense of beauty had however such an obvious relevance to the question of taste that it was inevitable that sooner or later they should be associated with one another. An early example is an article in the Echo or Edinburgh Weekly Journal which emphasises the intuitive nature of taste, and holds that it is "purely the gift of nature, and is not to be acquired by art or industry. Taste....exhibits to us at once, quick as a flash of lightning, not only the exterior, but also the very essence of things without calling the reasoning faculties to our

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1 Characteristics, vol.iii,p.164
2 Beauty and Virtue, p.9

assistance."[1] The same inclination to identify taste with the internal sense is seen in Akenside, who defines taste as strong and active internal powers, or as

"a discerning sense
Of decent and sublime, with quick disgust
From things deformed......"[2]

and in Melmoth, who saw in it "nothing more than this universal sense of beauty, rendered more exquisite by genius and more correct by cultivation."[3]

There can be no doubt that the acknowledgment of the existence of both the internal sense and a faculty of taste was embarrassing to such aestheticians as Gerard, whose system was formulated by drawing very largely and not always eclectically on the theories of his predecessors, and by then so disposing them as to present a more or less coherent argument. This is particularly evident in the <u>Essay on Taste</u> where Gerard is clearly unhappy about the position he should accord to the internal senses. On the very first page he admits that taste is not wholly natural and later he gives as its components the internal senses, delicacy of passion and judgment. The inclusion of this last is, as Miss Grene has recently pointed out,[4] difficult to reconcile with his statment that "taste is properly a kind of sensation"[5] which "supplies us with simple perceptions entirely different from all that we receive by external sense or by reflection"[5]-an interesting deviation from the original view of an internal sense. It is doubtful whether Miss Grene's charitable attempt to make these statements consistent with each other and with

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1 Echo, XXII(1729),p.78
2 Pleasures of Imagination, III,ll.517-9
3 Fitzosborne's Letters, p.182
4 Modern Philology, XLI(1943),p.45
5 On Taste, p.160

accepted contemporary opinion is really necessary, for Gerard has explained the difficulty to his own satisfaction in a lengthy footnote. In this, he reaches the conclusion that though the powers of taste are to be regarded as senses, they are not therefore to be regarded as ultimate principles, because all the phenomena of the internal senses can be "accounted for, by simpler qualities of the mind."[1] We may however continue to regard each individual principle of taste as a "particular sense, because its perceptions, however produced, are peculiar to it, and specifically different from all others."[1] The absurdity of such deductions should have warned others of the danger of trying to explain the judicial faculty of taste on the basis of the internal senses.

Gerard himself seems to have realised the untenability of his position, and in the fourth book which he added to the 1780 edition of his <u>Essay on Taste</u> he attempts to repair some of the damage without however making any fundamental change in his system. Taste may now be considered <u>either</u> "as a species of sensation or as a species of discernment. In the former light....it is simply the faculty by which we receive pleasure from the beauties and pain from the faults of things....In the other light, it is a faculty by which we distinguish the true causes of our pleasure or our dislike: by a reflex act it discerns the several qualities which are fit to excite pleasure or disgust.[2] That Gerard regarded such an explanation as necessary seems to render superfluous Miss Grene's attempt to explain Gerard's inconsistencies; but it must be remembered that this was for Gerard an afterthought, and that it left intact the principal inconsistency - that of a sensation which provides us with simple perceptions, and which yet

1 On Taste, p.161,note
2 ibid.,IV,p.214

includes the power of judgment.[1]

There were no further attempts made to carry on the inquiry on the lines suggested by Gerard, and writers like Beattie, who had more philosophical acumen than Gerard, were careful not to involve themselves in the same dilemma. Beattie has very obviously the internal senses of Gerard in his mind when he notes as one of the qualities of taste, "the capacity of being easily, strongly, and agreeably affected with sublimity, beauty, harmony exact imitation, etc.,"[2] but such a statement enables him to develop a more defensible theory than that of Gerard. Others made taste one of the internal senses, and were thus able to develop a consistent theory along different lines. Among these last was Duff, who called taste "that internal sense which by its own exquisitely nice sensibility, without the assistance of the reasoning faculty, distinguishes and determines the various qualities of objects submitted to its cognisance; pronouncing by its own arbitrary verdict that they are grand or mean, beautiful or ugly, decent or ridiculous."[3] Monboddo likewise argues that if a man "has not in his mind a preconceived idea of beauty, or in common language, if he has not taste, he will have no perception of beauty in any single thing, or in any combination of things."[4]

The fact that taste often involved the comparison of one object with another remained a stumbling-block to the progress of the attempts to identify taste with the internal sense; and generally a solution was sought which could include judgment as one of the component parts of taste. This usually meant that the internal sense had to be jettisoned, or so

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1 As Miss Grene does not refer to the 1780 edition of Gerard's Essay, it is to be presumed that she did not consider Book IV in her article.

2 Dissertations, p.166

3 Original Genius, p.11

4 Ancient Metaphysics, vol.ii, p.181

watered down as to be almost unrecognisable, but an exception must be made of John Ogilvie, who deserves special mention for an ingenious attempt to retain both faculties. According to Ogilvie, by taste or "this internal sense (as philosophers have denominated it) objects are perceived immediately to bear a certain relation to each other, which even the superior faculties of the mind, when considered apart, would not have been qualified to trace."[1] This is another outstanding example of the determination of eighteenth century aestheticians to accept without question the materials used by their predecessors, and to re-arrange them almost at will, without regard to reality of any sort. Towards the end of the century there is an almost anagrammatic quality about some of the systems worked out that makes it, at this distance of time, difficult to see how a theory such as that of the internal sense, which had so many manifest inconsistencies, held its ground for so many years in the field of aesthetic inquiry.

One of the most definite identifications of taste and the internal sense is that in Thomson's <u>Principles of Beauty</u>,[2] published in 1800. Thomson held that there were five internal powers of mind; perception, memory, imagination, taste, and judgment. Taste is the only one of these to have sensation and feeling, so may justly be referred to as the sixth sense: it is, in fact, "a perfect and distinct internal sense." Thomson holds a most exalted view of the powers of this sense: "it is the seat of all the passions: and nothing could affect the human mind either with desire or aversion....or any other passion or emotion if this power did not exist,

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1 On Composition, vol.i,p.302

2 I have not been able to see a copy of this work: quotations from it are taken either from the Monthly Review for 1801 (New Series, vol.XXIV, pp.387ff.) or Knight's <u>Philosophy of the Beautiful</u>.

there being no other faculty of the mind which can so feel or be affected by them." This system may be striking: but its real value is well assessed by an article in the Monthly Review, in which it is remarked that Thomson's taste is "another new and imaginary sense; the situation of which in the human frame we know not."[1]

The account just given of the various developments of the doctrine of the internal senses, though far from exhaustive, should show clearly the great importance of this theory for the student of eighteenth century aesthetic theory in England and Scotland. A more complete study would need to examine more fully the influence of Shaftesbury, which is only glanced at here, for though the philosophical details of the theory were provided by Locke, it is equally certain that the inspiration came from Shaftesbury, and that without him the internal sense might never have attained the prominence it did in the eighteenth century. It would also be necessary to examine more closely than can be done here the relation between the internal senses and association of ideas, for it was only by combining these two theories that anything approaching a final answer to the aesthetic problems which troubled the eighteenth century could be given.

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1 Monthly Review: New Series XXIV(1801),p.390

CHAPTER IX

HOBBES, LOCKE, AND ASSOCIATIONISM

1. The Doctrine of Association of Ideas.

In its review of Beattie's Dissertations, the Monthly Review makes the following comment: "The doctrine of association of ideas has furnished matter for many ingenious speculations, and served as the basis of many modern theories. It is but justice to the memory of a great philosopher of the last age, to observe that this doctrine, which is commonly considered as having been proposed by Mr. Locke, is to be found illustrated with great ingenuity in the philosophical writings of Hobbes."[1] That such a remark was necessary is a symptom of the comparative neglect into which Hobbes had fallen. Yet it may be doubted whether the doctrine of association as proposed by Locke would ever have wielded the same influence in the eighteenth century had it not been supplemented and even to some extent corrected by a point of view which had its source in Hobbes.

When considering the doctrines of either Hobbes or Locke, it is always necessary to keep in mind the fact that both men had what is vulgarly known as "an axe to grind." Hobbes was expounding a mechanistic philosophy, and had to show that everything in the universe was subject to invariable laws: Locke was putting forward a theory of knowledge which involved the view that man had normally some conscious control over the ideas passing through

1 Monthly Review, LXIX(1783),p.32

his mind. The respective aims of the two philosophers are clearly reflected in the attitudes they adopted when considering the succession of thoughts in the mind; and it is because neither Hobbes nor Locke considered association from an entirely disinterested point of view that their theories can be considered as in some degree complementary. Hume's treatment of association was more disinterested and consequently more complete than that of any of his predecessors, and it exercised correspondingly greater influence on the subsequent development of the associationist theories. It is, therefore, to Hobbes, Locke, and Hume, and in a lesser degree to Hutcheson, that the steady growth of associationism is due; and in its later stages little or nothing is added to the foundations provided by them.

The phrase association of ideas, as is well known, does not occur in the works of Hobbes, who uses fairly indiscriminately such terms as mental discourse, or train of thoughts, to describe what was to him an observable mental phenomenon. Hobbes's purpose was to explain, on the basis of his mechanistic philosophy, how such an apparently wayward faculty as the imagination could still be regarded as subject to regular laws: memory required no such explanation because according to the system of Hobbes its function was to preserve perceptions in the exact order in which they came originally. The imagination had however greater liberty: for although it could pass only from one idea to another that had previously succeeded it in sense, "when very many phantasms have been generated within us by sense, then almost any thought may arise from any other thought: insomuch that it may seem to be a thing

indifferent and casual which thought shall follow which."[1] Hobbes distinguishes between regulated and unregulated trains of thoughts: the former is guided by "some desire and design," as when the mind is trying to trace an idea, whereas the latter is "not as we want or need it, but as we have new sensations" which recall former ideas. This in Hobbes's view accounts for the never-ceasing train of thoughts or phantasms which passes through the mind of man: and suggests very obviously at least three lines of investigation: distraction of the mind when guided by a desire; the power to summon up the ideas gained by experience when the mind is pursuing a certain design: and what we now call day-dreaming, when the mind wanders in a seemingly casual manner from idea to idea. That this connection was regarded by Hobbes as a mechanical rather than a voluntary mental operation does not lessen its value as a contribution to psychology: Hobbes not only drew attention to the previously uninvestigated coherences in our trains of ideas, but even suggested possible reasons for them which could be used quite independently of his own fundamental theories.

It is generally accepted nowadays that Hobbes had no direct influence on Locke. The possibility that he may have had indirect influence remains but need not detain us at present: it can however be argued that Locke's chapter on association of ideas, which first appeared in the 1698 edition, was written as a criticism of the popular belief that, as Dryden said, there was a thread in every discourse, consisting of a train of connected thoughts. In the first edition of his Essay Locke had stated that "another cause of ignorance, of no less moment, is a want of discoverable connection between

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1 Elements of Philosophy: Wks.,vol.i:IV,xxv,8(p.397)

those ideas we have." The later passage is clearly complementary to this, and Locke is careful to use "association" as meaning the casual and unaccountable connection of what he refers to as a "whole gang" of ideas. In view of this, it is interesting to note that Berkeley never uses "association" but talks always of the "connection" of ideas, and that his opinions on the question are contrary to those of Locke. Hutcheson on the other hand invariably talkes of "association" but shares many of Locke's views on the subject. Hume settles the matter by heading his chapter Of the Connection or Association of Ideas.

Locke's chapter on association was therefore, as we have seen, an afterthought; and it was written from a purely critical point of view. Locke held that knowledge consisted in the perception of the agreement or disagreement of our ideas, and to him the fact that chance or custom could bring together in the mind two ideas having no natural connection with each other was a serious obstacle to man when in search of truth. The purpose of the additional chapter was not therefore to analyse or explain trains of ideas, but to warn men against what seemed to Locke a real hindrance to knowledge. "This wrong connection in our minds of ideas in themselves loose and independant of one another, has such an influence, and is of so great force to set us awry in our actions, as well moral as natural, passions, reasonings, and notions themselves, that perhaps there is not any one thing that deserves more to be looked after."[1]

Two features in Locke's account were outstanding and had considerable influence on his successors. The first was the recognition of a natural

1 Essay, II, xxxiii, 5

bu suggesting certain kinds of connection, looks forward to the work of Hume, who was to gather up the loose ends left by his predecessors and present a more complete theory of association than any of them.

It has been suggested by Dr. Rossi that it is only the power of Hume's name that has lent interest to his writings on aesthetics. This is true only if we leavd out of consideration his indirect contribution through his work on association which, by giving coherence to previous half-theories, produced a new and comprehensive theory which was eventually to turn aesthetic speculation into a completely new channel. His importance from this point of view is unquestionable, and doubts as to the intrinsic value of his associationist ideas are here irrelevant.

Hume at the outset abolished the implied distinction between connection of ideas, which was allowed by Locke to be natural and reasonable, and association of ideas, which was contrary to reason, by attributing the "association or connection of ideas" equally to the imagination. This meant, in Lockean phrase, that all complex ideas were formed by the associating power of imagination joining simple ideas into various combinations, and made the need for clearly stated rules of association imperative. Hume suggests as the qualities giving rise to these associations resemblance, cause and effect, and contiguity in time or place, and then goes on to propose a theory of association of impressions, which last may be said to correspond very roughly to Locke's simple ideas. Impressions may be either sensible, or the result of sensation, or reflective, when they are the recurrence in the mind of ideas of pleasure or pain which had originally accompanied certain sensations, and which when again evocated make a new impression on the mind. These

secondary impressions are, according to Hume, the passions, or emotions resembling them. All resembling impressions are connected with each other, and as they form like the thoughts a never-ceasing succession, are continually running one into the other. Hume completes his theory by stating that these two kinds of association, of ideas and impressions, are very closely related, and the one may assist the other, especially where "they both concur in the same object."[1]

If this is compared with the theories of Hobbes and Locke, it will be seen to be a compound of both. Hobbes had tried to deduce certain laws which would account for the operation of men's trains of thoughts: Locke had shown how certain prejudices or emotions could handicap reason, and had given examples of cases where it could be overruled by an associated feeling of pleasure or pain. Hume inherited both these theories, and so treated them that he himself considered that "if anything can entitle the author to so glorious a name as that of inventor, 'tis the use he makes of the principle of association of ideas, which enters into most of his philosophy."[2] The application of this principle to passions as well as to ideas enabled him to develop a theory by which "our more durable sentiments and the complexities of most of our emotions were generated from a comparatively small number of ultimate human feelings."[3]

Hume has himself given us examples of the possible uses of his doctrine in the field of aesthetics. In the chapter on association in his Inquiry he employs it to explain the necessity for maintaining the unity of action in

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1 Treatise, II,i,4

2 From An Abstract of the Treatise, 1740. It is here assumed that the arguments advanced by Mr. Keynes and Mr. Sraffa in favour of Hume's own authorship of this pamphlet are correct.

3 Laird: Hume's Philosophy of Human Nature, p.189

any composition. The whole attention of the reader can be held only so long as the events portrayed allow his thoughts and emotions to succeed one another according to the natural laws of association. Sudden digressions are therefore to be avoided, as they break the necessary continuity of this succession, and so distract the reader, causing him to lose interest. "The strong connection of the events as it were facilitates the passage of the thought or imagination from one to another, facilitates also the transfusion of the passions, and preserves the affection in the same direction."[1]

Nine years later, in his essay on tragedy, Hume again made use of his own theory of association to explain aesthetic reactions. He drew to some extent on the theory of du Bos that there is a certain pleasure in the excitation of any passion whatsoever, as being preferable to a wholly passionless condition: but his main argument was that the emotions most directly aroused by tragedy, such as the sentiments of beauty awakened by the art and genius of the writer, were themselves pleasing. The effect is, in Hume's own words, that "the impulse or vehemence, arising from sorrow, compassion, indignation, receives a new direction from the sentiments of beauty. The latter being the predominant emotions, seize the whole mind."[2] Hume has thus made, from the aesthetic viewpoint, one extremely important addition to the existing theory of association: he has provided a means of relating pleasure and pain, and the various passions connected with them, to ideas with which they could have no discoverable natural connection. The significance of this in a century which attached excessive importance to various modes of pleasure is easily seen.

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1 Enquiry, iii

2 Four Dissertations, p.191

2. Early Applications of the Doctrine.

The first to use the doctrine of association for aesthetic ends was Addison, and he does so in a way that suggests that he was acquainted with the opinions of Locke, and perhaps also of Hobbes; for he does not use the phrase association of ideas, and does on the other hand attribute the power of associating ideas to the imagination. He remarks that "any simple circumstance of what we have formerly seen often raises up a whole scene of imagery, and awakens numberless ideas that before slept in the imagination."[1] This may set in motion a whole train of related ideas, and if cultivated may become a fruitful source of images for a poet. Addison, following up a hint from Locke, explains this phenomenon by some "Cartesian" physiology, by no means essential to the theory he is proposing.

Hutcheson's views on association are in many ways an advance on anything written on the subject by Hobbes or Locke, and it seems likely that he profitted by the work of both of them. His theory is not on the other hand anything like so complete as that of Hume, and the contrary opinion of McCosh seems to be due to his insuperable antipathy to the later philosopher. Hutcheson regarded the power of association as a "disposition in our nature to associate any ideas together for the future which once presented themselves jointly."[2] Unlike Addison and Berkeley, Hutcheson uses the term association, and he does not attempt to distinguish as Locke had done between it and connection of ideas. He does however seem to write at times in the spirit of Locke, as when he says that association of ideas may make an object in itself unpleasing desirable, and thus "greatly corrupt the

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1 Spectator, no.417
2 On the Passions, p.10

affections and cause great evils."[1] His chief contribution to associationist aesthetic was his explanation of the diversity of tastes despite the existence of an internal sense of beauty, which seemed to carry with it the assumption of a uniform standard. According to Hutcheson, association of ideas is the cause of much of the "apparent diversity of fancies in the sense of beauty,"[2] as it may be responsible for the introduction of extraneous ideas which rouse in the spectator a sense of pain where he should first be conscious of beauty. Hutcheson insists however that this is not an argument against the sense of beauty, because when men do have such an "aversion to the objects of beauty and a liking to others void of it,"[2] it is "under different conceptions than those of beauty and deformity."[2] It is interesting to note that Hutcheson holds that "grandeur and novelty are two ideas different from beauty which often recommend objects to us."[3]

The other side of Hutcheson's contribution to associationism remains to be considered. Despite the disadvantages just quoted, Hutcheson thought association a very necessary faculty," as all our language and much of our memory depends on it. Were there no such associations made, we must lose the use of words, and a great part of our power of recollecting past events: besides many other valuable powers and arts which depend upon them."[4] This most important statement contains the seed of a theory that was one day to displace Hutcheson's own principle of an internal sense, and is the first sign of the later tendency to attribute almost every activity of the mind to some form of association. It is surprising that Hutcheson did not

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1 On the Passions, p.11
2 Beauty and Virtue, p.83
3 ibid., p.86
4 On the Passions, p.11

himself see the immense possibility of future development allowed for by his attributing language to association. If he had done so, the internal sense school might have been strangled at birth, and the slow growth of the associationist school over the next half century might have been anticipated. Hutcheson even notes that there is a certain charm in music "which is distinct from harmony, and is occasioned by its raising agreeable passions."[1] Hutcheson's associationist doctrine is full of unfulfilled promise, for the obvious reason that he himself considered it of relatively minor importance, and therefore never took the trouble to work it up into a complete and self-consistent system.

Akenside's theories as to association have been well summarised by a recent article in Modern Language Notes, which leaves little to be said on the matter. Akenside first refers to association in his short introduction, when he describes it as "the source of many pleasures and pains in life"[2] and adds that for this very reason it "bears a great share in the influence of poetry and the other arts." Akenside's doctrine of association is expounded in the passage beginning

> "For when the different images of things,
> By chance combined, have struck the attentive soul..."[3]

His ideas are not distinguished by any great originality, and all bear recognisable marks of their respective sources in Locke, Addison and Hutcheson: the most interesting feature is his development of Hutcheson's statement that memory depends to a great extent on association when it comes to supply the materials for artistic creation. The combination of memory and association is capable of supplying the mind with a wide variety

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1 Beauty and Virtue, p.84
2 Pleasures of Imagination (Preface)
3 ibid., III, ll.312-3

of ideas which it can then select from, and dispose at will.

Baillie too, in his Essay on the Sublime, has something to say on the subject of association which he regards as one of the two sources of man's pleasure in the objects surrounding him. One source is what Locke and Hutcheson had explained as a natural capacity in certain objects to please as soon as perceived, from "a certain harmony and disposition of their parts:"[1] the other is a long association with pleasing objects, so that "though in themselves there be nothing at first delightful, they at last become so."[1] Hence, concludes Baillie, "we see the powerful force of connection."[1] There is nothing very striking in this, but elsewhere Baillie reveals clearly his acquaintance with the psychology of Hume, which he draws on to explain that sublime which arises "merely from association."[2] According to Baillie's theory, association with certain types of ideas can make objects capable of sublimity, as well as of the emotions they themselves naturally arouse: this sublimity is however as a sensation of the soul perfectly genuine for in cases of objects sublime by association, the sublime is the predominant passion, and is therefore strengthened instead of weakened by accompanying associated emotions. This can of course work both ways, as Baillie admits: and if another passion such as terror becomes predominant, the sublime may be altogether destroyed. The most interesting thing about Baillie's theory is that it early shows that the trend of an associationist aesthetic must be towards subjectivism: the sublime by association is as much a case of true sublimity as the sublime of nature because it produces in the

1 On the Sublime, p.34
2 ibid., p.15

spectator the same elevation of soul, and the measure of a sublime object is therefore not so much what qualities it possesses as what emotions it arouses.

Hartley was the first philosopher to attempt to base a whole system on the doctrine of association, but in doing so he added very little that was new to what had already been proposed by his predecessors. He accepted the theory that association was the means of uniting simple ideas into complex ones, and varied it slightly by taking from Berkeley the suggestion that the visible idea is the sign of the other sensible ideas, and therefore the mark of their connection. Hartley illustrates the influence of association on language, already noted by Hutcheson, by certain examples of the power words may obtain through association. As the only possible connection between words and ideas is by association, and as the associations of men vary as much as do their circumstances, words will convey slightly different ideas to different men. Words by association with agreeable ideas come in time themselves to excite pleasure or pain, and this they may in turn transfer to things indifferent by conjunction with their names: hence the effectiveness of many figures of speech. The pleasure given by painting is largely due to association, because of the power of visible ideas to suggest associated ideas of magnitude, distance and the like;[1] and of the various pleasing associations colours have for most men. Likewise, music affects us because of the connections established by association between tunes on the one hand, and passions and emotions on the other. The pleasure taken in discord is attributed by Hartley to the fact that discords are first heard in conjunction with agreeable concords, and that the pleasure is then transferred to these discords,

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1 See chapter V, section2

which may then by association become themselves pleasing.

The position in 1750 (the year after the publication of Hartley's Observations on Man) should now be clear. Association, which had found a place only in the fourth edition of Locke's Essay, had so far increased in importance as to become the foundation of a system of mental philosophy. That is perhaps the significance of Hartley's work in the history of the development of associationism: he gave it an added importance by according it a central place in his philosophy, and so without displaying the originality of Hume on the same subject, he became known as the typical representative of the associationist school of philosophy. His concern with aesthetic questions was not sufficient to make his opinions on such matters of great moment; but his remarks on the subject are of interest, and are symptomatic of a tendency which was rapidly becoming general to make association of ideas the basis of the explanation of any difficulties in working out a philosophy of the arts.

3. Aesthetic Problems and Association.

The doctrines of association of ideas were applied to most of the problems confronting aestheticians in the years 1750-1790. It proved an invaluable asset to the internal sense school, for it could always be brought forward as an explanation of what seemed exceptions to their rules. This subordination to the internal sense accounts for the absence of proper examination of the relationship between aesthetics and association, and it is only in isolated cases that the latter problem received satisfactory treatment. Typical of the way in which the doctrine was often used is a passage from Dr. Johnson's Rambler,[1] in which he

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1 Rambler, no.168

explains that "words become low by the occasions to which they are applied or the general character of those who use them; and the disgust which they produce arises from the revival of those images with which they are commonly united." This statement, however correct it may be, is a good example of the piecemeal way in which associationism was employed to explain isolated facts.

Association of ideas was used to account for beauty, in whole or in part, long before Alison formulated his system. One of the most interesting early examples is that of Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his _Idler_ paper on the true idea of beauty. Reynolds comes to the conclusion that "the works of Nature, if we compare one species with another, are all equally beautiful, and that preference is given from custom or some association of ideas: and that in creatures of the same species, beauty is the medium or centre of all its various forms."[1] This anticipates much of the later speculation on the subject, and was referred to by Beattie in his _Dissertation of Imagination_. Another early application of the doctrine is found in James Usher, who based his analysis on the already existing division between intrinsic and relative beauty. Intrinsic beauty remains for him ultimate, and its standard is absolute and unchanging: the attacks on it made by such men as Mandeville are due to their failure to distinguish clearly between it and accidental beauty or "the adjuncts, or habitual associates of beauty, that please us only accidentally."[2] These last are, says Usher, so numerous that there is an "inexhaustible variety in arbitrary beauty or fashion."[3] This is typical of the attitude of the internal sense school, who were thus able to retain absolute beauty, and

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1 Idler, no.82
2 Clio (1803 ed'n), p.23
3 ibid., p.25

still able to allow for considerable varieties in tastes for other kinds of beauty, for example, that which seemed to exist in such things as dress.

A similar point of view is expressed by Joseph Priestley, who was an enthusiastic disciple of Hartley's. Priestley takes the qualities then popularly supposed to be the cause of beauty, such as uniformity, variety and fitness, and suggests that they please only because, having been perceived in most agreeable objects, they become associated with the idea of pleasure, and so please whenever they are discovered. Priestley ends, rather weakly, by saying that even if the principle of association cannot account for all the pleasures of taste, it has certainly "a very considerable influence in this affair, and will help us to account for much, if not all of the variety that is observable in the tastes of different persons."[1] The same fundamental idea is expressed in a strange pamphlet on the Principles of Taste (1785): "From the association of ideas any object may be pleasing, though absolutely devoid of beauty, and displeasing with it. The form is then out of the question: it is some real good or evil with which the object, but not its form is associated."[2] What all such accounts have in common is a determination to maintain the objective nature of beauty, and at the same time to find an explanation of the observable fact that in certain cases it seems rather to be subjective. Probably none of the aestheticians concerned would have agreed to such a statement of their difficulties: if they had seen the problem in this light, there might have been less unprofitable repetition of the same positions in the latter half of the century.

Exactly the same solution was from time to time used to explain certain

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1 Lectures on Oratory and Criticism, p.133
2 Principles of Taste, p.30

cases of sublimity. Gerard points out, as Baillie had done before him, that an object not in itself sublime may nevertheless become so if associated with a sublime object. On these grounds he accounts for sublimity of style as arising from the nature of the ideas connected with the words used; and then sums up by saying that "the sublime of those arts in which the instrument of imitation is language, must evidently arise entirely from association; because it is the only principle from which words derive their force and meaning."[1] Beattie likewise comments that a "common sentiment may be made sublime when it is illustrated by an allusion to a grand object,"[2] and Barrett in his Pretensions to a Final Analysis concludes that if an object has not in itself the dignity necessary to make it sublime it may become so by means of circumstances which must, however, "be marked with that very quality without which the object itself cannot be possessed of it."[3]

The pleasure given by colour was a source of much difficulty, and here too association of ideas proved helpful. Hartley himself had suggested that although colour might be a source of immediate pleasure to children, "in adults the pleasure of mere colours is very languid in comparison of their present aggregates of pleasure, formed by association."[4] Donaldson goes into this question in some detail; he starts by suggesting that we are apt to associate the idea of warmth with a certain shade of yellow, and from this draws the general conclusions that "by habit certain qualities inferred come to act much in the same way as immediate objects of sensation,"[5] and, after considering other examples, that "gentle tones of colour associate

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1 On Taste, p.24
2 Dissertations, p.632
3 Final Analysis, p.41
4 Observations on Man, vol.i,p.208
5 Elements of Beauty, p.12

with and dispose to, the gentle and delicate of internal feeling; harsh and sharp ones, with rude and disagreeable emotions."[1] Blair has little to say on the question, but agrees that association has probably "influence, in some cases, on the pleasure which we receive from colours."[2] Beattie, too, has something to say on this subject, and he comes to the logical conclusion that "the beauty of colours depends so much on the ideas with which they may happen to have been associated by custom, that the same colour shall be beautiful in one object, and in another ugly...."[3]

This does however represent only one aspect of the attention paid to associationism in the second half of the century, and there were also several attempts to use the theories of association as parts of a tentative aesthetic. One of the first to do this was Lord Kames, and though his views are not all original, being mostly derived from Hume, they are of importance because of the popularity of his Elements of Criticism, and also because of the prominent place accorded to association in a work avowedly literary in character. The very first chapter in the book is called Perceptions and Ideas in a Train, and in it Kames repeats what Hume has already said on the subject; that trains of ideas are governed by certain laws based on the relations of things, and that these laws are not completely inviolable. Man has no power to vary his trains of thought other than by paying more attention to some ideas than to others, and by making a selection where there are possible alternatives; but even here the ideas may follow the law of order by proceeding either from the general towards the particular or vice versa.

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1 Elements of Beauty, p.14
2 Lectures, vol.i,p.94
3 Dissertations, p.112

Kames then makes his own contribution by deducing that since men are subject to the natural laws of connection and order which govern their thoughts, order and connection wherever they occur must be a source of pleasure, and their absence must occasion displeasure. But "every work of art that is conformable to the natural course of our ideas is so far agreeable; and every work of art that reverses that course, is so far disagreeable,"[1] and so it follows that order and connection are one source of our pleasure in works of art. They are moreover, when submitted to by the artist, valuable restraints on a "bold and fertile imagination,"[1] and are the source of that order and unity essential to good composition. They do not exclude Hutcheson's principles of uniformity and variety: on the contrary they comprehend them, and Kames gives examples of both principles operating in our trains of thoughts, and then combines his conclusions in the general observation, that "in every work of art it must be agreeable to find that degree of variety which corresponds to the natural course of our perceptions; and that an excess in variety or uniformity must be disagreeable by varying that natural course."[2] These speculations would seem to provide a basis for a complete aesthetic theory which Kames did not however try to develop, as his interest was not primarily in the theory of the beautiful. His aim was to provide himself with a philosophical foundation on which he could then build up his theory of criticism, and he was not concerned with abstract speculation further than he considered it essential to his purpose.

The position of Gerard in his Essay on Genius is not unlike that of

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1 Wks., vol.iv, p.24
2 ibid., vol.iv, p.289

Kames. The nature of his subject involved him in a certain amount of philosophical speculation, and like Kames he took Hume's theory of association as a starting-point, then proceeded to construct a system in accordance with it. Gerard's main thesis is well summarised in his own words: "Genius sometimes has great force and compass: but a vigorous construction of the associating principles is sufficient to account for it, however great it be..."[1] The associating principles here referred to are a slight variation of those laid down by Hume: Gerard divides them into simple principles of resemblance, contrariety, and vicinity, and compound principles, composed of the "union of simple principles with one another or with other circumstances,"[2] and consisting in co-existence, the relation of cause and effect, and order in place or time. According to Gerard, one or other of the associating principles is, by constitution or by custom, predominant in almost every man, and gives a certain direction to his talents or, if he possesses any, his genius; the subordinate principles follow the lead given by the predominating principle and help it in various ways, as by supplying it with suitable ideas. The stronger the combination among these principles, the greater will be the force and range of a man's genius.

Gerard again summarises his theories very concisely. "In every kind of genius, its predominant principle of association keeps the end in view, renders the mind intent on it, gives it a disposition to run into what can promote it, and reject what is unserviceable: the subordinate principles have their vigour imparted to them by the predominant principle, and they act in a direction suitable to it."[3] Gerard's essay was on the

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1 On Genius, p.185
2 ibid., p.118
3 ibid., p.352

whole well received by the reviewers, and despite its obvious indebtedness to the philosophy of Hume the work undoubtedly shows originality in the application of the theory of association. The interest aroused by this aspect of his theory is reflected in the suggestion made in the Monthly Review that it may be possible for a man, "by the judicious direction of the associating principles, to produce material variations and improvements in his genius."[1]

Both Kames and Gerard displayed interest in the question of association of emotions and passions, and once again the influence of Hume is discernible, The treatment of Gerard, being more comprehensive than that of Kames, will alone be considered at present. Gerard held that when any specific passion is roused, it brings along with it into the mind all the widely different ideas that have been associated with it in the past. This theory has obvious relevance to his analysis of genius; and Gerard makes use of it to explain diversity of genius, and also that concentration of passion so often found in works of art, because "a passion tends to hinder the mind from running into the conception of such ideas as have no connection with that passion."[2] It is, therefore, from Gerard's point of view, "of great importance to understand the influence of passion on association."[3]

Reid has a chapter on association in his Intellectual Powers of Man, and refers with approval to the accounts of it given by Kames and Gerard; he has little to add to existing theories, but utters a very necessary warning against the danger of attributing too much importance to attractions of ideas in explaining trains of thoughts. If these are, he concludes,

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1 Monthly Review, LII(1775),p.8
2 On Genius, p.174
3 ibid., p.145

"the sole causes of the regular arrangement of thought in the fancy, there is no use for judgment or taste in any composition."[1] Reid was however of far less significance in the development of associationism as a factor in aesthetics than his contemporary Beattie, whose Dissertations appeared in 1783; that is, two years earlier than Reid's work just cited.

Beattie's theories as to association of ideas received their fullest expression in his essay Of Imagination. Like his predecessors Kames and Gerard, he accepts the basic positions of Hume, laying down as associating principles resemblance, contrast, custom, contiguity and the relation of cause and effect. He does however lay special emphasis on the influence of custom, and one example given by him is of unusual interest. "The daily contemplation of the grand phenomena of nature, in a mountainous country, elevates and continually exercises the imagination of the solitary inhabitant;"[2] one effect of such a way of life, Beattie adds, is to "render the mind in a peculiar degree susceptible of wild thoughts and warm emotions."[2] He also attributes to custom as an associating principle the power of a painter to convey by certain uses of light and shade the ideas of distance, magnitude or solidity on a flat surface.

Beattie then proceeds, by way of the familiar dictum that association may render unpleasing things in themselves agreeable and vice versa, to consider the relation between beauty and association. He begins with the general statement that "from affections founded in habit, many or perhaps most of these pleasing emotions are derived, which accompany the perception of what in things visible is called beauty: those colours, figures, gestures

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1 Essays, vol.ii, p.103
2 Dissertations, p.88

and motions being for the most part accounted beautiful which convey to the mind pleasurable ideas; and those ugly or not beautiful, which impart suggestions of an opposite or different nature."[1] He then takes several of the then recognised sources of the pleasure proceeding from beauty, and argues that they can be explained by their association with other qualities such as perfection or utility, which are universally pleasing. Thus the popular theory that beauty of form depends on proportion and variety is resolved by Beattie into association of ideas: variety is not, he holds, in itself pleasing, unless it is immediately connected with some other agreeable ideas; and proportion is made beautiful by a combination of the "pleasing ideas of skill, contrivance, and convenience."[2]

It looks for a moment as if Beattie is about to formulate a wholly associationist aesthetic, but at this point he comes up against the problem of the standard of beauty, and this can only be solved by his acceptance of the internal senses. Beattie, therefore, despite his belief that "in all cases it seems possible to account for (our ideas of beauty)....upon the principles of association, except perhaps in the single one of colours,"[3] finds it necessary to retain the sense of beauty. This allows him to admit without perturbation that men do now differ, and always will differ in their ideas of beauty "so long as they differ in their customs, prejudices, passions and capacities."[4] Beattie is however clearly the last link in the chain connecting Hume to Alison: it only remained for his successors to abandon the internal sense of beauty

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1 Dissertations, p.110
2 ibid., p.115
3 ibid., p.142
4 ibid., p.141

altogether, and the way would then be clear for the evolution of an aesthetic doctrine based solely on the association of ideas.

4. The Associationist Aesthetic of Alison.

Alison's *Essays on Taste* (1790) abandoned the theory of the sense of beauty, and substituted for it as the foundation of aesthetic speculation the principle of association of ideas. The system he formulated is built up almost painstakingly, and there is about it a unity and completeness that is rather notably lacking in most of the works on this subject in the period under consideration. The reason for this is not far to seek: Alsion by taking association as the basis of his system and at the same time rejecting the internal sense, had to reject many of the comfortable assumptions of his predecessors, and consider each point on its merits. He was moreover a true aesthetician, and did not concern himself with ethics or any other branch of philosophy; this left him free to concentrate on the one set of problems, and consequently his work has a purpose about it that is lacking in, for example, Kames when he is dealing with aesthetic problems.

Alison in his introduction announces that the objects of his inquiry are two; they are, to investigate both "the nature of those qualities that produce the emotions of taste"[1] and "the nature of that faculty by which these emotions are received."[1] Then after rejecting as unjustified the common assumptions of an internal sense and of the simplicity of the emotions of taste, he begins to develop his own theory. When we say that an object which is presented to our senses is beautiful or sublime, we are wrong in believing

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1 Essays, vol.i,p.xiv

that there is in that object any inherent beauty or sublimity. We are in reality describing our own reactions to that object, and we should therefore apply the description of 'beautiful' to our own emotions: it is to them, then, that we must look, if we wish to analyse beauty. Alison finds that the immediate effect of a 'beautiful' object when perceived by sense is to start an analogous train of thoughts in the imagination, and it is only when an object sets in motion such trains of imagery that we call it beautiful. The consequent emotion is proportional to the strength of the associating principle of resemblance, which Alison believes to be predominant in trains of thought produced by objects of taste. Such a theory supposes previous acquaintance with the objects, which will otherwise have no power to start immediately a train of imagery; and conversely the greater the number of associations we have with the object concerned, the greater will be its apparent beauty. The first essential in Alison's system is therefore a sudden exercise of the imagination consequent on the perception of a so-called "object of taste."

So long as the trains of thoughts originate in an idea associated with the object, they may depart very far from it, and still make the object appear beautiful. Such trains must however be distinguished from ordinary trains of thoughts, and Alison notes two characteristics which are peculiar to them. They must possess "some character of emotion"[1] so that the component ideas will be "ideas of emotion";[1] and the thoughts must have "some general principle of connection which pervades the whole and gives them some certain and definite character,"[2] whether it be one of gaiety, pathos or anything else. Alison then goes on to state

1 Essays, vol.i,p.75
2 ibid., vol.i,p.77

his main contention: experience shows that objects of taste are all "productive of some simple emotion,"[1] and Alison therefore concludes that "wherever the emotions of sublimity or beauty are felt,....some affection is uniformly excited by the presence of the object, before the more complex emotion of beauty is felt;....if no such affection is excited, no emotion of beauty or sublimity is produced."[1]

Finally, Alison distinguishes between the emotions of taste, and the ordinary emotions of simple pleasure. The emotions of taste are felt only when a "regular and consistent train of ideas or emotions"[2] follows on the perception of an object of taste. In the case of a simple emotion of pleasure, on the other hand, "no additional train of thought is necessary,"[3] and the emotion does not necessarily cause any exercise of the imagination. Alison appropriates the word <u>delight</u> to the peculiar pleasure given by objects of taste, and points to several additional contributory factors which help to keep it distinct from ordinary pleasure: these are the pleasures taken in the exercise of the affections, and in the activity of imagination, especially when uncircumscribed by the realities of everyday life, Both contribute to delight, and therefore the pleasure "which accompanies the emotions of taste....(is) a complex pleasure."[4]

The remainder of Alison's work is devoted almost wholly to showing that his theory is able to provide a solution to nearly all the specific difficulties that had confronted aestheticians during the

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1 Essays, vol.i,p.81
2 ibid., vol.i,p.158
3 ibid., vol.i,p.159
4 ibid., vol.i,p.169

eighteenth century. The question of a fixed standard of beauty is now easily disposed of, because Alison does not admit any such thing as absolute beauty: for him, beauty and sublimity are purely subjective emotions, and the only standard is the feeling of the individual. Different opinions as to the beauty of objects are due to the difference in the ideas associated with them, and "although we may not discover what the particular association is, we do not fail to suppose that some such association exists which is the foundation of the sentiment of beauty, and to consider this difference of opinion as sufficiently accounted for on such a supposition."[1] Such associations arise in various ways, and may be attributed to age, occupation, or prevalent habits amongh other things; and they account not only for the variety of opinions in the world, but also for the fact that the same object appears more or less beautiful at different periods of a man's life, or even at different times in the same day.

As Jeffrey was later to point out, Alison's theory abolishes the distinction made between beautiful, sublime, picturesque, and any other possible classes of the objects of taste. If such objects are recognised only by their effects, and if these effects are in every case a train of thoughts of a particular kind, there is clearly no real distinction between them. Alison does however allow that they differ inasmuch as they may vary to some extent the character of the train of imagery, and may also, as in the case of the picturesque, widen its scope by making us consider other qualities in the objects concerned. This will increase the emotion of beauty by suggesting fresh images to the mind, and thus

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1 Essays, vol.i,p.85

giving more exercise to the imagination.

The means by which the fine arts accomplish their purpose of producing the emotions of taste are also investigated by Alison, and he concludes that only such subjects are fit for artistic treatment as are capable of producing some kind of simple emotion. Other subjects may however also be rendered beautiful if they are associated with qualities which are productive of these emotions, and the power of each art is to be measured by the scope it allows for such additions as will lend beauty to its subjects. The task of the artist is to invent circumstances which will lead the mind in the desired direction, and at the same time to provide his composition with unity by subordinating the various parts to one general principle, thus making it possible for his audience to feel the emotions of taste in the greatest degree possible. "It is this purity and simplicity of composition accordingly, which has uniformly distinguished the great masters of the art (i.e. painting) from the mere copiers of nature."[1] Alison reviews the advantages of certain arts, and concludes that poetry has a greater power to produce beauty and sublimity than any other art, because it is less limited in its choice of subjects, is able to give animation to all it describes, and above all because of the "unbounded power which the instrument of language affords to the poet"[2] by enabling him to speak directly to the imagination.

The second and the longer of Alison's two essays is entitled Of the Beauty and Sublimity of the Material World. At the outset Alison rejects the possibility that matter can by itself or by means of its qualities

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1 Essays, vol.i,p.126
2 Ibid., vol.i,p.132

produce any kind of emotion. But, he adds, the qualities of matter may produce emotions or affections "from their association with other qualities; and as being either the signs or expressions of such qualities as are fitted by the constitution of our nature to produce emotion;"[1] for "the constant connection we discover between the sign and the thing signified, between the material quality and the quality productive of emotion, renders at last the one expressive to us of the other, and very often disposes us to attribute to the sign that effect which is produced only by the quality signified."[2] The rest of the essay is little more than a series of illustrations of the applicability of this doctrine to almost every type of beauty considered by Alison's predecessors. These fall into two main classes; beauty of material objects and beauty of mind, both of which are made known to us by material signs, which are in turn signs of the qualities productive of the emotion of beauty. Alison deals in turn with the beauty found in music, colour, form, and (in the second edition) the human face, and shows that each can be accounted for on the same principle of association with a quality capable of exciting emotion: when such associations are dissolved, material qualities can no longer be called beautiful.

In his closing chapter Alison claims that his doctrines are substantially the same as those of the Platonists, and of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Akenside, Spence, and Reid, all of whom believed that beauty consisted in the expression of mental qualities. There is, he holds, both a direct and an indirect way in which material qualities may be the signs of mental qualities. They may be so directly as "the immediate

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1 Essays, vol.i,p.178
2 ibid., vol.i,p.179

signs of the powers or capacities of the mind,"[1] or by signifying to us the more amiable affections of mind with which it is natural for man to sympathise. Indirectly, the material qualities may signify the mental as a result of experience of their constant co-existence; because of certain resemblances or analogies between them; from association "when by means of education, of fortune, or of accident, material objects are connected with pleasing or interesting qualities of mind;"[2] and finally from the individual and personal associations each man makes in the course of his life. Therefore, concludes Alison, "the beauty and sublimity which is felt in the various appearances of matter, are finally to be ascribed to their expression of mind; or to their being, either directly or indirectly, the signs of those qualities of mind which are fitted by the constitution of our nature, to affect us with pleasing or interesting emotion."[3]

McCosh tells us that Alison's essays seem to have "passed very much out of sight till the booksellers in 1810 told him that there was a wish expressed for a second edition, which was reviewed by Francis Jeffrey in 1811, and afterwards had an extensive circulation in various countries."[4] This is borne out by the comparative neglect of his work in the twenty years which intervened between the first and second editions: during this period there are very few references made to his essays, in the aesthetic writings of others. An exception must be made in the case of Mangin who, although he does not mention Alison by name, draws upon his theories as well as those of

1 Essays, vol.ii,p.418
2 ibid., vol.ii,p.421
3 ibid., vol.ii,p.423
4 The Scottish Philosophy, p.308

most of his predecessors in his Essays on Literary Pleasure. Very early in this work he advances the view that much of the pleasure received from objects of taste is due to "the train of ideas with which they are associated in our minds,"[1] and further on he defines association of ideas as the "part of our constitution which is always raising up a train of thoughts in consequence of every object which engages the attention."[2] Mangin considers that the character of the emotion felt on the perception of an object is governed by the kind of train of thought that it starts, and from this deduces the artistic necessity of presenting only such circumstances as will arouse the kind of thoughts and emotions intended by the artist. This all indicates knowledge of Alison's theory, but it must be added that Mangin did not accept Alison's principal arguments, and used the theory of association only when and as it answered his own purposes.

The second edition of Alison's essays was at once hailed by Jeffrey, writing in the Edinburgh Review, as "on the whole the best and most pleasing work that has yet been produced on the subject of taste and beauty."[3] There are good grounds for suspecting that it was Alison's work that first led Jeffrey to take an interest in aesthetic theory, and to develop a system of his own which eventually appeared in the Encyclopaedia Britannica supplement for 1824. In the earlier essay, Jeffrey allows that there may have been a certain amount of truth in earlier systems: "it seems to be perfectly true for instance, that certain combinations of colours and sounds are originally agreeable to the eye and the ear, and constitute a sort of beauty....of which no other account can be given than that, by the

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1 Pleasures from Literary Compositions, p.9
2 ibid., p.20
3 Edinburgh Review, XVIII, no.35(1811), p.1

constitution of our nature, such objects are agreeable to us."[1] This admission at once lays Jeffrey open to the very accusation which a few pages earlier he had levelled at others; that of implying the existence of an internal sense, for how else are such "combinations of colours and sounds"[1] to be recognised as beautiful?

In his article on Beauty however, Jeffrey abandoned the attempt to combine the objective theory of the internal sense with the subjective theory of Alison, and his attack on Knight's belief in the intrinsic beauty of colours shows that Jeffrey no longer held that belief himself. As the later article is therefore a more exact expression of Jeffrey's own views, it will be better to confine our attention to it at present. Jeffrey's theories are set out and expressed with admirable conciseness and clarity. After rejecting the possible existence of an inherent beauty, he claims that the "vast variety of objects to which we give the common name of beautiful become entitled to that appellation merely because they all possess the power of recalling or reflecting those sensations of which they have been the accompaniments, or with which they have been associated in our imagination by any other more casual bond of connection."[2] Jeffrey's debt to Alison, from whom he differs on certain points, is throughout obvious; but the two systems are not sufficiently alike to make a detailed account of Jeffrey's theory superfluous and the points of difference deserve special attention.

Jeffrey holds that the chief fault in Alison's theory is that it does not allow for the instantaneous nature of our perception of the beautiful, and this he attributes to Alison's "assertion that our sense

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1 Edinburgh Review, XVIII, no.35(1811), p.6
2 Encyclopaedia Britannica (1824), p.174(col.ii)

of beauty consists not merely in the suggestion of ideas of emotion, but in the contemplation of a connected series of such ideas."[1] This Jeffrey considers quite inconsistent with the fact that a beautiful object gives an immediate pleasure, and he concludes that it is impossible that the cause of a perception of beauty can be "a long series of various and shifting emotions."[1] It can only be assumed that Jeffrey had failed to appreciate one of the most central features of Alison's theory, which insisted that beauty could not be perceived until the imagination had been aroused, and that perception of beauty consisted in just this imaginative activity. Jeffrey allows that "the perception of beauty implies a certain exercise of the imagination," which involves a complete shifting of the emphasis. If then the first elements of the feeling of beauty were for Alison perception and imagination, it might be said that for Jeffrey they become sensation and emotion.

Hence Jeffrey's fundamental principles are that beauty is but "the reflection of our own inward emotions, and is made up entirely of certain little portions of love, pity and affection"[2] recalled on the perception of certain objects: and that "the love of sensation seems to be the ruling appetite of human nature,"[2] so that many sensations in themselves painful may be the subject of a certain kind of pleasure. Having established these theories, and deduced from them that the only interest we can have in anything, including beauty, must be connected with the "fortunes of sentient beings,"[3] Jeffrey can proceed to examine the relation between the object called "beautiful" and the emotion felt by the

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1 Encyclopaedia Britannica (1824), p.179(ii)
2 ibid., p.181(i)
3 ibid., p.181(ii)

beholder. Here his system differs little from Alison's, and he finds that "almost every tie by which two objects can be bound together in the imagination, in such a manner as that the presentment of the one shall recall the memory of the other,"[1] and in fact "almost every possible relation which can subsist between such objects may serve to connect the things we call sublime or beautiful, with feelings that are interesting or delightful."[2] Thus beauty and sublimity can both be explained as the "reflection of emotions excited by the feelings or condition of sentient beings: and are produced altogether by certain little portions.... of love, joy, pity, veneration, or terror, that adhere to those objects that are present on occasion of such emotions."[3]

Jeffrey ends by suggesting the consequences that will follow upon the adoption of his theory. He claims, as he had done earlier on behalf of Alison's theory, that it "establishes the substantial identity between the sublime, the beautiful and the picturesque"[4] by showing that material objects differ not in the qualities, but in the emotions which they may cause by association of ideas in each individual according to his experience. Attempts to classify these emotions as sublime, beautiful or picturesque he considers as ill-advised, since they tend to mislead men into attributing these classes to actual qualities in the object. The second advantage of Jeffrey's theory is that if accepted it makes unnecessary any fresh attempts to set up a fixed standard of taste, for it will follow that in so far as a man in discussing questions of taste speaks of his own emotions, all tastes must have equal validity. It does not mean

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1 Encyclopaedia Britannica (1824), p.181(ii)
2 ibid., p.182(i)
3 ibid., p.188(ii)
4 ibid., p.195(i)

however, as Jeffrey hastens to add, that all tastes are equally good; since all men have not the same degree of sensibility. There is therefore still room for the cultivation of taste "through the indirect channel of cultivating the affections and powers of observation."[1]

Although it did not appear until 1824, the spirit in which Jeffrey writes is clearly the spirit of Beattie and Alison rather than that of Kant or Coleridge, and there is on this score an obvious justification for including him in a work on the eighteenth century aestheticians. His article on Beauty has moreover an air of finality about it that makes it peculiarly suitable for consideration as the last word in a long controversy. Nobody now thinks that Jeffrey had provided the key to the solution of all aesthetic problems: but there is no reason to doubt that Jeffrey himself believed that his theory should "put an end to all these perplexing and vexatious questions."[2] It required no such indefensible assumptions as that of an internal sense of beauty; it accounted for the wide variety of tastes among men, at different ages and in different countries; and above all it seemed eminently reasonable and self-consistent from beginning to end. It had therefore accomplished all that any eighteenth century aesthetician could have hoped for, and Jeffrey may fairly be excused for thinking that he had ended a long and, it is to be feared, sometimes tedious dispute.

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1 Encyclopaedia Britannica (1824),p.196,(ii)
2 ibid., p.196(i)

PART IV

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER X

THE INFLUENCE OF HOBBES, LOCKE, AND BERKELEY
ON THE ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH AESTHETICIANS
OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

What has already been said in the preceeding chapters leaves little more to be done now than to gather up certain loose threads, and to try to take a whole view of what has so far necessarily been treated piecemeal. It is never easy to estimate the influence exercised by individuals on succeeding generations, and the task of doing so is rendered more difficult by the myopia that close study of certain aspects of any problem is apt to beget. It is nevertheless clear that eighteenth century aesthetic theorists were considerably indebted to the great philosophers whose chief works appeared between 1650 and 1750, and it is my immediate aim to try to set down the extent of this influence.

Berkeley, the last and the most delightful of the philosophers with whom I am specially concerned, is also the least influential of the three. It has already been indicated that Berkeley's philosophy was little understood by the ordinary educated man of the day, and his influence on what may be called the popular philosophy of the day was correspondingly small. As Professor Moore has pointed out, Berkeley was and is a "philosopher's philosopher," and few of those who dabbled in aesthetic theory could advance a claim to competence in philosophy. It may be said,

then, without fear of contradiction, that Berkeley's influence on the eighteenth century aestheticians was negligible. Certain of his theories did find favour, but it was often through the intermediacy of another philosopher that they became more widely known. Thus Hartley must have helped to popularise certain conclusions which could be drawn from Berkeley's New Theory of Vision, and the interest taken in Berkeley by Reid may be reflected in the slight increase in the knowledge of Berkeley's work which is apparent in some of the Scottish aestheticians at the end of the century.

The influence of Locke was as great as that of Berkeley was small. Locke as a philosopher expressed the spirit of the post-revolution period just as clearly as did Addison as an essayist, and a certain similarity of temperament in the two men may account in some degree for Addison's ready acceptance of much of Locke's philosophy. Locke has been claimed both as an empiricist and as a rationalist; and in either case he was giving expression to a point of view that was sure of a sympathetic hearing in the eighteenth century. He was an empiricist in so far as he believed in collecting carefully the facts of experience, and then drawing only such conclusions as seemed to him certain in view of the evidence before him. He was a rationalist in that he upheld the supremacy of the understanding among the human faculties, and taught that it was only through the exercise of reason that man could attain to certain truths. There are to be found, therefore, in his philosophy, two fundamental positions which came to be accepted by the vast majority of his successors, and which made his works, even as regards method, of great importance in the eighteenth century.

Locke did far more, however, than suggest to later aestheticians a way of approaching the problems which faced them. He provided a system of thought which, though it at no time dealt with aesthetic questions, at least provided a philosophic basis for numerous answers to such questions, though by doing so it often raised fresh problems. What is beauty? If it is an idea in the mind, Locke's "new way of ideas" could be used to explain just how it came to be there. If beauty is a quality residing in the beautiful object, the distinction between primary and secondary qualities provided the basis for a profound discussion of the point. In the same way, Locke's division of ideas into those arising from sensation and those arising from reflection gave a starting point to investigations on many subjects, and notably to Hutcheson's attempt to analyse the internal senses.

Locke's influence on the development of aesthetic theory was in fact very great. As has been pointed out earlier, most of the eighteenth century aestheticians were not philosophers at all, yet most of them realised that the problems they were dealing with went deeper than mere questions of artistic expediency. They looked around therefore to find philosophic support for their theories, and as often as not it was to Locke that they went for succour. Few of them were acquainted thoroughly with his philosophy, but most of them knew something about it, and took from Locke just as much as they needed and no more. Locke was also fortunate in that his philosophy was to some extent popularised by Addison in the _Spectator_, for this made it reach a wider audience than it might otherwise have done.

The influence of Hobbes on eighteenth century aesthetic theory is more

difficult to assess than that of either Locke or Berkeley. Hobbes was not in general well spoken of by his successors, and he is generally dismissed as "Mr. Hobbes the atheist," while Kames refers to his "dark and confused notions." It is well to remember however that one can shout disapproval of a philosopher in public, and still read his works in private. How far this can be said of the eighteenth century attitude to Hobbes, it is very hard to say. A large folio volume containing nearly all his most important works was published in London in 1750, and it is difficult to believe that this would have been done if there had not still been a good deal of interest in his philosophy.

So far as aesthetic theory was concerned, Hobbes had one great advantage over Locke. He had himself shown some interest in the arts and in criticism, and had expressed views on these subjects which had attracted some attention in the post-Restoration period when he was still the dominating figure in English philosophy. Most of the writers who wrote in the second half of the seventeenth century and in the early years of the eighteenth century felt his influence, which can be seen in the works of Dryden, Temple, Dennis, the Cambridge philosophers, Addison and Shaftesbury, even if it manifests itself only in violent opposition to Hobbes's theories. It was in this period that certain of Hobbes's ideas became established in the minds of critics, and chief among these were his various theories as to the functions of the imagination, whether or not engaged in the work of artistic creation. As these ideas were adopted piecemeal, they did not involve the necessary acceptance of Hobbes's determinism, and could therefore be passed on till a later generation could draw upon them in formulating a theory of creative genius.

It must also be remembered that many of Hobbes's theories as to the imagination were in keeping with traditional ideas on the subject. This helps to account for the readiness with which certain of his doctrines were accepted by men who were on the whole opposed to his philosophy, and for the fact already noted in the first chapter that even at the end of the eighteenth century, the functions of imagination were not regarded as differing in essentials from those proposed by Hobbes.

Other points in Hobbes's philosophy aroused sufficient controversy among his immediate successors to make almost certain their survival as living issues. Notable examples are his theory of laughter adopted by Addison and opposed by Hutcheson, and his opposition of wit and judgment, which preceded and no doubt in some way suggested Locke's later remarks on the same subject. He was also, as came to be recognised later in the eighteenth century, a pioneer as regards investigation of the associations of ideas in the mind, and can therefore claim some credit for the great amount of attention given to this phenomenon during the eighteenth century.

A comparison of the influence of Hobbes with that of Locke suggests a ready answer that Hobbes's influence was more in the field of psychology, and Locke's more in the field of philosophy. Such a wide generalisation would not be by any means the whole truth, and yet there is just an element of truth init. Hobbes's philosophy did concentrate to some extent on the processes of the mind: whereas Locke paid more attention to objects. and their qualities than did Hobbes. This is illustrated by the fact that in the first part of this thesis the name of Hobbes occurs more frequently than that of Locke: in the second

part it is mentioned very rarely. The difference probably illustrates just how much truth there is in such a generalisation.

Hobbes and Locke are, then, the two philosophers who exercised most influence on the course of eighteenth century aesthetics, and their ideas continued popular throughout the century. These ideas were sometimes, especially in the case of Locke, known directly from their philosophical works; but they were also known indirectly through the work of such men as Addison and Hutcheson, at the beginning of the century, and Kames and Gerard later on. This influence was very considerable, and of such a nature that it is safe to say that without the work of Hobbes and Locke the course of aesthetic theory in both England and Scotland would have been very different. The extent to which aestheticians were dominated by the basically empiricist assumptions of Hobbes and Locke may be estimated by a comparison between the development of aesthetic theory in eighteenth century England and the development of the aesthetic views of Kant between 1764 and 1790. In his earlier Observations on Beauty and Sublimity, Kant, like his English contemporaries, based his aesthetic on the theory of an internal sense. In the next quarter of a century however, Kant came to abandon this view, with its implication of an objective beauty, and in his Critique of Aesthetic Judgment (1790), he has come to accept the view that beauty is subjective. By an curious coincidence, in the same year appeared Alison's Essays on Taste, which was the first work in English to propose a theory of subjective beauty. The difference between the works of Kant and Alison is however very significant. Kant had by this time had shaken off the bonds of dogmatism, and had adopted a new critical approach that makes him the forerunner of a

completely new school of aesthetic thought. Alison, on the other hand, continued to accept the empiricist assumptions that had been established first by Bacon, and later by Hobbes and Locke, and therefore his theories are one of the last expressions of the empiricist aesthetic. It is not Alison, but Coleridge, who knew the work of Kant, who should be regarded as the herald of a new era in English aesthetics.

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The following points should be noted:

(i) Notes in this section are numbered from (1) upwards, and are given only the first time the number concerned occurs.

(ii) Under primary sources, I have noted as far as possible all available eighteenth century and also some early nineteenth century and modern editions. The editions I have consulted are marked with an asterisk. (*)

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[2] This later version, which contains only minor alterations, is wrongly listed in the Cambridge Bibliography as a separate work.

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[5] Some but not all of these are verbatim reproductions of passages in Elements of Criticism.

[6] It should be noted that this edition fails to record differences from the original text of 1748. It should not be used, therefore, without reference to the earlier editions.

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7 The Periodicals thus marked continued to appear after the last date here given, which shows the latest volume consulted.

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In this section, the following abbreviations are employed:

JEGP. Journal of English and Germanic Philology.
MLN. Modern Language Notes.
PMLA. Publications of the Modern Language Association of America.
MP. Modern Philology.
SP. Studies in Philology.
PBA. Proceedings of the British Academy.
PQ. Philological Quarterly.

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APPENDIX A

DATES OF GERMAN TRANSLATIONS

of some of the works of Scottish and English Aestheticians.

Work	Language	Date
Alison: Essays on Taste (1790)	German	1792
Avison: Essay on Musical Expression (1751)	"	1775
Beattie: Essays (1776)	"	1779
Dissertations (1783)	"	1789-90
Berkeley: Alciphron (1732)	"	1737
Brown: Dissertation on Poetry and Music (1764)	"	1769
Blair: Lectures on Rhetoric (1783)	"	1785-9
Burke: Inquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful (1756)	"	1773
Burnet (Monboddo): Origin and Progress of Language (1773-92)	"	1784-5 (partial)
Campbell: Philosophy of Rhetoric (1776)	"	1791
Cooper (Shaftesbury): Characteristics (1711 and 1723)	"	1745 (partial)
	"	1747 (partial)
	"	1776-7 (complete)
Ferguson: Civil Society (1767)	"	1768
Gerard: Essay on Taste (1759)	"	1766
Essay on Genius (1774)	"	1776
Harris: Treatises on Art and on Music (Three Treatises, 1744)	"	1756
Philological Enquiries (1781)	"	1789
Hartley: Observations on Man (1749)	"	1772-3
Hogarth: Analysis of Beauty (1753)	"	1754
Home (Kames): Elements of Criticism (1762)	"	1763-6
Hume: Treatise of Human Nature (1739-40)	"	1790-2
Enquiry concerning Human Understanding (1748)	"	1793
Hutcheson: Inquiry into Beauty and Virtue (1728)	"	1762
On the Passions (1728)	"	1760
Melmoth: Fitzosborne's Letters (1742-9)	"	1754
Price: Review of Morals (1758)	"	1758
Reynolds: Discourses (1769-90)	"	1781 (partial)
Smith: Moral Sentiments (1759)	"	1770
Syewart: On the Human Mind, vol. I (1792)	"	1794

APPENDIX B

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA (2nd edition)

I have not, unfortunately, had time to examine in detail many of the articles in the second edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. It is however very obvious that Lord Kames was responsible for most of the contributions on aesthetic questions, and, as I have noted in the bibliography, was the author of the articles on architecture, art, beauty, congruity, criticism, language, novelty, and uniformity. This list does not claim to be exhaustive; and it is more than likely that Kames was author of other articles. Of the articles which I have noted, that on art is most interesting , as unlike the others it is not an almost verbatim reproduction of a passage from the Elements of Criticism. Some of it comes from his discussion of art in Sketches of the History of Man, but it is possible that most of the article was composed specially for the Encyclopaedia. If so, it has an obvious intrinsic interest, as Kames has in his other works dealt with the subject of art in a less general manner.

The article of poetry is taken from Beattie's essay On Poetry and Music, but once again I have not been able to make a detailed comparison of the texts concerned. There are however certainly long passages taken direct and without alteration from Beattie's earlier work. Whether or not this is Beattie's only contribution, I am again not in a position to say. But it is clear that it should not be too difficult to name the authors of certain other articles as well, and that the results might sometimes be interesting.