Eighteenth Century British Aesthetics

Edited by Dabney Townsend

Foundations and Frontiers in Aesthetics
Series Editors: Colin Martindale and Arnold Berleant

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH AESTHETICS

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Preface

This collection brings together a number of hard to find texts dealing with beauty, taste, and related topics in aesthetics and the philosophy of art. It focuses on texts that are of interest to the philosophical study of aesthetics. Thus it omits literary criticism and the theory of painting and music except where they move into philosophy. Such a distinction is artificial, of course, especially in an age where neither philosophy nor literary theory had been segregated into discrete academic fields. Nevertheless, it provides a rough and ready distinction that justifies including writers such as James Harris and Daniel Webb while excluding Pope and the Wartons, who would otherwise be considered more important. I have also opted to include longer selections so that a sustained style and argument can be set forth, even at the expense of omitting some figures.

In choosing and editing this collection of texts, I have been guided by what would be most useful to the student of eighteenth-century British aesthetics or to the scholar who wants a reasonably comprehensive introduction and overview of the subject. These aims are not wholly compatible. Some of the key texts, for example Hume's "Of the Standard of Taste" and Reynolds' "Discourses," are readily available in inexpensive editions. Serious students will have them on their shelf. Yet to omit them here would give a decidedly unbalanced picture of the century. Thus I have elected to include them and others of varying degrees of availability. At the other extreme, there are a number of curiosities such as rhymed essays on taste[1] and Frances Reynolds'[2] curious treatise on the mechanics of beauty that, while they add a bit of esoteric perspective, contribute nothing either philosophically or culturally, though they are hard to come by for those who have an interest in such things. I have reluctantly omitted them in the interests of keeping to a manageable size. Within those limits, I have attempted to provide a representative selection.

A second problem is presented by the texts themselves. The eighteenth-century printed style was ideosyncratic to say the least. Moreover, in the course of the

[1] See, for example, Thomas B. Gilmore, Jr. (ed.), *Early Eighteenth-Century Essays on Taste* (Delmar, New York: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1972).

[2] Frances Reynolds, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Taste, and of the Origin of our Ideas of Beauty, &c.* (London: Printed by Baker and Galabin, 1785).

century, the accepted practices of style and printing changed. The predominant practice of capitalizing all nouns faded, as did the extensive use of italics. Spelling also changed. One choice would have been to preserve all textual characteristics. Scholarly fidelity argues for such a choice. It has the disadvantage of exaggerating the choice of edition, however, because consistency would then demand that difficult questions of textual variation and authority be dealt with, issues that are of direct concern only to the most specialized of readers and that are, in any event, often beyond my competence. The eccentricities of typography and excessive concern with minor differences between editions are needlessly off-putting to the reader whose primary interest is in the argument. Thus, I have opted instead to modernize capitals and italics, preserving only those of the latter that clearly are intended for special emphasis. I have also chosen to modernize spelling, though with somewhat more reluctance. A reader quickly becomes used to elided forms of spelling, for example, but there also seems little need to preserve such variations from modern practice. Ease of reading argues for modernization. I have not, however, replaced archaic word-forms with modern equivalents. Thus I have left "shew" for "show," "writ" for "wrote," and "tis" for "it is" as well as "hath," etc. As nearly as possible, I have left anything that would affect the sound or rhythm of the text while choosing the modern spelling when, at most, the alternative would affect the eye. In any instances that might affect the meaning, I have kept the original. Punctuation, which clearly affects the meaning more directly, I have left as it was printed unless it is clearly simply a matter of the printer's style (for example, the practice of repeating quotation marks at the beginning of lines or of varying the length of dashes to fill lines). I have also silently corrected a few obvious misprints, provided that they were truly obvious. Others have been allowed to stand, without the annoyance of scattered *sic*'s or typographical over-printing. The reader should assume that, within the limits of my proof-reading capabilities, oddities are part of the original. Notes that appear in the original have been converted to numbers and repositioned at the end of the reference, but if the text makes a distinction in types of notes, that distinction has been preserved. These are, after all, selections. To be most useful, they must be accessible to as wide an audience as possible while providing a reliable text. The specialist to whom textual variants matter will undoubtedly have to consult the originals or facsimiles of them in any case. I hope that what is presented here will suffice for the kind of philosophical and critical work that this collection is intended to promote.

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Introduction
Aesthetics in the Eighteenth Century

In the eighteenth century, the rise of the philosophic issues that came to form modern aesthetics is a complex movement as one might expect from the broad involvement of critics, artists, philosophers, connoisseurs, and dilettantes of all kinds. It is intimately connected to the new empiricist philosophy of Locke and Newton, but older scholastic modes of expression provide the conceptual framework. Moreover, the terms of the contemporary debates are set by divisions that are different and are understood differently from our modernist understanding of the same issues. We can often detect our own interests, but the contemporary expression of them is couched in terms current to the times. Among the dominant influences in that respect are divisions between classicists and modernists, between rationalist followers of Descartes and/or Leibniz and the followers of Newton and Locke, and between commercially motivated authors and critics and the talented polite learning of the nobility. The central debates are about the relation of poetry to painting and music, the development and judgments of taste, the characteristics of beauty and its uses, and critical issues concerning rules of composition, presentation, and status. The result is a decidedly messy but rich mixture.

1. Aesthetics

One issue of terminology must be dealt with at the beginning to avoid misunderstanding. A. G. Baumgarten coined the word *aesthetics* from the Greek adverb αισθητικος, having to do with perceiving by the senses. Baumgarten used it to mark a distinction between sensible perception and intellectual perception. His task in his aesthetics was to locate sensible experience, and particularly feeling, in the rationalist tradition of Leibniz and Christian Wolff. Baumgarten's strategy was to make a place for feeling both as a first step toward rational knowledge and as a legitimate, though limited, form of knowledge in its own right. Immanuel Kant adopted the word in his critical philosophy and shifted its usage from Baumgarten's narrow reference to felt sensation to any form of pre-theoretical apprehension. The word *aesthetic* did not come into widespread use in Britain until the 1830s, and by then it was being used more broadly than Baumgarten's rationalist project would

indicate. Thus to use the word at all with regard to eighteenth-century Britain is anachronistic. It is also misleading because the issues in eighteenth-century British discussions centered on the arts and do not reflect many of the Kantian presuppositions that references to aesthetics now take for granted. Kantian notions of disinterestedness, intuitive sensibility, and the free play of the imagination, as well as relations to art, the beautiful, and the sublime based on an aesthetic attitude appear, if at all, only in tentative ways in the eighteenth century. Even where the word *disinterested* does appear, its context indicates a strong link to anti-Hobbesian moral philosophy, for example.

Nevertheless, it is now taken for granted that, even if the concepts themselves are not present, our understanding of them requires us to look back before their origin to their roots in the philosophy and criticism of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. English and Scottish criticism, belles lettres, and philosophy are much more important to the subsequent history of aesthetics than the academic and near scholastic speculation of Baumgarten and his followers. We find ourselves in the awkward position of having no word that both indicates the subsequent development of aesthetics and is also true to the conceptual structure current in the pre-Kantian discussions in Britain. No neologism has been accepted. Sir William Hamilton would have preferred the coinage *apolaustic* as the umbrella term to refer to the philosophy of taste, the theory of the fine arts, and the science of the beautiful,[1] but it is merely eccentric. We could dispense with a term altogether and refer variously to the controversies, issues, and theories that are of interest to contemporary aesthetics. Yet that loses the significance of bringing them all together. I have chosen, therefore, to live with the anachronism, however misleading, and refer to eighteenth-century British aesthetics even though there is no such thing. In this context, it should be understood as an awkward substitute to avoid periphrastic verbosity.

2. The Ancients and Moderns: Science and Association

Aesthetics in eighteenth-century Britain is not a single, unified movement. It develops in the context of arguments and problems that arise in a variety of situations tangentially related to what we now recognize as philosophical aesthetics. One of those arguments is the ongoing debate within criticism and the arts over the relative priority of classical and modern arts and artists, a debate that is itself a part of a larger argument over the relative merits of modern versus classical learning and culture. The success of scientific and empiricist methodology in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was sufficient to produce a widespread public sense of the superiority of modern views of cosmology and physics. Science was still simple enough so that talented amateurs such as Benjamin Franklin and Joseph Priestley could make significant contributions to the study of electricity and chemistry. It also had about it something of popular entertainment. Scientific

[1] According to the OED, *Lectures on Metaphysics*, I, vii, 124.

demonstrations were performed for public audiences, and the collection and exhibition of curiosities was a popular form of display, not unrelated to the development of the museum. Newton acquired the reputation of a secular patron saint, as Pope's epitaph shows:

> Nature and Nature's Laws lay hid in Night;
> God said, Let Newton be! and all was Light.

The foundation of the Royal Society in England and similar groups on the continent, particularly Frederick the Great's sponsorship in Prussia of scientific investigations, institutionalized modern scientific investigation as a new force in learned circles. The best that could be said for classical science was that the moderns built upon the shoulders of giants.

Even that acknowledgment was more an act of cultural piety than of serious influence. As a matter of fact, the new science and mathematics owed very little to classical sources. Instead, it combined the mathematical discoveries of Descartes, Newton, and Leibniz with the rapidly advancing technology that made observation more detailed and the individualism of empiricist philosophy and Rennaissance humanism to completely recast the place of learning and discovery in the human economy. Science was pre-eminently a matter of individual experimentation and exploration. Newton, Boyle, Harvey, and others conducted their own investigations and promoted them as individual achievements. The partisan conflict between the followers of Leibniz and Newton over priority in developing the infinitesimal calculus shows the importance of individual personalities in the development of science.

Science modified the way human psychology was modeled as well. In particular the development of associationism on the model of mechanical causation individualized the view of the mind. What one person thought depended on what that individual had experienced and how a unique set of experiences interacted to produce the ideas that defined a particular person.

Associationist psychology took a number of forms. The basic empiricist scheme laid down by John Locke allows two sources of ideas: sensation or impression, and reflection on the operation of the mind itself. The function of reason is to recognize those ideas and monitor their combination into complex ideas so that the mind is neither deceived by what it apprehends nor misled by its own operations. A fundamental problem for this individualized, empirically formed mind is that minds vary so greatly. An explanation is required to account for why everyone does not know all and only true ideas. Locke introduces the association of ideas at the end of Book II of *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* in the context of a discussion of madness and error. Association of ideas is essentially negative—something that needs to be controlled. Locke writes,

> Some of our *Ideas* have a natural Correspondence and Connexion one with another: It is the Office and Excellency of our Reason to trace these, and hold them together in that Union and Correspondence which is founded in their peculiar Beings.

> Besides this there is another Connexion of *Ideas* wholly owing to Chance or Custom; *Ideas* that in themselves are not at all of kin, come to be so united in some Mens Minds, that 'tis very hard to separate them, they always keep in company, and the one no sooner at any time comes into the Understanding but its Associate appears with it; and if they are more than two which are thus united, the whole gang always inseparable shew themselves together.[2]

He goes on to give several cautionary tales of the evil that can be done by association of ideas if it is not carefully watched in the education and development of the mind. The problem, of course, is that while ideas founded on experience itself are reliable and the powers of the mind, properly exercised, will make only true complexity, association is a matter of chance and individual happenstance.

Nevertheless, association of ideas is too powerful a form of mechanical explanation to be restricted to Locke's essentially negative usage. It reappears vaguely and unsystematically as an adjunct to moral philosophy. John Gay, the cousin of the Poet, appeals to the association of ideas in an essay prefixed to his publication of Archbishop William King's essay on the origin of evil. Gay wants to show that Hutcheson relied too heavily on instinct and some form of innate ideas in his moral philosophy. Gay argues that "our Approbation of Morality, and all Affections whatsoever, are finally resolvable into *Reason*, pointing out *private Happiness*, and are conversant only about things apprehended to be means tending to this end; and that whenever this end is not perceiv'd, they are to be accounted for from the *Association of Ideas*, and may properly be call'd Habits."[3] Gay's account makes virtue and moral sense directly dependent on God's action; Gay wants to exclude any element of innate or instinctive virtue. Thus he accounts for the passions as arising from pleasure and pain and fixed by associations. "The Case is really this. We first perceive or imagine some real Good, i.e. fitness to promote our Happiness in those things which we love and approve of. Hence . . . we annex Pleasure to those things. Hence those things and Pleasures are so ty'd together and associated in our Minds, that one cannot present itself but the other will also occur. And the Association remains ever after that which at first gave them the Connection is quite forgot, or perhaps does not exist, but the contrary."[4] Thus no products of the moral sense are innate or instinctive; we can only acquire them from our own experience or learn them from others. Moreover, association connects ideas and pleasure as well as ideas and other ideas.

From Gay's broadening of the association of ideas to include all of the passions, it is still another step to David Hartley's mechanical theory of the association of ideas that incorporates a Newtonian schema of vibrations and transmission of ideas.

[2] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon press, 1975), Book II, Chapter XXXIII, p. 395.

[3] John Gay, *A Dissertation Concerning the Fundamental Principle and Immediate Criteria of Virtue as also the Obligation, and Aprobation of it. With some account of the Orgin of the Passions and Affections* (London: 1731), p. xiv.

[4] *Ibid.*, xxx-xxxi.

Hartley's object is also moral. The second volume of his *Observations on Man* is titled "Observations on the Duty and Expectations of Mankind." But Hartley introduces two major changes from the Lockean model. For Hartley, the association of ideas can actually produce ideas; the vibrations themselves can shift slightly so that new ideas are formed. This might be understood as merely a further complexity, but it allows the mind, through association, to combine and shift ideas so that they are more than merely a complex combination of the simple ideas provided by sense. And the operation is mechanical and involuntary. Instead of being in need of control, it is itself a means to an end. Like Gay, Hartley is prepared to accept that only a directly fortunate divine plan for each individual can lead the moral sense to virtue. Hartley faces the likely objection squarely: "The mechanical Generation of the Pleasures and Pains of the Moral Sense may by some be thought an Objection to the Reasoning here used; but it will appear otherwise, upon due Consideration. For all Things which have evident final Causes, are plainly brought about by mechanical Means; so that we may argue either way, *viz.* either from the mechanical Means, to the Existence of a final Cause, not yet discovered; or from the Existence of a final Cause, to that of a mechanical Means, not yet discovered."[5] Such a mechanical explanation can then be regarded in either of two ways: For the deist, it is working out some predetermined goal. For the Calvinist, it requires the intervention (perhaps to the end of both salvation and damnation) of an inscrutable divine hand.

Hartley's form of association, minus some of the speculative mechanism and theological application, is taken up by Joseph Priestley who uses it as the basis both for his own version of theological explanation and for his rhetorical theories, including a theory of taste. David Hume gives the theory a further twist by distinguishing between the association of ideas and the association of impressions. Impressions are immediate forms of sensation and reflection; association can be appealed to, as it was by Gay, to account for the pleasure and pain that belongs to the passions. But ideas are secondary repetitions of impressions, and association influences the way that ideas are recalled and even how they are perceived through sympathy. Hume develops a complex theory of the passions in Book Two of the *Treatise of Human Nature* that distinguishes between those passions that are immediate and those that require a double object such as possession. In Hume's successors in Scotland, particularly Alexander Gerard and Archibald Alison, association becomes the primary means of explaining aesthetic phenomena such as the perception of grace or beauty.

3. The Ancients and Moderns: Art

Associationist psychology, with its justification of a moral sense, its mechanical speculations, and its rhetorical applications provided a basis for the superiority of

[5] David Hartley, *Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations* (London, 1749), II, 338.

modern investigation of the mind and human nature over the psychology of the ancients, particularly Aristotle. This is important because in the arts, the ancients seem to have a much stronger claim. While modern science and cosmology clearly seem even to the most conservative thinkers in the eighteenth century to have won out, it seemed to many in the eighteenth century that the ancients achieved a perfection in the arts that no modern could challenge. This is in part, of course, because the ancients have the advantage of their antiquity: The only ancient texts that we know have stood the test of time that is so often applied as the only way to sort out the error produced by the psychology of individual response. If God alone could assure that a moral sense led to true happiness, and if, according to Calvinist theology, some would lack that final cause, then only time could guide the fickle sense of beauty in the arts. The ancients also have the advantage provided by the fact that education and taste were still formed by classical learning, although that was slowly changing as more middle-class artists and scholars depended less and less on Latin and Greek models. One of the third Earl of Shaftesbury's objections to his grandfather's physician and advisor, John Locke, was that Locke lacked the necessary classical education. The models in the arts remained the acknowledged classics, and the rules derived from them played an important role in shaping eighteenth-century British taste. The desire to emulate the rules of an imagined classical golden age gave weight to the side of the ancients in the arts.

The superiority of the ancients also was promoted by the emerging discoveries and dissemination of classical art works and the speculation that ensued from it. On the continent, J. J. Winckelmann made classical archeology a form of learning, and G. E. Lessing brought critical skill in the arts to bear on classical questions. Their genuine erudition enhanced the prestige of all things classical. It became very desirable not only to imitate classical forms, but also to preserve, restore, collect, and own classical objects. In Britain, Lord Elgin is only the most prominent example of the urge to find, admire and preserve classical artifacts. The same impulse undoubtedly motivated the nationalist desire to discover more native classical sources that led to the Ossian imposture and numerous instances of forgery. If native Britain was to compete with classical Greece and Rome, it was felt that it must have its own classical age with its own epic poets. If they could not be discovered, then they would be invented.

From the standpoint of the development of aesthetic philosophies, the conflicts that arose out of the disputes over the relative priorities of the ancients and moderns shaped the aesthetic questions, therefore. On the one hand, via associationist psychology and an admiration for the achievements of Newtonian science, aesthetic questions were put into empiricist form. On the other hand, in the arts, the authority of classical authors and the achievement of classical artists seemed to place taste and reason on the side of the ancients except in painting, where technical skill in perspective and a lack of ancient examples favored the moderns. This almost intolerable tension shows clearly in the writings of the first half of the century. Shaftesbury tries to balance classical virtue against his own sensibility. Peter Jones

argues for the influence of Cicero on Hume's moral and aesthetic thought.[6] And Daniel Webb works within a traditional theory of imitation and continues to defend the ancients, particularly in painting. The problem for Webb is thus how to justify the ancients when modern painting seems superior from the standpoint of technical skill. And the problems posed by the controversy over the relative priority of the ancients and moderns continues to appear well into the time that the combination of association and imagination lead to theories of aesthetic expression.

4. Rationalism and Empiricism

The alliance between Newtonian science and philosophical empiricism is paralleled in another area of fundamental disagreement: the rationalism of Descartes and Leibniz versus not only Locke but the more pragmatic forms of empiricism that Locke's basic principles helped justify. The place of reason as it bears on aesthetic arguments is never a simple choice between reason and experience. Rather it turns on how reason is understood. Reason can be assigned one of two roles: It is either the innate source of principles and rules by which practice should be regulated, or it is a higher-level function that is called upon to order and discipline what experience alone can begin. The latter function is obviously the choice within the empiricist tradition, but it raises serious problems for aesthetic practice.

The problem can be illustrated by considering how secondary qualities are related to the mind. The empiricist tradition widely accepted that qualities such as color and taste are only in the mind and cannot be connected directly to their object. The connection must be made via some form of faculty psychology. If beauty is included among the secondary qualities, it too is not a quality of an object but a quality of the mind's apprehension of the object. Critical and artistic practice, however, indicate otherwise in the case of art. Art is unlike one's color and taste responses in that art is an acquired skill, as Aristotle emphasized and as any eighteenth-century thinker would have accepted. If one begins with experience, that experience must be prior to any formative operations by which one acquires that experience. For the classical theories of beauty, of course, that was not a problem because beauty was understood as a form or order belonging to a higher intellect. Beauty had an ontological status superior to mere physical objects. But for a consistent modern empiricist, a concept of beauty could be based only on some prior sensory experience unless beauty was itself part of the mind's apprehension of its own powers.

That argument leads to rationalism's understanding of the mind, however. The rationalism of the Cartesians and of Leibniz and Spinoza is not opposed to empiricism at a basic level. Both break with classical epistemology. Beauty is not an extra-mental form, nor is the way to beauty through contemplation and participation.

[6] Peter Jones, *Hume's Sentiments: Their Ciceronian and French Context* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1982).

For the rationalist as much as the empiricist, beauty is a function of individual minds attaining an ordered, psychologically pleasurable form of perception. As the arguments are understood by eighteenth-century thinkers interested in the arts and criticism, both rationalists and empiricists are adherents of the new science. The point of difference lies in how the faculty that grasps beauty is believed to operate. For the rationalist, its function is to deliver clear and distinct ideas. Beauty is thus not sensuous and confused but universal and clear. It abandons the perspectival limitations of the senses and attains a quantitatively larger application than any mere sense perception can claim. As such, beauty belongs not to an object but to the mind's own grasp of what objects confusedly present. The regulative function of reason must be innate, and in order for it to function, the mind's faculty must include some ideational content also, at least in the form of logical, mathematical, and geometrical principles. In the process, art is left behind as one climbs the ladder of the intellect and pulls up the ladder behind one.

While this rationalist picture of beauty overcomes the paradox of artistic production that confronts empiricists, it raises its own kind of problem for art. The sensuous and felt nature of the pleasure provided by art is not, on its face, like the intellectual pleasure of a rationalist's beauty found in clear and distinct ideas. The price for accepting a rationalist construction of an argument for the aesthetic apprehension of beauty is to make the beauty of both art and nature secondary and inferior. It was this failure that led Baumgarten to try to incorporate feeling into the picture as, at least, a useful stage in the mind's apprehension of beauty. If such beauty was, in the last analysis, inferior, it nevertheless might be the most accessible form of perception for most people.

The temptation of this rationalist picture is evident in a number of otherwise empiricist theories of beauty. John Dennis, for example, has his own practical form of the paradox. To be successful, a playwright must appeal to a large public; drama must offer humor, not esoteric wit. The appeal of a play is subjective and thus problematic from the standpoint of producing rules. Therefore, Dennis tries to shift the appeal to a test of time so that the public may be extended sufficiently to account for immediate unpopularity. The good author does not write for "the generality" but for the few who are able to understand. The inconsistency of appealing to humor over wit and yet appealing to an elite audience does not seem to disturb Dennis.

Addison and Hutcheson are more acute thinkers. Addison explicitly appeals to Locke's model (*Spectator* 413). Yet his critical practice based on classical learning, wit, and irony favors an even more elite audience than Dennis's. Francis Hutcheson also explicitly acknowledges Locke's basic outline at the beginning of *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*. Hutcheson's *Reflections on Laughter* provide another example of the attempt at a philosophical psychology of human nature. They are very much of a piece with Hume's *Treatise*, particularly Book Two. Both Hutcheson and Hume attempt to map the passions as the product of forms of sensory input combined with mental oversight. (Hume is more extreme, however, in limiting that oversight to sentiment itself.) Yet Hutcheson needs some instinctive form of inner sense to correlate uniformity amidst variety with the pleasure provided by the inner senses. That comes close to returning "inner sense" to

its rationalist role of mental judge operating on the unruly senses. Hutcheson is no rationalist, but both Gay and Hume reproach him for introducing innate ideas by the back door, and they are not wholly wrong.

Perhaps no one makes a more extensive use of scientific analogies in accounting for taste than Alexander Gerard. The principles of taste are like the principles of mechanics. But Gerard's view of science is over-simple, and he does not consider the problems raised by observation. What, in taste, corresponds to the measurements of force, mass, time and distance? Without those objective measures, the analogy breaks down. His citation of uniformity, simplicity, variety, novelty, and proportion cannot operate in the same way that physical properties do because they are qualitative rather than quantitative. Once again, the empiricist forms of subjectivity need some means of bridging the gap between subjective experience and an authoritative reason. A rationalist can make the subjective qualities themselves into quantitative criteria because a quantity of ideas serves to reduce, though it cannot completely eliminate, confusion just as a multiplicity of perspectives corrects the distortion and limitation of a single point of view. Gerard and those who follow him in multiplying aesthetic predicates and "senses" are impelled by the implicit logic of the rationalist argument.

In contrast to Gerard's overt endorsement of a Newtonian mechanical model for aesthetic epistemology, Edmund Burke starts with the assumption that reason and taste are parallel. In so doing, he goes against the distinction that had grown up within the empiricist tradition that the passions operate differently from reason. Burke is not prepared to follow the sentimentalists in accepting that normative judgments belong to the passions rather than to reason, but his main thrust is that both operate according to common principles. His problem is to supply those principles. Therefore, Burke looks back behind the rationalists to a more formally Aristotelian form of empiricism. Yet the implicit result is the same. He adds the sublime, not in Longinus's merely rhetorical sense, but in a more robustly epistemological sense, to the aesthetic vocabulary of the beautiful. Both beauty and the sublime operate, for Burke, as if they are regulative principles on a par with other essentially rational criteria. One can "know" one's passions by recognizing their aesthetic place. Once this move is accepted, later writers are free to add other such regulative passions. The picturesque ultimately provides a link to an empiricist version of the same aesthetic autonomy provided by Kantian disinterestedness.

To take only one more example, Hugh Blair opts for sense over reason, but he so blurs the lines that one cannot distinguish one from the other. The metaphor of sense, he acknowledges, is based more on the educable palate (improved by exercise as the body is) than on immediate response—on wine tasting more than the distinction of sweet from bitter. Blair also observes that the ancients do not have a word for taste, though he quotes both Cicero and Quintilian as asserting something like taste. Blair's appeal is more explicitly to rhetorical function than the epistemological interests of the other empiricist treatments of beauty cited here, but he is still puzzled by the same paradox that occupies both rationalists and empiricists.

The point of these comparisons is not to blur the lines of difference between rationalists of the Cartesian and Leibnizian persuasion on the one hand and the

followers of Locke and Newton on the other, but to emphasize that both are working out a modernist, scientific break with classical forms of aesthetics. Both encounter a problem about aesthetic experience. The rationalist must find some place for it in a system that begins by accepting a view of the mind as essentially a thinking or reasoning machine. The empiricist must find some way to regulate experience by a mind that begins as a blank slate and can only go as far as sensation will take it and thus lacks an innate rational faculty. Put in these schematic terms, the tendency of the British empiricist tradition to slip in elements of their rationalists opponents is obvious. It is ultimately set aside only when a different route is found via the imagination and expression to a romantic and idealist mind that will dominate aesthetics in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

5. The Arts and Nature

The kind of disputes over the role of reason that occupy rationalist and empiricist philosophers alike may be central conceptually, but they are by no means the focus of attention for most writers interested in the nature of beauty, the arts, and responses to them. The inherited vocabulary sets the problems more traditionally. P. O. Kristeller argued that the concept of the fine arts is itself a product of an evolving re-orientation of the arts in the eighteenth century.[7] On the one side, the fine arts were not yet completely distinguished from the practical arts. On the other, the arts remained inferior to nature. The function of the artist, therefore, was two-fold. Artists were craftsmen, and their craft required that they know and follow nature.

This seemingly innocent cliché exercised considerable practical power in the formulation of eighteenth-century aesthetic theory. In one respect, it linked artistic practice back to classical models. Classical writers and sculptors were given credit for being much freer of the artificial conventions attributed to medieval artists, and admiration for the Rennaissance was attributed to what was taken to be its successful restoration of classical practices. There was also a reaction against the mannered style of allegory, pastoral, and metaphysical wit. Critics such as Samuel Johnson, in particular, deplored the artificiality of metaphysical poetry and looked to nature as the moral source of poetry.

Yet exactly the same appeal to nature could be made by the more sentimental writers in both moral philosophy and aesthetics—a tradition that Johnson abhorred. The appeal to sentiment was believed to be based on a view of human nature as corrupted only by the excesses of civilization. Shaftesbury's sentimentalism was pilloried by Bishop Berkeley in *Alciphron*, and Hume was lumped together with Rousseau in the mind of his religious opponents. Of course, neither Shaftesbury nor Hume fits the caricatures offered by their opponents. Shaftesbury's view of sentiment requires that it be both corrected and disciplined by a consciousness of the

[7] Paul Oskar Kristeller, "The Modern System of the Arts," *Essays on the History of Aesthetics*, ed. Peter Kivy (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1992).

good of the whole and of the individual's place in it. Hume's appeal to sentiment is even more circumscribed. Sentiment must be shaped by the same empirical forces that give us confidence in causation in spite of its equally unprincipled foundations in any rationalist sense of innate or logical principles. The passions may trump any rationalist form of deductive argument, but that is only possible because the passions themselves play a cognitive as well as emotive role. All of this ambiguity is captured by the catch phrase advice to artists to "follow nature."

To artists, in particular, the injunction to follow nature included a command to follow a set of rules that nature provided. Some of this advice was practical. Perspective, for example, had been developed into a quasi-science. Hogarth did a series of engravings illustrating true and false perspective and himself liked to play tricks with the rules of perspective. Similar interest in classical form guided painters. The quest for principles and its relation to the science of human nature therefore casts a different light on the commonplace appeal to nature as the guiding principle. Shaftesbury's method of soliloquy suggests the tension between the individual and the generically human. He presumes a common nature, but it must be discovered by a process of self-examination and self-disclosure. When Reynolds appeals to nature, he should be understood to be appealing to those regularities of the human mind that can be identified and relied upon. That is rather different from a command to "follow nature" that amounts to an appeal to the classical status quo. Nature is the opposite of caprice, changableness, and chance. To follow nature is to rely upon probabilities, as Hume argued, and to avoid the shifting grounds of accidence as Reynolds believed necessary if the painter was to succeed.

6. Rules

Following nature is completely compatible with following rules, therefore. At issue is the nature of the rules. A first step in constructing eighteenth-century aesthetics begins with the craft-like neo-classical quest for these rules and leads inexorably to their abandonment as the early romantic and expressive aesthetic replaces neo-classicism in the course of the century. Rules appear in three related but distinguishable contexts. First, rules are needed by artists to guide their art. Second, rules are needed by the audience to guide their response to art. And finally, rules are needed by critics to judge both works of art themselves and the response of audiences. All three situations are taken for granted in claims about nature and rules, but in fact they change in the course of the eighteenth century.

The nature of rules in all three situations is problematic. One way to regard rules looks back to classical logic. Syllogisms are governed by rules: Given that all men are mortal and that Socrates is a man, it follows by rule that Socrates is mortal. The rules of the schoolmen are thus foundational in the strongest way. The appeal of the ancients and the underlying classical education that was common to neo-classical aesthetics suggests that this sense of 'rule' is not altogether absent. One of the functions of neo-classical rhetoric is to persuade, and the strongest form of persuasion will be logical inferences to which all but the weakest intellects must accede. A good plot, therefore, has the inevitability of a syllogism. The wit of the metaphysical poets likewise depended on the ability of logic to carry a reader beyond what is expected

to unexpected but inevitable conclusions. The authority of Aristotle's Poetics gave credence to the establishment of rules for drama that at least are supposed to govern both the response of an audience and the construction of the plot itself.

If the rhetorical force of a syllogism can be understood, then the presence of such rules will determine success. The neo-classical desire for rules is thus intended as a practical guide. In his introduction to Charles du Fresnoy's *De Arte Graphica*, Dryden states clearly what is expected of the philosophy of art at the beginning of the century: the rules of the art, the reasons for appreciation, and the conditions of translating nature into art by imitation. Without these, one might be imposed on by bad works; with them, the direct effects of art are made self-conscious. To achieve this, one needs to formulate the rules and compare the best work. For Dryden, the need for rules follows from the fact that poetry and painting are arts. 'Art' here retains its basic meaning of something made by skill and craft. So if something is an art, there must be means, and hence rules, by which it is made. The fine arts, with their attendant creative mystery, are not yet part of the equation.[8] The kind of rules that Dryden has in mind govern things like the scope of invention, the economy of the plot, and the posture of the characters *vis-a-vis* the audience.

The force of syllogistic rules may be appealing, but it is fundamentally at odds with the empiricist direction that British aesthetics takes under the influence of Locke and Newton. Dryden repeatedly points out that his own plots do not follow such rules. A different sense of 'rule' emerges very soon. Empirical rules have the force of laws of nature if they can be grounded in cause and effect. If not, they still provide inductive guidance. In this sense, 'rule' has a more limited scope. It examines past practice to determine future expected effects. The importance of comparing poetry to painting lies in identifying the common features of both that serve as rules. Thus, though the comparison considers which form is greater, the likeness is more important. Short of the kind of scientific certainty provided by laws of nature, one can still have an expectation of success, and to the practicing artists, that is what is required. Reynolds clearly understands rules in that sense: "What has pleased, and continues to please, is likely to please again: hence are derived the rules of art, and on this immovable foundation they must ever stand."[9]

Since comparison must be based on successful instances if it is to provide sound rules, the production of inductive rules remains conservative. The classical works that are universally acknowledged are the only ones that can be relied on to provide rules. Shaftesbury also looks for rules in nature—proportion, harmony, and numbers are real relations. The problem, of course, is how to relate them to the effects that they are supposed to produce. For, as becomes all too clear, the effects provide the rules for art. Once the effects are taken as constitutive, the kind of rule focuses on the individual members of an audience rather than the universal nature of the rule itself. The Abbé Jean-Baptiste Du Bos laid it down as a rule that only the effect determined the quality of a work: "Since the chief end of poetry and painting is to move us, the

[8] John Dryden, "Introduction to Charles du Fresnoy, *De Arte Graphica*." See p. 33, this volume.

[9] Sir Joshua Reynolds, "Discourse Seven." See p. 337, this volume.

productions of these arts can be valuable only in proportion as they touch and engage us. A work that is exquisitely moving, must be an excellent piece, take it all together. For the same reason, a work which does not move and engage us, is good for nothing." Du Bos influenced Hume directly, and his work was translated into English in 1748 by Thomas Nugent.[10] Thus rules themselves, though intended to provide guidance to the artist and to determine the way an audience should react, come to be grounded in the same subjective responses that they are intended to overcome. The incipient circularity cannot be ignored.

An appeal to science as a source of rules as it is advanced by Gerard, Reynolds, and Kames is in danger of falling into Du Bos' kind of subjectivity, as Hume clearly sees. The principles that are sought cannot be understood to provide *a priori* certainty or Cartesian foundations. They are the kind of empirical laws that, while subject to revision and confirmation, allow a scientist to predict the outcome of experiments. In this case, the field is human nature, and the experiments are practiced by artists in moving the sentiments and passions of their audience. There are varying degrees of confidence in the reliability of such predictions. Everyone agrees that they rest on the common nature shared by all humans. But some, most notably Hume, recognize that the variations are more than science would normally tolerate. Kames and Gerard, on the other hand, are more confident that a standard of taste sufficient to convince everyone is available on the basis of the emergent principles of criticism.

Rules themselves come to require conditions of application. For example, John Dennis lays down three rules for a correct taste for comedy that are necessary both to the writer and the audience: great parts, a generous education, and due application.[11] He interprets the last of these as an ability to enter into the passions of different characters and a detachment from one's own concerns that makes that possible. His condition is thus something like the disinterestedness that will eventually emerge. Along the same lines, Dr. John Baillie adheres to the view that rules govern written forms, but his approach is more philosophically sophisticated than that of Dennis. The manner itself must be defined before rules can be formulated.[12] Rules prove more comforting, therefore, than their application can justify. In many cases, just as an appeal to Nature conceals uncertainty about what that nature is, so an appeal to rules conceals their lack of authority.

Critical correction of the absurdity of rules is common. Samuel Johnson, for example, is only one of the forceful objectors to attempt to make the Aristotelian

[10]Abbé Du Bos, *Réflexions Critiques sur la Poésie et sur la Peinture* (Paris: École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts, 1993), p. 276. "Puisque le premier but de la poésie et de la peinture est de nous toucher, les poèmes et les tableaux ne sont de ouvrages qu'à proportion qu'ils nous émeuvent et qu'ils nous attachent. Un ouvrage qui touche beucoup doit être exellent à tout prendre. Par la même raison l'ouvrage qui ne touche point et qui n'attache pas, ne vaut rien." *Critical Reflections on Poetry, Painting and Music,* trans. Thomas Nugent (London: Printed for John Nourse, at the Lamb, opposite Katherine Street in the Strand, 1748), II, 237.

[11]John Dennis, *A Large Account of the Taste in Poetry, and the Causes of the Degeneracy of It.* See p. 55, this volume.

[12]John Baillie, "An Essay on the Sublime." See p. 191, this volume.

dramatic unities more than the most general guides. The most common response to the obvious counterexamples to rules is that it is not the violation of the rules but the overcoming of them by greater beauties that saves dramatists such as Shakespeare from their own flaws. Johnson's ability to ridicule the obvious application of rules and critical formulas shows how deeply clichéd those formulas had become. He sees the hollowness of criticism of painting and imitation of nature. The increasingly ad hoc nature of applying rules gradually so undermines them that they cease to play a significant role in aesthetic theory, though they continue to be acknowledged by a kind of critical piety.

In one area in particular, rules are replaced in the course of the eighteenth century by a greater freedom. As Johnson puts it, "Whatever part of an art can be executed or criticized by rules, that part is no longer the work of genius, which implies excellence out of the reach of rules."[13] Genius is itself a form of *je ne sais quoi*,—"consult the genius of the place in all."[14] It develops from the kind of particular quality that cannot be described but must be experienced to a more theoretically involved alternative to rules as a part of the inductive explanation of how artistic practice is possible and of how that practice is connected to audience expectations. In some ways, the most important theoretical role for rules is that they provide a contrasting principle that can be set aside by genius.

7. Taste

For much of the eighteenth century, the controlling theoretical concept is taste. George Dickie has aptly described the eighteenth century as the century of taste.[15] The origins of the concept, however, pre-date the eighteenth-century uses of it. In classical discussion of art and criticism, taste as such does not appear. The Aristotelian scheme of the senses laid out in *De Anima* gives touch and its near-relative taste (the application of touch to the tongue) a wider scope than might be expected. Sight is placed "above all others" in *Metaphysics A*. Sight is also the most developed sense and leads to imagination.[16] Imagination is directly related to sense and memory by the formation of images. Elsewhere, however, touch is the primary sense. Touch is an unmediated sense; it works by direct contact. It is also the sense without which none of the others is possible.[17] Without touch, one is no longer a sentient being. Touch, in turn, is related to taste. Taste is the subordinate sense to touch because

[13]Sir Joshua Reynolds, "The Idler," No. 76. See p. 331, this volume.

[14]Alexander Pope, "Epistle IV, To Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington," 1. 57.

[15]George Dickie, *The Century of Taste* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

[16]"As sight is the most highly developed sense, the name *phantasia* (imagination) has been formed from *phaso* (light) because it is not possible to see without light." *De Anima* III.3.429a, 589.

[17]"Without touch it is impossible to have any other sense; for every body that has soul in it must, as we have said, be capable of touch. . . . All the other organs of sense, no doubt, perceive by contact, only the contact is mediate: touch alone perceives by immediate contact. . . . Without touch there can be no other sense, and the organ of touch cannot consist of earth or of any other single element." *De Anima*, III.13.435 a-436b, 602. *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941). *De Anima*, trans. J. A. Smith.

taste is impossible without touch.[18] Taste discriminates more accurately than other senses such as smell.[19] So taste is a modification of touch, touch is the most discriminating faculty, and from discrimination comes intelligence. The Aristotelian hierarchy from sense to knowledge has the potential to incorporate each of the senses, including taste, by virtue of its ability to provide images to experience in a discriminating way. Aristotle summed up a classical tradition which, for all of its distrust of individual sense, nevertheless recognized an essential relation between sense and consciousness. The problem with sense and experience was not whether they were necessary, but how they were to be incorporated into judgments. Taste provided an analogy which connected sense and judgment. Sight is the most intellectual sense, but touch is the pre-eminently human sense because, without touch, there is no soul.

Later classical writers, particularly writers on rhetoric, approach the eighteenth-century sense of 'taste,' but they do not develop the metaphor as such. Quintilian and Cicero in particular link response and judgment in ways that suggest the appropriateness of the metaphor of taste, but in a system of the arts that subordinates the productive arts to poetry and poetry to philosophy and contemplation, there is little room for the metaphor to develop. In the Renaissance, however, that context changes. The first appearances of taste as a significant metaphor that combines judgment with the immediacy of a sense occur in the context of Renaissance theorizing about painting. When a painter begins to display a distinctive, individual style and even emphasizes style and individual manner over the subject matter and tradition, taste suggests itself as the appropriate means of response. For example, Georgio Vasari is forced back upon direct experience when he confronts the eccentricity of one work by Jacopo Pontormo: "I am determined, since I myself do not understand it, although I am a painter, to leave all who may see it to form their own judgment, for the reason that I believe that I would drive myself mad with it and would lose myself, even as it appears to me that Jacopo in the period of eleven years that he spent upon it sought to lose himself and all who might see the painting, among all those extraordinary figures."[20] In this context, such individual judgment is not especially positive; it is a form of madness. But it is a relatively short step to a positive version of an individualized response. Federico Zuccaro takes that step when he writes, "Grace is . . . a soft and sweet accompaniment which attracts the eye and contents the taste . . . ; it depends entirely on good judgment and good taste

[18]"What can be tasted is always something that can be touched, and just for that reason it cannot be perceived through an interposed foreign body, for touch means the absence of any intervening body." *De Anima,* II.10. 422a, 575.

[19]"It seems that there is an analogy between smell and taste, and that the species of tastes runs parallel to those of smells—the only difference being that our sense of taste is more discriminating than our sense of smell, because the former is a modification of touch, which reaches in man the maximum of discriminative accuracy." *De Anima,* II.9.421a, 574.

[20]Georgio Vasari, *Lives of Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects,* in *Italian Art, 1500-1600: Sources and Documents,* ed. Robert Klein and Henri Zerner (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1966), p. 80.

(*gusto*)."[21] At this point, the metaphor of taste explicitly combines judgment and taste.

The origins of the metaphor of taste, therefore, belong to late Rennaissance mannerist painting and theory. The metaphor enters the critical vocabulary of the seventeenth century via the extension of mannerism to other areas of life and the arts. In that context, it provides a prudential piece of advice on how to conform one's own judgment to that of the wider public so that one will be seen as a person of taste. Addison associates taste with the writings of the Spanish mannerist writer, Balthazar Gratian, and defines it as "that faculty of the mind, which distinguishes all the most concealed faults and nicest perfections in writing" and "that faculty of the soul, which discerns the beauties of an author with pleasure, and the imperfections with dislike."[22] Appreciation of the ancients in particular serves as a test whether one has the faculty or not.

Taste is still a questionable faculty at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Shaftesbury rejects innate taste and links taste to criticism. Out of this complex of taste and criticism, eighteenth-century aesthetics arises. The move to taste individualizes judgment and locates it in response. Criticism disciplines taste and provides a means for discrimination. Yet criticism with its rules and taste with its subjectivity are potential antagonists. Eighteenth-century aesthetics can be viewed as a struggle between the two, just as it reflects the struggle between the authority of the ancients and the development of the moderns. Ultimately, subjectivity triumphs, but in doing so, it reduces taste to a mere preference, just as Shaftesbury saw that it would. Alexander Pope regards taste with suspicion in the "Epistle to Burlington":

> "Tis strange, the miser should his cares employ
> To gain those riches he can ne'er enjoy;
> Is it less strange, the prodigal should waste
> His wealth, to purchase what he ne'er can taste?
> . . .
> What brought Sir Visto's ill-got wealth to waste?
> Some daemon whispered, "Visto! have a taste."[23]

The desire to be thought a person of taste leads to all sorts of waste and exaggeration. Yet the metaphor seems firmly established. It combines the immediacy of the sense of taste with the normative elements of liking or disliking, pleasure or pain,

[21]Federico Zucarro (Rome) *Idea de' Pittori, Scultori e Architetti* (1607) cf. Romano Alberti, *Origine e Progresso dell' Academia del Disegno* (1604), p. 59 which contains the minutes of the Academy of Drawing for 1593-94 in which Zucarro is the only speaker. Cited by Anthony Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy, 1450-1600* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 1940), p. 146.

[22]Joseph Addison, *The Spectator,* No. 409. See p. 107, this volume.

[23]Pope, ll 1-4; 15-16.

that do not have to be justified by any argument, and in fact cannot be changed without a change in the organ itself.

Shaftesbury in *Advice to an Author* makes it clear that not just any taste will do. There is a right and wrong taste. His rejection of credulity in travel narratives adds another element to the changing picture of taste. Taste must be checked against more basic facts. An element of class is also at work. "True" aristocrats such as Shaftesbury and Burlington do not yield to the vagaries of taste as do newly made peers and the newly rich country squires with their ridiculous collections of eccentricities. Yet taste is at bottom that to which one must appeal because, in the empirical scheme of things, it is the form of direct experience to which all more complex ideas and judgments in the arts must be traced.

8. Sentiment and the Passions

The tradition of sentimentalism in both morals and aesthetics has frequently been misunderstood both in its own time and by later commentators. It appeared to be an abandonment of reason and a surrender to primitive emotion, the triumph of taste over reason. More recent commentary has provided a needed correction. First of all, the passions are never simple emotional indulgence. Those with a classical education would assume the tripartite division of the soul set out in Plato's *Republic*. Reason provides intellectual certainty, and, at the other extreme, bodily appetites surrender to desire and sensation. The passions are a third category. Like the appetites, they provide immediate pleasure and lack reasoned justification. But unlike appetite, the passions have a normative element. They are good (courage, honor) as well as bad (anger, hatred) and they may even be indifferent. For example, although for James Beattie the prevalence of moral sentiments is not a necessary but an empirical fact of human nature, among the facts are "agreeable affections"—Beattie cites joy and hope—that involve neither virtue nor vice.[24] So for those within the tradition that values sentiment, there is a place for a form of taste that combines both normative and affective judgment. Sentiment is not simply pleasant; it is good or bad depending on how it fits into a larger system.

David Hume is the most carefully philosophical defender of sentiment.[25] In "Of the Delicacy of Taste and Passion," Hume distinguishes delicacy of passion from delicacy of taste, though they operate in the same way. But he also uses the Platonic distinction between Passion and appetite: "When a man is possessed of this talent [for controlling delicacy of sentiment], he is more happy by what pleases his taste, than by what gratifies his appetites." The function of delicacy of taste turns out to be to distinguish between good and bad passions: "it [a cultivated taste for the polite arts] rather improves our sensibility for all the tender and agreeable passions; at the same time that it renders the mind incapable of the rougher and more boisterous

[24]James Beattie, *Essays on Poetry and Music, as They Affect the Mind.* See p. 355, this volume.

[25]See Annette Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

emotions."[26] When this view of taste and passion is combined with Hume's extensively worked out reduction of the claims of rationalist argumentation to the status of empirical observation, the result is a view of human nature that incorporates sentiment into the pattern of justification. Hume does not hold, any more than Shaftesbury did, that all sentiment is right because it is pleasant. But by the time Hume has gotten through dismantling the claims of rationalists to be able to establish causal relations and personal identity on the basis of arguments from either direct Cartesian introspection or innately demonstrable premises, it must be acknowledged that reason itself acts only on sentiment and that taste, like moral approbation, is a way of justifying some sentiments and condemning others. Hume does not provide a detailed working out of aesthetic sentiment on a parallel with what he provides for moral sentiment in Book Three of the *Treatise of Human Nature*. We are left with only fragments and hints of how the reconfiguring of reason to depend on beauty and taste would go. Taste, however, clearly has a cognitive role to play.

9. A Standard of Taste

Appeals to taste were already widespread by the time Hume offered his views in the essays, particularly "Of the Standard of Taste." Taste was both defended as a form of polite learning accessible to everyone and reviled as an invitation to vulgar display and immoral subjectivity. By the time Archibald Alison refers to emotions of taste in 1790, a psychological shift had taken place. The passions with their Platonic division of the mind that distinguishes passions from both a rational soul and animal appetites had become a simpler empirical set of emotions resident in the host mind. On that basis, taste becomes only one among many possible emotional reactions and loses its centrality as a cognitive form of sentiment. Aesthetic philosophy shifts its emphasis from the immediacy of emotion to an activity of mind, and the transformation of aesthetic philosophy on the basis of kinds of mental operation brought about by Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgment* finally moves the more direct empiricism of Hume and Alison to the margins of the debate.

Before that takes place, however, two issues shape the aesthetics of the mid-eighteenth century. Both have to do with the status of taste. The first is the question whether and how taste can be formed. The metaphor suggests that taste is as immediate and invulnerable to modification as its gustatory counterpart. No amount of argument will convince one that something that tastes bitter is not bitter nor that one should like bitter tastes if one does not. To counter that implication, Edmund Burke denies that taste is a separate faculty, and thus that it is a sense. He gives a much larger role to reason and understanding in forming taste, which incorporates both sensibility and judgment. But Burke's view concedes too much to older forms of reasoning for the tradition in which taste is the central term.

Instead, one finds explanations of taste that point the metaphor itself in a different direction. The preferred analogy is to the development of a palate in wine tasting. While aesthetic taste requires a minimal level of organic input as a necessary

[26]David Hume, "Of the Delicacy of Taste and Passion." See p. 227, this volume.

condition, taste can be refined in the same way that sensory awareness can be made more discriminating. A number of factors are cited as educating taste: comparison, removal of prejudice, and taking account of climate and age. The most important factor, however, is delicacy of taste. Delicacy is at once a given—a function of one's physical make-up like good vision—and something that can be improved by practice. Hume maintains that delicacy of taste can cure delicacy of passion because delicacy of taste is more controllable and provides a more refined and higher pleasure. On the other hand, Priestley worries that too much delicacy may impede enjoyment by making the slightest imperfection in a musical performance painful to the hearer. They agree, however, that delicacy in itself is something to be desired and that it can be improved just as one can develop a better ear for music by a combination of listening and instruction.

The centrality of delicacy makes it important to the other major question about taste, whether there is a standard of taste or not. This question became a common topic of polite philosophizing in the essay tradition of the mid-century. Once taste is acknowledged as an important characteristic for an educated person to cultivate, it becomes equally important to be able to tell good taste from bad taste. In part, this is a prudential question, as Gratian claimed. To the new class of art consumers, to be thought to have good taste was very important. One did not want to appear in public to have liked the wrong things. But taste seemed to offer little ground for a standard. The empirical fact was that opinions varied and controversy could not be settled by asserting one's taste because someone else could counter with an equally vivid and strongly held passion. So if taste was to function, its very advantage—its subjective incorrigibility—was also its disadvantage since one might well find that one had lost status by liking the wrong things.

The need for a standard of taste was also a moral question, however. The link between virtue and aesthetic taste was not to be broken until after Kant's formal separation removed aesthetic intuition from the realm of the practical altogether. For writers who followed Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, taste formed character, and character determined moral sentiment. While in principle it might be possible for someone to have good taste and still be a morally unvirtuous person, in fact the means to form taste and to form character were so connected that to fail in the one was to imply failure in the other. One does not develop good taste without exposing one's opinions to correction by the widest and most disinterested forms of experience, and inevitably that experience will also free one from the selfish forms of hedonism that were still attributed to Hobbes and his followers. So while taste might be acknowledged as of little importance in itself—one of those elements of character that permitted a tolerant diversity and conceded much to personal choice —it was unlikely that a person of taste would not also be a person of sense and benevolence, the characteristics necessary if moral sentiment was to be reliable. This connection easily accommodated the enlightened class awareness of Shaftesbury just as its absence drew the satiric scorn of Pope. For all of its theologically suspect nature, the defense of sentiment could be quite conservative.

The way that Hume separated the need for a standard of taste from the related question of the fact of taste is well known. In the absence of a clear fact of the matter,

the judgment that one work is better than another could not be settled by a direct reference to taste. Nor are the kind of principles that inform the education of taste applicable in the difficult cases. Where time is long and difference in quality is great, the inductive appearance of principles, even in the absence of a clear understanding of causal rules, can settle the question. Whoever dislikes Homer is condemned out of his own mouth. But in contemporary cases, nothing like such agreement can be expected. Yet that is where a standard of taste becomes most important because there the prudential and moral risk is greatest. Hume's solution, of course, is to turn to a different question that seems more amenable to factual distinction: the character of the judges. Where that can be determined, true judges can be identified, and then their judgments provide the standard. The principles that Hume refers to in "Of the Standard of Taste" are just those that are used by true judges who in effect become the teachers and guides of others.

Other attempts at a standard were made, however. The most common move was to look for a more easily applied form of induction. Hume's radical revision of the relation of sentiment and reason was too opaque for his contemporaries. They were not prepared to trust sentiment quite so far because they viewed sentiment as one more form of emotion. Instead, they hoped to find rules that corresponded to the rules in science about electricity or gases. There too the microscopic principles were held to be inaccessible, but that did not prevent Robert Boyle from relating pressure and volume for a gas. Alexander Gerard tries for a similar natural philosophy of taste. Mere sentiment is unscientific. But regarded in the light of a common human nature, it can be predicted. Gerard's appeal to reasons or principles against sentiment remains ambiguous, however. He seems to hold both that the principles are like natural laws and that they are the necessary order that corrects the senses. Lord Kames's belief in a standard of taste also depends in large measure on his conviction that there is a common human nature. Thus, part of the interest in a science of human nature rests on the appeal to it to provide standards. Most of those who regard taste as something positive in itself appeal to that assumed common nature as the basis for sorting good from bad taste.

10. Beauty and Aesthetic Pleasure

A continuing concern in eighteenth-century aesthetics is to counter Thomas Hobbes and others who argue for some form of egocentric hedonism. The moral problem raised by the claim that all actions are essentially self-interested and directed toward one's own pleasure has a corresponding aesthetic side. If it can be demonstrated that people have a disinterested pleasure in the arts, then not all pleasure need be self-interested. The same pleasure that one takes in beauty could be felt for benevolent actions. The attempt to identify aesthetic pleasures is another aspect of the psychology of human nature that is important, especially to those sentimentalists who see a relation between aesthetic and moral pleasure.

It is widely held that beauty includes a pleasant emotion in some way. The complication comes in relating beauty and pleasure to the ideational scheme traceable back to Locke. One possibility is that beauty itself is an idea. Hutcheson,

for example, refers to beauty as an idea provided by an internal sense. The details of this scheme are more difficult to work out. Sense produces simple ideas, so beauty should be a simple idea itself. On the other hand, beauty does not arise directly from an external sense but only by the intervention of an internal sense whose object is based on a complex comparison of uniformity and variety. Hutcheson is willing to call it a reflexive sense instead of an internal sense. That would seem to indicate that if beauty is representational at all, it must represent a complex idea. The place of pleasure in the idea is equally ambiguous. Beauty is regarded as an emotion or calm passion. As such, it simply is pleasant in the way that other emotions are either pleasant or painful. On the other hand, it seems possible to perceive beauty and yet feel no emotion at all. That we feel pleasure in beauty is a contingent fact of our emotional make-up. We could respond differently. In that case, pleasure is an accompaniment of beauty that supervenes on the idea.

The solutions to these hedonistic puzzles about beauty can take at least three forms. The first understands beauty as a simple idea to which pleasure is somehow necessarily connected. This is the solution most congruent with later views about aesthetic pleasure because it requires aesthetic pleasure as a necessary condition of aesthetic objects. Beauty is a name for an object that is aesthetic, and an object becomes aesthetic if and only if it is accompanied by aesthetic pleasure. An alternative understands an internal sense as allowing complex ideas, on the model of classical accounts of an internal sense that treats it as a form of judgment (e.g., in St. Augustine) and includes pleasure as part of the complex. This view is consistent with the classicism and the psychology of human nature that still looks for an intellectual soul that unites mere sense into perception by the integrating operation of a common sense. The third possibility understands beauty as itself simply a form of pleasure. Beauty is not a representational idea at all. This view leads to a non-cognitive form of aesthetics if it is followed out consistently.

It is too much to expect that a single clear answer will emerge from writers such as Hutcheson and his followers. Both 'idea' and 'beauty' are words that have so many different uses in the eighteenth century that one can expect only a limited consistency. Hume sees the need to distinguish ideas from impressions, for example, but that distinction leads to its own problems about how ideas are related to belief. If ideas are not themselves the direct product of experience, then one is either led back to the problems of integration of ideas and belief found in Aristotle and subsequent Aristotelian forms of epistemology or one must offer some alternative way of validating ideas. Hume's proposal that vivacity alone distinguishes ideas that are believed from those that are merely entertained requires the complex psychological analysis that he attempts in the *Treatise* and that was so widely ignored or misunderstood by his contemporaries.

While aesthetic pleasure as a separate category may seem a plausible solution in the light of nineteenth- and twentieth-century aesthetics, it is at most hinted at in eighteenth-century theories. The issue that dominated eighteenth-century discussions was whether pleasure had to be self-interested. Put that way, the alternatives are self-interested pleasure or a more generic form that permits sympathy

and benevolence. All pleasure would conform to one or the other of those possibilities.

One place that this can be illustrated is in the questions that are raised about tragic pleasure. A paradox arises because events that are painful nevertheless are experienced as pleasant when represented in a well-constructed play. If all pleasure is self-interested, one can account for tragic pleasure by the separation of the audience from the events. One's pleasure is essentially a feeling of relief that it is not I, and my pleasure is not implicated in the tragic events. But to those who hold that aesthetic pleasure is a form of sympathy, then to take pleasure in suffering seems paradoxical. Du Bos appeals to mental activity to explain the paradox. A mind occupied, even with tragic events, is more satisfied than a mind with no object. Fontenelle shows that pleasure and pain are similar, so that a painful emotion attenuated by its being fictional is felt as pleasant. Hume, notes, however, that some such emotions are historical, not fictional, so he adds a third factor, the beauty from eloquence and imitation.[27] Burke, on the other hand, focuses on the removal of pain as productive of relative pleasure.

A problem remains, of course. It is not just that people take pleasure in the portrayal of tragic events, either in plays or history. They flock to executions and disasters. The imposition of an aesthetic distance is not sufficient to explain tragic pleasure unless the pleasure itself can be distinguished, and that kind of distinction is not available in eighteenth-century psychology, even as practiced by Hume. In eighteenth-century British aesthetics, a different route is ultimately followed. Rhetorical strategy depends on being able to produce the expected effects, so the problem of tragic pleasure is viewed as one more rhetorical problem by Priestley and Kames, among others. Kames sees this rhetorical strategy as a problem about the combination of ideas, a kind of psychological manipulation based on human nature. While Kames seems merely to be accumulating rhetorical advice, his way of explaining how ideas become pleasant in certain combinations is a significant move toward an expressive aesthetic. It will be taken up by Alison and given more theoretical shape. Thus aesthetic pleasure comes to be viewed as a product of the association of ideas and a mechanics of emotion. Rather than an autonomous form of aesthetic pleasure, all pleasure depends on the combination of simpler ideas that are pleasant in themselves.

The particular combinations that are effective may well be accidental, however. If they are, then no regularity will be discoverable, and thus no rhetorical strategy can be effective. The need to explain aesthetic pleasure thus leads back to either some form of fortunate teleology, or it must be supported by an "experimental" account of the laws of human nature. The former is represented in Addison's treatment of the pleasures of the imagination. Addison's structure is teleological: we are formed so as to take pleasure in that which leads to the ultimate pleasure, God. Everything is ordered to that end if it is natural. The unnatural cannot reproduce itself. Hutcheson also has a fortunate teleology at work. His

[27]David Hume, "Of Tragedy." See p. 242, this volume.

account of laughter takes on aesthetic significance because it tries to show that laughter is not just self-interested relief but a form of human community provided by God. The latter is the goal for Hume, who remains somewhat skeptical about his own success, and for optimistic scientists of human nature such as Priestley and Kames.

11. Imitation

One of the most important sources of aesthetic pleasure links empiricist theories to classical philosophies of art. A continuing theme in eighteenth-century theories of art attributes pleasure to the practice of imitation, and one of the persistent problems for imitation theories in the eighteenth century is how to account for the pleasure that one takes in otherwise unpleasant things. The simple answer is Aristotle's—that we take pleasure in imitation itself. But as Adam Smith noted, that, by itself, cannot account for the fact that painting can imitate unpleasant objects while sculpture cannot. The solution to this puzzle must come from a full theory of imitation. For most of the century, the stock answer to the question, "What is art?" involves imitation, most commonly the imitation of nature. The most common imitation theory is based on Aristotle, both because of the influence of the *Poetics* and because Aristotelian metaphysics continues to exert a strong influence even on those who adhere to the new science.

James Harris develops a thorough-going Aristotelian version of imitation. His first treatise is a straightforward Aristotelian attempt at definition in terms of the four causes. He defines art as "an habitual power in man, of becoming the cause of some effect, according to a system of various and well approved precepts." He then explains these precepts in terms of Aristotle's formal, efficient, material, and final causes, beginning with what is really the formal cause—something caused intentionally and artificially by a person according to some rules. He then goes on to the purpose and means of art. What subject does art operate on? "On a contingent, which is within the reach of the human power to influence." For what reason? "For the sake of some absent good, relative to human life and attainable by man, but superior to his natural and uninstructed faculties." Where does art end? "Either in some energy, or in some work." Harris identifies these as the four causes.[28] Imitation of nature also has a normative element: it produces the best pleasure and the most noble forms. Thus pleasure and the nobility of nature are linked. The imitation of nature produces admiration, and admiration is always pleasant.

A theory of imitation is important in two additional respects. First, it supports the link between pleasure and the new psychology of the mind. Thus Burke, like most others, psychologizes the theory of imitation. Imitation is understood to produce a kind of mental operation, rather than defining a kind of object (as in Plato or Aristotle). That mental operation is the source of the pleasure of art. Second, imitation retains the nominal link to classicism that gives art and its objects status

[28]James Harris, "Three Treatises." See p. 165, this volume.

while opening the way for more concrete explorations of art objects. The century produces some rather acute analyses of the way that particular forms of art work by starting with imitation. Music, however, presents a problem because its imitative function is so limited. Imitation also allows a distinction between art and ordinary objects. Adam Smith's analysis of imitation notices the difference between imitation in ordinary objects, where exactness is a merit, and imitation in painting, where exactness cannot match the original and where the pleasure depends on a difference when the object is otherwise ordinary.

All imitation theory is not Aristotelian, however. If imitation is fundamentally imitation of nature, then Nature is often understood as those essential forms instantiated by natural things. An essentially Platonic view of beauty remains strong. The forms that appear in matter are inevitably compromised. Nature, therefore, is at once the model and a problem. As the model, one can only follow nature. But nature is material and thus incapable of a perfect presentation of the beauty of forms. The role of the painter is to form beauties that are superior to nature. Nature, in this context, is the intermediary between Platonic forms and the mind. The mind, being intellectual in its own nature, is able to accomplish what nature alone cannot. Yet gradually emerging from this very traditional picture is a view of the mind as individual that is at odds with its Platonic model. In neo-Platonism, there is only one mind. For an eighteenth-century artist, each mind competes for superiority.

Platonic imitation has problems of its own as well as presenting a delicate balancing act between the classical and modern views of the mind. For example, Dryden is aware that the standard view of nature as Platonic emblem presents a problem for portrait painting where the image must conform to the sitter, and for tragedy and comedy which both must admit the failings and errors of humans. Idealization may produce greater beauty, but audiences expect more contemporary references. Dryden's own *Absalom and Achitophel* was read by his contemporaries as a defense of the succession of James, Duke of York. Portrait painting in the mode of Reynolds, Gainsborough, and especially Thomas Lawrence might make its obeisance to classical beauty in the pose and background, but the sitter was not just recognizable but naturalized, particularly in portraits of actors, which introduce an additional distance from the reality of form as it is described in the *Republic*. Lawrence's portrait of George III's queen, Charlotte, remained unaccepted by the King because it was deemed not regal enough by the King. Daniel Webb distinguishes mechanical painting from ideal painting, but then he argues for sensibility as the perception of the idea, thus uniting a kind of practical Platonism with sentimentalism. Beauty is treated as a separate quality by Addison, but it is also acknowledged to belong to the eye of the beholder.

12. Beauty

In general, beauty is replaced by taste as the central theoretical term, as we have noted. Beauty becomes a secondary quality of objects or more often a calm passion. It is assimilated to the predominant empirical psychology of the mind, and as such, attention shifts to the mode of reception—either an internal sense or taste or both.

Attempts to relocate beauty in terms of sensation lead in turn to attempts at definition in terms of some necessary or sufficient set of secondary qualities of objects that correlate to human sensory reception. The classical definitions in terms of harmony and proportion are recast into properties or combinations of properties. Hogarth's sensuous line and Hutcheson's uniformity amidst variety are the most widely acknowledged definitions. One thing to note about both of these that helps account for their widespread appearance in other texts is the way that they shift classical definitions. Hogarth's sinuous line looks back to the classical proportion represented by the golden ratio. What in classical terms was a matter of numerical harmony and a reality independent of its instantiation becomes for Hogarth a psychological generalization, a piece of practical knowledge that artists can utilize just as they can utilize knowledge of perspective and of color relations. Hutcheson's formula also recalls the classical qualities of unity and participation. It is no wonder that Hutcheson's followers have difficulty reconciling uniformity amidst variety with Locke's ideas. Beauty never fits comfortably into that scheme.

Treatments of beauty after Hutcheson tend to confuse the classical mode with the new psychology. For example, John Baillie seeks defining characteristics for beauty, and accepts Hutcheson's uniformity amidst variety before he goes on to his own treatment of the sublime, another classical term that is relocated theoretically in the course of the eighteenth century. Kames attributes beauty to regularity, uniformity, proportion, order, and simplicity. His organization is Aristotelian, especially in the search for final causes and utility, but the way that the Aristotelian causal structure continues to be used even when the basic thesis is ideational is interesting. Order is both a natural order implicit in things that makes them beautiful and the rhetorical order that allows language to be manipulated at will. Hugh Blair, who follows Kames rhetorically, lacks originality and never goes into any great depth. He does, however, provide a very clear enumeration of the various characteristics claimed to produce the emotion of beauty. He distinguishes the sublime from looser uses, but is content to leave beauty as a kind of omnibus term covering a number of different kinds

Toward the end of the century, 'beauty,' which tends to be an omnibus term applied to many different secondary qualities, has largely been replaced by more particular quality terms such as 'sublimity' and 'picturesqueness' for which theoretically inclined critics try to give specific characteristics. The result is a further psychologizing of beauty in terms of its causes and consequences. Adam Smith recognizes the role that fashion and expense play in finding some objects beautiful and others less so. He notes that sculptured foliage that would be ordinary in nature is beautiful when done in stone. He then mounts a modest defense of sculptured shrubbery on the grounds that it does not really differ from sculptured marble except in the expense of the materials. One ought, therefore, to find both beautiful, though he does not press the matter, since skill will favor the marble.[29] The Rev. William

[29]Adam Smith, "Of the Nature of that Imitation which Takes Place in What are Called the Imitative Arts." See p. 441, this volume.

Gilpin goes farther by looking for a quasi-scientific explanation. Smoothness corresponds to the ease of the eye moving over the surface, and is thus beautiful.[30] What we observe in these later examples is that even when the description retains Platonic or Aristotelian verbal forms, its logic is that of subjective response. Some things just affect human beings that way, and what one wants to know is how and when the pleasure of beauty will be felt. Gradually, the answer involves breaking the response down more carefully into other feelings. By then, the need for an all-encompassing beauty is largely gone. Even taste divides into a multiplicity of tastes.

The same thing happens, however, to the notion of an internal sense. An internal sense appears most important when beauty is still the final cause. Then internal sense plays the role of reflective unifier. Without an internal sense, uniformity amidst variety could not come together. The emphasis on an analogy of sense conceals to some extent, perhaps even from its advocates, the real function of sense theories. They do not just operate like the external senses. An internal sense only begins after external sensation has been organized and presented by the mind as perception. The function of an internal sense, therefore, is not just to immediately respond to perception; an internal sense must repeat the perceptive act. The unity of internal sense is imposed by the sense but equally is the product of what is sensed. Thus beauty and virtue require an internal sense, but the number of senses is limited to what exists. When Alexander Gerard begins to multiply senses, therefore, he is implicitly acknowledging that an internal sense no longer responds to some higher level organization. All that is left for sense to do is to attach a label to a response. So one finds a sense of novelty and a sense of ridicule as well as the more classical senses of virtue, harmony, beauty, and imitation. Novelty and ridicule depend on the subject. Something that is novel to one person will not be to another.

13. Imagination

Instead of an internal sense, a different kind of faculty, imagination, emerges. Imagination changes its function in the course of the eighteenth century. From a subordinate position in the scheme of simple and complex ideas, it eventually becomes the dominant creative faculty, the specific function of genius, which has also changed from a characteristic of places and people to a creative force.

The imagination is an important element in early eighteenth-century theory, of course. It is a source of pleasure and a major part of the new faculty psychology built on experience. Addison relates imagination primarily to sight. Its function is to provide images from ideas. In that role, imagination is active but limited. It is synonymous with fancy, the ability to combine and recombine ideas at will. While this is a powerful tool, it does not do anything that is not also done by other reflective faculties, such as memory and reason, and these have the larger role because what they do provides truth while imagination or fancy provides only artificial combinations.

[30]William Gilpin, "Three Essays." See p. 421, this volume.

The importance of imagination thus rests on its ability to please and entertain rather than on any central epistemological role. Addison accounts for imagination's ability to provide pleasure in terms of the exercise of the mind. Different degrees of exercise produce different degrees of pleasure. One of the advantages of imagination over understanding is that the understanding requires too violent an exercise of the mind. Imagination is pleasurable just because it provides moderate exercise without too much worry about consequences. When imagination begins to intrude into more serious matters, it works like a disease. Samuel Johnson's philosophical tale, *Rassalas*, illustrates how excess imagination can lead to madness. The good and wise astronomer comes to imagine that he controls the weather and seasons. In one of the more poignant passages in eighteenth-century literature, Imlac observes "Of the uncertainties of our present state, the most dreadful and alarming is the uncertain continuance of reason."[31] Johnson himself feared such an imagination.

Imagination gradually comes to play a different role. Hume attributes to the imagination the ability to represent ideas. The imagination is thus on a par with memory, and because the only difference in ideas is their vivacity, imagination can contribute directly to the process of linking ideas into the kind of expectations and habits that allows sentiment to become a cognitive operation on a par with or superior to reason. As internal sense fragments, much of the role of combining and ordering shifts to the faculty of the imagination. Imagination in that sense would be especially dangerous if it were not controllable. Control comes from the increased attention to the powers of the mind itself, however. Imagination converts painful passions into pleasure, because the force of imagination is always pleasant. A normal mind will be guided by its own sensitive responses to avoid the extremes that it finds painful. The control of the imagination thus comes from a kind of built in governor, one more aspect of the psychologizing of epistemology that is taking place. What was, for Addison, a subordinate explanation of innocent pleasures becomes in its turn a naturally powerful substitute for excessive reliance on reason. A diseased mind, however, will not be able to control its own imaginative faculty, and the tendency of romanticism to run into the abnormal only illustrates how central imagination becomes.

14. Aesthetic Predicates: The Sublime and Picturesque

The place of the imagination in philosophy of art is a function of an expanded awareness of possible responses to art and nature and attempts to systematize them. The two most important are the sublime and the picturesque. Burke's kind of sublimity is anticipated by Addison's description of the great and uncommon as pleasures of the imagination. Addison treats novelty in the same way.[32] We might identify three stages of the sublime. In Longinus, at least as he was understood in the eighteenth century, sublimity is a rhetorical effect connected to a form of passionate

[31]Samuel Johnson, *Rassalas*, Ch. 43; *Rassalas*, ed. Bertrand H. Bronson (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1958), p. 595.

[32]Joseph Addison, "The Spectator," No. 412. See p. 107, this volume.

ecstasy. That is, the sublime is a way of lifting the reader out of the ordinary into a more intellectual world. John Baillie's sublime remains essentially that of neo-Platonic participation. The highest form of sublime passion is love, which unites the mind with divinity. Yet in spite of his acceptance of Longinus and Longinian rhetorical rules, Baillie traces the sublime to the mind's expansion and explains that expansion in terms of the extent and vastness of ideas.[33] The second stage frees the sublime from its Platonic roots. Edmund Burke's youthful analysis of the sublime is also classically influenced, but it is Aristotle's analytical structure rather than neo-Platonism that organizes Burke's sublime. Burke not only reduces beauty to a parallel position with the sublime—smallness and smoothness as opposed to greatness and vastness—he grounds the sublime in natural passions. Feminine beauty and masculine sublimity are not just metaphors for Burke; they are real passionate sources, and they are to be interpreted concretely. The final stage of the development of the sublime loses Burke's physiological psychology and retains only his qualitative characterizations. Uvedale Price limits the sublime to a certain kind of response —that produced by mental expansion—and thus reduces the sublime to one among many possible mental forms.

The most important of these additional forms is the picturesque. Price's quest for qualities of the picturesque is curious in the following way. He identifies the effect, then looks for the qualities that produce it. It would seem that the effect is identified before its identifying qualities, therefore, and in fact it is. The only criteria for picturesqueness is a felt quality. Everything else is a kind experimental introspection, a thought experiment carried out to determine when the response in question occurs. When Price settles on roughness and sudden variation joined to irregularity as the causes of picturesqueness, however, he is doing more than just providing an efficient cause.[34] Instead of giving a definition, he is providing a recipe based on experience. His purpose is practical and empirical in the sense that it is the way to achieve the effects desired. By turning to a kind of emotional catalogue, the basis for aesthetics shifts from feeling itself to a variety of separate feelings. The only reason for singling out the picturesque, therefore, has to do with its relation to nature on the one hand and pictures on the other. Exactly the same principles would allow urban manufacturing to be related to pictures when the futurists in the early twentieth century turn their picturesque eye in that direction.

The path followed by the development of the picturesque provides a clear picture of the way that eighteenth-century aesthetics develops. Picturesqueness begins simply as that quality in a scene that would be appropriate for a picture. Addison uses it in that way. However, the social and economic forces in the century impose a distance on picturesque painting. What is at first merely a scene appropriate for painting is modified as the roles reverse. Under the influence of landscape painters, natural scenes are shaped to fit painterly criteria. Landscape gardening

[33]John Baillie, "An Essay on the Sublime." See p. 191, this volume.

[34]Uvedale Price, "An Essay on the Picturesque as Compared with the Sublime and Beautiful." See p. 431, this volume.

becomes an art. At first this is simply another instance of idealizing nature. Smoothness and a tailored form replace the excessive formalism of seventeenth-century landscape gardening. Classical references are incorporated into the garden via grottos and statues. Sweeping drives, waters, and clumps of trees present vistas and replace older buildings. Capability Brown and Humphrey Repton become great improvers of nature. More is at work, however, than merely presenting nature as a stage in which a new landed gentry can play out their social roles.[35] Landscape becomes something to be looked at rather than lived in. The landscape painter must separate himself from the scene. Picturesqueness calls for stronger emotions, but it also imposes distance in a number of ways. The actual economic effect places a distance between vision and real effect.[36] Whole villages may have to be moved or destroyed to create a single composition. A different kind of artificiality than the idealizing classicism of early picturesque scenes emerges. The distance demanded includes a distance in time and lived space. What is wanted is not the smoothness of Brown but the wildness of Salvator Rosa and Claude Lorraine. If it is not to be found at hand, it can be built. A desire for the picturesque inspires purposely-built ruins and rustic scenery. Never mind that such scenes are inconvenient and even destructive. Early exhibitions of taste provoked scorn because of their wastefulness and pretension. The creation of picturesque scenery carried that wastefulness to an extreme. The Rev. William Gilpin was hard pressed to justify his tourist journeys and guides. The very idea of a tourist who came only to look from outside a scene was a middle-class transformation of the earlier notion of a grand tour as an educational experience.

The picturesque provides a psychological bridge between the aesthetics of taste that is still based on imitation and a moral unity of sensibility and virtue and the emerging aesthetic of individual experience that can only be experienced at a distance and under conditions that separate both the artist and the audience from the ordinary world. The picturesque is a denial of that world at the same time that it is an affirmation of the independent value of a particular class of experiences for their own sake. The banditti and poor who appear in picturesque painting are only tolerable as long as a clear separation between art and reality is maintained.[37] The movement to an increasingly individualized psychology in the course of the eighteenth century finds its artistic counterpart in the picturesque movement that eventually develops into an aesthetic of autonomous experience, imagination, and fine art as a form valuable for its own sake.

[35]John Dixon Hunt, *Gardens and the Picturesque: Studies in the History of Landscape Architecture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), p. 114.

[36]John Barrell, *The Dark Side of Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting 1730-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 134-135.

[37]Barrell, *The Dark Side of Landscape,* 101.

15. Expression

Aesthetic theories based on imitation are replaced by theories based on expression as the aesthetic justification for sensibility at the end of the eighteenth century. The explanatory and theoretical importance of expression is, itself, a direct outgrowth of the increased emphasis on the importance of the imagination, sublimity, and picturesqueness. Imitation theory said "Follow Nature" and provided an aesthetic of construction and transcendent beauty. Expression said, "Look to the mind itself"; the activity of the mind is the source of aesthetic experience just as the experience of the world is the source of ideas. However, expression is psychologically atomistic in a very different way from the psychological atomism of Locke's ideas. Emotion tends to be divorced from knowledge. Adam Smith introduces and discusses directly expression in both painting and music. He defines expression as the effect upon the mind of the work. In painting, that effect arises from the thought of something. It is distinct from the drawing and coloring that are a product of skill. In instrumental music, however, the effect is the necessary result of the melody and harmony. They are not distinct from what the music expresses. This is because the effects of instrumental music as imitation are very limited, but its emotional effects on the mind are nevertheless expressive though different from imitation.[38]

Archibald Alison turns associationist psychology to a different end than it originally served by combining it with a theory of the mind's expressive powers to produce an extensive theory of aesthetic effects and predicates. Earlier associationist psychology served an explanatory function. It either explained the negative effect that interfered with the mind's ability to respond naturally or it explained positively how one mind could by association understand the workings of another. For Alison, however, association is productive in a different way. Our language and emotions work together to provide a kind of experience that the mind itself can relish. The hedonism of earlier aesthetics sought to provide an alternative to a purely hedonistic self-interest by showing how one's deepest self-interest was served by aesthetic pleasure. Alison's hedonism changes self-interest into disinterestedness in order to preserve and promote a form of experience that is independent of one's other concerns. Alison frees aesthetics from its moral connections to virtue—ironically, given his own moral purposes.

Alison's particular form of expressiveness is supplanted by Kant's more powerful transcendental theory. Aesthetics develops along a different line from Alison's form of associationism. But elements of what we might call an expressive naturalism continue to influence British aesthetics through Ruskin and the pre-Raphaelites and into the particularly British versions of post-Kantian idealism. Unlike its idealist continental counterparts in the nineteenth century, British aesthetics retains a direct concern with the way that particular works of art are formed by the imaginative powers of individual artists. Coleridge may take over whole sections of Schelling, and Ruskin may graft his social reforms onto his views of aesthetic education, but

[38] Adam Smith. See p. 441, this volume.

both find the connection between nature and aesthetic expression essential to the creative act.

16. Cultural Forces

One final note needs to be added to complete this sketch of eighteenth-century British aesthetics. None of the theorizing described above takes place in an economic or social vacuum. The idea that aesthetics is distanced from the world is a product of aesthetic movements that are only beginning to take shape by the end of the century. It is enough to merely list some of the interactions of theory, art, and audience to see how powerfully they influence each other. Beginning with Dryden and Dennis, the professional author is transformed from a creature of patronage to an entrepreneur. Patronage does not disappear, of course, but it, like the monarchy itself, becomes decidedly more middle class. New economic forces mean new audiences. Private reading, professional critics, circulating libraries, and serial publications transform literary expectations. The novel itself is a form appropriate to the linear time of the eighteenth-century belief in progress and the voracious public appetite for sensation. Salons and academy exhibitions anticipate the museum culture that is already emerging from the classical collecting impulses of the eighteenth century and the opening of great houses and collections to picturesque tourists such as William Gilpin. It would be naive not to recognize the influence of these institutions and economic forces on the production of art and the corresponding changes in art theory. That is not to say that theory is merely a social consequence of other forces. Quite the contrary. The picturesque is only one example of how theory produces a change in the art world. What we must recognize is that the eighteenth century is at once the root of our modern aesthetic and at the same time so very different from it that we make a serious mistake if we view the century with post-Kantian eyes.

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CHAPTER 1

John Dryden*

"Introduction" to Charles du Fresnoy, *De Arte Graphica*

De Arte Graphica
Preface of the Translator, with a Parallel, of Poetry and Painting
1695

It may be reasonably expected, that I should say something on my own behalf, in respect to my present undertaking. First, then, the reader may be pleased to know, that it was not of my own choice that I undertook this work. Many of our most skillful painters and other artists were pleased to recommend this author to me, as one who perfectly understood the rules of painting; who gave the best and most concise instruction for performance, and the surest to inform the judgment of all who loved this noble art: that they who before were rather fond of it, than knowingly admired it, might defend their inclination by their reason; that they might understand those excellencies which they blindly valued, so as not to be farther imposed on by bad pieces, and to know when nature was well imitated by the most able masters. 'Tis true indeed, and they acknowledge it, that beside the rules which are given in this treatise, or which can be given in any other, that to make a perfect judgment of good pictures, and to value them more or less when compared with one another,

*John Dryden (1631-1700) was the son of a Northhamptonshire landowner. He attended Westminster school and Trinity College, Cambridge. His family had sided with the commonwealth during the war, but Dryden formed a friendship with the royalist Sir Robert Howard, the younger son of the Earl of Berkshire. Dryden married his sister, Lady Elizabeth Howard and eventually converted to Roman Catholicism. In 1662, he was elected to the Royal society and embarked on a successful career as a playwright. He prospered artistically and politically under the restoration, reaching a position of dominance in literary society. The exile of James II and accession of William III saw a change in Dryden's political fortunes, but his literary career continued largely undiminished until his death.

there is farther required a long conversation with the best pieces, which are not very frequent either in France or England; yet some we have, not only from the hands of Holbein, Rubens, and Van Dyck, (one of them admirable for history-painting, and the other two for portraits,) but of many Flemish masters, and those not inconsiderable, though for design, not equal to the Italians. And of these latter also, we are not unfurnished with some pieces of Raphael, Titian, Correggio, Michael Angelo, and others.

But to return to my own undertaking of this translation, I freely own, that I thought my self uncapable of performing it, either to their satisfaction, or my own credit. Not but that I understood the original Latin, and the French author perhaps as well as most Englishmen; but I was not sufficiently versed in the terms of art; and therefore thought that many of those persons who put this honorable task on me, were more able to perform it themselves, as undoubtedly they were. But they assuring me of their assistance, in correcting my faults where I spoke improperly, I was encouraged to attempt it, that I might not be wanting in what I could, to satisfy the desires of so many gentlemen who were willing to give the world this useful work. They have effectually performed their promise to me; and I have been as careful on my side, to take their advice in all things; so that the reader may assure himself of a tolerable translation: Not elegant, for I proposed not that to my self; but familiar, clear, and instructive. In any of which parts, if I have failed, the fault lies wholly at my door. In this one particular only I must beg the readers pardon. The prose translation of the poem is not free from poetical expressions, and I dare not promise that some of them are not fustian, or at least highly metaphorical; but this being a fault in the first digestion (that is, the original Latin) was not to be remedied in the second (viz.) the translation. And I may confidently say, that whoever had attempted it must have fallen into the same inconvenience; or a much greater, that of a false version.

When I undertook this work, I was already engaged in the translation of Virgil, from whom I have borrowed only two months, and am now returning to that which I ought to understand better. In the mean time I beg the readers pardon, for entertaining him so long with my self: 'Tis an usual part of ill manners in all authors, and almost in all mankind, to trouble others with their business; and I was so sensible of it beforehand, that I had not now committed it, unless some concernments of the readers had been interwoven with my own. But I know not, while I am atoning for one error, if I am not falling into another: for I have been importuned to say something farther of this art; and to make some observations on it in relation to the likeness and agreement which it has with poetry, its sister. But before I proceed, it will not be amiss, if I copy from Bellori (a most ingenious author, yet living) some part of his idea of a painter, which cannot be unpleasing, at least to such who are conversant in the philosophy of Plato. And to avoid tediousness, I will not translate the whole discourse, but take and leave as I find occasion.

> God Almighty, in the fabric of the universe, first contemplated himself, and reflected on his own excellencies; from which he drew, and constituted those first forms, which are called idea's: So that every species which was afterwards

expressed was produced from that first idea, forming that wonderful contexture of all created beings. But the celestial bodies above the moon being incorruptible, and not subject to change, remained for ever fair, and in perpetual order: On the contrary, all things which are sublunary are subject to change, to deformity, and to decay. And though nature always intends a consummate beauty in her productions, yet through the inequality of the matter, the forms are altered; and in particular, human beauty suffers alteration for the worse, as we see to our mortification, in the deformities, and disproportions which are in us. For which reason the artful painter and the sculptor, imitating the divine maker, form to themselves as well as they are able, a model of the superior beauties; and reflecting on them endeavor to correct and amend the common nature; and to represent it as it was first created without fault, either in color or in lineament.

This idea, which we may call the Goddess of painting and of sculpture, descends upon the marble and the cloth, and becomes the original of those arts; and being measured by the compass of the intellect, is it self the measure of the performing hand; and being animated by the imagination, infuses life into the image. The idea of the painter and the sculptor, is undoubtedly that perfect and excellent example of the mind; by imitation of which imagined form, all things are represented which fall under human sight: Such is the definition which is made by Cicero in his book of the orator to Brutus. "As therefore in forms and figures there is somewhat which is excellent and perfect, to which imagined species all things are referred by imitation, which are the objects of sight, in like manner we behold the species of eloquence in our minds, the effigies, or actual image of which we seek in the organs of our hearing. This is likewise confirmed by Proclus in the dialogue of Plato called Timaeus: If, says he, you take a man, as he is made by nature and compared him with another who is the effect of Art; the work of nature will always appear the less beautiful, because art is more accurate than nature." But Zeuxis, who from the choice which he made of five virgins, drew that wonderful picture of Helena, which Cicero in his *Orator* before mentioned, sets before us as the most perfect example of beauty, at the same time admonishes a painter, to contemplate the ideas of the most natural forms; and to make a judicious choice of several bodies, all of them the most elegant which he can find: by which we may plainly understand that he thought it impossible to find in any one body all those perfections which he sought for the accomplishment of a Helena, because nature in any individual person makes nothing that is perfect in all its parts. For this reason Maximus Tyrius also says, that the image which is taken by a painter from several bodies produces a beauty, which 'tis impossible to find in any single natural body, approaching to the perfection of the fairest statues. Thus nature on this account is so much inferior to art, that those artists who propose to themselves only the imitation and likeness of such or such a particular person, without election of those idea's before-mentioned, have often been reproached for that omission: Demetrius was taxed for being too natural; Dionysius was also blamed for drawing men like us, and was commonly called, Ανθρωπόγραφοζ that is, a painter of men. In our times Michael Angelo da Caravaggio, was esteemed too natural. He drew persons as they were; and Bamboccio, and most of the Dutch painters, have drawn the worst likeness. Lysippus of old, upbraided the common sort of sculptors, for making men such as they were found in nature; and boasted of himself that he made them as they ought to be; which is a precept of Aristotle, given as well to poets as to painters. Phidias raised an admiration even to astonishment, in those who beheld his statues, with the forms, which he gave to his Gods and heroes; by imitating the idea rather than

nature. And Cicero speaking of him affirms, that figuring Jupiter and Pallas, he did not contemplate any object from whence he took the likeness, but considered in his own mind a great and admirable form of beauty, and according to that image in his soul, he directed the operation of his hand. Seneca also seems to wonder, that Phidias having never beheld either Jove or Pallas, yet could conceived their divine images in his mind. Apollonius Tyanaeus says the same in other words, that the fancy more instructs the painter than the imitation; for the last makes only the things which it sees, but the first makes also the things which it never sees.

Leon Battista Alberti tells us, that we ought not so much to love the likeness as the beauty, and to choose from the fairest bodies severally the fairest parts. Leonardo da Vinci instructs the painter to form this idea to himself: And Raphael, the greatest of all modern masters, writes thus to Castiglione, concerning his Galatea: "To paint a fair one, 'tis necessary for me to see many fair ones; but because there is so great a scarcity of lovely women, I am constrained to make use of one certain idea, which I have formed to my self in my own fancy." Guido Reni sending to Rome his St. Michael which he had painted for the church of the Capuchins, at the same time wrote to Monsignor Massano, who was Maestro di Casa (or steward of the house) to Pope Urban the Eighth, in this manner: "I wish I had the wings of an Angel, to have ascended into paradise, and there to have beheld the forms of those beatified spirits, from which I might have copied my archangel: But not being able to mount so high, it was in vain for me to search his resemblance here below: so that I was forced to make an introspection, into my own mind, and into that idea of beauty, which I have formed in my own imagination. I have likewise created there the contrary idea of deformity and ugliness; but I leave the consideration of it, 'till I paint the devil: and in the mean time shun the very thought of it as much as possibly I can, and am even endeavoring to blot it wholly out of my remembrance."

There was not any lady in all antiquity, who was mistress of so much beauty as was to be found in the Venus of Gnidus, made by Praxiteles, or the Minerva of Athens by Phidias; which was therefore called the beautiful form. Neither is there any man of the present age, equal in the strength, proportion, and knitting of his limbs, to the Hercules of Farnese, made by Glycon: Or any woman who can justly be compared with the Medicean Venus of Cleomenes. And upon this account, the noblest poets and the best orators, when they desired to celebrate any extraordinary beauty, are forced to have recourse to statues and pictures, and to draw their persons and faces into comparison. Ovid endeavoring to express the beauty of Cyllarus, the fairest of the centaurs, celebrates him as next in perfection, to the most admirable statues.

Gratus in ore vigor, cervix, humeriq; manusq;
Pectoraq; Artificum laudatis Proxima Signis.

A pleasing vigor his fair face expressed;
His neck, his hands, his shoulders, and his breast,
Did next in gracefulness and beauty stand,
To breathing figures of the sculptor's hand.

In another place he sets Apelles above Venus.

Si Venerem Cois nunquam pinxisset Apelles,
Mersa sub aequoreis illa lateret Aquis.

thus varied.

One birth to seas the Cyprian Goddess owed,
A second birth the painter's art bestowed:
Less by the seas than by his power was given;
They made her live, but he advanced to heaven.

The idea of this beauty, is indeed various, according to the several forms which the painter or sculptor would describe; as one in strength, another in magnanimity: and sometimes it consists in cheerfulness, and sometimes in delicacy; and is always diversified by the sex and age.

The beauty of Jove is one, and that of Juno another: Hercules, and Cupid are perfect beauties, though of different kinds; for beauty is only that which makes all things as they are in their proper and perfect nature, which the best painters always choose by contemplating the forms of each. We ought farther to consider, that a picture being the representation of a human action, the painter ought to retain in his mind, the examples of all affections, and passions, as a poet preserves the idea of an angry man, of one who is fearful, sad or merry, and so of all the rest: For 'tis impossible to express that with the hand, which never entered into the imagination. In this manner as I have rudely and briefly shewn you, painters and sculptors, choosing the most elegant natural beauties, perfectionate the idea, and advance their art, even above nature it self, in her individual productions; which is the utmost mastery of human performance.

From hence arises that astonishment, and almost adoration which is paid by the knowing to those divine remainders of Antiquity. From hence Phidias, Lysippus, and other noble sculptors, are still held in veneration; and Appelles, Zeuxis, Protogenes, and other admirable painters, though their works are perished, are and will be eternally admired; who all of them drew after the ideas of perfection, which are the miracles of nature, the providence of the understanding, the exemplars of the mind, the light of the fancy; the sun which from its rising, inspired the statue of Memnon, and the fire which warmed into life the image of Prometheus: 'Tis this which causes the graces, and the loves to take up their habitations in the hardest marble, and to subsist in the emptiness of light, and shadows. But since the idea of eloquence is as far inferior to that of painting, as the force of words is to the sight, I must here break off abruptly, and having conducted the reader as it were to a secret walk, there leave him in the midst of silence to contemplate those ideas; which I have only sketched, and which every man must finish for himself.

In these pompous expressions, or such as these, the Italian has given you his idea of a painter; and though I cannot much commend the style, I must needs say there is somewhat in the matter: Plato himself is accustomed to write loftily, imitating, as the critiques tell us, the manner of Homer; but surely that inimitable poet, had not so much of smoke in his writing, though not less of fire. But in short, this is the present genius of Italy. What Philostratus tells us in the proem of his figures is somewhat plainer; and therefore I will translate it almost word for word.

He who will rightly govern the art of painting, ought of necessity first to understand human nature. He ought likewise to be endued with a genius to express the signs of their passions whom he represents; and to make the dumb as it were to speak; he must yet further understand what is contained in the constitution of the cheeks, in

> the temperament of the eyes, in the naturalness (if I may so call it) of the eye-brows; and in short whatsoever belongs to the mind and thought. He who thoroughly possesses all these things will obtain the whole: And the hand will exquisitely represent the action of every particular person. If it happen that he be either mad, or angry, melancholic, or cheerful, a sprightly youth, or a languishing lover; in one word, he will be able to paint whatsoever is proportionable to any one. And even in all this there is a sweet error without causing any shame: For the eyes and minds of the beholders being fastened on objects which have no real being, as if they were truly existent, and being induced by them to believe them so, what pleasure is it not capable of giving? the ancients, and other wise men, have written many things concerning the symmetry which is in the art of painting; constituting as it were some certain laws for the proportion of every member, not thinking it possible for a painter to undertake the expression of those motions which are in the mind, without a concurrent harmony in the natural measure: For that which is out of its own kind and measure, is not received from nature, whose motion is always right. On a serious consideration of this matter it will be found, that the art of painting has a wonderful affinity with that of poetry; and that there is betwixt them a certain common imagination. For as the poets introduce the Gods and heroes, and all those things which are either majestical, honest or delightful, in like manner the painters, by the virtue of their out-lines, colors, lights and shadows, represent the same things and persons in their pictures.

Thus, as convoy ships either accompany, or should accompany their merchants till they may prosecute the rest of their voyage without danger, so Philostratus has brought me thus far on my way, and I can now sail on without him. He has begun to speak of the great relation betwixt painting and poetry, and thither the greatest part of this discourse by my promise was directed. I have not engaged my self to any perfect method, neither am I loaded with a full cargo. 'Tis sufficient if I bring a sample of some goods in this voyage. It will be easy for others to add more when the commerce is settled: For a treatise twice as large as this of painting could not contain all that might be said on the parallel of these two sister arts. I will take my rise from Bellori before I proceed to the author of this book.

The business of his preface is to prove, that a learned painter should form to himself an idea of perfect nature. This image he is to set before his mind in all his undertakings, and to draw from thence as from a store-house, the beauties which are to enter into his work; thereby correcting nature from what actually she is in individuals, to what she ought to be, and what she was created. Now as this idea of perfection is of little use in portraits (or the resemblances of particular persons) so neither is it in the characters of comedy, and tragedy; which are never to be made perfect, but always to be drawn with some specks of frailty and deficiency; such as they have been described to us in history, if they were real characters; or such as the poet began to shew them at their first appearance, if they were only fictitious, (or imaginary). The perfection of such stage-characters consists chiefly in their likeness to the deficient faulty nature, which is their original: Only, as 'tis observed more at large hereafter, in such cases there will always be found a better likeness, and a worse; and the better is constantly to be chosen: I mean in tragedy, which represents

the figures of the highest form amongst mankind. Thus in portraits, the painter will not take that side of the face which has some notorious blemish in it; but either draw it in profile (as Apelles did Antigonus, who had lost one of his eyes) or else shadow the more imperfect side. For an ingenious flattery is to be allowed to the professors of both arts; so long as the likeness is not destroyed. 'Tis true that all manner of imperfections must not be taken away from the characters, and the reason is, that there may be left some grounds of pity for their misfortunes. We can never be grieved for their miseries who are thoroughly wicked, and have thereby justly called their calamities on themselves. Such men are the natural objects of our hatred, not of our commiseration. If on the other side their characters were wholly perfect (such as for example, the character of a saint or martyr in a play,) his, or her misfortunes, would produce impious thoughts in the beholders: they would accuse the heavens of injustice, and think of leaving a religion, where piety was so ill requited. I say the greater part would be tempted so to do, I say not that they ought: and the consequence is too dangerous for the practice. In this I have accused my self for my own *St. Catherine*, but let truth prevail. Sophocles has taken the just medium in his *Oedipus*. He is somewhat arrogant at his first entrance; and is too inquisitive through the whole tragedy: Yet these imperfections being balanced by great virtues, they hinder not our compassion for his miseries; neither yet can they destroy that horror which the nature of his crimes have excited in us. Such in painting are the warts and moles, which adding a likeness to the face, are not therefore to be omitted: But these produce no loathing in us. But how far to proceed, and where to stop, is left to the judgment of the poet and the painter. In comedy there is somewhat more of the worse likeness to be taken, because that is often to produce laughter; which is occasioned by the sight of some deformity: but for this I refer the reader to Aristotle. 'Tis a sharp manner of instruction for the vulgar who are never well amended, till they are more than sufficiently exposed.

That I may return to the beginning of this remark, concerning perfect ideas, I have only this to say, that the parallel is often true in epic-poetry. The heroes of the poets are to be drawn according to this rule. There is scarce a frailty to be left in the best of them; any more than is to be found in a divine nature: And if Aeneas sometimes weeps, 'tis not in bemoaning his own miseries, but those which his people undergo. If this be an imperfection, the Son of God when he was incarnate shed tears of compassion over Jerusalem: And Lentulus describes him often weeping, but never laughing; so that Virgil is justified even from the holy scriptures. I have but one word more, which for once I will anticipate from the author of this book. Though it must be an idea of perfection, from which both the epic poet, and the history painter draws; yet all perfections are not suitable to all subjects: But every one must be designed according to that perfect beauty which is proper to him. An Apollo must be distinguished from a Jupiter, a Pallas from a Venus: and so in poetry an Aeneas from any other hero: for piety is his chief perfection. Homer's Achilles is a kind of exception to this rule: but then he is not a perfect hero, nor so intended by the poet. All his Gods had somewhat of human imperfection; for which he has been taxed by Plato, as an imitator of what was bad: But Virgil observed his fault, and mended it. Yet Achilles was perfect in the strength of his body, and the

vigor of his mind. Had he been less passionate, or less revengeful, the poet well foresaw that Hector had been killed, and Troy taken at the first assault; which had destroyed the beautiful contrivance of his *Iliads*, and the moral of preventing discord amongst confederate princes, which was his principal intention. For the moral (as Bossu observes) is the first business of the poet, as being the ground-work of his instruction. This being formed, he contrives such a design, or fable, as may be most suitable to the moral. After this he begins to think of the persons, whom he is to employ in carrying on his design: and gives them the manners, which are most proper to their several characters. The thoughts and words are the last parts, which give beauty and coloring to the piece.

When I say, that the manners of the hero ought to be good in perfection, I contradict not the Marquess of Normanby's opinion, in that admirable verse, where speaking of a perfect character, he calls it "A faultless monster, which the world ne're knew": For that excellent critique, intended only to speak of dramatic characters, and not of epic.

Thus at least I have shewn, that in the most perfect poem, which is that of Virgil, a perfect idea was required, and followed, and consequently that all succeeding poets ought rather to imitate him, than even Homer.

I will now proceed as I promised, to the author of this book. He tells you almost in the first lines of it, that the chief end of painting is to please the eyes: and 'tis one great end of poetry to please the mind. Thus far the parallel of the arts holds true: with this difference, that the principal end of painting is to please; and the chief design of poetry is to instruct. In this the latter seems to have the advantage of the former; but if we consider the artists themselves on both sides, certainly their aims are the very same: they would both make sure of pleasing, and that in preference to instruction. Next, the means of this pleasures is by deceit. One imposes on the sight, and the other on the understanding. Fiction is of the essence of poetry as well as of painting; there is a resemblance in one, of human bodies, things and actions which are not real, and in the other, of a true story by a fiction. And as all stories are not proper subjects for an epic poem, or a tragedy, so neither are they for a noble picture. The subjects both of the one, and of the other, ought to have nothing of immoral, low, or filthy in them; but this being treated at large in the book it self, I waive it to avoid repetition. Only I must add, that though Catullus, Ovid and others were of another opinion, that the subject of poets, and even their thoughts and expressions might be loose, provided their lives were chaste and holy, yet there are no such licenses permitted in that art any more than in painting, to design and color obscene nudities. *Vita proba est*, is no excuse, for it will scarcely be admitted, that either a poet or a painter can be chaste, who give us the contrary examples in their writings and their pictures. We see nothing of this kind in Virgil: that which comes the nearest to it, is the Adventure of the cave, where Dido and Aeneas were driven by the storm: Yet even there the poet pretends a marriage before the consummation; and Juno her self was present at it. Neither is there any expression in that story, which a Roman matron might not read without a blush. Besides, the poet passes it over as hastily as he can, as if he were afraid of staying in the cave with the two lovers, and of being a witness to their actions. Now I suppose that a painter would not be much

commended, who should pick out this cavern from the whole *Aeneids*, when there is not another in the work. He had better leave them in their obscurity, than let in a flash of lightning to clear the natural darkness of the place, by which he must discover himself as much as them. The alter-pieces, and holy decorations of painting, show that art may be applied to better uses, as well as poetry. And amongst many other instances, the Farnesian gallery, painted by Hannibal Carracci, is a sufficient witness yet remaining: the whole work being morally instructive, and particularly the *Hercules Bivium*, which is a perfect triumph of virtue over vice, as 'tis wonderfully well described by the ingenious Bellori.

Hitherto I have only told the reader what ought not to be the subject of a picture or of a poem: what it ought to be on either side; our author tells us: it must in general be great and noble: and in this, the parallel is exactly true. The subject of a poet either in tragedy or in an epic poem is a great action of some illustrious hero. 'Tis the same in painting; not every action, nor every person is considerable enough to enter into the cloth. It must be the anger of an Achilles, the piety of an Aeneas, the sacrifice of an Iphigenia (for heroines as well as heroes are comprehended in the rule;) but the parallel is more complete in tragedy, than in an epic poem. For as a tragedy may be made out of many particular episodes of Homer or of Virgil, so may a noble picture be designed out of this or that particular story in either author. History is also fruitful of designs both for the painter and the tragic poet: Curtius throwing himself into a gulf, and the two Decii sacrificing themselves for the safety of their country, are subjects for tragedy and picture. Such is Scipio restoring the Spanish bride, whom he either loved or may be supposed to love, by which he gained the hearts of a great nation, to interest themselves for Rome against Carthage: These are all but particular pieces in Livy's history; and yet are full complete subjects for the pen and pencil. Now the reason of this is evident. Tragedy and picture are more narrowly circumscribed by the mechanic rules of time and place than the epic poem. The time of this last is left indefinite. 'Tis true, Homer took up only the space of eight and forty days for his *Iliads*; but whether Virgil's action was comprehended in a year or somewhat more, is not determined by Bossu. Homer made the place of his action Troy, and the Grecian camp besieging it. Virgil introduces his Aeneas, sometimes in Sicily, sometimes in Carthage, and other times at Cumae, before he brings him to Laurentum; and even after that, he wanders again to the kingdom of Evander and some parts of Tuscany, before he returns to finish the war by the death of Turnus. But tragedy according to the practice of the ancients, was always confined within the compass of twenty-four hours, and seldom takes up so much time. As for the place of it, it was always one, and that not in a larger sense (as for example, a whole city or two or three several houses in it) but the market or some other public place, common to the chorus and all the actors; which established law of theirs, I have not an opportunity to examine in this place, because I cannot do it without digression from my subject, though it seems too strict at the first appearance because it excludes all secret intrigues, which are the beauties of the modern stage: for nothing can be carried on with privacy, when the chorus is supposed to be always present. But to proceed, I must say this to the advantage of painting, even above tragedy, that what this last represents in the space of many