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## SUMMARY

The aim of the thesis is to study Francis Hutcheson in the friendship networks in which he moved in the 1720s while in Dublin, and to posit a number of potential influences which his identity had on the development and general character of his thought.

The thesis will therefore map some of the landscape, both intellectual and geographic, in which he lived, and discuss his thought in this context. The thesis itself will comprise a general introduction, a biographical survey, and six full chapters. The chapters will discuss in turn, Hutcheson's first two inspirations, two beauty and virtue, his correspondence with Gilbert Burnet, the

# **HUTCHESON IN DUBLIN** **THE CRUCIBLE OF HIS THOUGHT**

Submitted for the degree of doctor of philosophy

2000

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## SUMMARY

The aim of the thesis is to situate Francis Hutcheson in the friendship networks in which he moved in the 1720s while in Dublin, and to posit a number of potential influences which his friends had on the development and general character of his thought.

The thesis will therefore map some of the landscape, both intellectual and geographic, in which he lived, and discuss his thought in this context. The thesis itself will comprise a general introduction, a historiographical survey, and six full chapters. The chapters will assess in turn, Hutcheson's first two inquiries, into beauty and virtue, his correspondence with Gilbert Burnet the younger, his contributions to the *Dublin Weekly Journal*, his *Essay on the passions* and the *Illustrations on the moral sense*.

Hutcheson's texts will be examined in relation to his network of friends, including Robert Viscount Molesworth of Swords, the Anglican minister Edward Synge the younger, the Presbyterian preacher Joseph Boyse, the editor and essayist James Arbuckle, the Lord Lieutenant, John Carteret and the Archbishop of Dublin, William King.

The thesis will suggest a reading of Hutcheson's thought in the light of his Dublin experiences and suggest a link between his work and the emergence of a social theory that his Glasgow students later termed 'civil society.' The intellectual relationship between Hutcheson's ethical theory and Scottish theories of civil society will be pointed towards in the concluding remarks.

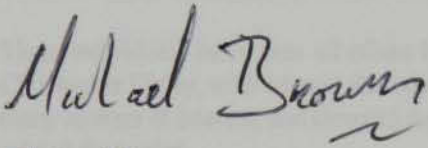
The whole will point up a crucial intellectual link between Ireland and Scotland in the eighteenth century and posit an interesting genealogy for a category which is coming under increasing scrutiny in the disciplines of political science, sociology and history, that of civil society.

## DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at any other university.

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Michael Brown



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First notice must go to Dr. Patrick Kelly, for his patient and careful supervision. Notice too to the staff of the Modern History Department, for providing a convivial environment. Thanks should be offered to the staff of the libraries in which I worked: the Berkeley Library, Lecky Library, Early Printed Books and the 1937 Reading Room in Trinity College, Dublin, Marsh's Library, the National Library of Ireland, Pearse Street Public Library, the British Library, the National Library of Scotland, Glasgow University Library, Glasgow University Archives, Edinburgh University Library, the Scottish Record Office, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland and the Cambridge University Libraries. Special thanks to the staff of the Divinity Library, Edinburgh University.

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Finally, thanks must go to my sister Linski.

Other specific debts I attempt to acknowledge in the footnotes.

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, Suzanne and Terence.

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## A NOTE ON REFERENCES

Francis Hutcheson proposed the following abbreviations in the preface to his *Essay on the passions and illustrations on the moral sense*: “In the references in the bottom of the pages the Inquiry into Beauty is called Treatise I, the Inquiry into the ideas of moral good and evil is Treatise II, the Essay on the passions, Treatise III, and the Illustrations on the moral sense, Treatise IV.”

Therefore, I shall adopt his scheme of referring to his work as following:

RCSM: *Reflections on the common systems of morality*  
T1: *Inquiry concerning beauty, order, harmony, design*  
T2: *Inquiry into the ideas of moral good and evil*  
GBL: *Letters between Francis Hutcheson and Gilbert Burnet*  
TOL: *Thoughts on laughter*  
OFB: *Observations on the fable of the bees*  
T3: *Essay on the passions*  
T4: *Illustrations on the moral sense*  
IL: *Inaugural lecture on the social nature of man*  
CP: *Considerations on patronage*  
SIMP: *Short introduction to moral philosophy*  
SMP: *A system of moral philosophy*  
MMA: *Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*

Alongside these abbreviations the following will be used throughout the text:

AD: Robert Molesworth, *Account of Denmark*, (London, 1696)  
CA: Robert Molesworth, *Considerations on agriculture*, (Dublin, 1723)  
CNM: John Toland, *Christianity not mysterious*, (Dublin, 1696)  
CSPd: Calendar of state papers, domestic  
CTC: Edward Syngé, *The case of toleration considered*, (Dublin, 1725)  
DNB, Dictionary of national biography  
DWJ: James Arbuckle ed., *Dublin Weekly Journal*, (Dublin, 1725-9)  
EDFS: William King, *Europe's deliverance from France and Slavery*, (Dublin, 1691)  
EOE: William King, *Essay on the origin of evil*, (London, 1698)  
HL: James Arbuckle ed., *Hibernicus Letters*, (Dublin 1729)  
HMC: *Historical Manuscripts Commission*  
JHOC: *Journal of the House of Commons Ireland*  
JHOL: *Journal of the House of Lords, Ireland*  
Life: W. R. Scott, *Francis Hutcheson: his life, teaching and position in the history of philosophy*, (Bristol, 1992).  
PRW: Robert Molesworth, *Principles of a real Whig*, (London, 1775)  
PSMP: William Leechman, Preface to the *System of moral philosophy*, (Glasgow, 1755)  
SPI: William King, *State of the Protestants of Ireland*, (Dublin, 1691)

Otherwise the *Irish Historical Studies* rules have been used in the references, and the spelling and punctuation has been silently modernised.

## LOCATING FRANCIS HUTCHESON

On 26 November 1729, the Professor of Moral Philosophy, Gerschom Carmichael died from a cancerous growth on his face.<sup>1</sup> Glasgow University approached an old student, the Dublin-based dissenter Francis Hutcheson, with an offer of the chair. It was an offer he accepted gratefully. Hutcheson taught in Glasgow from taking up the chair in the autumn of 1730, at the age of 36, until his death sixteen years later.

Formal induction into the faculty did not occur until early November.<sup>2</sup> Hutcheson signed the Confession of Faith on 29 October and gave his inaugural lecture before the assembled faculty and interested public five days later.<sup>3</sup> One of those who attended, the sceptical Robert Wodrow, left moderately impressed with what he had heard:

*November 3.* Upon the 3rd of this month Mr. Francis Hutcheson was publicly admitted, and had his inaugural discourse. It's in print, and I need say no more of it. He had not time, I know, to form it, and it's upon a very safe general subject....He delivered it very fast and low, being a modest man, and it was not well understood.<sup>4</sup>

Once hard at work Hutcheson's weekly workload, as recorded by his colleague and subsequent biographer, the Professor of Theology, William Leechman, consisted of:

[H]is constant lectures five days of the week, on Natural Religion, Morals, Jurisprudence and Government, [besides which] he had another lecture three days of the week, in which some of the finest writers of antiquity, both Greek and Latin, on the subject of Morals, were interpreted, and the language as well as the sentiment explained in a very masterly manner. Besides these sets of lectures he gave a weekly one on the Sunday evening, on the truth and excellency of Christianity.... This was the most crowded of all his lectures as all the different sorts and ranks of students, being at liberty from their particular pursuits on this day, chose to attend it, being always sure of finding both pleasure and instruction.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For a graphic depiction of his affliction, see R. Wodrow, *Analecta*, (Edinburgh, 1843), volume four, p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> The teaching term often did not begin until November.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, p. 56. Scott dates Hutcheson's inaugural address to the 30th of November, referencing Robert Wodrow for this information. See p. 56, n. 3. However, Wodrow's entry, which reads that "Upon the 30th of this moneth Mr. Francis Hutcheson was publickly admitted." (R. Wodrow, *Analecta*, (Edinburgh, 1843), volume four, p. 167) appears at the start of the entry dated 3 November 1730. This, together with the use of the past tense suggests a date of 30 October 1730. This is further complicated by the suggestion forwarded by Thomas Mautner that the actual date was 3 November, five days after Hutcheson's signature appears in the register as having signed the Confession. The motive for this suggestion is an examination of Wodrow's original manuscript, undertaken by M. A. Stewart and would account for the use by Wodrow of the phrase "this month." I have therefore followed Mautner in accepting the date of the lecture as 3 November 1730. See T. Mautner (ed.) *Francis Hutcheson, Two texts on human nature*, (T. Mautner, ed.), (Cambridge, 1993), p. 107, n1.

<sup>4</sup> R. Wodrow, *Analecta*, (Edinburgh, 1843), volume four, pp 186-7.

<sup>5</sup> PSMP, p. xxxvi-ii.

In Hutcheson's main duties, the lectures on morals and jurisprudence, he followed the scheme offered by Samuel von Pufendorf's treatise, *On the duty of man and citizen*.<sup>6</sup> Pufendorf had supplied students of moral philosophy with a grid on which to graph the legal and ethical structures of society.<sup>7</sup> In basing the course upon this text, Hutcheson's curriculum was broadly in line with a European trend which saw "Pufendorf's texts...[as] required reading for university students everywhere from the late seventeenth century to the late eighteenth century."<sup>8</sup> It was also in line with the course his predecessor had taught. Indeed, Hutcheson made use of Carmichael's edition and notes.<sup>9</sup> Hutcheson's conservatism was observed: "He teaches Mr. Carmichael's *Compend* and Pufendorf, and speaks with much veneration of him [Carmichael], which at least is an evidence of his prudence. He is very close in examining the lads on the Sabbath night as to the sermon and serious in his sacred lesson on the Monday."<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless, traditionalists within the Church of Scotland were suspicious of the Professor's theological leanings. Most explosively, in 1738 one of Hutcheson's students attacked him in print for reneging upon his subscription to the Westminster Confession.<sup>11</sup> In a sequence of eleven charges, the anonymous assailant, usually identified as Hugh Heugh, detailed Hutcheson's theological transgressions from lecture notes taken from two successive sessions at the college.<sup>12</sup> Citing relevant doctrine in the Westminster Confession, the author declared Hutcheson to be a heretic and warned his readers that:

A church is never in greater danger of being ruined, than when her youth are early instructed in such principles as have a direct tendency to overturn both her doctrine and discipline....I earnestly wish that the Lord may preserve them to hold fast the form of sound words, lest you should spoil them through philosophy and vain deceit.<sup>13</sup>

Charges were brought, to the effect that Hutcheson had contravened the trust placed in him by "Teaching to his students in contravention to the Westminster Confession the

<sup>6</sup> Hutcheson lectured on Pufendorf until 1742. D. Murray, *Memories of the old college of Glasgow*, (Glasgow, 1927), p. 508 n1. The *Philosophiae moralis institutio compendiaria* (a translation of which appeared in 1745 as *A short introduction to moral philosophy*) follows Pufendorf's framework closely and may have been derived from his lecture notes.

<sup>7</sup> S. Pufendorf, *On the duty of man and citizen according to natural law*, (J. Tully, ed.), (Cambridge, 1991).

<sup>8</sup> J. Moore and M. Silverthorne, "Protestant theologies, limited sovereignties: natural law and the conditions of union in the German Empire, the Netherlands and Great Britain," in *A union for empire: political thought and the British union of 1707*, (J. Robertson, ed.), (Cambridge, 1995), p. 173.

<sup>9</sup> G. Carmichael, *On Samuel Pufendorf's De officio hominis et civis: supplements and appendix*, (J. N. Lenhart and C. H. Reeves, eds.), (Ohio, 1985).

<sup>10</sup> R. Wodrow, *Analecta*, (Edinburgh, 1843), volume four, p. 185.

<sup>11</sup> That Hutcheson did not take the charges very seriously may be seen in a remark of his to Thomas Drennan, that: "There has been some whimsical buffonery about my heresy of which I will send you a copy." F. Hutcheson to T. Drennan, Glasgow, 5 March 1738/9, GUL MS Gen. 1018. f.6 verso.

<sup>12</sup> For a fuller analysis of the content of this pamphlet see chapter three.

<sup>13</sup> [H. Heugh], *Shaftesbury's ghost conjur'd*, [Scotland, 1738], p. 39 and p. 41.

following two false and dangerous doctrines, first that the standard of moral goodness was the promotion of the happiness of others; and second that we could have a knowledge of good and evil, without, and prior to a knowledge of God.”<sup>14</sup> The case might have resulted in Hutcheson’s condemnation by the Presbytery of Glasgow, had not fourteen friends and students rallied to defend him. They issued a second pamphlet, countering Heugh’s accusations charge by charge. Heugh was guilty of a cowardly assault, which amounted to no more than “a stab in the dark.”<sup>15</sup>

This pamphlet affray indicates the approval which Hutcheson’s teaching usually met. He even managed to convince doubters like Wodrow of his orthodoxy and probity:

Mr Francis Hutcheson is much commended since he came here. He carries himself gravely and will not meet in their clubs at night, nor drink. That he is not Arminian, but strictly opposite to these principles....That he seems to be under some very serious impressions from his father’s death and that of one of his children. That he is very full and positive for the restoring the discipline of the college, keeping the students to rules, catalogues, exact hours and c. wherein there is certainly a very great decay; so that I hope there will be very good effects of his being at this juncture come to this country.<sup>16</sup>

Students like William Thom and John McLaurin thought the Irishman instructive and personable. He seemed capable of disputation without ill feeling.<sup>17</sup> Thom in particular held Hutcheson in high esteem, excluding him from the criticisms within his ill-mannered and intemperate tract, *The defects of an university education*.<sup>18</sup> As he recalled: “If ever a professor had the art of communicating knowledge, and of raising an esteem and desire of it in the minds of his scholars, if ever one had the art to create an esteem of liberty, and an abhorrence and contempt of tyranny and tyrants, he was the man.”<sup>19</sup> As Ramsay of Ochertyre recorded: “Long after his death, I have heard orthodox useful ministers who spoke of their old professor with veneration.”<sup>20</sup> Preachers drew on Hutcheson’s model for

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<sup>14</sup> Cited in *Life*, p. 84.

<sup>15</sup> *A vindication of Mr. Hutcheson from the calumnious aspersions of a late pamphlet*, [n.p.], (1738), p. 4. The list of signatories includes Carmichael’s son, Professor George Rosse, three preachers, one elder, a merchant of Glasgow and the two Foulis brothers who were then students of Hutcheson but were later to become famous for their publishing house, with which Hutcheson occasionally aided them.

<sup>16</sup> R. Wodrow, *Analecta*, (Edinburgh, 1843), volume four, pp 190-1.

<sup>17</sup> On John McLaurin see N. C. Landsman, “Presbyterians and provincial society: the evangelical enlightenment in the west of Scotland, 1740-1775,” in *Sociability and society in eighteenth-century Scotland*, (J. Dwyer and R. B. Sher, eds.), (Edinburgh, 1993), p. 200. For Thom see R. K. Donovan, “Evangelical civic humanism in Glasgow: the American war sermons of William Thom,” in *The Glasgow enlightenment*, (A. Hook and R. B. Sher, eds.), (East Linton, 1995), pp 227-45.

<sup>18</sup> W. Thom, *The defects of an university education and its unsuitableness to a commercial people*, (London, 1762).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>20</sup> J. Ramsay of Ochertyre, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the eighteenth century*, (Edinburgh, 1888), pp 275-6.

polite sermonising, emphasising the practical applications of morality before the explicit exposition of dogma. As Leechman recalled, Hutcheson

insisted upon the uselessness and impropriety of handling in the pulpit such speculative questions, as, whether human nature is capable of disinterested affections, whether the original of duty or moral obligation is from natural conscience, or moral sense, from law, or from rational views of interest, and such like enquiries...such disquisitions might be proper and even necessary in a school of philosophy, yet...they did not fall within the province of the preacher, whose office is not to explain the principles of the human mind, but to address himself to them and set them in motion.<sup>21</sup>

Local intellectuals like Hugh Blair (who wrote a review of Hutcheson's *System of moral philosophy* for the attenuated *Edinburgh Review*) and Alexander Carlyle (who was a student of Hutcheson) appropriated his approach and attested to Hutcheson's influence over their brand of "virtuous discourse."<sup>22</sup>

His listeners remarked upon his openness to new ideas and his desire to explore the theories of other men. This temperamental tendency to seek mutual understanding marked out Hutcheson's work from many of his contemporaries. As Leechman recalled: "He filled their [the students'] hearts with a new and higher kind of pleasure than they had experience of before, when he opened to their view, in his animated manner, large fields of science of which hitherto they had no conception."<sup>23</sup> Alexander Carlyle remarked:

I attended Hutcheson's class this year [1743] with great satisfaction and improvement. He was a good-looking man, of an engaging countenance. He delivered his lectures, without notes, walking backwards and forwards in the area of his room. As his elocution was good, and his voice and manner pleasing, he raised the attention of his hearers at all times; and when the subject led him to explain and enforce the moral virtues and duties, he displayed a fervent and persuasive eloquence which was irresistible.<sup>24</sup>

Another student, John Donaldson, postulated "a strict analogy may be observed between everyone's natural manner of walking and his manner of thinking." He equated professorial intelligence with active presentation and dullness with "a sedentary professor, who reads or repeats his lectures sitting, or leaning his backside against a desk." Hutcheson was an illustration of an "ambulatory Professor" in motion.<sup>25</sup> Yet despite this physical style

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<sup>21</sup> PSMP, pp xxxviii-ix.

<sup>22</sup> H. Blair, "A system of moral philosophy," in *Edinburgh Review*, 1, (1755), pp 9-23. The final phrase is from J. Dwyer, *Virtuous discourse: sensibility and community in late eighteenth-century Scotland*, (Edinburgh, 1987).

<sup>23</sup> PSMP, p. xxxii.

<sup>24</sup> A. Carlyle, *Autobiography of Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk, 1722-1805*, (Edinburgh, 1910), p. 78. Carlyle also attended in 1744. "I again attended the lectures of Professors Leechman and Hutcheson with much satisfaction and improvement." *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>25</sup> This eccentric notion of Donaldson's is recounted in W. Thom, "Donaldsoniad: J--n D-----n Detected," in *The works of the Revd. William Thom, late Minister of Govan*, (Glasgow, 1799), pp 364-5. The quotes are p. 365.



and lengthy improvisations, he remained fluent, coherent and accurate in his handling of complex philosophical arguments: “He had a great fund of natural eloquence and a persuasive manner: he attended indeed much more to sense than expression, and yet his expression was good: he was master of that precision and accuracy of language which is necessary in philosophical enquiries.”<sup>26</sup>

Most dramatic of his stylistic traits was his introduction of the vernacular into the lecture hall, replacing the Latin delivery of his predecessor.<sup>27</sup> Gifted as a regent, Carmichael found lecturing a chore. By contrast, Hutcheson appeared at ease in front of an audience and held their attention with a characteristic blend of philosophical speculation and anecdotal illustration:

They [the lectures] were not confined to high speculations, and the peculiarities of a scheme, but frequently descended to common life, sometimes pointing out and exposing fashionable vices and follies in the upper part of the world, departures from real justice and equity in the busy and commercial part of it, and the dangerous rocks on which youth is apt to split and make shipwreck both of virtue and happiness.<sup>28</sup>

This style emerged out of a different perception of the task of educator. Hutcheson rebelled against summarising a set body of texts: “He apprehended that he was answering the design of his office as effectually, when he dwelt in a more diffusive manner upon such moral considerations as are suited to touch the heart, and excite a relish for virtue, as when explaining, or establishing any doctrine.” This surprised his colleagues and pleased his students. As Leechman recalled: “Students advanced in years and knowledge chose to attend his lectures on moral philosophy, for four, five or six years together.”<sup>29</sup>

Importantly, he left the students to determine for themselves the rights and the wrongs of an issue. Alexander Carlyle found this freedom liberating rather than dangerous:

For...they [Leechman and Hutcheson] opened and enlarged the minds of the students, which soon gave them a turn for free inquiry; the result of which was candour and liberality of sentiment. From experience, this freedom of thought was not found so dangerous as might at first be apprehended; for though the daring youth made excursions into the unbounded regions of metaphysical perplexity, yet all the judicious soon returned to the lower sphere of long-established truths, which they found,

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<sup>26</sup> PSMP, p. xxxi.

<sup>27</sup> Gerschom Carmichael, who may have occasionally lectured in English, may have anticipated this revolution. See Francis Hutcheson, *Two texts on human nature*, (Thomas Mautner, ed.), (Cambridge, 1992), p. 4 n. 2, and C. Robbins, “‘When it is that colonies may turn independent’: an analysis of the environment and politics of Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746),” in *William and Mary Quarterly*, 11, (1954), p. 222.

<sup>28</sup> PSMP, p. xxxiv.

<sup>29</sup> PSMP, p. xxxi and p. xxxiii.

not only more subservient to the good order of society, but necessary to fix their own minds in some degree of stability.<sup>30</sup>

Hutcheson's form of applied morality excited his listeners. Not bound to a philosophical discourse or text, Hutcheson utilised his broad reading and years of thinking to provide his students with an example of moral philosophy in action. As Leechman suggested, he "regarded the culture of the heart as a main end of all moral instruction."<sup>31</sup> Indeed Hutcheson wrote in a "Letter to the Students," which prefaced the *Short introduction to moral philosophy*: "Let not philosophy rest in speculation, let it be a medicine for the disorders of the soul, freeing the heart from anxious solitudes and turbulent desires; and dispelling its fears: let your manners, your tempers and conduct be such as right reason requires."<sup>32</sup> Summing up his legacy in the *London Courant's* death notice, James Moor, the Professor of Greek wrote: "Mr. Francis Hutcheson...eminently practised that virtue and benevolence with which he endeavoured to inspire others, for what he taught he was."<sup>33</sup>

But who was he? Where had he developed this open style and amiable disposition? Out of what experiences had he perceived the value of disputation? He did not inspire a generation of preachers and scholars by reciting the curriculum Carmichael had provided in his school-masterly fashion. Something else had entered the equation, which was inspiring his students. To find out what, we must ask why Glasgow University turned to Hutcheson in the autumn of 1730.

Hutcheson was not an entirely unknown quantity. Educated in Glasgow from 1710 to 1717, he had spent the 1720s in Dublin. During this time, he had produced a series of polite essays on aesthetics, ethics and politics. In the preface to the *Inquiry concerning the original of our idea of beauty and virtue* he identified the audience he was addressing:

I doubt we have made philosophy, as well as religion, by our foolish management of it, so austere and ungainly a form that a gentleman cannot easily bring himself to like it; and who that are strangers to it can scarcely bear to hear our description of it. So much it is changed from what was once the delight of the finest gentlemen among the ancients, and their recreation after the hurry of public affairs.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> A. Carlyle, *Autobiography of Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk, 1722-1805*, (Edinburgh, 1910), p. 94.

<sup>31</sup> PSMP, p. xxxi.

<sup>32</sup> SIMP, p. ix.

<sup>33</sup> J. Moor (?), Death Notice taken from the *London Courant*, cited in T. Hollis, *The memoirs of Thomas Hollis Esq.* (London, 1780), volume two, p. 585.

<sup>34</sup> T1, p. 25. Suggestively, Hutcheson removed the above quotation from the fourth edition of the *Inquiry* when it was put to press in 1738. This was the first reprint since his appointment to the chair of moral philosophy and may point to a changing self-perception or to a different concept of his public duties.

Although they were not conceived as academic texts, but as polite letters, the *Inquiry* and the defences that followed drew the attention of Scotland's academic community. Colin MacLaurin, Edinburgh University's noted Professor of Mathematics, was delighted to discover that the author of the *Inquiry* and his old acquaintance were the same.<sup>35</sup> It is to the works that brought Hutcheson fame that we must turn if we are to understand what he was bringing to the lecture-halls of Glasgow upon his return there.

Hutcheson first appeared in print in an advertisement for his forthcoming *Inquiry concerning...beauty and virtue* which appeared in editions 277 and 278 of the *London Journal* on 14 and 21 November 1724.<sup>36</sup> He informed the editor, one Osbourne, that readers "may shortly expect *An essay upon the foundations of morality, according to the principles of the ancients.*" The purpose of the articles in the *London Journal* was, he explained, to discuss and dismiss "our common systems of morality." These he condemned by citing Horace: "The good hate vice because they love virtue, but you [the slave] will avoid crime only for fear of punishment. You are prepared to commit sacrilege if you believe that you can get away with it."<sup>37</sup> This observation provided Hutcheson with the premise that drove the puff forward. He condemned modern ethical systems for advocating the mentality of the slave. To be a slave was to be self-interested.

Hutcheson appealed to the reader's experience, reminding him that:

A very small acquaintance in the world may probably let us see, that we are not always to expect the greatest honour or virtue from those who have been most conversant in our modern schemes of morals. Nay, on the contrary, we may often find many, who have, with great attention and penetration, employed themselves in these studies, as capable of a cruel or an ungrateful action, as any other persons.<sup>38</sup>

Knowledge of modern ethical ideas actually provided men with "nice distinctions, to evade their duty." Nor did these systems serve their advocates well, for they were often "sour and morose in their deportment, either in their families or among their acquaintances."<sup>39</sup> Hutcheson judged that modern systems failed on empirical grounds. They made for deceitful minds and did not provide the contentment of the individual or their social circle.

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<sup>35</sup> C. MacLaurin to F. Hutcheson, 22 October 1728, SRO MS RH 1/2/497. They may have met in Glasgow University, where MacLaurin was a student from 1709-1713. Following a stint as Professor of Mathematics at Marischal College he was appointed to Edinburgh in 1725. He was one of the leading Newtonians of his day. (Born 1698, died 1746).

<sup>36</sup> Habermas has described the *London Journal* as "the most important and widely read journal at that time." J. Habermas, *The structural transformation of the public sphere*, (Cambridge, 1992), p. 60.

<sup>37</sup> RCSM, p. 96. For the history of the *London Journal*, see C. B. Realey, "The *London Journal* and its authors, 1720-1723," in *Humanistic Studies of the University of Kansas*, 5, (1936), pp 237-74.

<sup>38</sup> RCSM, pp 96-7.

<sup>39</sup> RCSM, p. 97.

What then was wrong with these structures, Hutcheson inquired? There must have been “some mistakes in the leading principles of the science, some wrong steps taken in our instruction, which make it so ineffectual for the end it professes to pursue?” Like a physician, Hutcheson diagnosed the illness afflicting moral philosophy. He began by setting out the premises from which he intended to prognosticate. He assumed the aim was to develop moral well being; understood as the pursuit of virtue. All virtue he suggested “is allowed to consist in affections of love toward the deity, and our fellow creatures, and in actions suitable to these affections.”<sup>40</sup> Thereby Hutcheson made morality consist of theoretical definitions and practical outcomes. One was of no importance without the other, and it was on both scales that he intended to judge the systems under review.

Hutcheson suggested that the affections could not be excited by considerations of advantage or interest. The idea of interest had deformed the ethical systems of the moderns. In contrast Hutcheson set out in synoptic form the argument laid out in full in the forthcoming *Inquiry*. He remarked that: “the only thing which can really excite either love, or any other affection, toward rational agents, must be an apprehension of such moral qualifications, or abilities, as are, by the frame of our nature, apt to move such affections in us.” This placed the source of virtue in social affection, and in the observations of moral worth in those around him. His ethical discourse immediately centralised the “spectator.”<sup>41</sup>

Treating of Pufendorf, Hutcheson argued that his system claimed that:

All our worldly happiness depends upon society, which cannot be preserved without sociable dispositions in men toward each other, and a strict observation of any rules adapted to promote the good of society. Nothing is looked upon as more effectual for this end than the belief of a deity...and therefore as we expect to promote our civil interest, we should believe in a deity.<sup>42</sup>

To Hutcheson’s mind, this reversed the correct order of the argument. To contend that one ought to love the deity so as to promote our “civil interest” was to create a recipe for “obsequiousness in our outward deportment, and dissimulation of our opinions.”<sup>43</sup> Love was not love when it was secured by a belief in worldly gain.

Hutcheson concluded his first instalment by positing his own solution to the problem of self-interest, which foreshadows his concept of universal benevolence:

Could we enlarge men’s views beyond themselves, and make them consider the whole families of heaven and earth, which are supported by the indulgent care of this universal parent; we should find

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<sup>40</sup> RCSM, p. 97.

<sup>41</sup> RCSM, p. 98.

<sup>42</sup> RCSM, p. 98.

<sup>43</sup> RCSM, pp. 98-9.

little need of other sort of arguments to engage an unprejudiced mind to love a being of such extensive goodness.<sup>44</sup>

The second instalment followed a similar structure. Hutcheson introduced an initial problematic, this time not love for the deity, but fellow-feeling. He then refuted the modern moralists. Finally he proposed a different conception of the individual from that of his antagonists, and argued that his thesis was empirically verifiable.

He did accept that the attempt to portray mankind as virtuous was a more exhausting task than supplying a similar portrait of God. As he pointed out: "Everybody is furnished with a thousand observations about their wickedness and corruption; so that to offer anything in their behalf, may make a man pass for one utterly unacquainted with the world." Yet this effort was not misplaced, for without such a portrait, "we may bid farewell to all esteem of, or complacence in, mankind."<sup>45</sup>

His antagonist here was Thomas Hobbes. Hutcheson found his portrait of mankind as "injurious, proud, selfish, treacherous, covetous, lustful, [and] revengeful," unconscionable. As he wrote of those who agreed with the Englishman: "They never talk of any kind instincts to associate; of natural affections, of compassion, of love of company, a sense of gratitude, a determination to honour and love the authors of any good offices toward any part of mankind, as well as of those toward ourselves."<sup>46</sup> Hutcheson believed that in the modern portrayal of man, the principle of self-interest had overcome common sense. Man was more sociable, more benevolent than Hobbes had envisaged.

Once again Hutcheson appealed to the reader's experience to posit the principle that "every action is amiable and virtuous, as far as it evidences a study of the good of others." Hobbes had overplayed his hand. He averred self-love could grow "too strong by bad habits," but might equally be suppressed by moral education. This could bring to the fore man's "natural affections, friendships, national love, gratitude...and on the other hand, a like determination to abhor everything cruel and unkind in others." Hutcheson instead portrayed a humanity that held the "mutual love and society with its fellows [as] its chief delight." To man, society was "as necessary as the air it breathes."<sup>47</sup>

This led Hutcheson to question how Hobbes and his followers had accounted for social life at all. Interest could not suffice to explain such temperaments, nor did it appear to operate when individual actions were considered:

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<sup>44</sup> RCSM, p. 100.

<sup>45</sup> RCSM, p. 100.

<sup>46</sup> RCSM, p. 100.

<sup>47</sup> RCSM, p. 101 p. 101, pp 101-2, and p. 102.

A superstitious temper might be terrified by religion, to submit to the hard terms of a generous or public spirited action, to avoid damnation, and procure heaven to itself; but upon motives of interest, we should never find a man who could entertain such a thought as 'It is agreeable and fitting to die for one's country.'<sup>48</sup>

By way of contrast, Hutcheson offered a vision of men "possessed with just notions of humane nature." He appealed to the reader to acknowledge "that almost every mortal has his own dear relations, friends, acquaintances" and that these social ties and "the good-natured, kind sollicitudes" which they inspired grounded virtue in humanity. The laws were conceived of as supports to man's natural instincts, not as the means of repressing desires. Hutcheson believed "the bulk of mankind are most powerfully moved by some apparent virtuous dispositions in the miserable object along with the distress."<sup>49</sup>

Hutcheson accepted that none of these observations implied "that the considerations of rewards and punishments are useless."<sup>50</sup> In a manner that foreshadowed his later engagements with politicians, and his incorporation of the state into his vision of the virtuous life, Hutcheson allowed that laws and punishments were

the only, or best means of recovering a temper wholly vitiated, and of altering a corrupted taste of life, of restraining the selfish passions when too strong, and of turning them to the side of virtue; and of rousing us to attention and consideration, that we may not be led into wrong measures of good from partial views, or too strong attachments to parties.<sup>51</sup>

Finally, Hutcheson considered the effect of these rules on the practical conduct of the individual. For Hutcheson, morality was not a theoretical game but was, as his students in Glasgow discerned, a form of applied science. The modern moralists had made a serious error of judgement in mistrusting all of the passions that were contained in man. In their anxiety to control the baser passions which "we are told...hurry us into violations of laws, and expose us to their penalties," they misrepresented the finer passions.<sup>52</sup> By overplaying their hand, they misconceived of morality.

Hutcheson pointed out through concrete illustrations that "a passion is not always flexible by reasons of interest," as they had contended. The only route was to educate minds to "just ideas of [their] objects" and thereby remove the cause of the unwanted passion: "If it mourns the loss of a friend, let it see that death is no great evil; and let other friendships and kind affections be raised and this will more easily remove the sorrow." Thus the task of the moral educator was not to control or remove the passions but to utilise

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<sup>48</sup> RCSM, p. 102. The quotation is taken from Horace, *Odes*, ii, 2.

<sup>49</sup> RCSM, p. 102, p. 103 and p. 103.

<sup>50</sup> RCSM, p. 103.

<sup>51</sup> RCSM, pp 103-4.

<sup>52</sup> RCSM, p. 104.

those which were beneficial and contain those which were pernicious. Passion however, remained at the forefront of the ethical vision: “Unless just representations be given of the objects of our passions, all external arguments will be but rowing against the stream; an endless labour, while the passions themselves do not take a more reasonable turn, upon juster apprehensions of the affairs about which they are employed.”<sup>53</sup>

What Hutcheson provided was guidance for common life. It was a pragmatic and practical morality, accounting for “the delights of humanity, good nature, kindness, mutual love, friendships, societies of virtuous persons.” In an example which foreshadowed his later work on the morality of commerce, and which echoed the life in the city in which he lived, Hutcheson declared: “We find more virtuous actions in the life of one diligent good-natured trader, than in a whole sect of such speculative pretenders to wisdom.”<sup>54</sup>

The modern moralists had abandoned the search for common happiness in favour of finding individual advantage. To Hutcheson this was a gross error, for empirical observation revealed that “amidst peace and wealth, there may be sullenness, discontent, fretfulness and all the miseries of poverty.” By centring their investigations upon the doctrine of rights and “how far refractory or knavish men should be compelled by force” the modern moralists only addressed the issue of “which side will it be most convenient to compel?” This was, as Hutcheson reiterated in the closing sentence of the article, to argue that “the avoiding the prison or the gallows, appears a sufficient reward for the virtue which many of our systems seem to inspire.”<sup>55</sup>

To discover how Hutcheson intended to reinvigorate morality we must turn back to his opening remark. In stark contrast to the modern systems of morality, Hutcheson proposed the development of a system of morality ‘according to the principles of the ancients.’ His aim was to reinvest the pursuit of the general good with legitimacy. It was not the systems of morality, be they the Stoicism, Aristotelianism or Platonism from which he drew inspiration, but their project of generating a moral life. He drew from all the moral codes in which he noticed elements of worth. His students responded to this open-mindedness and engaged in debate with him. His modesty and desire to improve the moral environment attracted them. All his efforts as an educator and as a writer were to produce a positive theory of virtue akin to those he found in his classical education. As he remarked in this first foray into print “Are all the efforts of humane wisdom, in an age which we think wonderfully improved, so entirely ineffectual in that affair, which is of the greatest

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<sup>53</sup> RCSM, p. 104, p. 104, p. 104, and pp 104-5.

<sup>54</sup> RCSM, p. 104, p. 104 and p. 105 and p. 105.

<sup>55</sup> RCSM, p. 105, p. 105 and p. 106, and p. 106.

importance to the happiness of mankind?"<sup>56</sup> What Hutcheson required and attempted to produce was a moral system which described man as he ought to be, not as he is. It was the fact that the modern writers had reversed this equation that had driven him into print.

His difficulties with the system-builders of the seventeenth century were as practical as theoretical. He demanded that they justify their theories empirically and continually appealed to the experience of the reader to buttress his points. His writing was filled with practical illustrations drawn from common life and he explicitly argued that "the poor creatures we meet in the streets, seem to know the avenues to the humane breast better than our philosophers."<sup>57</sup> To understand the system Hutcheson erected, we must follow his instructions and examine the practical experiences that shaped and inspired him. We must place him in the environment that moulded his ideas. We must turn to Dublin.

Arriving some time in the early 1720s, Hutcheson would have found Dublin a bustling and booming mercantile and administrative city. David Dickson has estimated the population of Dublin in 1725 at circa. 92,000. The population doubled from an estimated 62,000 people in 1705 to an estimated 112,000 in 1744.<sup>58</sup> The Dublin Mountains and the Hill of Howth, which limited it to the north and south, dictated the shape of the city. It was expanding, with the streets of the North Strand being laid down for urban settlement and the bay being slowly filled by land reclamation.

Charles Brooking depicted the landscape of the city in 1728 in *A map of the city and suburbs of Dublin* drawn for the Lord Lieutenant, John Carteret. The city still showed signs of the medieval street plan, with winding and narrow roads cluttered by trade drawn from the fertile market-gardening land of Meath and Kildare. The main thoroughfare was Dame Street, which ran from the administrative centre of English rule, Dublin Castle, down Cork Hill and out of the city limits proper, across the Green to the gates of Trinity College, Dublin. These were set in an imposing facade to the campus, which hid the building site beyond upon which was being raised the Long Room library.<sup>59</sup>

Across the Green rose up the dangerously ramshackle home of Irish democracy, Chichester House. It was here the Lords and Commons of the Anglo-Irish elite gathered to

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<sup>56</sup> RCSM, p. 96 and p. 97.

<sup>57</sup> RCSM, p. 103.

<sup>58</sup> D. Dickson, "The place of Dublin in the eighteenth-century Irish economy," in *Ireland and Scotland, 1600-1850: parallels and contrasts in economic and social development*, (T. M. Devine and D. Dickson eds.), (Edinburgh, 1983), p. 179. The *Dublin Weekly Journal* gave the "Yearly Bill of Mortality for the city and suburbs of Dublin, the 25<sup>th</sup> of March 1725" as follows: Males Buried: 1437; Females Buried: 1478; Males Baptized 723; Females Baptized 757; Above 16 1489; Under 16 1426; Total Buried 2915; Total Baptized 1480; Decreased in Burials 48; Increased in Christ. 502. *DWJ*, 10 April 1725, p. 8.

<sup>59</sup> A royal grant towards the building of the Long Room Library was first granted in 1709. Designed by the Chief Engineer and Surveyor of his Majesty's Fortifications in Ireland, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Burgh, the



draft heads of bills before sending to the English Privy Council for expansion or consent. Demolished in 1728, John Connolly, the Speaker of the Commons laid the foundation stone in a public ceremony in 1729. While construction was taking place, the Parliament sat at the Blue Coats School, situated on Oxmantown Green.

Walking up Dame Street, Hutcheson would have passed the print houses, in which his books would be set and produced, all working under the watchful eye of the government. Dame Street led up towards Lucas', a fashionable coffee shop located on Cork Hill, onto Castle Street and towards the other great institutions of the city, the two cathedrals of Christchurch and St. Patrick's. The Liberties of the city of Dublin, stretched out to the west of the city, where traders in wheat and merchandise gathered. It was from there that the great riots of the century emanated from a culture at continual odds with the authorities and willing to make trouble for the city proper.

In St. Patrick's shadow was the meetinghouse of the Wood Street Presbyterian congregation who financially underwrote the private academy where Hutcheson taught. This lay out to the north of the city, over the river Liffey, on the corner of Drumcondra Lane and Dorset Street. And it was from amidst the most recent urban expansion of the city that Hutcheson would venture out beyond the city walls to the countryside. He headed north past the lush fields of north county Dublin to the estate of Breckdenstown, the home of his friend and mentor, Robert, first Viscount Molesworth of Swords.<sup>60</sup>

What Hutcheson tells us in his first publication is threefold. Modern moralists are mistaken in not having produced a positive, normative system. Such systems emanate from the social environment in which people live and work. Virtue is a product of the social networks, the friendships and emotional attachments the person forges. This is why he signed himself "Philanthropos," or "lover of humanity," at the beginning and end of the articles for the *London Journal*.<sup>61</sup> It is also why this thesis proposes to follow Hutcheson into the city of Dublin, and to examine the network of friends that he tells us helped to shape his ethical ideas and his writings.<sup>62</sup>

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construction began in 1712. The main structure was finished by 1724, but the building was not opened until 1732. See C. Maxwell, *A history of Trinity College, Dublin: 1591-1892*, (Dublin, 1946), p. 168.

<sup>60</sup> Molesworth became a Viscount in 1716.

<sup>61</sup> RCSM, p. 96 and p. 106.

<sup>62</sup> This work is thereby an exercise in the history of ideas, separate from a reified social history of ideology, as defined by Judith Shklar: "As a part of social history ideas are impersonal functions of group life; as the subject of history of ideas they are expressions of individual thinkers." See, J. N. Shklar, "Ideology hunting: the case of James Harrington," in *Political thought and political thinkers*, (Chicago, 1998), pp 224-5.

## THINKING ABOUT FRANCIS HUTCHESON

On 16 April 1746, the Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow University wrote to the Reverend Thomas Drennan, minister to the Presbyterian congregation at Holywood, County Down. In the letter, the last we have in Francis Hutcheson's hand, the scholar addressed his old friend on a range of topics from the mundane to the unusual. First, he recommended the bearer of the epistle, one William Donaldson, as having "behaved with great diligence and sobriety during his residence with us, and as far as I [Hutcheson] could judge by examinations, seemed to have a pretty good apprehension of what I taught."<sup>1</sup>

Next he cast his eye over public affairs. News of the Jacobite rising was consuming much of his attention; his letters of previous months had kept his Irish correspondent abreast of military developments. Now news had just reached Hutcheson that: "The Duke [of Cumberland] had passed the Spey, that 2,000 rebels on the banks fled precipitously upon his pointing his canon at them. They may reassemble, and as they are very cunning, may yet have some artifice to surprise, but I cannot but hope that they are dispersing and their chiefs making their escape."<sup>2</sup>

He then remarked upon his own affairs as a figure in the University system. With some surprise he told Drennan that:

I had this day a letter from a Presbytery of Pennsylvania of a very good turn, regretting their want of proper ministers and books: expecting some assistance here. It was of a very old date in October last. I shall speak to some wise men here but would as soon speak to the Roman conclave as to our Presbytery. The Pennsylvanians regret the want of true literature....The only help to be expected from you is sending some wise men if possible. I shall send them my best advice about books and philosophy and hope to be employed to buy them books, cheaper here than they are to be got anywhere.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, Hutcheson came full circle, reintroducing private matters by raising the possibility of seeing his old companion again:

I am in a good deal of private distresses about Jo[h]n Wilson [Hutcheson's brother-in-law] and his sister, the latter in the utmost danger and the other scarce recovered from death. My wife too [is] very tender. I am intending to take them over if I can alive this summer, but by a set of the most intricate business upon which the soul of this college depends and all may be ruined by the want of one vote, I cannot leave this till after the 26<sup>th</sup> of June and we go to Dublin first.<sup>4</sup>

Hutcheson did manage to transport his frail friends across the water to Ireland. However, he did not reacquaint himself with Drennan, for while staying in the capital, he contracted a fever. He

<sup>1</sup> F. Hutcheson to T. Drennan, Glasgow, 16 April 1746, GUL MS Gen. 1018, f. 21, recto.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, recto.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, recto/verso.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, verso.

died on his birthday, 8 August 1746, and was buried in St. Mary's Churchyard on the northern limits of the city. He had just turned fifty-two.

The letter shows Hutcheson in his private and public capacities. A loyal and long time friend, he maintained contact with Thomas Drennan, who had helped run the Presbyterian academy in the 1720s, up until his death some sixteen years after he left for Glasgow. It illustrates his concern for the developing character of the University. It hints at his religious leanings and connects him with Ireland and Scotland. It reveals his international reputation in dissenting circles.

This was despite Hutcheson's belief, subsequently agreed upon by later commentators, that his most creative days had long since passed.<sup>5</sup> In the six years between his first publication and his removal to Glasgow he had published two extended studies: an *Inquiry concerning the original of our ideas of beauty and virtue* and *An essay on the nature and conduct of the passions and illustrations on the moral sense*.<sup>6</sup> He also contributed on four separate occasions to periodicals, twice in the *London Journal* and twice in the *Dublin Weekly Journal*, debating with the rationalist philosopher Gilbert Burnet, and offering criticisms of the work of Thomas Hobbes and Bernard Mandeville.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, his lengthier stay in Glasgow saw little original theorising. His few published works were either brief, as in the *Considerations on patronage*, or expository, as in the *Short introduction to moral philosophy*.<sup>8</sup> His sole attempt to progress his Dublin ideas was, he admitted to Drennan, a failure:

In running over my papers I am quite dissatisfied with method, style, matter and some reasonings, though I don't repent my labour, as by it, and the thoughts suggested by friends, a multitude of which I had from W[illia]m Bruce and [Edward] Synge and still more in number from some excellent hands here, I am fitter for my business, but as to composing in order I am quite bewildered and am adding confusedly to a confused book all valuable remarks in a farrago to refresh my memory in my class lectures on the various subjects.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> J. Moore, "The two systems of Francis Hutcheson: on the origins of the Scottish enlightenment," in *Studies in the philosophy of the Scottish enlightenment*, (M. A. Stewart ed.), (Oxford, 1990), pp 37-59.

<sup>6</sup> F. Hutcheson, *An inquiry into the original of our ideas of beauty and virtue*, (London, 1725); F. Hutcheson, *An essay on the nature and conduct of the passions and illustrations on the moral sense*, (Dublin, 1728).

<sup>7</sup> F. Hutcheson, "Correspondence with Gilbert Burnet," in *Illustrations on the moral sense*, (B. Peach ed.), (Cambridge MA, 1971); F. Hutcheson, *Thoughts on laughter and observations on the 'Fable of the bees'*, (J. Price ed.), (Bristol, 1989).

<sup>8</sup> F. Hutcheson, "Considerations on patronage," in *Tracts concerning patronage by some eminent hands*, (T. Randall ed.), (Edinburgh, 1770), pp 21-36; F. Hutcheson, *Short introduction to moral philosophy* (Glasgow, 1742).

<sup>9</sup> F. Hutcheson to T. Drennan, Glasgow, 15 June 1741, GUL MS Gen. 1018, f. 8, verso. This was posthumously published by Hutcheson's son Francis [Ireland], as *A system of moral philosophy in three books*, (Glasgow, 1755), two volumes.

His output in Glasgow dispirited him and he told Drennan he felt the wear and tear of age and the heavy academic workload were taking their toll on his creative capacity. He complained that “during our college session I get nothing done” and that the farrago was in part due to his increasing age; a fact he found “not in grey hairs and other trifles, but in an incapacity of mind for such close thinking on composition as I once had.”<sup>10</sup> But despite his evident frustration at being drawn from his study to teach he did gain some sense of achievement from his work. Writing to Thomas Steward, minister in St. Edmundsbury, he remarked:

Since my settlement in this college, I have had an agreeable, and, I hope, not a useless life; pretty much hurried with study and business, but such as is not unpleasant. I hope I am contributing to promote the more moderate and charitable sentiments in religious matters, in this country; where yet there remains too much warmth and animosity about matters of no great consequence to real religion. We must make allowances for the power of education and have indulgence to the weaknesses of our brethren.<sup>11</sup>

His despondency concerning his written output was ill founded, for his career had already assured him a place in the footnotes of the history of philosophy. He remains anthologised in tomes like the *British moralists* by D. D. Raphael; *Moral philosophy from Montaigne to Kant* by J. B. Schneewind, and in the anthology of the Scottish enlightenment compiled by Alexander Broadie.<sup>12</sup> This last indicates one of the critical concerns which has brought light to bear on Hutcheson’s work. Historians identify Hutcheson as the source for the grand stream of philosophical thought that characterised late eighteenth century Scotland; R. H. Campbell has dubbed him the “father of the Scottish enlightenment.”<sup>13</sup> In fact, the specific study of Francis Hutcheson as a historical figure falls into three distinct phases, all of which are related to revivals in scholarly interest in the nature of that enlightenment. The first phase dates from the second half of the nineteenth century and culminates in W.R. Scott’s biography of 1900; the second centres around the work of the American scholar Caroline Robbins and mirrors the concern with political ideology found in the United States in the middle of the twentieth century; the third is distinctly Scottish, and revolves around the rise of Scottish nationalism since 1970.<sup>14</sup>

In the second half of the nineteenth and early years of the twentieth century the philosophy of eighteenth-century Scotland became a matter of concern for a number of predominantly Scottish scholars. Thinkers such as Henry Thomas Buckle, James McCosh, Leslie

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<sup>10</sup> F. Hutcheson to T. Drennan, Glasgow, April 17, 1738, GUL MS Gen. 1018, f. 5, recto; F. Hutcheson to T. Drennan, Glasgow, 15 June 1741, GUL MS Gen. 1018, f. 8, verso.

<sup>11</sup> F. Hutcheson to T. Steward, 12 February 1740, MSS Magee College, Londonderry. Cited in *Life*, p. 134.

<sup>12</sup> For a list of Hutcheson’s appearances in recent anthologies see the bibliography.

<sup>13</sup> R. H. Campbell, “Francis Hutcheson: father of the Scottish enlightenment,” in *The origins and nature of the Scottish enlightenment*, (R. H. Campbell and A. S. Skinner eds.), (Edinburgh, 1982), pp 167-85.

<sup>14</sup> This analysis will concentrate on the distinctly historical assessments of Hutcheson’s work.

Stephen and Thomas Fowler looked back in order to confront the intellectual problems of the late nineteenth century. Each endeavoured to square the circle of science and faith. What they found in the Scottish enlightenment was a deep tension between the new sciences and the philosophers' Presbyterian inheritance. Buckle emphasised the regressive nature of Scottish Calvinism. McCosh decried its intellectual rigidity and its stultifying effect on intellectual endeavour. Stephen celebrated the Scottish utilitarian conclusions. Fowler described Hutcheson in terms of the secularising power of science.

Even before the death of the last great Scottish philosopher, Thomas Carlyle in 1881, Henry Thomas Buckle had argued that Scottish intellectual life in the previous century had a distinct texture and purpose. An autodidact, Buckle's multi-volume *History of English civilisation* contained a volume dedicated to the cultural life north of the Tweed.<sup>15</sup> In a manner echoing the work of enlightenment students of society such as Ferguson and Montesquieu, Buckle attempted to uncover the spirit of the Scottish people.

Buckle's portrait of Scottish intellectual development suggested a stark contrast in the colour of the intellectual cloth of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The first was darkened by Calvinist hues and blackened by intellectual rigidity. It was dipped in the sombre tones of religious enthusiasm and ornamented by biblical exegesis and scholastic skirmishes. It included the execution of heretics, war with the south, and the congealing of doctrine. It culminated in famine, economic failure, and political emasculation. In the emergence of Scotland into the light of the European intellectual summer of the eighteenth century, Francis Hutcheson was one of the forerunners.

Foreshadowing a later nationalist appropriation, Buckle claimed that despite Hutcheson's Irish birth, his development ought to be understood within the Scottish context: "This eminent man, though born in Ireland, was of Scotch family, and was educated in the University of Glasgow, where he received the appointment of Professor of Philosophy in the year 1729." Buckle placed Hutcheson at the fount of the tradition he was eager to celebrate: "The beginning of the great secular philosophy of Scotland is undoubtedly due to Francis Hutcheson."<sup>16</sup> Anxious to separate the eighteenth-century philosophy from its scholastic forerunner, Buckle saw Hutcheson as untainted by Calvinism's pessimistic, religious worldview:

The principles from which he started, were not theological, but metaphysical. They were collected from what he deemed the natural constitution of the mind, instead of being collected, as heretofore, from what

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<sup>15</sup> It was number five of nine actually published. See H. T. Buckle, *On Scotland and the Scotch intellect*, (H. J. Hanham ed.), (London, 1970).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 244-5 and p. 244.

had been supernaturally communicated. He therefore shifted the field of study....This confidence in the power of the human understanding was altogether new in Scotland, and its appearance forms an epoch in the national literature.<sup>17</sup>

The method Hutcheson used to inspire his Scottish followers was, for Buckle, not the inductive approach Hutcheson's work would seem to endorse, but rather a deductive form of reasoning which Buckle identified as the collective characteristic of the Scottish school.<sup>18</sup> This Buckle understood as any reasoning from assumed first principles, a tendency he isolated within Hutcheson's moral sense theory:

He assumes that all men have what he terms a moral faculty, which, being an original principle, does not admit of analysis. He further assumes that the business of this faculty is to regulate all our powers. From these two assumptions, he reasons downwards to the visible facts of our conduct, and deductively constructs the general scheme of life.<sup>19</sup>

This led Buckle to portray Hutcheson as an isolated system builder, a utopian schemer with little or no practical insight. As Buckle wrote: "His views, for instance, respecting the nature and objects of legislation, criminal as well as civil, might have been written by a recluse who had never quitted his hermitage, and whose purity was still unsoiled by the realities of the world."<sup>20</sup> In his anxiety to separate Hutcheson from the religious men of the seventeenth century, Buckle depicted a philosopher more clerical than the clerics themselves.

The canonisation of Hutcheson proceeded with the publication in 1874 of James McCosh's interpretation of the enlightenment, *The Scottish philosophy*. McCosh collated the thought and lives of key figures in the Scottish renaissance in philosophical literature. Despite Hutcheson's position in the subtitle, he was not the first figure to get a chapter devoted to him. That honour fell to the English Lord, Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury. McCosh justified his place at the head of the table by claiming that "the author who exercised the most influence on the earlier philosophic school of Scotland was not Locke, but Shaftesbury." McCosh then laid out the primary components which made up the Earl's philosophic vision; a Lockean empiricism, a Cartesian acceptance of innate ideas, a Platonic view of beauty and a common sense identification of virtue with good of the community. His position was critical, McCosh believed, in any understanding of the thought of the Scottish school, particularly in its

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 245.

<sup>18</sup> On Hutcheson's inductive method see chapter one.

<sup>19</sup> H. T. Buckle, *On Scotland and the Scotch intellect*, (H. J. Hanham ed.), (London, 1970), p. 253.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 254.

earliest manifestation. As McCosh explained: “Francis Hutcheson did little more than expound these views, with less versatility, but in a more equable, thorough and systematic manner.”<sup>21</sup>

This was followed by an account of Gerschom Carmichael and by an analysis of Andrew Baxter.<sup>22</sup> But Hutcheson’s position in the subtitle was not unearned. Hutcheson was the central figure in the emergence of a distinct school of Scottish philosophy. McCosh’s depiction of Hutcheson was of a moderate churchman, drawn not to dogma but to ethics. Thus he moved smoothly from his theological training to education and to the professorship in moral philosophy.

The first half of McCosh’s account centred on Hutcheson’s life and depicted Hutcheson as a Presbyterian. He situated Hutcheson’s early output within the history of Irish Presbyterianism and that community’s unhappy relationship with the politically dominant Anglicans. Leaving aside the treatises and polite essays he identified but did not discuss, McCosh considered it Hutcheson’s primary concern in Ireland to avoid the non-subscription controversy that split the Irish Presbyterian church in the 1720s.<sup>23</sup> McCosh put great store by Hutcheson’s protestations of allegiance to the Westminster Confession of Faith, although he accepted:

I rather think...[these protestations] would not altogether satisfy the good old father [John Hutcheson, minister at Armagh] who had stood firm on principle in trying times. I have referred to these transactions, because they exhibit the struggles which were passing in many a bosom in those times of transition from one state of things to another. Hutcheson never conformed as his contemporary [Samuel] Butler did, to the Church. His Presbyterian friends were soon relieved from all anxieties in this direction by his being appointed...to an office altogether congenial to his tastes, in Glasgow University.<sup>24</sup>

This was not only congenial to Hutcheson but to the narrator, for McCosh was a professional academic and President of the College of New Jersey in Princeton. Born in 1811, he was also of Presbyterian background. Educated in the universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, he came into contact with the last of his *dramatis personae*, Sir William Hamilton.<sup>25</sup> He subsequently practised as a minister in Arbroath and Brechin, and was an active advocate of the free Kirk principles in the secession of 1843. His mind had turned to philosophy however, and he was appointed to the chair of logic and metaphysics in Queen’s College Belfast in 1851, ironically one of the ‘Godless colleges’ founded in 1845. He remained there until his removal to Princeton in 1868, where he was a successful administrator and popular teacher.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> J. McCosh, *The Scottish philosophy: biographical, expository, critical from Hutcheson to Hamilton*, (London, 1875), p. 29 and p. 35.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, chapters five and six.

<sup>23</sup> On the non-subscription controversy see chapter three.

<sup>24</sup> J. McCosh, *The Scottish philosophy: biographical, expository, critical from Hutcheson to Hamilton*, (London, 1875), p. 58.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 415-33.

<sup>26</sup> Biographical detail taken from the DNB supplement, volume XXII, pp 989-91.

Thus, when McCosh came to write about Hutcheson in 1874, he found interesting parallels to his own career. He understood Hutcheson's philosophy as a blend of 'new light' theology and academic empiricism. In his treatment of Hutcheson's academic career, McCosh took seriously Hutcheson's claim to philosophic prowess, something which the earlier Dublin writings did not seem in his view to merit. McCosh outlined the central tenets of Hutcheson's thought on issues ranging from epistemology to logic, and from metaphysics to politics.

The key texts for McCosh were the compendiums on logic and metaphysics. Yet, as James Moore has noted, these were published when "Hutcheson had no responsibilities for logic or metaphysics...whereas he did in Dublin; and at Dublin he was preparing students to go to further studies in disciplines in which their principles readings would be still in Latin." Whatever the chronology of these works, it seems reasonably certain that Hutcheson's intentions in writing and publishing the works were as both McCosh and Moore posit: "They are parallel texts...which together constitute a pedagogical system suitable for the instruction of youth."<sup>27</sup>

Only a page and a half of McCosh's thirty-seven page account was given over to an examination of what McCosh accepted was Hutcheson's central concern: "A considerable portion of all his works is occupied in demonstrating that man is possessed of a moral sense." Yet it was here, in the core doctrine of Hutcheson's mature thought that McCosh found disconcerting parallels. Whereas in Hutcheson's text on metaphysics McCosh could discern that "his scholastic training at Killyleagh, and the spirit of the older teaching had still a hold upon him for good," in the moral philosophy McCosh found the seeds of a destructive legacy.<sup>28</sup>

What disturbed McCosh was Hutcheson's identification of the object of the sense with "good will or benevolence." McCosh understood Hutcheson to believe "the moral sense [was] planted in our nature to lead us to commend at once those actions which tend towards the general happiness." He described Hutcheson's system as "an exalted kind of eudaimonism, with God giving us a moral sense to approve of the promotion of happiness without our discovering the consequences of actions." He also acknowledged Hutcheson's opponents were on weak ground in charging him with heterodoxy. However, Hutcheson's system was open to abuse as "Hume required only to leave out the divine sanction...in order to reach his theory of virtue consisting in the useful and agreeable."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> J. Moore, "The two systems of Francis Hutcheson: on the origins of the Scottish enlightenment," in *Studies in the philosophy of the Scottish enlightenment*, (M. A. Stewart, ed.), (Oxford, 1990), p. 57, particularly n.46.

<sup>28</sup> J. McCosh, *The Scottish philosophy: biographical, expository and critical from Hutcheson to Hamilton*, (London, 1875), p. 79 and p. 73.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80. McCosh describes Hutcheson's delineation of the internal senses as "the result and the sum of much reading and much reflection" and accepts that "I suspect that it still remains true [as Hutcheson remarked] that the common division of our external senses is very imperfect, and that it is not easy to arrange our senses into classes." *Ibid.*, p. 70 and p. 71. Eudaimonism is a system of ethics which makes happiness the test of rectitude. Writing of



In sum, McCosh narrated Hutcheson's life and work as a morality tale on the theme of philosophical hubris. Despite Hutcheson's religious orthodoxy, his speculations had fathered a monstrous scheme. Guilty himself of being "pagan in spirit", Hutcheson's real crime was to enable Hume's secularising thought to become thinkable. That Hutcheson was unable to support Hume's attempts to gain the chair of moral philosophy in Edinburgh did little to lessen the crime. As McCosh concluded: "Hutcheson... had not retained sufficiently deep principles to enable him successfully to resist the great sceptic who had now appeared. Error has been committed, God's law has been lowered, and the avenger has come."<sup>30</sup>

Both Buckle and McCosh shared a deep concern for the intellectual tensions caused by the scientific advances of their time, and the need to reconcile philosophical understanding to matters of ethics and faith. This nineteenth-century concern was brought explicitly to bear on eighteenth-century thought by the one-time rector and self-proclaimed agnostic, Leslie Stephen.<sup>31</sup> His epic two-volume encounter with eighteenth-century philosophy included many non-English writers. Indeed, his Scottish hero, David Hume was outside the official remit of his title, *History of English thought in the eighteenth century*.<sup>32</sup>

Stephen's extensive documentation of the religious radicals and philosophic investigators of the period provided him with a comfortable intellectual heritage. Thus, in his treatment of what he termed the "common sense school" he treated of Shaftesbury, Butler, Hutcheson and Reid as precursors to his own intellectual school-masters; Hume, Bentham and the Mills. Hutcheson was reduced from a critical theorist in his own right to a static, insipid, fragmentary figure, whose claim to posterity lay in first coining the phrase, "the greatest good for the greatest number."<sup>33</sup> His philosophy was, Stephen argued, proto-utilitarian:

The moral sense... approves the benevolent actions because, and in so far as, they conduce to the public good.... We find, in short, that Hutcheson uses two standards – the public good, and the approval of the moral sense – and uses them indifferently, because he is convinced of their absolute identity. In his discussion of particular problems, the moral sense passes out of sight altogether, and he becomes a pure utilitarian.<sup>34</sup>

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Hugh Heugh's pamphlet assault on Hutcheson's which he admitted he had not seen, McCosh suggested that "there seems to be force in some of the objections taken; others entirely fail." *Ibid.*, p. 82. See also H. Heugh, *Shaftesbury's ghost conjur'd: or a letter to Mr. Francis Hutcheson, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow wherein several gross and dangerous errors vented by him in the course of his teaching are brought to light and refuted*, (Scotland?, 1738?).

<sup>30</sup> J. McCosh, *The Scottish philosophy: biographical, expository and critical from Hutcheson to Hamilton*, (London, 1875), p. 85 and p. 86.

<sup>31</sup> Stephen is credited with having popularised the word agnostic. See DNB twentieth century 1901-11 p. 398-405.

<sup>32</sup> L. Stephen, *History of English thought in the eighteenth century*, (London, 1872), two volumes.

<sup>33</sup> T2, p. 164.

<sup>34</sup> L. Stephen, *History of English thought in the eighteenth century*, (London, 1872), volume two, pp 60-1.

Unwillingly, Stephen accepted that his forefather was unaware of the all-prevailing nature of his insight. Hutcheson was unable to accept the moral efficacy of a wholly utilitarian stance:

When utility was thus recognised as the criterion of virtue, it required but one step to admit that it was also the cause of moral approbation. That step was taken by Hume, who had some personal relations with Hutcheson; but Hutcheson explicitly declined to accept an explanation which appeared to be equivalent to resolving virtue into selfishness.<sup>35</sup>

Instead, Hutcheson fell back upon divine mystery. Dismissively, Stephen remarked: "Hutcheson assumes that because none of the ordinary explanations are sufficient, no explanation can be given except the divine ordinance. God enters his system, not as the supreme judge and awarder of rewards and penalties, but as the skilful contriver of an harmonious system."<sup>36</sup>

Beyond this reductive account of Hutcheson's moral scheme, Stephen decried the Irishman as either confusing or derivative:

There are the senses of beauty and harmony, or of the imagination; the sympathetic sense, the sense which causes us to take pleasure in action, the moral sense, the sense of honour, the sense of decency and dignity, a parental, and social, and religious sense. Each of these senses produces, or is identical with a certain 'determination of the will.' There is a determination of the will towards our own happiness, and another, not resolvable into the first, and entitled to override it in cases of conflict, towards the 'universal happiness of others.' The system, already sufficiently complex, is further perplexed by cross-divisions of the various passions which appear to be identical with the senses, into selfish and benevolent, extensive and limited, calm and turbulent; and we are ready, after reading the list, to agree fully with Hutcheson's observation that human nature must 'appear a very complex and confused fabric, unless we can discover some order and subordination among these powers.'<sup>37</sup>

The derivations within Hutcheson's work were drawn from the thought of the third Earl of Shaftesbury, who had first postulated the existence of the moral sense. This left Hutcheson as little more than a "servile disciple" of the intellectual master. Hutcheson's achievements were reduced by Stephen to the observation that: "The chief difference between the master and the disciple is that Hutcheson forces into the framework of a system the doctrines which are in a state of solution in Shaftesbury's rather turbid eloquence."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62. In his article for the *Dictionary of national biography* of which he was the general editor, Stephen writes of Hutcheson that: "He may be thus classed as one of the first exponents of a decided utilitarianism, as distinguished from 'egoistic hedonism.'" L. Stephen, "Francis Hutcheson," DNB, volume X, p. 344.

<sup>36</sup> L. Stephen, *History of English thought in the eighteenth century*, (London, 1872), volume two, pp 61-2.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58, quoting SMP, p. 9 and p.38.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

It was this intellectual relationship between Hutcheson and Shaftesbury that was to be the subject of the lengthy study of Thomas Fowler.<sup>39</sup> The President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, Fowler was a graduate of mathematics and classics. Ordained in 1855, at the age of twenty-three, his theological colour changed as he aged - moderating and liberalising. Appointed tutor in Lincoln College and rising to Professor of Logic from 1873 to 1889, he developed an interest in the historical context of ideas, which he brought to his studies of Bacon and Locke, the second of which appeared in the English Philosophers series.<sup>40</sup>

Also appearing in this series, Fowler's consideration of Hutcheson was juxtaposed with a longer notice of Shaftesbury.<sup>41</sup> The rationale for this was that "there are no two of the better-known English philosophers whose writings are so closely related as those of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson."<sup>42</sup> However, the work was divided into distinct sections, and Hutcheson was treated as more than a cipher of the elder writer. In fact, Fowler understood Hutcheson as a pioneer of the psychological study of mankind and morality.

The study opened with an account of Hutcheson's life and works, wherein Fowler asserted: "Of all [his] writings... those alone on which Hutcheson's philosophical reputation rests are the four essays, and perhaps the letters, all published during his residence in Dublin."<sup>43</sup> Fowler favoured the moral sense theory Hutcheson forwarded in the 'Inquiry concerning moral good and evil,' and it was with this work that Fowler mainly dealt. His assessment was tinged with an interest in the developing field of psychology; a field he may have encountered as Professor of Logic. As his footnote concerning the axiom of internal senses makes plain, Fowler was intrigued by recent speculation concerning the fabric of the human psyche:

Hutcheson here anticipates a great improvement in the classifications of psychology. To the five senses, commonly so called, recent psychologists add various other physical or corporeal senses, by the action of which a great part of our conscious life is built up. By Mr. Lewes (problems of life and mind, Vol. 1, p. 132.) these are called the 'systemic senses, because distributed through the system at large, instead of being localised in eye, ear, tongue &c,' and are classified as the nutritive, respiratory, generative and muscular senses. As examples of the first he gives the feelings accompanying secretion, excretion, hunger and thirst. 'The feelings of suffocation, oppression, lightness &c., belong to the second. The sexual and maternal feelings belong to the third; while those of the fourth enter as elements into all the others.'" The recognition of this last class, the muscular feelings, whose characteristic is the consciousness of energy promoted or impaired, at once introduces a wide difference between the old psychology and the new, and

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<sup>39</sup> T. Fowler, *Shaftesbury and Hutcheson*, (London, 1882).

<sup>40</sup> The Locke appeared in the "English men of letters series." For biographical detail see *Who was who? 1897-1915*, (London, 1988), p. 188.

<sup>41</sup> Shaftesbury receives 169 pages to Hutcheson's 71.

<sup>42</sup> T. Fowler, *Shaftesbury and Hutcheson*, (London, 1882), p. v.

vastly adds to the material at our disposal for the construction of a rational account of the development of our cognitive and sentient nature.<sup>44</sup>

This interest led Fowler to supply a highly appreciative account of Hutcheson's moral sense theory with Hutcheson depicted as a progressive thinker concerned with the inner structure of human nature. Fowler claimed: "Hutcheson's whole treatment of morals proceeds on the assumption that they constitute an independent branch of investigation."<sup>45</sup> He suggested Hutcheson was leading the way towards a Humean science of morality, or 'science of man.'<sup>46</sup> Even in Hutcheson's less important Glasgow publications, Fowler identified a concern for the psychological texture of mankind.<sup>47</sup> His second theoretical chapter on Hutcheson, 'Hutcheson's writings on mental philosophy, logic and aesthetics,' treated of Hutcheson's work as a mental science of humanity.<sup>48</sup> Although building upon John Locke's associationalist theory of epistemology, Fowler described how Hutcheson made one crucial alteration to the Englishman's system, concerning the issue of personal identity, which:

[Hutcheson thought was] made known to us directly through consciousness; instead of being identical with, and therefore, of course, limited by, consciousness, present or remembered....It would have been better to derive the idea of same self (which of course involves the idea of self or ego) not from a single act of consciousness, but from a comparison of two or more acts.<sup>49</sup>

Hutcheson's main achievements, as summarised by Fowler, were to aid the process of secularisation within moral philosophy, to provide a psychological framework for the study, to centralise "the question [of] the exact relations between the operations of the reason and the emotions in our moral acts," and to take intellectual strides towards utilitarianism.<sup>50</sup> In Fowler's

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 183-4 n. 2. Fowler here refers to George Henry Lewes, *Problems of life and mind*, (London, 1874-9), five volumes, three series. G. H. Lewes, (1817-78) is described by the *DNB* as "a miscellaneous writer." He wrote on both philosophy and psychology, intending to write a "physiologically interpreted" treatise on the Scottish enlightenment. He did write a *Biographical history of philosophy*, (London, 1845-6), two volumes. The *Problems* was a series of reports on his physiological and psychological experiments, and is described by the *DNB* as giving: "special prominence to the doctrine that the mind, like the bodily organism, is a unit, whose aspects can be logically separated but which are not really distinct." *DNB*, volume XI, pp 1043-6.

<sup>45</sup> T. Fowler, *Shaftesbury and Hutcheson*, (London, 1882), p. 198.

<sup>46</sup> This is to suggest a closer relationship between the sceptical Whiggery of Hume and Smith and the vulgar Whiggery of Hutcheson than is currently conceded by modern scholars. See in particular. D. Winch, *Adam Smith's politics: an essay in historiographic revision*, (Cambridge, 1978), pp 46-69.

<sup>47</sup> See also G. P. Brooks and S. K. Aalto, "The rise and fall of moral algebra: Francis Hutcheson and the mathematization of psychology," in *Journal of the History of Behavioural Science*, 17, (1981), pp 343-356; and G. P. Brooks, "Francis Hutcheson: an important Irish contributor to eighteenth-century psychological thought," in *Irish Journal of Psychology*, 6, (1983), pp 54-68, for a more recent parallel between Hutcheson's philosophy and psychological theories.

<sup>48</sup> T. Fowler, *Shaftesbury and Hutcheson*, (London, 1882), p. 201.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 206-7.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239. See also pp 238-40.

portrait, Hutcheson was central to the development, not only of a school of Scottish moral philosophy, but much subsequent psychological speculation.

Peculiarly, despite the apparently comparative methodology suggested by Fowler's title, the issue of Hutcheson's similarities to Shaftesbury were passed over with one dismissive remark: "As Hutcheson's ethical system is so closely allied with that of Shaftesbury, it is unnecessary that I should devote any further space to it."<sup>51</sup> Yet, these unidentified similarities served as the keystone in the longest, most ambitious and detailed historical encounter with Hutcheson to date- the biography by William Robert Scott.<sup>52</sup>

Scott trained and worked as an economist. Born in Omagh, county Tyrone, in 1868, educated in St. Columba's College, Rathfarnham, and Trinity College, Dublin, he graduated with a BA in 1889.<sup>53</sup> From there he had removed to St. Andrew's receiving a D. Phil in 1900. He had joined the staff in 1899 as a lecturer in political economy. In 1915 he became Adam Smith Professor of Economics in Glasgow University, where he published a study of Smith and a range of authoritative economic studies of the inter-war condition of Scotland's economy for the government. He died in April 1940, a fellow of the British Academy.<sup>54</sup>

His still standard biographical study of Francis Hutcheson, *Francis Hutcheson: his life, teaching and position in the history of philosophy* of 1900 was intended to be an article on Hutcheson's spell in the Irish capital. However, it developed incrementally into a full-scale analysis.<sup>55</sup> Scott's methodology was pragmatic. First he depicted Hutcheson's life and career, and then he developed a more philosophical analysis.<sup>56</sup>

Scott's training revealed itself in the ox-bow lake of chapter nine, part two where Hutcheson's economic theory came under investigation.<sup>57</sup> Aside from this digression, which dealt with Hutcheson's relationship with Adam Smith, the analysis of the philosophical development of his protagonist, fell into four distinct episodes. Scott justified these divisions by citing the alterations made to Hutcheson's *Inquiry* in later editions:

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>52</sup> *Life*.

<sup>53</sup> He appears in the list of graduates for that date. See *A catalogue of graduates of the University of Dublin, 1868-1892*, (Dublin, 1896), volume two, p. 221.

<sup>54</sup> Biographical detail found in *Who was who, 1929-1940*, pp 1210-1.

<sup>55</sup> Scott narrated the development of his concern with Hutcheson in the preface to the book. See *Life*, pp vii-ix.

<sup>56</sup> The life takes up pp 4-146. The exposition of the philosophy runs from pp 147-257. The final thirty-one pages are an assessment of Hutcheson's historic stature. *Life*.

<sup>57</sup> *Life*, pp 230-43. Scott interpreted Hutcheson's relationship with Adam Smith as built out of a shared interest in social ties. Smith, Scott noted, "is indebted to Hutcheson for the general philosophical position that is presupposed by his economics." See, *Life*, p. 232. He then documented the teacher's influence on the pupil in a range of theories found in the latter's mature work.

In every case of this kind it will be found that the earlier view has been contrasted with an altogether different one....Therefore, it is important to isolate the different works, which naturally belong to each phase of thought, and consider them separately, especially as the neglect of this simple expedient has somewhat confused the summaries of Hutcheson's philosophy given by Fowler [and] McCosh.<sup>58</sup>

Moreover, as he concluded: "It is worth mentioning that each period of Hutcheson's work contains the germ of the dominant idea of that which follows it."<sup>59</sup>

The chapter Scott devoted to contemporaneous Hellenic and philanthropic ideals indicated the main interpretative thrust of his assessment.<sup>60</sup> As in Fowler's interpretation, he prioritised the relationship between Hutcheson and Shaftesbury. Scott understood Shaftesbury's thought as responding to two developments within English culture, "the need for protests against the neglect of beauty and against the prevailing selfishness of the current views of life."<sup>61</sup>

The first of these Scott located within the austere tradition of English Puritanism that had "banished beauty and martyred the whole sensuous man." The second, Scott deciphered through the popularity of Thomas Hobbes, who had "denied the objective reality of morality, giving in return no basis, save a subjective convention."<sup>62</sup> Given the complexity of these conundrums, Shaftesbury's thought was double-edged and occasionally contradictory.

In his reading, Scott granted primacy to the first question, arguing that "as a lover of Greek literature and the fine arts he [Shaftesbury] found little if any guidance in the works of his contemporaries, and therefore his inclination and training forced him back to the Greek world for inspiration."<sup>63</sup> This was less a borrowing of "the mere arguments or even the spirit of Plato, but rather the broad outlines of the Hellenic spirit," and this Scott read as a celebration of artistic life:

He [Shaftesbury] endeavours to restore the Greek worldliness by reviving the conviction of the nearness of man and nature. To the true Greek, in the best days of his history, there was no breach between the two, and beauty was an integral part of himself and his environment. Natural and artistic beauty went hand in hand, each expressing and supplementing the other. Nature was half-human and man was an artist to his finger-tips, not merely reproducing his ideals in material form, but in the institutions of the state and especially in life....It was not only an ideal of a lovely environment; but further, this environment was the background for a beautiful and self-complete life....What was inwardly ideal, materialised itself outwardly; and the outer world was idealised by a spiritual interpretation. Thus the two spheres, [beauty and virtue] so sharply distinguished in the modern world, [and, according to Scott,

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<sup>58</sup> *Life*, p. 185. The concern here will be less on any development within Hutcheson's thought, of which I am not convinced, and more on the contextual question of why Hutcheson extended his thought in any given direction.

<sup>59</sup> *Life*, p. 246.

<sup>60</sup> *Life*, pp 146-81.

<sup>61</sup> *Life*, p. 155.

<sup>62</sup> *Life*, p. 149 and p. 152.

<sup>63</sup> *Life*, p. 155.

subsequently parted again by Hutcheson] each interpenetrated the other and that too automatically. There was no duality, only an all pervading unity.<sup>64</sup>

It was “rather an aesthetic cult than a philosophy proper.” The cult envisioned a community of celebrants who were aesthetes; connoisseurs who knew that the “whole system revolves round the idea of a cosmos, beautiful and perfect, in which there is room, not merely for natural beauty, but also for loveliness of life, which is the higher type of the two.” This enabled Shaftesbury to respond to the second, Hobbist, threat with a portrait of “the man of good impulses – nature’s gentleman.” Scott saw Shaftesbury as forwarding a theory of synchronicity between the macrocosm of natural beauty and the universal values of ethics. The good life was the beautiful life: “From Shaftesbury’s general point of view the kind affections which are virtuous are harmonious and symmetrical and therefore beautiful. It is by these affections that the microcosm of the individual is orderly [Sic.] connected with the macrocosm of society at large.”<sup>65</sup>

Scott interpreted Hutcheson’s time in Dublin in terms of Shaftesbury’s hold on the dissenter’s mind. Hutcheson may have encountered the Earl’s writings through his friendship with Shaftesbury’s one-time political associate, Robert Molesworth. Molesworth had retired to Dublin following his defeat in the election of 1722. In Scott’s account, he gathered about him a group of young dissenters to whom he imparted the philosophy of Shaftesbury.<sup>66</sup> Of this “Shaftesbury coterie” Scott elsewhere remarked: “His [Molesworth’s] environment and circle of friends at Blanchardstown [sic], - his country seat near Dublin – recall some of the best traditions of what are often called the ‘Greek schools’.”<sup>67</sup> Their interest in the Earl’s aesthetic thought was driven, in Scott’s view, by a reaction to their Puritan heritage.<sup>68</sup>

Scott admitted Hutcheson was “an incomplete follower” of Shaftesbury, following “independently not blindly.”<sup>69</sup> Most important of the distinctions between the two men was Hutcheson’s separation of the sense of beauty from the moral sense.<sup>70</sup> This made the internal sense passive and led Hutcheson towards a hedonistic outlook; later appropriated into Hume’s utilitarian theory in the 1740s. Hutcheson was saved from this fate by his Christian commitment. As Scott described it, the progress of Hutcheson’s argument moved:

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<sup>64</sup> *Life*, pp 156-7.

<sup>65</sup> *Life*, p. 156, p. 160, p. 163 and p. 168.

<sup>66</sup> It included Edward Syngé, see chapter two; and James Arbuckle, see chapter four.

<sup>67</sup> *Life*, p. 182. W. R. Scott, “James Arbuckle and his relation to the Molesworth-Shaftesbury school,” in *Mind*, new series, 8, (1899), p. 199.

<sup>68</sup> As Scott wrote: “All Shaftesbury’s followers had...Puritan connections. Molesworth had served the Commonwealth, Arbuckle and Hutcheson were the sons of Presbyterian clergymen.” *Life*, p. 182.

<sup>69</sup> *Life*, p. 182 and p. 185.

<sup>70</sup> Others include the democratic tendency of Hutcheson’s rendition of moral sense theory, on which see chapter two, and his more orthodox religious attitude, on which see chapter three. See *Life*, pp 185-6.

[in] two brief steps, Hutcheson's aesthetics pass into teleology and from teleology to the metaphysic of ethics; for regularity presupposes design and design a benevolent cause. In effecting this transition, Shaftesbury's Hellenic ideal is largely displaced by his Christian one. The supreme artist passes into the background, to give place to the good and benevolent God.<sup>71</sup>

Paradoxically, this belief in the structured nature of the universe and the design inherent in God's creation centralised the aesthetic concerns in Hutcheson's work:

The general drift of Hutcheson's thought tends to make the objects of the moral sense a subdivision of those of the sense of beauty, and so, though he starts by dividing internal sense, he virtually ends in subsuming the second sense under the first. Such a cosmic theory of ethics naturally sacrifices the microcosm to the macrocosm.<sup>72</sup>

This resituated Hutcheson's thought within a Platonic idealism characteristic of his mentor. However, this was subject to one flaw - the need for a theory of motivation. If, as Scott indicated, the senses were passive, they gave no guidance as to how one ought to act. This problem led Hutcheson to rethink his system in the *Essay on the nature and conduct of the passions*.

Scott read the *Essay* as a study on the nature of the microcosm and the macrocosm.<sup>73</sup> The passive nature of the senses in the *Inquiry* resulted in the individual's removal from the universe, trapping him into what Ernest Gellner termed "the loneliness of the long distance empiricist."<sup>74</sup> Hutcheson attempted to break out from the cage of isolation through a depiction of the individual's internal psychology. This he described as a hierarchy of passions, which moved from self-interest to benevolence. What ensured the latter's supremacy was:

[that] happiness, as a result of self-love, is a sum of personal or individual pleasures...and as such the individual is looked upon as isolated, and his relation to the macrocosm is destroyed. On the other hand, the happiness which benevolence seeks is the union of the individual with the system as a whole; and being universalistic includes a reference to the perfection of that whole....In fact, by following self-love the individual cannot be perfect, since he is no longer a system or microcosm, while by acting benevolently, he realises the cosmic relation and thereby perfects himself.<sup>75</sup>

But, rather than pursue the consequences of this scheme through to its conclusion, that the moral sense was itself a universal and regular component of man's frame, Scott believed Hutcheson saw the outcomes as intrinsically individualistic. This opened Hutcheson's moral sense theory to

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<sup>71</sup> *Life*, p. 192.

<sup>72</sup> *Life*, p. 193.

<sup>73</sup> *Life*, p. 198.

<sup>74</sup> E. Gellner, *Language and solitude: Wittgenstein, Malinowski and the Hapsburg dilemma*, (Cambridge, 1998), pp 43-6.

<sup>75</sup> *Life*, p. 200.



moral relativity. Thus the moral sense “can make the good man a kind of ethical Narcissus, in love with his own image.”<sup>76</sup>

With Hutcheson’s removal to Glasgow many of his concerns took a new track. He needed to produce lectures on a prescribed curriculum and had to accommodate these new demands to his old scheme. The ill-formed progeny of this circumstance was the *System of moral philosophy*. Scott depicts this as infused with the influence of Aristotle.<sup>77</sup> Yet despite this change in emphasis Scott described the third stage of Hutcheson’s odyssey as “an explication of the implications of the second.”<sup>78</sup>

Altering the microcosm to include a greater range of internal senses, Hutcheson introduced a teleology identical with universal benevolence. Hutcheson kept the macrocosm of the external world constant, while arguing that “as the moral faculty is, in its highest form, the best expression of all human power, excluding the aesthetic sense, so the transition from the microcosm to the macrocosm includes, besides moral excellence, teleological considerations.”<sup>79</sup> Teleology bound the individual, the community, the world and the divine together.

The final phase of Hutcheson’s thought as conceived of by Scott was found in the series of Latin compendiums, on morals, metaphysics and logic. In these Scott discerned the influence of a new thinker, Marcus Aurelius. This was indicated by “a large increase in Stoic terminology and modes of thought” and derived from the translation of Marcus Aurelius’s *Meditations* undertaken by Hutcheson and James Moore in 1741.<sup>80</sup> As Scott understood, this origin point for Hutcheson’s Stoicism implied that “Hutcheson does not take his Stoicism from the fountain head, but rather adopts it directly from Marcus Aurelius and hence one finds no reference to the theory as held by Zeno, Cleanthes and Chrysippus.”<sup>81</sup> This removal from the heart of Stoic thought accounted for some of Hutcheson’s deviations from the Stoic paradigm.

However, Scott was happy to attribute to Stoicism “the importance now assigned [by Hutcheson] to the life according to nature.”<sup>82</sup> This Scott understood to be:

The macrocosm reduced to its lowest terms and anything is natural that directly or immediately brings the microcosm into connection with the whole. Further, the macrocosm being in its highest or best state,

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<sup>76</sup> *Life*, p. 208.

<sup>77</sup> “It is worthy of note...that Hutcheson has now fallen very greatly under the influence of Aristotle.” *Life*, p. 212.

<sup>78</sup> *Life*, p. 214.

<sup>79</sup> *Life*, p. 226.

<sup>80</sup> *Life*, p. 246. F. Hutcheson and J. Moore, *The meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, (Glasgow, 1741). Hutcheson translated all but the first two books. Moore was Professor of Greek at Glasgow University. For a reading of Hutcheson which situates his career into a Stoic paradigm see M. A. Stewart, “The Stoic legacy in the early Scottish enlightenment,” in *Atoms, pneuma and tranquillity*, (Cambridge, 1991), pp 290-2.

<sup>81</sup> *Life*, p. 247.

<sup>82</sup> *Life*, p. 247.

presided over by God, the *vox naturae* is the *vox Dei*. This attitude of mind leads to the important result that the function of the microcosm is the translation of cosmic relations into its own language, conversely, ethically, in rendering what is individual into the universal, this being its cosmical value.<sup>83</sup>

Scott identified a “reaction from the utilitarianism of the *System*. Virtue becomes the natural in conduct, and this again depends upon a right or altruistic disposition of the will and affections.”<sup>84</sup> It was here that Hutcheson found himself at odds with the Stoic world-view. He became, as in his relationship to Shaftesbury, ‘an incomplete follower.’

With him life according to nature is not altogether that of objective reason....Pleasure is not to be wholly condemned, as by the Stoics. The aspect of self-consistency...is not important, neither is the relation to nature as a whole, apart from nature as social. Thus Hutcheson does not insist on internal consistency of the individual nature, nor on the consistency of the individual with universal nature, except as social, and he has little preference for one epistemological connecting link rather than another.<sup>85</sup>

This brought Hutcheson’s work full circle. In his attempts to incorporate Stoicism into his moral sense theory, Hutcheson had to bind the microcosm and the macrocosm together, making them barely distinguishable. He thereby effected a retreat into the holistic system of aesthetic virtue that was the hallmark of his mentor, Shaftesbury. As Scott explained, Hutcheson “makes a fresh attempt to bring the aesthetic sense into line with the rest, and so, again, there is now as much to be said about the beauty of virtue as in the earlier works.”<sup>86</sup>

Scott’s narrative, from the description of Shaftesbury’s Hellenism, to Hutcheson’s idealism, from his development of a relationship between the microcosm and the macrocosm hinged on benevolence, through to his acceptance of a brand of Aristotelianism and Stoicism in the Glasgow works, was committed to the centrality of Hutcheson’s aesthetics in his thought. Yet Hutcheson only wrote directly on aesthetics in the *Inquiry concerning beauty*, and, arguably, in the *Thoughts on laughter*. The vast bulk of his thought was ethical in its character.

A possible inspiration for Scott’s concern with aesthetics is suggested by his interpretation of Shaftesbury’s Neo-Platonism. Scott suggested it was part of the final phase of an attenuated English Renaissance, which for peculiar cultural reasons had never fully flourished:

Hitherto, art had been a chance visitor to Great Britain; it was an imported, not yet a native product. Though the country had shared in the general revival, originated by the Renaissance, in renewed culture, freedom of thought and material advantages, the progress of the arts had lagged behind. From the time of

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<sup>83</sup> *Life*, p. 250.

<sup>84</sup> *Life*, pp 251-2.

<sup>85</sup> *Life*, p. 249.

<sup>86</sup> *Life*, p. 248.

Henry VIII, all the artists of any renown were foreigners, either refugees from their own countries, or tempted by offers of patronage.<sup>87</sup>

This mention of the Renaissance was reinforced by Scott's use of Walter Pater's Epicurean interpretation of the Renaissance to investigate the thought of Shaftesbury.<sup>88</sup> Scott used this to lay out Hutcheson's thought in aesthetic terms, centring on the Platonist tension between microcosms and overarching macrocosm. Other references - to Thomas Carlyle on Puritanism and heroism, Stephen's portrait of Shaftesbury as a heterodox hero and the Gifford lectures - indicated Scott's concern for the religious implications of Neo-Platonism.<sup>89</sup>

Yet, Scott realised the limitations of his own interpretation. The Neo-Platonism he found at the heart of Hutcheson's thought sat uncomfortably with the presence of Aristotle and Marcus Aurelius within Hutcheson's canon of inspiration.<sup>90</sup> Locke's empiricism, Butler's religiosity, and Smith's economics also made for uncomfortable intellectual companions.<sup>91</sup> They reveal the complex nature of his thought. Scott could not declare that Hutcheson was of a piece with the Neo-Platonism espoused by Shaftesbury. This limited his overall account.

In Scott's summation of Hutcheson's philosophy, he depicted Hutcheson as an eclectic:

Hutcheson's classicism being derived from philosophical writers inevitably tends to revive many of their opinions. When it is added that his favourite authorities were Cicero, Seneca, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, it is easy to see that his debt to the 'Antients' resembles a mosaic, in being composed of separate borrowings from many sources.<sup>92</sup>

In this portrayal Scott echoed the judgement of Hutcheson's most celebrated student, Adam Smith who wrote in his *Theory of moral sentiments* that:

The system which makes virtue consist in benevolence, though I think not so ancient as all of those which I have already given an account of, is, however, of very great antiquity. It seems to have been the doctrine of the greater part of those philosophers who, about and after the age of Augustus called themselves Eclectics, who pretended to follow chiefly the opinions of Plato and Pythagoras, and who upon that account are commonly known by the name of the later Platonists....But of all the patrons of this system, ancient or modern, the late Dr. Hutcheson was undoubtedly, beyond all comparison, the most

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<sup>87</sup> *Life*, p. 150.

<sup>88</sup> *Life*, p. 157 and p. 160. See W. Pater, *The Renaissance: studies in art and poetry*, (Oxford, 1986) and W. Pater, *Plato and Platonism*, (London, 1895).

<sup>89</sup> See *Life*, p. 148, p. 149 and p. 153. For a discussion of the Gifford lectures see A. MacIntyre, *Three rival versions of moral enquiry*, (London, 1990), pp 9-31.

<sup>90</sup> Scott admits that by the time of writing the *System*, "Hutcheson has now fallen very greatly under the influence of Aristotle, and that this shows a somewhat striking divergence from Shaftesbury who was rather a Platonist than an Aristotelian, which difference of inspiration will be found to have an important bearing upon the general drift of this phase of Hutcheson's thought." *Life*, p. 212.

<sup>91</sup> As Scott accepts, Hutcheson's "idealism is painfully embarrassed by Lockean pre-suppositions." On Locke see *Life*, pp 193-4. On Butler see pp 199-200. On Smith see pp 230-43.

acute, the most distinct, the most philosophical, and what is of the greatest consequence of all, the soberest and most judicious.<sup>93</sup>

The second wave of literature concerned with Hutcheson's historical significance centres on Caroline Robbins extensive study of eighteenth century radical Whiggery, *The eighteenth century commonwealth man*.<sup>94</sup> In contrast to Scott aesthetic interpretation, Robbins centralised Hutcheson's political thought. As her subtitle made clear, she narrated the *transmission, development and circumstance of English liberal thought from the Restoration of Charles II until the war with the thirteen colonies*. Despite the range of her study, the core analysis rested on a vision of the commonwealthmen as representatives of an early modern political liberalism.

While classic political liberalism is a nineteenth-century phenomenon, an ideology which, coupled with utilitarianism, emerged in the wake of the French revolution, Robbins was careful to distinguish her subject from these phenomena. Although Hutcheson is renowned in the history of ideas for coining the term 'the greatest happiness for the greatest number,' Robbins was at pains to announce that the commonwealthmen and Bentham were poles apart:

The radicals and liberals of the nineteenth century paid some lip service to their [the commonwealthmen's] reputation and their efforts, but in fact their utilitarian assumptions did not emphasise the old natural rights doctrines and their political conceptions ignored the forms and theories of the mixed government earlier generations had esteemed. Where both Commonwealthman and liberal shared a distrust of too powerful a government, the one relied upon a due balance between its different component parts, the other sought a release of individuals from statutory restrictions and controls as preservatives against the Leviathan state.<sup>95</sup>

Instead, Robbins offered a portrait of a radical, even "revolutionary tradition" which linked "the histories of English struggles against tyranny...with those of American efforts for independence."<sup>96</sup> Whereas Scott placed Shaftesbury and Hutcheson in direct opposition to the Puritan excesses of the 1650s Robbins emphasised the continuity between them. She identified a tradition of republicanism emerging in the 1650s in the minds of Milton and Harrington, developing through the eighteenth century and culminating in the revolution of 1776. Robbins posited the influence of Hutcheson's thought on the American leaders as one of his claims to historical importance.<sup>97</sup> In this regard Robbins foreshadowed the work of Bernard Bailyn, who in

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<sup>92</sup> *Life*, p. 260.

<sup>93</sup> A. Smith, *The theory of moral sentiments*, (D. D. Raphael and A. L. McFie, eds.), (Indianapolis, 1982), pp 300-1.

<sup>94</sup> C. Robbins, *The eighteenth-century commonwealthman*, (Cambridge MA, 1959).

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>97</sup> C. Robbins, "'When it is that colonies may turn independent': an analysis of the environment and politics of Francis Hutcheson," in *William and Mary Quarterly*, 11, (1954), pp 214-51. See also D. Fate-Norton, "Francis





1967, located the ideological origins of the American Revolution in the adaptations made to commonwealthism by Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and the federalists.<sup>98</sup>

The conjunction with Bailyn's study highlights a key element in Robbins approach. Although Robbins asserted that the Commonwealthmen were not a formal political party, they did endeavour to pass on their creed to younger generations of political activists. They transmitted their beliefs far from the glamour and publicity of parliamentary debate; a shyness partially imposed by lack of electoral success. They utilised the pulpit, the educational system and personal correspondence to spread their canon of political orthodoxy. They convened in taverns like the Grecian in London and at the private residencies of adherents, like Molesworth's estate in Swords. They involved themselves in exploiting the means of political dissemination in the provincial towns of Glasgow and Dublin.<sup>99</sup>

In this Robbins may have been a product of her context - inspired by the ideological politics of mid-twentieth-century America. The Commonwealthmen provided their eighteenth-century readers with an understanding of the past; Molesworth for example producing an edition of Francois Hotman's *Franco-Gallia*.<sup>100</sup> They analysed the politics of the present, both in the debate over the Glorious Revolution and in current affairs. They gave a credible analysis of the failings of the present administration and produced a checklist of demands they believed sufficient for the safeguarding of the British liberties they held dear. The Commonwealthmen became, in Robbins' hands, fighters for the cause of freedom. They suffered from many of the dilemmas which she pointed out confront any radical movement, misunderstanding, fear and loathing. As she noted the term Levellers was used by opponents as "a missile word as accurately used then as communist is today."<sup>101</sup>

Yet they were the forefathers of the 'war with the thirteen colonies' and thus were political patriarchs of the United States of America. Therefore they could not be equated with either the tawdry nineteenth-century utilitarians or with the revolutionary socialists of the twentieth century. Just as Robbins was determined to differentiate her heroes from the classical liberals, so too she averred: "The Real Whig was not egalitarian although he might emphasise to

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Hutcheson in America," in *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 154, (1976), pp 1547-68 and D. Carey, "Reconsidering Rousseau: sociability, moral sense and the American Indian from Hutcheson to Bartram," in *British Journal for Eighteenth-century Studies*, 21, (1998), pp 25-38.

<sup>98</sup> B. Bailyn, *The ideological origins of the American Revolution*, (London, 1967).

<sup>99</sup> C. Robbins, *The eighteenth-century commonwealthman*, (Cambridge MA, 1959), pp 16-9.

<sup>100</sup> The modern translators of Hotman's text note that: "of all the authors of the Gothic policy, none publicised it more effectively than Viscount Molesworth, the first English translator of the *Franco-Gallia*. It was he who assimilated the *Franco-Gallia* to the Old Whig school in the eighteenth century." F. Hotman, *Franco-Gallia*, (R. E. Giesey and J. H. M. Salmon, eds.), (Cambridge, 1972), p. 123

<sup>101</sup> C. Robbins, *The eighteenth-century commonwealthman*, (Cambridge MA, 1959), p. 4.

an embarrassing degree the equality of man before God, or in a state of nature. A ruling class and an uneducated and unrepresented majority were for a long time taken for granted.”<sup>102</sup>

The political achievements of the commonwealth men lay in America where their philosophy became institutionalised. Robbins proclaimed it was “in the constitutions of the several United States [that] many of the ideas of the Real Whigs found practical expression.” Foremost among these, in her view, was the idea that “tyranny could and should be resisted.”<sup>103</sup> This was the central tenet holding together the bewildering array of political demands the commonwealthmen proposed, from annual elections to militias, and the reduction of placemen.

Robbins did not portray them as maverick radical revolutionaries. Their desire for reform, and their “inheritance of the revolutionary tradition [of the 1650s] was tempered by the admiration for the English constitution.” In essence she saw them as early exponents of a worldview commensurate with the American neo-conservatism of the 1950s. Her introduction ended with a declaration: “The chief service of these asserters of liberty was that, as Priestley explained, they believed that uniformity is the characteristic of brute creation.”<sup>104</sup>

The tradition explored by Caroline Robbins was an inherently political one. Therefore an ethical thinker like Hutcheson ought to have sat uncomfortably at the table of the commonwealth. Yet, Robbins did set him a place. This was accomplished by reading Hutcheson as the lynchpin between the radical political thought of Robert Molesworth and the social theory of the Scottish enlightenment:

in Robert Molesworth, Hutcheson had a friend at a very important period in his development, soaked in the theories of Milton, Harrington, Sidney and Locke, and acquainted with all the most important like-minded Englishmen of the Augustan age. To say that, however important, Hutcheson’s contribution was but a part of the whole achievement of his contemporaries is not to belittle, but to comprehend it.<sup>105</sup>

This was of real importance for Robbins’ narrative, for while Hutcheson was imbibing his ideas in Ireland, his influence was not limited to that island: “Hutcheson spent thirty years including infancy in Ireland, twenty-two in Scotland.”<sup>106</sup> Moreover his professional status as a writer and an academic enabled him to disseminate his attitude to a wide range of listeners:

Evidence of his influence on his students, as well as of the spread and use of his writings in his own century is overabundant. Parliamentary reformers, antislavery propagandists, supporters of colonial

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<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20 and p. 21.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8 and p. 21.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.



aspirations, as well as early utilitarians all found inspiration in Hutcheson's pronouncements. Liberalism at Glasgow, at Aberdeen and wherever his disciples may be found, was a vital and a growing force.<sup>107</sup>

What Hutcheson inculcated was a "definition of when it was that colonies might turn independent, his defence of liberty and of human dignity, his teaching that the standard of moral goodness was the promotion of the general happiness, his whole idea of the state." In all of these, his beliefs "were significant not of his single genius, but of the environment into which he was born and in which he lived, and of the tradition he inherited."<sup>108</sup>

Robbins used Hutcheson's presence in the estate house of Breckdenstown and the lecture halls of Glasgow to accomplish a pivotal transition in her narrative. Through his friendship with Molesworth, Hutcheson had immediate contact with the generation that flourished between the revolution and 1727. As a professor Hutcheson played a key part in moving the tradition out of the coffee-shops and taverns and into the intellectually respectable universe of universities, Kirks and print houses. It was Hutcheson and his students who kept the flame burning until the arrival of the radical dissenters such as Joseph Priestley, Richard Price and William Godwin.<sup>109</sup>

In this contextualisation of Hutcheson, Robbins found an ally in J. G. A. Pocock. Intriguingly, Hutcheson is not mentioned in Pocock's masterpiece, *The Machiavellian moment*. Despite his vigour in tracing the civic humanist tradition back to late Renaissance Florence and in retrieving the thought of many minor figures, Pocock dismissed the entire "half century following the revolution of 1688" as a period bereft of any "political theorist or philosopher to be ranked among the giants."<sup>110</sup>

However, Hutcheson did make a brief appearance in Pocock's essay, "The varieties of Whiggism from exclusion to reform."<sup>111</sup> There, Pocock situated the Scottish enlightenment as part of a broader trend in the political discourse of Whiggery. He linked the rise of Scottish culture to the development in England of a polite Whiggery that stood in opposition to the Commonwealthism Robbins identified. In Pocock's view it was developed to fill the need for

a defence of urban life and politics as neither an ancient polis nor a *faeces Romuli* – a financial and military regime based...on a decisive abandonment of the classical (and at the same time Gothic) ideal of the citizen as armed proprietor, and his replacement by a leisured, cultivated, and acquisitive man who paid for others to defend and govern him. This could not be defended in Greco-Roman terms. Rather it

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<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 196.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 195.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 335-56.

<sup>110</sup> J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian moment*, (Princeton, 1975), p. 423.

<sup>111</sup> J. G. A. Pocock, "The varieties of Whiggism from exclusion to reform," in *Virtue, commerce and history*, (Cambridge, 1985), pp 215-310.

called for an understanding of commercial modernity, and the vindication of the regime entailed an opposition between ancient and modern.<sup>112</sup>

This modern brand of Whiggery demanded a social polish and cultivation that emanated from conversation and commercial activity, and was grounded in a belief in the sympathetic capacity of the actor. Shaftesbury and the journalist Joseph Addison defended and moralised the financial revolution and secular manners of London society.<sup>113</sup>

In the hands of the Scots, polite Whiggery provided a counter-thrust to the bellicose demands of Fletcher of Saltoun's civic humanism.<sup>114</sup> It justified the actions of the Scottish parliament, in uniting with the English legislature in exchange for a piggyback ride on England's imperial juggernaut. The anti-Harringtonianism of Smith and Hume developed into a brand of sceptical Whiggery.<sup>115</sup> This valued social and commercial exchange as the basis of human morality, recognised the need for this form of liberty to be underwritten by a strong state, and feared the potential for barbarism latent in the military ethos of the highlands. Further elaboration by Adam Ferguson, William Robertson and John Millar identified liberty with commerce in an imaginative historical framework; the stadial theory of development studied by Ronald Meek.<sup>116</sup> This "scientific Whiggism" ensured that "the mobilisation of commerce and politeness in support of Whiggism and the union...reached a state of imaginative completeness."<sup>117</sup>

However, Hutcheson again becomes problematic. Pocock's sole reference to the Irish thinker set him in direct opposition to the Sceptical Whiggery he identified as the ideological heart of the enlightenment project. Accepting Bailyn's identification of the American revolutionaries as inheritors of the commonwealth ideology Pocock stated that:

It is a difficulty that Scottish scientific Whiggism evolved in a commercial and unionist direction highly supportive of the Whig order, and we should be obliged to set the enlightenment of Francis Hutcheson in opposition to that of Hume, Robertson or even Adam Ferguson, and perhaps look behind Hutcheson to the radically Whig Irish environment, of Molyneux, Molesworth and possibly Toland, in which his career began.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 235.

<sup>113</sup> See E. A. Bloom and L. D. Bloom, *Joseph Addison's sociable animal*, (Providence, 1971). On Hutcheson's debt to the Addisonian paradigm see chapter four.

<sup>114</sup> See A. Fletcher, *Political works*, (J. Robertson, ed.), (Cambridge, 1997); J. Robertson, "Andrew Fletcher's vision of union," in *Scotland and England, 1286-1815*, (R. A. Mason, ed.), (Edinburgh, 1987), pp 203-225.

<sup>115</sup> In this Pocock is heavily reliant on the writings of Duncan Forbes. See D. Forbes, *Hume's philosophical politics*, (Cambridge, 1976) and D. Forbes, "Sceptical Whiggism, commerce and liberty," in *Essays on Adam Smith*, (A.S. Skinner and T. Wilson eds.), (Oxford, 1975), pp 179-201.

<sup>116</sup> R. L. Meek, *Social science and the ignoble savage*, (Cambridge, 1976).

<sup>117</sup> J. G. A. Pocock, "The varieties of Whiggism from exclusion to reform," in *Virtue, commerce and history: essays on political thought and history, chiefly in the eighteenth century*, (Cambridge, 1985), p. 253.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 264.

To accept the identity of Hutcheson's thought as commonwealth in character, in order to differentiate it from the later enlightenment in Scotland, is to reset the puzzle of what the Scots drew from their popular teacher. In locating polite Whiggery's origins in London, and by identifying Irish Whiggery as commonwealth in character, Pocock occluded the central position Hutcheson held between the two traditions, choosing instead to leave Hutcheson as an isolated remnant of an older tradition.

It does however point out the need for a reassessment of Hutcheson's Irish context. Moreover, it points out Pocock's need to situate the Scottish enlightenment within a broader British context. His analysis of the enlightenment hinged on the central position granted to the metropolitan culture of Addison and the development of what John Brewer has termed the "fiscal-military state."<sup>119</sup> This concern for the primacy of metropolitan culture stood at the heart of Pocock's plea for historians to create a truly British history.<sup>120</sup> To Pocock, English historical writing suffered from the denial of the periphery. Yet, the demand for English history to include such far-flung colonies as Dublin, Edinburgh and Boston was paradoxically driven by Pocock's own sense of the core culture's value. In an engagingly self-revelatory essay, "The limits and divisions of British history" Pocock considered how a truly British history ought to be shaped. It would contain, rather than be contained by, the saga of the expansion of the English state. It would take into account the fact that "the regional nationalisms of the United Kingdom contend that they have been incorporated in that state known by that name, but not in the English political nation which they say continues to govern it." The key component would remain the "period of history, marked by parliamentary ascendancy, unification of the British state system, detachment from Europe and maintenance of Empire, and lasting from the late seventeenth to the late twentieth century, to which the name British history might well be given."<sup>121</sup>

Pocock admitted this desire for an invigorated imperial narrative was driven by intrinsically personal concerns. Pocock was determined that the history of the commonwealth to which he belonged was not to die of neglect:

Some fifteen years ago there appeared among English scholars and publicists a strong tendency to assert that England - or Britain if they happened to use the word - had always formed part of Europe and the history of Europe; and this was plainly a myth - like all other myths containing much incidental truth - designed to accompany the entry of the United Kingdom into the EEC. The decision to seek this entry

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<sup>119</sup> J. Brewer, *Sinews of power: war, money and the English state, 1688-1783*, (London, 1994), p. 25.

<sup>120</sup> J. G. A. Pocock, "British history: a plea for a new subject," in *Journal of Modern History*, 47, (1975), pp 601-28.

<sup>121</sup> J. G. A. Pocock, "The limits and divisions of British history," in *Studies in Public Policy*, 31, (1979), p. 10 and p. 6.

was, as we know, founded upon the proposition that Britain's independent role as an imperial power was now irretrievably lost. The accompanying myth - the insistence on the inherently European character of British history - conveyed the message that the history of that imperial role either had never happened or had never counted and could now be forgotten. Coming as I do from a profoundly British society in a southern reach of the Pacific Ocean, New Zealand, I was aware that this history had happened, and as its product, I felt no desire to have it forgotten and be forgotten along with it.<sup>122</sup>

This was to site the entire debate in the volatile world of imperial history. Pocock revealed himself as an unashamed British loyalist fighting intellectually for the maintenance of his identity. By drawing in the issues of the commonwealth tradition and the intellectual florescence of the Scottish enlightenment, Pocock intentionally re-opened the period for political appropriation in the late twentieth century.

Nor was he the first to do so. The modern assessment of the Scottish enlightenment arguably dates from an article published in 1967.<sup>123</sup> There, Hugh Trevor-Roper offered a polemical interpretation of the intellectual trends of the era.<sup>124</sup> In "The Scottish enlightenment," Trevor-Roper proposed that the intellectual blossoming of eighteenth-century Scotland was a direct repercussion of the introduction of new varieties of thought from Europe. Painted in contrasting tones, ironically reminiscent of the Calvinist dialectics of salvation, Trevor-Roper levelled charges of dark superstition and religious intolerance on the Scottish nation.<sup>125</sup> A blend of Jacobite contacts with radical thought in France and the opening up of Scotland to world trade inspired by the union generated a circle of high-minded enlightened *philosophes*.<sup>126</sup>

While Trevor-Roper's tone may have done little to help his argument, Knud Haakonssen has recently offered a more considered version of the central thesis. His account of Scottish moral philosophy, *Natural law and moral philosophy: from Grotius to the Scottish enlightenment* emphasised the debt of the enlightenment to European jurisprudential theory. In the case of Francis Hutcheson, Haakonssen related the Irishman's work to Pufendorf.<sup>127</sup> This

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<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>123</sup> Duncan Forbes, who ran a seminar in Cambridge previous to this, also claimed the accolades. Both, however, were foreshadowed by the work of Gladys Bryson who read the Scottish enlightenment as prefiguring the development of sociology. See G. Bryson, *Man and society: the Scottish inquiry of the eighteenth century*, (Princeton, 1945).

<sup>124</sup> H. Trevor-Roper, "The Scottish enlightenment," in *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 58, (1967), pp 1635-58.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p 1635-6. Roper writes of the seventeenth century as a "dark age" (p. 1635) and characterises Scotland as a "by-word for irremediable poverty, social backwardness, political faction." He continues: "Its universities were the unreformed seminaries of a fanatical clergy." (p. 1636).

<sup>126</sup> Trevor-Roper names six men he deems of particular significance, what he terms "the real intellectual pioneers: Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, Adam Ferguson, William Robertson, Adam Smith, John Millar." (p. 1639). For a reading of the Scottish enlightenment as inspired by Jacobitism see J. Clive, "The social background of the Scottish renaissance," in *Scotland in the age of improvement*, (N. T. Phillipson and R. Mitchison, eds.), (Edinburgh, 1970), pp 225-44.

<sup>127</sup> K. Haakonssen, "Natural law and moral realism: the Scottish synthesis," in *Studies in the philosophy of the Scottish enlightenment*, (M. A. Stewart ed.), (Oxford, 1990), pp 61-85. See in particular the heading "The debate

had the effect of destabilising the Scottish tradition from its local context. By highlighting Pufendorf's hold over Hutcheson's outlook, Haakonssen emphasised the European linkages Scotland had in the early modern period.

The Union ensured the continuation of the institutions of law and church, the intellectual content of which were indebted to European thought. The Scottish legal system was grounded in Roman jurisprudence, while the Scottish church was Calvinist in doctrine, even if given a local hue by John Knox. Even within the universities, ties with Europe were common, with the scientific disciplines working hard to keep in touch with European developments. Haakonssen's narrative thus fitted into a broader theorisation of the enlightenment that saw Scottish developments emanating more from 'Scotland within Europe' than as wholly indigenous.

The Edinburgh-based scholar Nicholas Phillipson also emphasised the importance of the union to the enlightenment. In a series of important articles, Phillipson argued the enlightenment derived its intellectual energy from the collapse of the Scottish political institutions in 1707.<sup>128</sup> The Act of Union implied the language of commonwealthism was no longer available to the Scottish ruling caste. The Scottish gentry could not plausibly posture as Cicero or play the Harringtonian statesman. The disintegration of the polity, and the renunciation of the essentially political concept of virtue embedded within commonwealthism, was made psychologically harder to bear by their exchange of virtue for a share of England's commercial wealth. This left the Scottish political nation in need of a justificatory theory to supply intellectual credibility to their self-interested actions, and to provide them with a non-political model for the good life. This they discovered in Addison's periodicals. The Scottish enlightenment involved the implementation of polite Whiggery in a Scottish context. Tension between Calvinism, which disdained luxury as much as commonwealthism did, and the commercialism intrinsic to enlightenment thought produced a creative dialectic. This was synthesised in the 'Sceptical

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about Pufendorf as a setting for Hutcheson." (p. 68.) This section is merged with an earlier passage in Haakonssen's reprint of the article in the book, but the argument is essentially the same. See K. Haakonssen, *Natural law and moral philosophy: from Grotius to the Scottish enlightenment*, (Cambridge, 1996) pp 65-85. For Hutcheson's criticisms of Pufendorf see IL, and the "Letter to the students" prefaced to SIMP.

<sup>128</sup> N. Phillipson, "Nationalism and ideology," in *Government and nationalism in Scotland*, (J. N. Wolfe, ed.), (Edinburgh, 1969), pp 167-88; "Towards a definition of the Scottish enlightenment," in *City and society in the eighteenth century*, (P. Fritz and D. Williams, eds.), (Toronto, 1973), pp 125-47; "Culture and society in the eighteenth-century province: the case of Edinburgh and the Scottish enlightenment," in *The University in society*, (L. Stone, ed.), (London, 1975), volume two, pp 407-48; "Lawyers, landowners, and the civic leadership of post-union Scotland," in *Juridical Review*, 21, (1976), pp 97-120; "Virtue, commerce and the science of man in early eighteenth-century Scotland," in *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 191, (1980), pp 750-53; "The Scottish enlightenment," in *The enlightenment in national context*, (R. Porter and M. Teich, eds.), (Cambridge, 1981), pp 19-40; "Politics, politeness and the Anglicisation of early eighteenth-century Scottish culture," in *Scotland and England, 1286-1815*, (R. A. Mason, ed.), (Edinburgh, 1987), pp 226-46; "Politeness and politics in the reigns of Anne and the early Hanoverians," in *The varieties of British political thought*, (J. G. A. Pocock, ed.), (Cambridge, 1993), pp 211-45.

Whiggery' of Adam Smith's great works, the *Theory of moral sentiments* and the *Wealth of nations* and in the protean figure of David Hume, who as Phillipson indicated was haunted by the belief that commercial civilisation was prone to collapse.<sup>129</sup>

This analysis was countered by a third interpretation, which emphasised the inherent Scottishness of the enlightenment. The critical bone of contention resided in Phillipson's analysis of the relationship between political and cultural developments. Where Phillipson isolated the appropriation of English approaches to social analysis as the engine behind the Scottish intellectual revival, nationalist scholars have inscribed the enlightenment into the immediate landscape of the Scottish thinkers. Thus Smith's *Wealth of nations* emerged from the context of Scottish proto-industrialisation, while Hume's scepticism was situated within a tradition of Scottish heretical thought which includes the Speculative Freemasons, the unfortunate Thomas Aitkenhead and the recalcitrant John Simson.<sup>130</sup>

Nationalists moved the conceptual core of the enlightenment away from the canon of British moral philosophy towards institutional history. This asserted the importance of the Scottish institutions of Kirk, university and law, protected from the Anglicising forces unleashed by the Union. Drawing on George Davie's notion of a democratic intellectual tradition in the universities, Alexander Broadie and Richard Sher have argued cogently for a Scottish enlightenment for a Scottish people.<sup>131</sup>

Broadie's text, *The tradition of Scottish philosophy*, proposed "a new perspective on the enlightenment." This perspective was gained by delving further back into Scotland's past, specifically to the "three or four decades from around 1500, decades of intense intellectual activity in the universities of Scotland." This reorientation of scholarly concern tried to correct "a seriously distorted picture of the history of Scottish culture in general and the history of Scottish philosophy in particular." This emphasised that the "philosophers of the Scottish enlightenment

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<sup>129</sup> N. Phillipson, *Hume*, (London, 1989); N. Phillipson, "Propriety, property and prudence: David Hume and the defence of the Revolution," in *Political discourse in early modern Britain*, (Q. Skinner and N. Phillipson eds.), (Cambridge, 1993), pp 302-20.

<sup>130</sup> D. Stevenson, *The origins of freemasonry*, (Cambridge, 1988); T. F. Torrance, *Scottish theology*, (Edinburgh, 1996); M. Hunter, "'Aitkenhead the atheist': the context and consequences of articulate irreligion in the late seventeenth century," in *Atheism from the reformation to the enlightenment*, (M. Hunter and D. Wooton, eds.), (Oxford, 1992), pp 221-54. On Simson see chapter three.

<sup>131</sup> G. E. Davie, *The democratic intellect: Scotland and her universities in the nineteenth century*, (Edinburgh, 1961); A. Broadie, *The tradition of Scottish philosophy: a new perspective on the enlightenment*, (Edinburgh, 1990); K. Haakonssen, *Natural law and moral philosophy: from Grotius to the Scottish enlightenment*, (Cambridge, 1996) and R. B. Sher, *Church and university in the Scottish enlightenment: the moderate literati of Edinburgh*, (Edinburgh, 1985). See also G. E. Davie, *The social significance of the Scottish philosophy of common sense*, (Edinburgh, 1973); G. E. Davie, *The Scottish enlightenment*, (London, 1981) and G. E. Davie, *A passion for ideas: essays on the Scottish enlightenment*, (Edinburgh, 1994). These can be supplemented by reading some of the essays in C. Beveridge and R. Turnbull, *The eclipse of Scottish culture: inferiorism and the intellectuals*, (Edinburgh, 1989) and C. Beveridge and R. Turnbull, *Scotland after enlightenment: image and tradition in modern Scottish culture*, (Edinburgh, 1997).

did not philosophise in a vacuum; by the beginning of the eighteenth century the country... had acquired a rich philosophical tradition, and it is past belief that in the absence of that tradition the philosophy of the Scottish enlightenment could have been written.”<sup>132</sup> While this work has thrown many features of the landscape into relief, it has been limited in one respect. In the search to identify the origin of many of the contours of the landscape, many of the climactic changes separating the Scottish enlightenment from its precursors have at times been overlooked.

Richard Sher has however discerned something intrinsically Scottish that conditioned and sustained the enlightenment in the country. The continuing vitality of the universities and the Kirk were necessary preconditions, in Sher’s mind, for the flourishing of any cultural life in the post-Union era. The Moderate literati of Edinburgh, who were the subject of Sher’s study, thereby represented the Scottish post-political elite.<sup>133</sup> Yet in Sher’s vision they were not the Anglophiles of Phillipson’s thesis. While their primary concern as a theological party in the Kirk was with the introduction of a polite style of preaching, they remained committed to the cultural life of Scotland and to the smooth running of its institutions. They pursued through the patronage system at their disposal the positioning of like-minded friends to positions in the education system and to parishes in the church.<sup>134</sup>

More pertinently, they remained committed to regional concepts like a Scottish militia and were strong advocates of James Macpherson’s claims to credibility in the ‘Ossian’ controversy. They welcomed Burns into the Scottish literary pantheon. In Sher’s hands the image was of a regional elite, committed to the betterment of their locality while tempted by rumours of London life. They were at once proud of their province and wary of being seen as backward by more sophisticated metropolitans.

The provision of a Scottish character for the enlightenment is paradoxically indicative of a peculiarly intractable problem embedded in the nationalist discourse on the field and suggestive of a solution. There is evidence that the eighteenth century school of historical scholarship in Scotland drew from a rich and fertile regional tradition.<sup>135</sup> Equally, the debate surrounding demands for a Scottish militia to defend their homesteads indicates a high level of communal

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<sup>132</sup> A. Broadie, *The tradition of Scottish philosophy: a new perspective on the enlightenment*, (Edinburgh, 1990), p. 2, p. 1 and p. 3. More specifically again, Broadie centres his attention on the work of John Mair and his circle. See pp 20-6.

<sup>133</sup> They are Hugh Blair, Alexander Carlyle, Adam Ferguson, John Home and William Robertson.

<sup>134</sup> A case in point is the career of Adam Ferguson. See R. B. Sher, *Church and university in the Scottish enlightenment*, (Edinburgh, 1985), pp 93-4.

<sup>135</sup> D. Allen, *Virtue, learning and the Scottish enlightenment: ideas of scholarship in early modern history*, (Edinburgh, 1993). C.f. C. Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's past: Scottish Whig historians and the creation of an Anglo-British identity*, (Cambridge, 1993).

sentiment.<sup>136</sup> Yet the most creative idea to emerge from the period is not amenable to a nationalist reading. A fact Tom Nairn for one could not digest.

In his essay, "From civil society to civic nationalism: evolutions of a myth," Nairn execrated the distinctly Scottish concept of civil society. Despite its origins in the minds of conationals, he dismissed it as "essentially a reactive idea." Rather than being celebrated as a distinctively Scottish theory of modernity, Nairn was contemptuous of its conceptual worth and scathing of its corrupting effect on the development of the historic Scottish nation. By what Nairn decried as an "accident... associated with the freak development of one national society"<sup>137</sup> Scotland was thrust down a historical *cul de sac* which resulted in its removal from the tide of nation-state building in which it ought to have found its historical destiny. The ultimate effect of this development was to deny the Scots a place in the sunlight of the nation-state, thus stunting their growth as a self-confident and creative people - as Nairn expounded:

It was, as apologists have invariably said, 'decent' enough all right. Alas, decency was compatible with - and indeed inevitably expressed through - a basically resentful dependence and collective impotence, and the turgid misery of bureaucracy or 'low politics.' On its own, cut off by these strange conditions from normal or 'high politics', civil society itself can amount to a kind of ailment, a practically pathological condition of claustrophobia, cringing parochialism and dismal self-absorption. No one would claim such symptoms are confined to Scotland, of course... However, chosen provinciality is worse.<sup>138</sup>

In contrast, Richard Sher's subtle and sophisticated depiction of the tussle concerning identity within the character of the Scottish enlightenment suggests a reading containing the desire for a local identity and a commitment to the values of the centre. Ironically it highlights the concept Nairn wanted to wish away; the concept the Scots developed to articulate their condition - civil society. Civil society can be understood as

an ideal-typical category... that both describes and envisages a complex and dynamic ensemble of legally protected non-governmental institutions that tend to be non-violent, self-organising, self-reflexive, and permanently in tension with each other and with the state institutions that frame, constrict and enable their activities.<sup>139</sup>

This thesis will take seriously the possibility that the Scottish enlightenment is characterised by the emergence of a theory of civil society. If this is so, the figure that the literati credited with

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<sup>136</sup> On the militias see J. Robertson, *The Scottish enlightenment and the militia issue*, (Edinburgh, 1985).

<sup>137</sup> T. Nairn, "From civil society to civic nationalism: evolutions of a myth," in *Faces of nationalism: Janus revisited*, (London, 1997), p. 75 and p 79.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>139</sup> J. Keane, *Civil society: old images, new visions*, (Cambridge, 1998), p. 6.



inspiring the movement, Francis Hutcheson, ought to be amenable to a reading that sees him as part of that development.

The three schools of thought on Hutcheson identified here have all, to varying extents, been shaped by the cultural concerns of the periods in which they emerged. The tension between religion and science is evident in nineteenth-century interpretations, while more political concerns, with ideology and with nationhood, mark the two twentieth-century schools. The nineteenth-century scholars highlight the classical education that helped shape Hutcheson's work, and explore his eclectic response to that training. They also emphasise the importance of the more general European trend of secularisation through their concern with faith and utility. The work of Robbins and Pocock in the mid-twentieth century concerns itself with the radical political context in which Hutcheson developed his philosophy. For these scholars Hutcheson's association with Molesworth links him to the deist John Toland and the civic humanist Shaftesbury. This centralisation of the political context emphasises Hutcheson's radical democratisation of virtue. The moral sense was, as the work of Robbins makes plain, one of the factors shaping the thought of Thomas Jefferson. Finally from the most recent phase of scholarship we can derive an appreciation of the cultural specificity that lies behind the Scottish enlightenment. The work of Nicholas Phillipson, Knud Haakonssen and Richard Sher highlights the complexity of Scottish responses to the Act of Union of 1707, which cast light on the circumstances to which Hutcheson became exposed upon his arrival in Glasgow.

What this thesis proposes is a fourth possible reading of Hutcheson's work. Recognising the crucial significance of cultural context, it will provide an historical reading of Hutcheson's life and thought as it developed in Dublin. It will also supply the reader with a series of close textual analyses of the Dublin writings, exploring the possible relationships these works have with the individuals to whom Hutcheson gave inspirational credit. The overall purpose will be to supply a study of Hutcheson's thought in the intellectual, confessional and social firmament of early eighteenth-century Dublin.

In that it is as complicit with the context in which it was written as any of the interpretations offered above. The thesis is informed by current debates surrounding the category of civil society. By civil society is meant the set of voluntary associations and emotional networks which exist outside of the family structure and which are free from the direction of, if often underwritten by, the coercive power of the state.

The category of civil society involves a certain conception of the nature of the human actor and of the concept of human flourishing. In this it is both a descriptive and a normative category. It supplies a science of human action and an ethics. It assumes that the starting point

for any philosophical study is the individual human agent as an autonomous actor, although he may be informed and shaped by the families from which he emerges and the state under whose power he lives. It assumes neither the family nor the state is sufficient to satisfy all the aims, goals and desires of the human being, and that the human agent must have the freedom to associate with other likeminded individuals in the pursuit of shared goals. The goals in question are those intrinsic to the practice for which the individuals have associated.

While Hutcheson's thought is relatively static in its articulation, with little in the way of development or alteration, a series of issues will be highlighted in the study that follows. Taking the individual as the primary unit, the first chapter concentrates on how this individual was considered as an object of empirical study and an agent in that study. Having shown how Hutcheson conceived of the individual, the nature of human inter-relationships and networks will then be outlined, with particular emphasis upon the role of trust between agents in the formation of social ties. The content of that society will then be examined through highlighting the voluntary association closest to Hutcheson's self-identity, the Presbyterian Church. The fourth chapter will show how Hutcheson organised a plurality of ends into a greater and ultimate good, that of civility. The final two chapters will examine the role of the economy and the state in mediating between external and internal goods and will highlight the demands made on the civil actor and the role of free will and communal values in this conception of the ethical life.

Hutcheson did not use the term civil society to indicate this field of human ethical endeavour. Nor did he explicitly formulate anything other than a moral sense philosophy. However, his moral system was almost entirely a-political and the individual agent was conceived of in terms that make civil society the crucial realm of ethical action.<sup>140</sup> Those in Scotland who developed his project of intellectual investigation perceived this potentiality within Hutcheson's work. The nature and extent of Hutcheson's achievement in the light of these insights will be examined in the conclusion. In all, the thesis will suggest that Hutcheson's work in Dublin played a part in the development of the concept of civil society.

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<sup>140</sup> In this he can be separated from the Augustinian thought which divided the City of God from the City of Man (or civil society). As Hutcheson stated: "Nature and Grace [in the Hobbesian and by default in the Augustinian account] are by this scheme made the very opposite. Some may question whether they have the same author. Whereas if the preceding scheme [Hutcheson's] be just, we see no such inconsistency." T3, p. 86. For an account of St. Augustine's thought as it relates to the development of the notion of civil society see D. Colas, *Civil society and fanaticism: Conjoined histories*, (Stanford, 1997), pp 54-63.

## ONE: HUTCHESON, ROBERT MOLESWORTH AND AESTHETICS

Francis Hutcheson's *Inquiry* appeared in the spring of 1725. The title page offered an "Inquiry into the original of our ideas of beauty and virtue." Thus the reader was informed immediately of two key assumptions shaping the treatise. First, it was an inquiry into the origin of philosophical concepts. Hutcheson thereby set it in a tradition of exploration into the development of knowledge. It analysed the psychology of the individual.

Secondly, its argument was based on an analogy between the origins of our ideas of beauty and those of virtue. Hutcheson was postulating a parallel between the nature of man's judgement of aesthetics and ethics. It was not that the two were identical, for Hutcheson divided the treatise into two distinct subsections capable of standing alone. Nor was the parallel grounded on the same human capacity, for the mechanisms activating any judgement in the two fields were discrete. Hutcheson's argument was that the two mechanisms were distinct but analogous. As such, he was grounding his entire argument upon a rhetorical ploy that he hoped would convince the reader. His hope was that if the reader accepted his system in the case of beauty, assent in the case of ethics would follow.

The use of analogy was also an indication of Hutcheson's polemical intent. He was signalling his dissatisfaction with the rigorous systems of academic and Cartesian logic. Analogy was rhetorically more inclusive than the strictures of logical deduction. It appealed to the reader's experience and suggested likeness, rather than exclusion through systemisation. The aim was to convince through appeal to similarity and not by a display of rational exposition. It evaded the absolutist tendencies inherent in the rhetoric of logic - a strict dichotomy between right and wrong, acceptance into the system or outright rejection, in favour of comparison, compromise and coalescence.

Hutcheson understood the power of analogy and its place in the creation of artistic and argumentative works:

We may...observe a strange proneness in our minds to make perpetual comparisons of all things which occur to our observation, even of those which would seem very remote. There are certain resemblances in the motions of all animals upon like passions, which easily found a comparison.....Inanimate objects have often such positions as resemble those of the human body in various circumstances. These airs or gestures of the body are indications of dispositions in the mind, so that our very passions and affections, as well as other circumstances, obtain a resemblance to natural inanimate objects. Thus a tempest at sea is often an emblem of wrath, a plant or tree drooping under the rain of a person in sorrow; a poppy bending its stalk, or a flower withering when cut by the plough resembles the death of a blooming hero; an aged oak in the mountains shall represent an old empire; a flame seizing a wood shall represent a war. In short, everything in nature, by our strange inclination to resemblance shall be brought to represent other things, even the most

remote, especially the passions and circumstances of human nature in which we are more nearly concerned.<sup>1</sup>

Hutcheson thought analogy could illustrate a complex phenomenon like human judgement, and that, given man's inclination towards using it to grasp complex ideas, he could deploy it to communicate his philosophical system. He explained one system for judging through comparing it to another, believing that men were used to and happy with the poetic use of diverse and strange analogies. The groundwork for accepting his rhetoric was laid.

Hutcheson began by analysing the sense of beauty that he had isolated within the human organism. The sense of beauty was a more common attribution to mankind, and could therefore be used to illustrate in a familiar form the shape of his argument before moving to a more critical concern. It showed how man moved from experience to judgement. Hutcheson then mimicked this structure in relation to morality, providing the reader with a distinct, if similar argument for an internal moral sense. This familiarisation process was the aim of the first inquiry, that "concerning beauty, order, harmony, design."<sup>2</sup>

The first of eight sections concerned the existence of "some powers of perception, distinct from what is generally understood by sensation."<sup>3</sup> Following the epistemology of John Locke, Hutcheson argued that the mind was capable of compounding the ideas that the objects created in the mind, so as to create more complex images in the mind. Experiences might be described so adequately to others that, so long as they had already encountered the simple ideas before, they might comprehend the complex idea an individual generated. Thus, as in Locke, the mind could expand its knowledge through education. One did not have to experience something in order to know of its existence. Instead a trusted individual could tell one of its existence.

Hutcheson then introduced a second criteria into the system, that of passion. As he explained "many of our sensitive perceptions are pleasant, and many painful, immediately." In this, Hutcheson was claiming that passions were pre-rational, emanating directly from experience and not from our reasoned analysis after the event. Binding together the possibility of education, and the existence of passions with the architecture of the mind, Hutcheson concluded "it follows that when instruction, education, or prejudice of any kind raise any desire or aversion toward an object, this desire or aversion must be founded upon an opinion of some perfection, or some deficiency in those qualities for perception of which we have the proper senses." The approbation or dislike it raised could account for different ideas, raised by the same object, in different viewers. These different

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<sup>1</sup> T1, p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> T1, titlepage

<sup>3</sup> T1, p. 30.

passions were due to the customary relationships the viewer derived from past experience: “We shall generally find that there is some accidental conjunction of a disagreeable idea which always recurs with the object.” Crucially for the social aspect of such a value system, Hutcheson argued that “there does not seem to be any ground to believe such a diversity in human minds, as that the same simple idea or perception should give pleasure to one and pain to another, or to the same person at different times.”<sup>4</sup> This experience was consistent over time and among humanity.

Having mapped a theory of epistemology which followed Locke in all the particulars from the rejection of innate ideas, the movement from simple to complex ideas, the consistency of experience across time and between individuals and the socialising force of education and language, Hutcheson made the leap into the dark. He offered a new concept, which he paraded under Locke’s notion of complex ideas: “There are vastly greater pleasures in those complex ideas of objects, which obtain the names of beautiful, regular, harmonious,” than those accounted for by the pleasures of sense alone.<sup>5</sup> He was supplying a new capacity for taste, or judgement, analogous to the other senses:

It is of no consequence whether we call these ideas of beauty and harmony perceptions of the external senses of seeing or hearing or not, I should rather choose to call our power of perceiving these ideas an internal sense, were it only for the convenience of distinguishing them from other sensations of seeing and hearing which men may have without perception of beauty and harmony.<sup>6</sup>

Despite great differences in the internal and external senses, Hutcheson argued that both types supplied the observer with immediate, pre-rational sensations. This was critical in his argument for it separated passions from any “prospects of advantage” which they might supply. Man wanted pleasure, not because it was in his interest but because he desired pleasure. Pleasure was an end in itself: “It plainly appears that some objects are immediately the occasions of this pleasure of beauty, and that we have senses fitted for perceiving it, and that it is distinct from that joy which arises upon prospect of advantage.” Although we might abandon our pursuit of pleasure for fear of disadvantage, disadvantage would not alter our sense of what pleasure was; pleasure and interest were distinct: “So gold outweighing silver is never adduced as proof that the latter is void of gravity.”<sup>7</sup>

Hutcheson then addressed the other end of the spectrum. If man recognised beauty through an internal sense, what was it that he saw? What was beauty? Beauty, Hutcheson announced, was either “original or comparative, or if any like the terms better, absolute or

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<sup>4</sup> T1, p. 31, p. 31, p. 32, and p. 33

<sup>5</sup> T1, p. 33.

<sup>6</sup> T1, p. 34.

<sup>7</sup> T1, p. 36, p. 37 and p. 38.

relative.” To elucidate these terms Hutcheson accepted that he had to explain “what quality in objects excites these ideas, or is the occasion of them.” He here delimited his investigation to the secular world. He acknowledged that “beauty has always relation to the sense of some mind” but limited his inquiry to the beauty perceived by men. The beauty perceived by animals was beyond his ken for “they may have senses otherwise constituted than those of men.”<sup>8</sup> Implicitly he was also excluding the beauty perceived by the deity in his own creation, for that too was beyond the knowable realm of man.

Hutcheson began with the simple ideas of beauty “such as occurs to us in regular figures” and stated his thesis baldly. The idea of beauty, he contended, was due to the presence of “uniformity amidst variety.” Building up a rhetoric of mathematical precision which informed some of his more speculative passages in the ‘Inquiry concerning virtue’, he proposed: “What we call beautiful in objects, to speak in the mathematical style, seems to be in compound ratio of uniformity and variety: so that where the uniformity of bodies is equal, the beauty is as the variety; and where the variety is equal, the beauty is as the uniformity.”<sup>9</sup> Hutcheson therefore provided a theory of beauty that did not envision it as inherent to the object. It had to be seen. The mind of the observer was fundamental to the system. Moreover, Hutcheson believed beauty was proportional. It was the blend of two elements, uniformity and variety that produced the third quality, beauty. It was when a viewer compared two objects that he could make a judgement as to their relative beauty.

Hutcheson expanded on the nature of those qualities. Taking variety first he proposed that “the variety increases the beauty [of an object] in equal uniformity.” Utilising a geometric image of the kind that was to become commonplace in his work, Hutcheson illustrated this idea by noting how “the beauty of an equilateral triangle is less than that of the square, which is less than that of a pentagon.” Yet the danger of variety was that by continually increasing the data to be comprehended in the scheme, the regularity which held the experience together would be overwhelmed, and lost to the perceiver. The fundamental regularity had to remain visible “beauty [in geometric shapes] does not always increase with the number of sides, and the want of parallelism in the sides of heptagons, and other figures of odd numbers, may also diminish their beauty.”<sup>10</sup>

This limitation only highlighted the necessity for the other half of Hutcheson’s equation: uniformity tempered variety. Continuing his geometric illustration, Hutcheson argued that “an equilateral triangle, or even an isosceles, surpasses the scalenum.” From these observations, Hutcheson proposed the axiom that “greater uniformity increases the

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<sup>8</sup> T1, p. 38, p. 39, p. 39 and p. 40.

<sup>9</sup> T1, p. 40.

beauty amidst equal variety.” At the root of his conception of beauty, therefore, was a theory of relations, or as he termed it, “compound ratio.”<sup>11</sup>

Hutcheson then appealed to the reader’s experience to prove the veracity of his definition of beauty. Despite the variety of his readers’ experience, Hutcheson felt confident that they would agree that:

These observations would probably hold true for the most part, and might be confirmed by the judgement of children in the simpler figures, where the variety is not too great for their comprehension. And however uncertain some of the particular aforesaid instances may seem, yet this is perpetually to be observed, that children are fond of all regular figures in their little diversions, although they be no more convenient or useful for them than the figures of our common pebbles.<sup>12</sup>

All this was built out of Hutcheson’s interpretation of the Lockean system of epistemology. He drew the terminology of simple and complex ideas directly from Locke’s *Essay*. Moreover, Hutcheson had appropriated Locke’s conceptual tools, and built upon his foundations. Finally, Hutcheson built out from Locke’s theory of association to provide a theory of beauty as a compound between the variety embedded in the object, or what made it particular, and the regularity in the object which gave the viewer a sense of conformity.

Hutcheson then provided the reader with a series of practical illustrations of his notion of beauty. Moving away from the abstractions of geometry, he suggested that “it is the same foundation which we have for our sense of beauty in the works of nature. In every part of the world which we call beautiful there is a vast uniformity amidst almost infinite variety.” From the movement of the planets, to the colour of the landscape, he identified the source of beauty as the infinite variety of a universe in harmony. Even “if we descend to the minuter works of nature, what vast uniformity among all the species of plants and vegetables in the manner of their growth and propagation.”<sup>13</sup> He believed he could even identify this uniformity when he subjected the objects to the technologies of science

this uniformity is...observable...in the structure of their minutest parts, which no eye unassisted with glasses can discern. In the almost infinite multitude of leaves, fruit, seed, flowers of any one species we often see a very great uniformity in the structure and situation of the smallest fibres. This is the beauty which charms an ingenious botanist.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> T1, p. 40.

<sup>11</sup> T1, p. 41.

<sup>12</sup> T1, p. 41.

<sup>13</sup> T1, pp 41-2 and p. 43.

<sup>14</sup> T1, p. 43.

In line with Lockean empiricism, Hutcheson argued that man was an inductive creature, building truths from experience and deriving generalisations from particularities. He realised this was to go from the concrete to the abstract, and was aware that this distanced his subject from the objective world around him. Thus, mathematics was an essential rhetoric in Hutcheson's argument, for it was in mathematics he found general, abstract laws comparable to the laws of other human activities which he was pursuing. If man was able to find beauty in the external world, he ought, therefore, to be able to locate it in the general laws of shape and size which organised the world he observed. Geometry was the distillation of his aesthetic ideas and the epitome of what he identified as the beautiful "when we see the universal exact agreement of all possible sizes of such systems of solids [cylinders, to spheres, to cones] that they preserve to each other the constant ratio of 3, 2, 1, how beautiful is the theorem, and how are we ravished with its first discovery!"<sup>15</sup>

By extending the beauty of theorems to contain their capacity for further truths to be deduced from them, Hutcheson did not limit his understanding of man's reasoning to induction. All theorems derived from stable foundations:

In the search of nature there is the like beauty in the knowledge of some great principles, or universal forces from which innumerable effects do flow. Such is gravitation in Sir Isaac Newton's scheme. Such also is the knowledge of the original of rights, perfect and imperfect, and external, alienable and inalienable with their manner of translation, from whence the greatest part of moral duties may be deduced in the various relations of human life.<sup>16</sup>

The dangers of such speculation were clear and Hutcheson warned the reader against conclusions that were too distant from the empirical evidence and were little more than flights of fancy. This was the fault he identified at the heart of Cartesianism and other modern systems of philosophy:

'Twas this probably which set Descartes on that hopeful project of deducing all human knowledge from one proposition viz. *Cogito, ergo sum*; while others with as little sense contended that *Impossibile est idem simul esse & non esse* had much fairer pretensions to the style and title of *Principium humanae cognitionis absolute primum*. Mr. Leibniz had an equal affection for his favourite principle of a sufficient reason for everything in nature, and brags to Dr. Clarke of the wonders he had wrought in the intellectual world by its assistance; but his learned antagonist seems to think he had not sufficient reason for his boasting. If we look into particular sciences we may see in the systems learned men have given us of them the inconveniences of this love of uniformity. Dr. Cumberland has taken a great deal of needless pains to reduce the laws of nature to one general

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<sup>15</sup> T1, p. 49.



principle and how awkwardly is Pufendorf forced to deduce the several duties of men to God, themselves and their neighbours from his single fundamental principle of sociableness to the whole race of mankind. As if they had not been better drawn, each respectively, from their immediate sources, viz., religion, self-love and sociableness.<sup>17</sup>

Grounding his analysis on Aristotle's *Nicomachean ethics*, Hutcheson asserted: "This delight which accompanies sciences, or universal theorems, may really be called a kind of sensation, since it necessarily accompanies the discovery of any proposition and is distinct from the bare knowledge itself." Thus he provided a sensory, pre-rational account of the search for universal truths, and founded his system on an empiricism which implied "we may leave it in the breast of every student to determine whether he has not often felt this pleasure without such prospect of advantage from the discovery of his theorem."<sup>18</sup>

Hutcheson then completed his analysis of the source of beauty in theorems by examining the other great source of abstraction, art

were we to run through the various artificial contrivances or structures, we should constantly find the foundation of the beauty which appears in them [works of art] to be some kind of uniformity or unity of proportion among the parts, and of each part to the whole. As there is a vast diversity of proportions possible, and different kinds of uniformity, so there is room enough for that diversity of fancies observable in architecture, gardening and such like arts in different nations: they all have uniformity, though the parts in one may differ from those in another.<sup>19</sup>

The beauty of art was the finest example of what Hutcheson termed "relative or comparative beauty."<sup>20</sup> This category was quite distinct from the original beauty Hutcheson had analysed thus far. Where original or absolute beauty derived directly from an object, he realised that beauty also emanated from the imitation of absolute beauty:

All beauty is relative to the sense of some mind perceiving it; but what we call relative is that which is apprehended in any object commonly considered as an imitation of some original. And this beauty is founded on a conformity, or a kind of unity, between the original and the copy. The original may be either some object in nature or some established idea; for if there be any known idea as a standard, and rules to fix this image or idea by, we may make a beautiful imitation.<sup>21</sup>

The notion of a standard, which was a fundamental precept in Hutcheson's ethical thought, was enunciated here for the first time. It enabled aesthetic judgements to be made and generalised beyond the initial observer. Moreover, and crucial in the broadening of artistic subject matter, was Hutcheson's acceptance that heroic or beautiful objects were

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<sup>16</sup> T1, p. 51.

<sup>17</sup> T1, pp 51-2.

<sup>18</sup> T1, p. 52 and pp 52-3.

<sup>19</sup> T1, p. 53.

<sup>20</sup> T1, p. 54.

not the sole legitimate concern of the artist “to obtain comparative beauty alone, it is not necessary that there be any beauty in the original.” It was simply the accurate representation of the external world, either in natural formation or character delineation that gave art and poetry its aesthetic potency. Indeed, as Hutcheson accepted “perhaps very good reasons may be suggested from the nature of our passions to prove that a poet should not out of choice draw the finest characters possible for virtue.” As in the natural world, beauty resided not in uniformity itself, but in the mixture of order and variety, a blend which extended into the artistic world. Beauty resided in the accurate depiction of the complexity of the universe. While this might not accord with the unities demanded of art, it made the material depicted recognisable to the human eye, “and farther through consciousness of our own state we are more nearly touched and affected by the imperfect characters, since in them we see represented, in the persons of others, the contrasts of inclinations, and the struggles between the passions of self-love and those of honour and virtue which we often feel in our own breasts.”<sup>22</sup>

Crucial in the deployment of this kind of illustrative beauty was the intention of the artist at work. The intention could necessitate the use of comparative beauty in an effort to emphasize the beauty of the whole. If the aim of the artificer was to imitate an object that was not intrinsically orderly, some imitation of variety was desired. This was the case in the art of gardening where

We see that strict regularity in laying out of gardens in parterres, vistas, parallel walks, is often neglected to obtain an imitation of nature even in some of its wildness. And we are more pleased with this imitation, especially when the scene is large and spacious, than with the more confined exactness of regular works.<sup>23</sup>

The sense of beauty implanted in the viewer’s appreciation of the artificer’s intention was also open to the viewer when he observed the natural world directly, for as Hutcheson acknowledged, the viewer ought to consider

how the mechanism of the various parts known to us seems adapted to the perfection of that part, and yet in subordination to the good of some system or whole. We generally suppose the good of the greatest whole, or of all beings, to have been the intention of the author of nature, and cannot avoid being pleased when we see any part of this design executed in the systems we are acquainted with.<sup>24</sup>

This led Hutcheson towards an analysis of the Aristotelian formal cause, or what Hutcheson termed “our reasonings about design and wisdom in the cause.” He articulated his belief that

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<sup>21</sup> T1, p. 54.

<sup>22</sup> T1, p. 54, p. 55 and p. 55.

<sup>23</sup> T1, p. 57.

“there seems to be no necessary connection of our pleasing ideas of beauty with the uniformity and regularity of the objects, from the nature of things, antecedent to some constitution of the author of our nature, which has made such forms pleasant to us.” This was fundamental to the successful operation of Hutcheson’s entire scheme. As he explained, man was designed by God to perceive beauty: “The constitution of our sense so as to approve uniformity is merely arbitrary in the author of our nature, and that there are an infinity of tastes or relishes of beauty possible.”<sup>25</sup> By so arguing, Hutcheson embraced the possibility of aesthetic variety. Beauty lay in the eye of the beholder, and not in the objective world beyond.

However, the scheme had a purpose “that in the immense spaces, any one animal should by chance be placed in a system agreeable to its taste must be improbable as infinite to one.” Turning to common experience Hutcheson recalled that “we see this confirmed by our constant experience, that regularity never arises from any undesigned force of ours; and from this we conclude that wherever there is any regularity in the disposition of a system capable of many other dispositions, there must have been design in the cause.”<sup>26</sup> He illustrated this with his favourite example, the regularity found in geometric configurations. Even the crystals that Hutcheson had observed forming through a microscope justified his thesis: “We have good reason to believe that the smallest particles of crystallised bodies have fixed regular forms given them in the constitution of nature, and then it is easy to conceive how their attraction may produce regular forms.”<sup>27</sup>

Design was fundamental to the formation of even the simplest of complex structures. As in Locke’s system of epistemology, it was insufficient to have innumerable simple ideas. It required the activities of a mind to effect the combination of these and to create complex ideas. Hutcheson’s argument from design for a creator mimicked the empirical epistemology with which he had explained the mechanics of the human mind in

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<sup>24</sup> T1, pp 57-8.

<sup>25</sup> T1, p. 59. The extension of this kind of relativism to ethics has been the subject of extensive discussion. See the footnote pertaining to moral realism in chapter two.

<sup>26</sup> T1, p. 60 and p. 61. It was this assertion which led to Molesworth’s objection which Hutcheson noted in his preface. In turn, Hutcheson added the following paragraph: “This conclusion is too rash unless some farther proof be introduced, and what leads us into it is this. Men who have a sense of beauty in regularity are led generally in all their arrangements of bodies to study some kind of regularity and seldom ever design irregularity, and hence we judge the same of other beings too, that they study regularity, and presume upon intention in the cause wherever we see it, making irregularity always a presumption of want of design, whereas if different senses of beauty be in other agents, or if they have no sense of it at all, irregularity may as well be designed as regularity. And then let it be observed that in this case there is just the same reason to conclude design in the cause from any one irregular effect as from a regular one. For since there are an infinity of other forms possible as well as this irregular one produced, and since to such a being void of a sense of beauty, all forms are as to its own relish indifferent, and all agitated matter meeting must make some form or other, and all forms, upon supposition that the force is applied by an agent void of a sense of beauty, would equally prove design, it is plain that no one form proves it more than another, or can prove it at all, except from a general metaphysical consideration too subtle to be certain, that there is no proper agent without design and intention, and that every effect flows from the intention of some cause.” T1, pp 61-2.

<sup>27</sup> T1, p. 63.

the first stages of the *Inquiry*. Each part of the argument thus acted to substantiate the whole, in a further illustration of the rhetoric of inductive scientific method. As Hutcheson explained: “The recurring of any effect oftener than the laws of hazard determine gives presumption of design; and that combinations which no undesigned force could give us reason to expect must necessarily prove the same.”<sup>28</sup>

Just as Hutcheson argued that chance was not an adequate explanation for the combination of forms into regular shapes, he argued that the combination of irregular forms without design was implausible. As he expounded: “The combinations of regular forms or of irregular ones exactly adapted to each other, require such vast powers of infinite to effect them, and the hazards of the contrary forms are so infinitely numerous, that all probability or possibility of their being accomplished by chance seems quite to vanish.” While chance might provide occasion for one regular form to emerge, it could not account for the variation on a theme one discovered in a species where diverse individuals were “similar to each other in a vast number of parts.” This convinced Hutcheson that there was no “possible room...left for questioning design in the universe.” The objection that such species beings are not exactly similar but have a kind of “gross similarity” was rejected by Hutcheson for trivialising the fundamental point.<sup>29</sup>

The crux of Hutcheson’s contention was that the existence of irregularity did not compromise the notion of design as a whole. As in his theory concerning the cause of beauty in the active mind of the observer, it required some variety to cast the perceived uniformity into relief. Indeed as Hutcheson explained: “a rational agent may be capable of impressing a force when he is not intending to produce any particular form, and of designedly producing irregular or dissimilar forms, as well as regular and similar.” To presuppose that the world had to be entirely orderly was to impose upon its designer the assumption that he “is determined from a sense of beauty always to act regularly,” to in effect impose a limitation upon the creator. This Hutcheson thought “plainly absurd.”<sup>30</sup>

To attribute intentionality of design to the creator, in however limited a remit, was to proclaim that the creator was not in thrall to chance. It was also to attribute the characteristics of wisdom and prudence to Him: “Wisdom denotes the pursuing of the best ends by the best means....therefore the beauty apparent to us in nature will not of itself prove wisdom in the cause, unless this cause, or author of nature, be supposed benevolent.” The means, being the installation of a sense of beauty in man in harmony with the regularity of the universe, implied the best end - the benevolence of the creator. Hutcheson

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<sup>28</sup> T1 p. 64. This passage is italicised by Hutcheson

<sup>29</sup> T1, p. 66, p. 66, p. 66 and pp 67-70.

accepted this given that: “When we see any machine with a great complication of parts actually obtaining an end we justly conclude that since this could not have been the effect of chance, it must have been intended for that end, which is obtained by it.”<sup>31</sup>

The whole system of the world was therefore evidence of the grandeur of God’s design, and the regular working of ordinary providence, the laws of natural phenomena, constantly reminded mankind of the wisdom and benevolence of the creator. Extolling the merits of the natural world, and displaying his awareness of scientific understandings of natural events, Hutcheson marvelled at:

How innumerable are the effects of that one principle of heat derived to us from the sun, which is not only delightful to our sight and feeling and the means of discerning objects, but is the cause of rains, springs, rivers, winds and the universal cause of vegetation! The uniform principle of gravity preserves at once the planets in their orbits, gives cohesion to the parts of each globe, and stability to mountains, hills and artificial structures. It raises the sea in tides, and sinks them again, and restrains them in their channels. It drains the earth of its superfluous moisture by rivers. It raises vapours by its influence on the air and brings them down again in rains. It gives a uniform pressure to our atmosphere, necessary to our bodies in general, and more especially to our inspiration in breathing, and furnishes us with a universal movement, capable of being applied in innumerable engines. How incomparably more beautiful is this structure than if we supposed so many distinct volitions in the deity, producing every particular effect, and preventing some of the accidental evils which casually flow from the general law!<sup>32</sup>

Having offered the argument from design Hutcheson refuted the contention that beauty was entirely relative to the taste of the observer. This problem, which he acknowledged, was overcome by emphasising how all men had such a sensibility. God-given, it had to be reliable, for unless this was so, either the deity was erratic or the argument from design was flawed.

The admission that “all beauty has a relation to some perceiving power,” placed the weight of expectation squarely on the sense of beauty, rather than in any objective quality intrinsic to the object perceived. Confining his investigation to the sense of beauty in humankind, Hutcheson argued that although the internal sense of beauty could provide pleasure, it was “not an immediate source of pain”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> T1, p. 70. See Molesworth’s philosophy of garden design below for a material example of this.

<sup>31</sup> T1, p. 71.

<sup>32</sup> T1, pp 72-3. Hutcheson followed his peroration with a digression on miracles the existence of which he did not explicitly rule out. He did however assert that: “that mind must be weak and inadvertent which needs them to confirm the belief of a wise and good deity...and must weaken the best arguments we can have for the sagacity and power of the universal mind.” T1, p. 73.

<sup>33</sup> T1, p. 74.

many objects are naturally displeasing, and distasteful to our external senses, as well as others pleasing and agreeable, as smells, tastes, and some separate sounds; but as to our sense of beauty, no composition of objects which give not unpleasant simple ideas, seems positively unpleasant or painful of itself, had we never observed anything better of the kind. Deformity is only the absence of beauty, or deficiency in the beauty expected in any species.<sup>34</sup>

Again Hutcheson centralised the role played by comparison. Neither uniformity nor variety adequately produced a sense of beauty. Beauty was relative to the range of experiences the observers held in their memory. It was the lack of comparative material that explained why “bad music pleases rustics who never heard any better.”<sup>35</sup>

It was this characteristic of the sense of beauty that fused it directly into the Lockean epistemology Hutcheson favoured. The need to compare ideas of beauty with each other ensured that man’s emotional reaction to images was dependent upon the associations the vista recalled to the mind “we find that most of these objects which excite horror at first, when experience or reason has removed the fear, may become the occasions of pleasure as in ravenous beasts, a tempestuous sea, a craggy precipice, a dark shady valley.” Hutcheson generalised this observation, proposing “that associations of ideas make objects pleasant and delightful which are not naturally apt to give any such pleasures; and the same way the causal conjunctions of ideas may give a disgust where there is nothing disagreeable in the form itself.”<sup>36</sup>

Yet, this intrinsic relativism did not overwhelm Hutcheson’s faith in the existence of “the universal agreement of mankind in their sense of beauty from uniformity amidst variety.” To ascertain the nature of this phenomenon, “we must consult experience.” He asked his reader to “consider if ever any person was void of this sense in the simpler instances,” providing such common examples as “an inequality of heights in windows of the same range... [and] unequal legs or arms, eyes or cheeks in a mistress.”<sup>37</sup> Given that this rhetorical question was to be answered in the negative, Hutcheson concluded that although

we are indeed often mistaken in imagining that there is the greatest possible beauty, where it is but very imperfect; but still it is some degree of beauty which pleases, although there may be higher

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<sup>34</sup> T1, p. 74.

<sup>35</sup> T1, p. 74.

<sup>36</sup> T1, p. 75. Hutcheson gave a series of examples of the associations he had in mind: “The beauty of trees, their cool shades, and their aptness to conceal from observation have made groves and woods the usual retreat to those who love solitude, especially to the religious, the pensive, the melancholy, and the amorous. And, do not we find that we have so joined the ideas of these dispositions of mind with those external objects that they always recur to us along with them? The cunning of the heathen priests might make such obscure places the scene of the fictitious appearances of their deities; and hence we join ideas of something divine to them.” T1, p. 80.

<sup>37</sup> T1, p. 76, p. 76 and pp 76-7.

degrees which we do not observe; and our sense acts with full regularity when we are pleased, although we are kept by a false prejudice from pursuing objects which would please us more.<sup>38</sup>

Citing his inspiration, Hutcheson then examined, how, given such universality of cause, the sense of beauty resulted in the formation of “very different judgements concerning the internal and external senses.” As he realised: “Nothing is more ordinary among those, who, after Mr. Locke, have shaken off the groundless opinions about innate ideas, than to allege that all our relish for beauty and order is either from advantage or custom, or education.” This mistook the experiential element of judgement for the whole of the case. Instead he suggested that as we “allow our external senses to be natural, and that the pleasures or pains of their sensations, however they may be increased or diminished by custom or education and counterbalanced by interest...are really antecedent to custom, habit, education or prospect of interest” so it is with the internal senses.<sup>39</sup>

Hutcheson stated his opposition to innate ideas. The notion of an internal sense was in no way dependent upon the existence of knowledge prior to any experience gained by the subject. Both external and internal senses were best considered as “natural powers of perception, or determinations of the mind to receive necessarily certain ideas from the presence of objects.” He clarified how “the internal sense is a passive power of receiving ideas of beauty from all objects in which there is uniformity amidst variety.”<sup>40</sup> This finally located Hutcheson in a Lockean discourse of empirical epistemology founded on a belief that the individual is the essential unit of analysis for the philosopher.

Hutcheson was searching for the lynchpin that would balance the relationship between the uniformity of the sense and the range of judgements to which it came. Thus, having stated his case for the existence of such a uniform mechanism in all humans, Hutcheson considered the extent to which “custom, education and example” altered the final assessments made by that mechanism. Of custom, Hutcheson contended that it “operates in this manner. As to actions, it only gives a disposition to the mind or body, more easily to perform those actions which have been frequently repeated but never leads us to apprehend them under any other view than what we were capable of apprehending them under at first.”<sup>41</sup> This was a critical component of his rejection of ethical rationalism.

“As to our approbation of, or delight in external objects” Hutcheson believed the role of custom in the workings of the mechanisms of the external senses was clear:

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<sup>38</sup> T1, p. 77.

<sup>39</sup> T1, p. 79.

<sup>40</sup> T1, p. 80. He also referred to the *Spectator* 412, distinguishing grandeur and novelty from beauty. T1, p. 82.

<sup>41</sup> T1, p. 82.

When the blood or spirits, of which anatomists talk, are roused, quickened, or fermented as they call it, in any agreeable manner by medicine or nutriment, or any glands frequently stimulated to secretion, it is certain that to preserve the body easy we will delight in objects of taste which of themselves are not immediately pleasant to the taste if they promote that agreeable state which the body had been accustomed to.<sup>42</sup>

Hutcheson remained adamant that “custom can never give us the idea of a different sense from what we had antecedent to it” for that would enable the senses to alter so radically in judgement that the edifice of judgement would collapse under the pressure of relativity.<sup>43</sup> The actual sensation experienced by the observer had to be constant. Only the judgement of the consequence of the event could change. As Hutcheson explained, custom

will never make the blind approve objects as coloured, or those who have no taste approve meats as delicious, however they might like such as proved strengthening or exhilarating....So by like reasoning, had we no natural sense of beauty from uniformity, custom could never have made us imagine any beauty in objects; if we had no ear, custom could never have given us pleasures of harmony. When we have these natural senses antecedently, custom may make us capable of extending our views farther and of receiving more complex ideas of beauty in bodies, or harmony in sounds, by increasing our attention and quickness of perception.<sup>44</sup>

Hutcheson, a professional teacher, understood the effect of education, along similar lines. As he summarised: “education and custom may influence our internal senses, where they are antecedently, by enlarging the capacity of our minds to retain and compare the parts of complex compositions.” This capability did presuppose “our sense of beauty to be natural.”<sup>45</sup> Hutcheson was not only aware of the capacity of education to influence men’s minds, but also of its limitations. This he illustrated using the empirical sciences

Instruction in anatomy, observation of nature and those airs of the countenance and attitudes of body which accompany any sentiment, action, or passion, may enable us to know where there is a just imitation. But why should an exact imitation please upon observation if we had not naturally a sense of beauty in it, more than the observing the situation of fifty or a hundred pebbles thrown at random?<sup>46</sup>

Education had one profound salutary effect - the removal of prejudice. Hutcheson ascribed the existence of prejudice to the inaccurate association of ideas with an object. Education removed those errors and replaced them with “new agreeable ideas.” Intriguingly, he used the Jewish disdain for meats which John Abernethy controversially seized upon in 1720. As Hutcheson explained: “When the prejudice arises from an

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<sup>42</sup> T1, pp 82-3.

<sup>43</sup> T1, p. 83.

<sup>44</sup> T1, p. 83.

<sup>45</sup> T1, p. 85.



apprehension or opinion of natural evil as the attendant or consequent of any object or action, if the evil be apprehended to be the constant and immediate attendant, a few trials without receiving any damage will remove the prejudice, as in that against meats.”<sup>47</sup>

In effect, Hutcheson argued that education helped direct and comprehend experience in a manner not dissimilar to the methodology used by the empirical scientist. A set of directed experiments could result in a pattern of probability being identified which could break traditional assumptions concerning the association of objects with ideas, and with their replacement by a truer picture. The Lockean system of epistemology, with its empirical base, could produce a series of value judgements as to the aesthetic make up of the world. God had granted humans a sense of beauty sufficiently reliable to establish general rules. The general rule was the identification of beauty with the recognition of unity amidst variety. Hutcheson’s empirical man could, and did stand above the chaos of experience, creating patterns whereby he judged his experience.

The reliability of Hutcheson’s system was dependent on the existence of God. As he acknowledged, in a manner indicative of the readership he was trying to attract “the busy part of mankind may look upon these things as airy dreams of an inflamed imagination.” However, he was convinced that “a little reflection will convince us that the gratifications of our internal senses are as natural, real and satisfying enjoyments as any sensible pleasure whatsoever.”<sup>48</sup>

Hutcheson concluded God was the “final causes of this internal sense.” Inquiring as to the reasons why the “all mighty and all knowing being” had determined that a “connection between regular objects and the pleasure which accompanies our perceptions of them” existed, Hutcheson offered five plausible explanations. First, that it “must be most convenient for beings of limited understanding and power.” Second, that regularity in form enabled men to make deductions concerning probability based on partial knowledge. Third, “it follows that beings of limited understanding and power...may avoid the endless toil of producing each effect by a separate operation.” Fourth, while it was conceivable that the deity might have constituted man without a sense of beauty, its existence implied that it “depends upon a voluntary constitution adapted to preserve the regularity of the universe, and is probably not the effect of necessity but choice in the supreme agent who constituted

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<sup>46</sup> T1, p. 85.

<sup>47</sup> T1, p.85, p. 85 and p. 86. On John Abernethy see chapter three.

<sup>48</sup> T1, p. 87.

our senses.”<sup>49</sup> Finally, anticipating his ethical theory, Hutcheson’s fifth explanation suggested that the whole proceeded from the intrinsic benevolence of the deity.

In its first appearance the *Inquiry* included an allusive reference to a man Hutcheson acknowledged had helped formulate these ideas. Unprepared to append his own name to the text, Hutcheson was just as reticent in identifying his colleague:

Were not the author diffident of his own performance, as too inconsiderable to have any great names mentioned in it, he would have publicly acknowledged his obligations to a certain Lord (whose name would have had no small authority with the learned world) for admitting him into his acquaintance, and giving him some remarks in conversation, which have very much improved these papers beyond what they were at first.<sup>50</sup>

Following the critical success of the treatise, Hutcheson owned up to his authorship. In the second edition of 1726, his name appeared on the cover. However, in a characteristic gesture, he took the opportunity to reveal the source of his inspiration. Thus, he revealed in the second edition that the elusive Lord was

the late Lord Viscount Molesworth....and that their being published was owing to his approbation of them. It was from him he had that shrewd objection which the reader may find in the first treatise, besides many other remarks in the frequent conversations with which he honoured the author, by which that Treatise was very much improved beyond what it was in the draught presented to him. The author retains the most grateful sense of his singular civilities and of the pleasure and improvement he received in his conversation, and is still fond of expressing his grateful remembrance of him.<sup>51</sup>

Molesworth was a person of note.<sup>52</sup> Jonathan Swift’s sixth ‘Drapier letter’ contained a dedication to this radical politician:

Since your last residence in Ireland, I frequently have taken my nag to ride about your grounds; where I fancied myself to feel an air of freedom breathing round me; and I am glad the low condition of a tradesman, did not qualify me to wait on you at your house; for then, I am afraid, my writings would not have escaped severer censures. But I have lately sold my nag, and honestly told his greatest fault, which was that of snuffing up the air about Brackdenstown [sic.]; whereby he became such a lover of liberty, that I could scarce hold him in.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>49</sup> T1, p. 89, p. 89, p. 90, p. 91 and p. 92. Proposition four is in line with Hutcheson’s later acceptance of a theory of positive liberty. See chapter six.

<sup>50</sup> T1, pp 27-8, n. 23.

<sup>51</sup> T1, pp 26-7.

<sup>52</sup> Leechman recognised the importance of this intellectual exchange. “[Hutcheson] was honoured with a place in the esteem and friendship of the late Lord Viscount Molesworth, who took pleasure in his conversation, and assisted him with his criticisms and observations to improve and polish the *Inquiry* into the ideas of beauty and virtue before it came abroad.” PSMP, p. vii.

<sup>53</sup> J. Swift, *The drapier letters*, (T. Scott, ed.), (London, 1903), p. 175. Their regard would appear to have been mutual. Although there is no extant correspondence between the two men, Molesworth did take note of Swift’s

Nor was Swift alone in his admiration of the Lord. As Molesworth identified, the essayist Richard Steele dedicated an entire edition of *The Tatler* to wax lyrical upon the Molesworth family. As Robert instructed his wife, Laetitia:

I must recommend to your reading *The Tatler* of Saturday the 24<sup>th</sup> instant. There you will find a huge compliment passed upon our two eldest lads and no small one to their father, and 'tis the greater because we are none of his intimates. I am glad I was not in town, for fear people should think these were bespoken commendations.<sup>54</sup>

What Laetitia found if she followed her husband's advice was a passage declaring:

The elder, who is a scholar, showed from his infancy a propensity to polite studies, and has made a suitable progress in literature; but his learning is so well woven into his mind, that from the impressions of it, he seems rather to have contracted a habit of life, than manner of discourse. To his books he seems to owe a good economy in his affairs, and a complacency in his manners; though in others that way of education has commonly quite a different effect. The epistles of the other son are full of accounts of what he thought most remarkable in his reading....Their father is the most intimate friend they have, and they always consult him rather than any other, when any error has happened through youth and inadvertency. The behaviour of this gentleman to his sons has made his life pass away with the pleasures of a second youth.<sup>55</sup>

Nor was this the first occasion that Steele had noticed Molesworth's presence. In the ninety-fourth issue of the periodical, Steele had utilised an anecdote related in Molesworth's *Account of Denmark* to illustrate his belief in the motivational power of love. Two women, Clarinda and Chloe, were both in love with Philander, a young gentleman who was a friend of their father and guardian, Romeo. Each hoped to catch the eye of their sweetheart, but Philander loved only Chloe. On the night in question they were attending a masque at the theatre house, when a fire broke out. Philander rushed to rescue his sweetheart, where by mistake he rescued the masked Clarinda and declared his love for

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appointment to the Deanery, writing to his wife: "They have made Swift Dean of St. Patrick's. This vexes the godly party beyond expression." R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth, London, 28 April [1713], Clements Mss: *HMC VC* volume eight, p. 262. They were certainly in communication for Molesworth writes to his wife in 1720 to tell her: "Pray take the first good opportunity of sending my compliments to Mr. Dean of St. Patrick's. I have received very kind and civil letter from him to which I design to return an answer speedily, but I would have some notice taken of his civility by you, that he may be convinced I am pleased with it." R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth, London, 27 December 1720, Clements Mss: *HMC VC* volume eight, p. 291.

<sup>54</sup> R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth, Edlington, 28 June 1710, in *ibid.*, p. 247.

<sup>55</sup> R. Steele, *The Tatler*, (Saturday 24 June 1710), (D. F. Bond ed.), (Oxford, 1987), volume three, p. 25. Molesworth took an active part in the direction of his son's education. He wrote to his wife in 1700: "I have recalled my two sons {from a tour of the continent}. I expect they will draw on me for 75, being their quarter beforehand. There is a brave conveniency (but it is threescore miles more north than Edlington for boarding and teaching our four boys. My Lord Lonsdale has set up at his own town {Whitehaven} a sort of Academy for none but gentlemen's sons. There is a French master and all other masters for nothing, only boarding the boys in his town, where there is all sorts of conveniencies to that purpose. Mr. Woodyear tells me that the masters in their kinds are very good, and My Lord gives them large salaries, and does this as well to promote good education as

her. Discovering his misunderstanding he returned into the blaze when he died in the arms of his love, Chloe. From this tale Steele drew the moral that: "That which we call gallantry to women, seems to be the heroic virtue of private persons; and there never breathed one man, who did not, in that part of his days wherein he was recommending himself to his mistress, do something beyond his ordinary course of life."<sup>56</sup>

Subsequently, Steele praised the *Account* in the *Plebeian* stating that: "Nothing can be better writ, or more instructive to anyone that values liberty than the narrative of that tragedy in that excellent treatise."<sup>57</sup> This assessment was echoed by Samuel Boyse, son of the Presbyterian minister and controversialist Joseph, who inscribed his esteem in the *Dublin Weekly Journal* on 11 February 1726/7.<sup>58</sup> Boyse noted admiringly that: "My Lord Molesworth, in his excellent Preface to the Account of Denmark, has observed, that liberty, like health, is a blessing we never so truly value, as when we feel its loss. I wish we may never have such an occasion of being taught its worth."<sup>59</sup> The editor of the *Dublin Weekly Journal*, James Arbuckle, was an associate of Viscount Molesworth and Boyse detected in the 'Hibernicus letters' "a sincere friendship to the cause of liberty."<sup>60</sup> Arbuckle, a signatory to Molesworth's will, contributed a lengthy obituary to the periodical upon news of his patron's death on 22 May 1725 after suffering for years from strangury.<sup>61</sup>

Molesworth was born in Fishamble Street in Dublin on 7 September 1656, four days after the death of his father, a prominent Dublin merchant, and educated at home and at Trinity College Dublin, where he received a BA in 1675. In August 1676, Molesworth married Laetitia Coote, the daughter of Lord Coloony, by whom he had numerous progeny. In a letter to one of his sons, John, Molesworth rejoiced how:

Tomorrow, your mother and I have had *irrumptam copulam* for forty-five complete years, and have undergone a great many hardships, both public and private, have had seventeen children, whereof

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to encourage his town by the expense which boarding will bring to it." R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth, Edlington, 24 May 1700, Clements Mss: HMC, VC, volume eight, p. 221.

<sup>56</sup> R. Steele, *The Tatler*, (Tuesday, 15 November 1709), (D. F. Bond ed.), (Oxford, 1987), volume two, p. 84.

<sup>57</sup> R. Steele, *The Plebeian*, (No.1), cited in R. J. Allen, "Steele and the Molesworth family," in *Review of English Studies*, 12, (1936), p. 454.

<sup>58</sup> On the 'Hibernicus letters' and Hutcheson's contribution to them, see chapter four.

<sup>59</sup> HL, volume two, p. 385.

<sup>60</sup> HL, volume two, p. 376.

<sup>61</sup> See appendix one for Arbuckle's obituary. For Molesworth's complaint see Lord Ferrard to his half-brother Robert Molesworth, Beaulieu, 4 September 1722: "I hope you find yourself better of your strangury. Take care of cold, let your diet be sweetening, let your days be free of too much thought, let your exercise be moderate and drink plentifully of soft things." Clements Mss: HMC, VC, volume eight, p. 346. Also relevant is a letter from Molesworth to L. Molesworth, dated 3 May 1724: "I see by experience that 'tis high time for me to leave off riding long journeys. This last (though I did no more than walk a foot pace), has brought a fit of the strangury and gravel upon me, and I am in a place where there is no herb or drug that I might have occasion for (either for clyster or oat drink) can be had nearer than Tullamore." *Ibid.*, p. 369. Strangury is a urinary tract disorder.

nine, I hope, are alive and well. 'Tis enough! and what very few can say in these parts of the world, and I ought to be content with it.<sup>62</sup>

As Arbuckle recorded in his obituary these survivors included

his Excellency *John*, now Lord *Molesworth*, Envoy Extraordinary from his Britannick Majesty to the King of *Sardinia*; besides whom he has left six sons, and two daughters, viz. The Honourable Richard Molesworth; William Molesworth Esq., Surveyor general of the Lands of this Kingdom; Captain Edward Molesworth; Captain Walter Molesworth; Coote Molesworth Esq. a Student in the Temple; and Bysse Molesworth Esq. now with his brother in Italy; Mrs. Titchburne, married to the honourable Capt. William Titchburne, son to the Lord Ferrard; and Mrs. Letitia, married to Edward Bolton of Brasile Esq. His Lordship had also an Elder Daughter, married to George Monck Esq.<sup>63</sup>

This last was the poetess Mary Monck who, as Arbuckle recalled “was a lady of extraordinary merit, and dying about ten years ago, left behind her a collection of excellent poems, which his Lordship published after her death, and dedicated to her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales.”<sup>64</sup>

In Arbuckle’s view, Molesworth was notable for two things: his parliamentary work in favour of liberty, and for his commitment to learning and improvement:

He frequently served his country in the House of Commons both here and in England, and always behaved himself in Parliament with that *firmness* and *intrepidity* in the cause of LIBERTY; and our *ancient constitution*; which though sometimes disagreeable to particular persons and parties, when his maxims happened to clash with their private interest; yet has been applauded by all parties in their turns, as soon as the warm fit was over, and the humours of the nation had settled. He was raised to the peerage by his present majesty in the beginning of his reign, and continued to serve his country with indefatigable industry and *uncorrupted integrity*, till the two last years of his life, when finding himself worn out with constant application to PUBLICK AFFAIRS, and a long an painful indisposition, he was obliged to retire from business, and pass the remainder of his days in that *learned leisure*, so highly celebrated by the great men of antiquity, whom his Lordship set up for his models, and so exactly resembled in all parts of his character.<sup>65</sup>

His parliamentary career was eventful. He was attainted by the Irish parliament of James II in May 1689.<sup>66</sup> The Jacobites sequestered his estate, valuing it at £2,825. But with James’ defeat in the military campaign of 1690, Molesworth returned to political favour, and his estate, while badly damaged, was secured. This suffering by the hands of the Jacobites brought Molesworth the appreciation of the Williamite government. In 1689 he

<sup>62</sup> R. Molesworth to J. Molesworth, London, 15 August 1721, in *ibid.*, p. 319.

<sup>63</sup> *DWJ*, 29 May 1725, no. 9, p. 36.

<sup>64</sup> *DWJ*, 29 May 1725, no. 9, p. 36. The work in question, *Marinda* was published in 1716 with a preface by Molesworth. M. Monck, *Marinda: poems and translations upon several occasions*, (London, 1716).

<sup>65</sup> *DWJ*, 29 May 1725, no. 9, p. 36.

<sup>66</sup> *Complete Peerage*, (London, 1936), p. 31.

was appointed to act as an Envoy Extraordinary of William's government to the kingdom of Denmark, where he remained until 1692.<sup>67</sup> A year later he determined upon an active political life, and stood successfully as a candidate for the constituency of Camelford.<sup>68</sup> He also stood as an MP for the city of Dublin.

Despite this electoral success, he removed himself from the seat in Dublin and in the election of 1702 stood instead for the smaller constituency of Swords, near his estate at Breckdenstown. His pride in the family interest in the district came through in a letter sent to the Archbishop of Dublin, William King, whose diocese had land-holdings in the area:

I and my ancestors for about seven score years and more have had, and still have a very considerable estate in and about the town of Swords, [Breckdenstown] equivalent to that of the See of Dublin there, and ever since the reformation (whenever parliaments met) my ancestors have served for Swords or recommended (at least one) member for it. My grandfather Bysse, then Chief Baron, immediately after (I mean the first Parliament after the Restoration) recommended his son-in-law Sir William Tichborne and at another time Coll. Forster, the present Recorder's father. When I served for the county of Dublin since the Revolution I recommended my friend for Swords and since that time I served for it myself.<sup>69</sup>

Elevated to the rank of Viscount on 16 July 1716 Molesworth took his seat in the Irish Lords on 10 July 1719. He became a regular attendee of the chamber. Between his accession to the title and his death, the *Journal* lists 162 attendance records. Among these, Molesworth appears on fifty occasions. The pattern indicates regular attendance until the prorogation of 1719, with Molesworth withdrawing from the House from the session of 12 September 1721. He then reappears for the session of 16 December 1721 but does not attend again until 5 September 1723. After that date he attends on 24 September 1723, on 25 September 1723 and 26 September 1723 before making his final appearance in the

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<sup>67</sup> The appointment is noted in CSPd, 1689-90 for June 1 1689, as follows: "Certificate that Robert Molesworth Envoy-Extraordinary to the King of Denmark departed on that employment on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May last." CSPd, 1689-90, p. 133.

<sup>68</sup> He held the seat from 1695 to 1698. Camelford, in Cornwall, was a rotten borough with some 30-50 electors. In a letter dated November 10, 1695 he wrote to Laetitia that "I am here still waiting an issue of my election, which, I believe [I] hope well of, notwithstanding the Lord of the Manor, [possibly Francis Maunton] the Mayor and the Sheriff be against me, this last keeping the precept in his hands thus long and will do longer to put me to charges and to endeavor to win off some of my votes from me, who as yet stand firm. Whether they will continue so, or whether Mr. Mayor will return me duly chosen, 'tis time only must try, and that a very short one, for within ten days it must be determined one way or the other....My election if I carry it will cost me sauce, is that we must endeavour to make it up by good husbandry....Since I writ the within letter, a message is sent to me that all matters relating to my election are agreed to by my adversaries, because they find it vain to oppose me, so that I am just taking horse to go to Camelford (the town I shall serve for) in order to my election this morning." R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth Molesworth, Pencarro, 10 November 1695, Clements Mss, HMC, VC, volume eight, p. 217-8.

<sup>69</sup> R. Molesworth to W. King, Edlington, 7 October 1713, HMC, Report 2, 1874, appendix XVI, p. 246.

House on 8 October 1723. Of the 55 attendance lists between his introduction to the House and the prorogation of 1719, Molesworth's name appears on 44.<sup>70</sup>

His English status was never so stable. He sat for Lostwithiel between 1705 and January 1706, before removing to East Retford for the session between 1706 and 1708.<sup>71</sup> Unable to find a seat in 1710, Molesworth returned to the London Parliament in 1715, standing as MP for Mitchell, until 1722.<sup>72</sup> His final campaign was for the popular constituency of Westminster.<sup>73</sup> Unsuccessful, he resigned from political life. He removed from his Yorkshire estate of Edlington, living out his final years at Breckdenstown.

As well as Molesworth's political career being characterised by electoral insecurity he experienced a series of disappointments when it came to attaining financial comfort.<sup>74</sup> Despite appointing him Envoy Extraordinary to Denmark, the monarch did not take to Molesworth.<sup>75</sup> When Molesworth left Denmark, rumoured to be a result of his notoriously quick temper and his impudence in riding a carriage on the private road of the King, the King had to be cajoled into readmitting Molesworth into his service.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> All this information derives from an analysis of the Journal of the House of Lords.

<sup>71</sup> Lostwithiel, Cornwall, was a rotten borough with an electorate as small as 24. The seat remained in Whig hands until the 1730s, under the guidance of a local family named Johns. East Retford in Nottinghamshire was larger, with about 80 electors. The chief interest there was Molesworth's putative patron, the Duke of Newcastle.

<sup>72</sup> Mitchell was another borough with an electorate of about 40. Located in Cornwall, it ought to have been a Tory bastion, thanks to the status of Henry Arundell, a Roman Catholic and Jacobite. However Molesworth and his fellow MP, Nathaniel Blakiston were Whiggish in sentiment.

<sup>73</sup> The electorate stood at about 8,000. Molesworth withdrew when he failed to make any inroads into the support of either John Cotton, or Archibald Hutcheson, both Tories. They defeated Sir Thomas Crosse, a resident MP who had once stood for the Tories but was standing as a Whig and William Lowndes, the secretary to the Treasury. Following a petition the election was declared void on 6 November 1722 and in the subsequent by-election two Whig candidates, Charles Montagu and George Carpenter were returned. See HPC, pp 285-6.

<sup>74</sup> Molesworth, although not alone among the Country Whigs to reveal feet of clay in their confrontation with the Court, was, as David Hayton remarked, "perhaps the most remarkable instance" of the tendency of independent-minded MP's to relinquish their moral high-ground in return for more pecuniary rewards of service. This led Hayton perhaps precipitously to dismiss Molesworth's political philosophy as posturing for attention. As Hayton surmised: "The necessity of providing for a numerous family out of limited resources drew Molesworth towards the source of patronage. Godolphin made him 'assurances' after he had supported the 1704-5 Place Bill. These came to nothing and he again opposed the Court over the Regency Bill, but the appointment of his son Jack to a place in the Stamp Office in 1706 won him over to the administration. He was even willing to make approaches to Robert Harley when his patron Godolphin fell from power, and at the accession of George I became a place-man himself and for a time a spokesman for the 'court interest', amongst other things supporting (with considerable embarrassment) a standing army. His biography it has been said 'amply demonstrates the force of self-interest...in politics.'" D. Hayton, "The 'country' interest and the party system, 1689-c.1720", in C. Jones (ed.), *Party and management in parliament, 1660-1784*, (Leicester, 1984), 51. The citation is from Cobbett, *Parliamentary history*, VII, 536-7

<sup>75</sup> Molesworth appeared to be unaware of the King's sentiments. In a letter to the Secretary of state, James Vernon, dated 30 January 1699, Molesworth expressed his belief that the King favoured him personally: "I told you that at my taking leave of his Majesty I found him in a disposition of doing something for an early appearer and great sufferer for his interests and he promised me he would. I asked nothing but left the time and manner to his own grace: if you sir, when you see him in a good humour, will put in a word, 'twill confirm and hasten his intentions." CSPd, 1699-1700, p. 36.

<sup>76</sup> Paul Ries has discussed the campaign waged against Molesworth by the Danish embassy in London in an effort to limit the damage done by the *Account*. P. Ries, "Robert Molesworth's *Account of Denmark*: A study in the art of political publishing and bookselling in England and on the continent before 1700," in *Scandinavica*, 7, (1968), pp 108-25. "Having said this much in relation to the persons proposed to be turned out, I shall trouble you with very little concerning those offered in their room. You know most or all of them, only I doubt it will be

The following decades saw Molesworth continually in search of a place in the state system to make him financially secure. A range of ministers flirted with his affections, but none ever moved to make Molesworth comfortable. In 1694 the Duke of Shrewsbury, in a memorandum to the King recommending Molesworth for a place in the excise, drew an interesting portrait of the Irishman:

That same active, busy spirit that rendered him an uneasy correspondent to a Secretary of State [James Vernon] may be no ill recommendation towards putting him into these commissions which want warmth and zeal, and I must do him the justice to say that in my idle time, having looked over many of his dispatches [from Denmark] and the answers to them, he was often full of his own projects and perhaps too tedious for one that had multiplicity of business to answer; but in the concerns with Denmark, it were to be wished that his opinion had been followed in many particulars. Upon the whole I think the man nicely honest, zealous for your Government, a lover of business, painful and assiduous in any employment and with very good parts to set all these at work. He has a relation in the West, by whose interest he is almost secure to come into Sir Peter Collendon's place in Parliament, where I am sure he has talents to be made very useful for you, and if he is desperate of your favour, I foresee he will be a very troublesome popular speaker; having suffered as much in this revolution [1688-90] as any man of his estate and got reputation by his book which was written with great ingenuity.<sup>77</sup>

Shrewsbury's belief that Molesworth might prove a troublesome MP was borne out in 1698 when he spoke against the court's attempts to augment the forces. Shrewsbury's assessment was shared by the secretary of state, James Vernon. Vernon complained to Ambassador Williamson of Molesworth's attitude concerning the Danes: "Mr. Molesworth (I think very unadvisedly) took this occasion to show his resentments at what dissatisfied him in Denmark; but with an air so unbecoming one who has borne a public character, that showed rather a waspishness than gave any force to his arguments."<sup>78</sup>

While mentioned in reference to a potential peerage in 1697, Molesworth's best hope for a patron in the 1690s came from the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, John Methuen, who described Molesworth in correspondence to the Secretary of state, Vernon as "as honest a gentleman as ever was born."<sup>79</sup> Methuen's political friendship with Molesworth resulted in his appointment to the Irish Privy Council in 1697.

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necessary I should say a few words concerning one which I myself offered, though he was readily consented to by the rest, who agreed he had the talents extremely proper to make an industrious, faithful and zealous officer, and that is Mr. Molesworth." The Duke of Shrewsbury to the King, Whitehall, 15 July, 1694, CSPd, p. 181.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 181-2.

<sup>78</sup> J. Vernon to Ambassador Williamson, Whitehall, 11 February 1698, CSPd, 1698, p. 83.

<sup>79</sup> J. Methuen to J. Vernon, Dublin 20 July 1697, CSPd, 1697, p. 259. "The Lord Chancellor of Ireland came to town last night. I know not how true it is but I hear several Irish Lords to be made, viz. young Colvell, Tom Broderick, Hill, Moulesworth [sic.] Allen and God knows who. This is to balance the bishops there." J. Sloane to Sir J. Williamson, London, 24 December 1697, CSPd, 1697, p. 529.



Molesworth's hopes for patronage raised highest when his son Richard saved Lord Marlborough's life on the field of Ramilles in 1706. Despite this act of heroism, and Molesworth's confidence that "My Lord Marlborough will certainly do better for Dick than was at first intended for he is a favourite," the Duke soon fell dramatically from favour; a blow which hit Robert's ambitions hard.<sup>80</sup> Upon hearing news of an apoplectic fit suffered by another of Molesworth's putative patrons, the Duke of Newcastle, in 1707, Molesworth wrote to his wife, back in Ireland, lamenting that: "All our friends either die or fall sick just when they should do us good."<sup>81</sup> Even the relationship that Molesworth nurtured with Lord Godolphin was not consummated by the gift of a profitable office. Upon news of his demise Molesworth wrote in despair:

My dear Lord Godolphin is dead! The greatest man in the world for honesty, capacity, courage, friendship, generosity, is gone: my best friend is gone! As if my friendship were fatal to all that ever take it up for me. So that now there is another great article to be added to the misfortunes of my family this year, which indeed are insupportable. This great patriot could not survive the liberties of his country, whilst I, like a wretch, am like to live a slave, and have reared up my children to no better end.<sup>82</sup>

The task of supporting his offspring and of seeing them settled and secure was burdensome. As he confessed to his wife in 1710:

Jack promises me to take care of all things needful for Ned and to send him back speedily to General Stanhope, who has promised to promote him. I will make an attempt for Will before I leave town and, if I can get him but into the Treasury Office as an under clerk without salary, I think it may be a proper place to keep him out of idleness and entitle him hereafter to rise in that office. I give him a handsome allowance now of 50l. per annum, and that with his frugality will maintain him like a gent. As to Cloky, we shall not have money enough to dispose of her here, and in order to a good match in Ireland, I must speedily either carry or send her over.<sup>83</sup>

Molesworth's energies had been rewarded with a place on the Irish Privy Council on 2 August 1697, being renewed in 1702. But this post was of little consequence to him. Upon his reappointment, he remarked to his wife "There is no fear that I should desert that

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<sup>80</sup> R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth, London, 19 November 1706, Clements Mss, *HMC*, VC, volume eight, p. 235. Molesworth reported that Richard did gain favouritism from Marlborough, noting in a letter to Laetitia that: "His [Richard's] new employment is worth above 300l. a year, and also puts it in his power to oblige several friends by appointing a deputy and other lesser officers under him." R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth, Edlington, 18 September 1708, *ibid.*, p. 239.

<sup>81</sup> R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth, Edlington, 6 September 1707, in *ibid.*, p. 238.

<sup>82</sup> R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth, Edlington, 20 September 1712, in *ibid.*, p. 259.

<sup>83</sup> R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth, London, 8 April 1710, in *ibid.*, p. 246.

country [Ireland], wherein I have so good a stake, though unless there be a parliament, I shall hardly go over to be sworn Privy Councillor only for the sake of a wine warrant.”<sup>84</sup>

Even this less than satisfactory office was taken from him in dramatic circumstances in the winter of 1713. On 23 December John Vesey, Archbishop of Tuam, submitted to the House of Lords a complaint from the Lower Chamber of the Convocation concerning Molesworth, then a Commoner sitting for the popular seat of Dublin.<sup>85</sup> As subsequently reported to the House of Lords by the Prolocutor, William Percival, it read:

The Lower House of Convocation, being informed by several Members of their House that immediately after your Graces and Lordships, with the whole clergy, had presented their address to his Grace the Lord Lieutenant on Monday the 21<sup>st</sup> of December inst. and when your Graces and Lordships, with the whole clergy, were still in the presence chamber; the right hon. Robert Molesworth Esq.; did publicly, and in the hearing of a great many persons, speak the following words, viz. “they that have turned the world upside down have come hither also.”

We humbly represent to your Graces and Lordships that we look upon these words as uttered by him, to be an intolerable profanation of the Holy Scriptures, and that his speaking them, at that time, and in that place, was with design to cast an odium and aspersion on yours Graces and Lordships, with the whole clergy; and to represent us, as a turbulent and seditious body; and we think ourselves in duty, obliged to lay this matter before your Graces and Lordships, not only for the reasons before mentioned, but because we conceive it to be a high affront to her Majesty, and great disrespect to her representative, our Lord Lieutenant.

And we humbly pray your Graces and Lordships, to take such methods of doing right to yourselves, and to us, in vindicating the whole clergy from this wicked calumny as to your Graces’ and Lordships’ wisdoms shall seem most proper.<sup>86</sup>

What appalled the House of Lords about this was that it had occurred in Dublin Castle, within the hearing of the Lord Lieutenant, and was a reminder of the Tory sympathies many on the Episcopal bench still harboured.<sup>87</sup>

In Molesworth’s case, the irritation and offence he caused led to the two Houses of the legislature holding a conference in which the upper House made plain its displeasure:

The Lords cannot entertain the least suspicion, but that the Commons, upon full proof of the words charged upon Robert Molesworth Esq. which they may have from several Members of the Lower House of Convocation of indisputable characters will do justice upon their Member to that venerable body, the Convocation.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth, London, 26 November 1702, in *ibid.*, p. 227.

<sup>85</sup> John Vesey (1638-1716), Bishop of Limerick, 1673, Archbishop of Tuam 1678.

<sup>86</sup> JHOL, pp 441-2.

<sup>87</sup> Indeed the Irish political nation was inherently more Tory-minded than its English counterpart. The argument could be made that however wrong Jonathan Clark is concerning the conservative hue of English politics, the model is applicable to the Irish situation. See J. C. D. Clark, *English society, 1688-1832*, (Cambridge, 1985).

<sup>88</sup> JHOL, p. 442.

They demanded that an example be made of the wrongdoer, stating that: “The lords entertain this assurance of the readiness of the Commons to do justice in all these particulars, from the zeal they have observed by the Commoners, in former Parliaments expressed against Toland and Asgil.”<sup>89</sup> Molesworth was removed from the Privy Council on 25 Jan 1713/4 but no further punitive action was taken, perhaps because the Parliament was suspended in January 1713/4.<sup>90</sup>

Despite this incident, the accession of George I and the shift in political culture, Anne’s death ensured Molesworth’s re-appointment to the Privy Council on 9 October 1714.<sup>91</sup> In November 1714 he was made commissioner for trade and plantations.

Molesworth’s financial situation deteriorated dramatically in 1720, when his investment in the South Sea company turned sour. In 1720 Laetitia had written to her son John, enthusing about the recent developments in the London stock market and telling him: “I believe most of our money of this kingdom is gone over to the South Sea stock, for I never saw it so hard to get in my life.”<sup>92</sup> In the ensuing crash Molesworth suffered heavily. In January 1720/1 he reassured his son that the turn in events had not overwhelmed him:

I admire that you should as much as suspect that any disappointment in the S[outh] S[ea] affair could have the least influence on my health. I thought I had always shown myself above any accidents of that nature, and, to convince you that I am so, be assured that at this present (directly contrary to my own interest in relation to money) I am doing my utmost that stocks should not rise again. ‘Tis enough to have one half of the nation bubbled in one year without drawing in the other half to their undoing.<sup>93</sup>

Molesworth was referring to his service on the Committee of Secrecy from where he assailed the company directors. Despite the political cover-up that saved the King from public humiliation, Molesworth’s most powerful hopes of patronage, Lord Stanhope and Lord Sunderland fell victim to apoplexy, the former in the chamber of the House of Lords during a debate on the scandal. As Arthur Onslow narrated it to Molesworth’s son, John:

We have had a very sad accident. Earl Stanhope was taken ill o’ Friday night last of a headache and died o’ Sunday by the bursting of his veins in his brain. He is universally lamented, as the greatest

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<sup>89</sup> JHOL, p. 442. On Toland see below. John Asgil (1659-1738) MP for Enniscorthy, expelled in 1703 for writing a pamphlet which argued that death was not obligatory on Christians. MP for Bamber in England 1705-7. Also expelled there in 1707 for the same work.

<sup>90</sup> Steele defended Molesworth’s actions in issue 46 of *The Englishman*.

<sup>91</sup> Molesworth expressed his delight at the turn in events in a letter to William King, writing that: “In short, there seems to be a disposition to do every thing that can conduce to the future happiness of these realms.... I can scarce persuade myself I am yet awake, when I consider our late condition and I look back with dread upon the precipice we have escaped.” R. Molesworth to W. King, London, 28 September 1714, HMC, 1874, report 2, appendix XVI, p. 247.

<sup>92</sup> L. Molesworth to J. Molesworth, Breckdenstown, 17 May 1720, in *ibid.*, p. 287.

loss at this time that could have happened from anyone's death. His reputation was untouched as to any concern in the South Sea affairs and his interest and authority for that reason much greater with the people than anybody's.<sup>94</sup>

Despite Molesworth's part in the committee, he was a vitriolic opponent of the South Sea directors. He utilised his appointment to lambaste the company for fraud and deceit, although he was modest when it came to celebrating his achievements:

I find the world is in a mistake when to me alone is attributed the prosecution of those incomparable villains, who have plundered the nation. I do but my part in this matter and am but one of thirteen. 'Tis true many things are attributed to me, which are none of mine, and 'tis true I continue steadfast in my purpose, notwithstanding the opposition given by the Court, old and new ministry, the majority of the Parliament (which are dipped) and the relations, bribed and interested of all concerned.<sup>95</sup>

So heated was Molesworth's opposition that his sons believed he was associated with the most vitriolic of the public campaigns against the South Sea Company; 'Cato's letters,' which appeared in the *London Journal* between 5 November 1720 and 27 July 1723.<sup>96</sup> This series derisively criticised the Company and its directors. The Anglo-Irish writer, Thomas Gordon and the English commonwealthman, John Trenchard, declaimed:

These monsters, therefore, stand single in the creation: they are stock-jobbers; they have served a whole people as Satan served Job; and so far the Devil is injured, by any analogy that you can make between him and them. Well; but monsters as they are, what would you do with them? The answer is short and at hand, hang them; for whatever they deserve, I would have no new tortures invented, nor any new death devised. In this, I think, I show moderation; let them only be hanged, but hanged speedily. As to their wealth, as it is the manifest plunder of the people, let it be restored to the people, and let the public be their heirs; the only method by which the public is ever like to get millions by them, or indeed anything.<sup>97</sup>

They levelled the accusation that the political establishment had used the affair to further their corrupt interests:

A very great authority has told us, that, 'Tis worth no man's time to serve a party, unless he can now and then get good jobs by it. This, I can safely say has been the constant principle and practice of every leading patriot, ever since I have been capable of observing public transactions; the *primum mobile*, the *alpha* and *omega* of all their actions.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> R. Molesworth to J. Molesworth, 9 January, 1720/1, in *ibid.*, pp 293-4.

<sup>94</sup> A. Onslow to J. Molesworth, 4 February 1720/1, in *ibid.*, p. 299.

<sup>95</sup> R. Molesworth to J. Molesworth, 19 May 1721, in *ibid.*, p.312.

<sup>96</sup> J. Trenchard and T. Gordon, *Cato's letters: or essays on liberty, civil and religious*, (R. Hamowy, ed.), two volumes, (Indianapolis, 1995).

<sup>97</sup> T. Gordon, "The pestilent conduct of the South Sea directors," 19 November 1720, in *ibid.*, volume one, p. 45.

<sup>98</sup> J. Trenchard, "The leaders of parties," in 11 February 1720/1, in *ibid.*, volume one, p. 118.

Given this political stance, it is little wonder to find the old radical, Molesworth, associated with the *Letters*. As his son Walter pointed out to his brother, John:

These are sometimes silly, sometimes false assertions and conclusions, frequently very bitter personal reflections and applications, which, supposing them true, never did good to any cause. All this I have heard my father own, and yet I know the whole load of odium lies upon him, and the consequences of it is that his family may starve for anything that either the Ministers or he will do to prevent it.<sup>99</sup>

Molesworth's position was equivocal. His denial of involvement, as Walter recognised, was ambiguous:

This comes of engaging in a paper, where many people broach their sentiments or humours; if it happens that there is anything fault in any of them, the blame is constantly laid upon the most eminent of the persons concerned....he [Molesworth] protested solemnly he had not writ one this half year nor ever was the author of any personal or scurrilous reflections.<sup>100</sup>

But as is suggested by his outburst in Dublin Castle, by the public's identification of him with Cato's Letters and by his unstable parliamentary career, Molesworth was a political radical. In a series of books and pamphlets he espoused a political creed which, he acknowledged: "Amount[s] to a *Commonwealthsman*, I shall never be ashamed of that name, though given with a design of fixing a reproach upon me, & such as think as I do."<sup>101</sup> As Swift implied the cornerstone of this creed was a belief in the necessity of political liberty to human flourishing and a concomitant disdain for absolutist theories:

I [Swift] have likewise buried, at the bottom of a strong chest, your Lordship's [Molesworth's] writings, under a heap of others that treat of liberty; and spread over a layer or two of Hobbes, Filmer, Bodin and many more authors of that stamp, to be readiest at hand, whenever I shall be disposed to take up a new set of principles in government. In the meantime I design quietly to look to my shop, and keep as far out of your Lordship's influence as possible; and if you ever see any more of my writings on this subject, I promise you shall find them as innocent, as insipid, and without a sting, as what I have now offered you. But if your Lordship will please to give me an easy lease of some part of your estate in Yorkshire, thither I will carry my chest; and turning it upside down, resume my political reading where I left it off; feed on plain homely fare, and live and die a free honest English farmer.<sup>102</sup>

Most exacting was Molesworth's "public profession of my political faith," the preface to his 1721 edition of his 1707 translation: Francois Hotman's *Franco-Gallia*.

<sup>99</sup> W. Molesworth to J. Molesworth, 9 November 1721, Clements Mss: *HMC*, VC, volume eight p. 326.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 326.

<sup>101</sup> *PRW*, p. 22.

<sup>102</sup> J. Swift, *The drapier letters*, (T. Scott, ed.), (London, 1903), pp 175-6.

There he provided the reader with a political manifesto. Included was a demand for frequent elections: “The law that lately passed with so much struggle for triennial parliaments shall content me, till the legislative shall think fit to make them annual.” Parliament was to limit taxation to curb central authority and “An Old Whig is for choosing such sort of representatives to serve in parliament as have estates in the kingdom.” He opposed standing armies and advocated “the arming and training of all the freeholders of England as it is our undoubted ancient constitution, and consequently our right.” This ancient constitution of England, which situated the liberties Molesworth held dear, was capable of degenerating into French-style despotism. This Polybian vision of history grounded Molesworth’s analysis of the seventeenth century: “Because some of our princes in this last age, did their utmost endeavour to destroy this union and harmony of the three estates, and to be arbitrary or independent, they ought to be looked upon as the aggressors upon our constitution.”<sup>103</sup>

The eventual success of the people in defeating the Stuarts’ dynastic ambitions was not a forgone conclusion. The Commonwealthmen saw liberty as under perpetual threat. Only the active and constant vigilance of the citizenry ensured that the community remained free. Molesworth made his literary name with an analysis of one such collapse into despotism: *An Account of the Kingdom of Denmark as it was in the year 1692*. Paraded as a travel guide for the intelligent reader, Molesworth utilised this genre to survey the Danish political landscape. Travel was a vehicle for the importation of Ciceronian virtues into the minds of young men. Travel enabled them to compare the relative states of political health in the body politics and aided the appreciation of liberty:

Want of *liberty* is a disease in any society or body politic, like want of *health* in a particular person; and as the best way to understand the nature of any distemper aright, is to consider it in several patients, since the same disease may proceed from different causes, so the disorders in society are best perceived by observing the nature and effects of them in our several neighbours. Wherefore *travel* seems as necessary to one who desires to be useful to his country, as practising upon other men’s distempers is to make an able physician.<sup>104</sup>

One example for the English traveller was the kingdom of Denmark. The *Account* directed the audiences’ attention to a landscape scarred by human incompetence, avarice and ambition. By an injudicious blend of error and corruption, the nobility in Copenhagen had succumbed to the insinuations of the King; forsaking the country by forgoing its freedoms. The book opened with a geographic depiction of the Kingdom, and supplied the

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<sup>103</sup> *PRW*, p. 6, p. 12, p. 13, p. 17 and p. 7.

<sup>104</sup> *AD*, pp iii-iv.

reader with details of its agricultural wealth, diplomatic strength and imperial power. Yet the account pivoted on chapter seven, wherein Molesworth explored how: “The Kingdom of *Denmark* in four days time changed from an estate little differing from aristocracy, to as absolute a monarchy as any is at present in the world.”<sup>105</sup>

As Molesworth argued, the Danish constitutional revolution of 1660 was a didactic saga, the study of which would edify the European audience to which the book aspired. Central to his concern were the reasons why free men might choose to relinquish their liberty for dependence.<sup>106</sup> Ironically the revolution developed out of an insult given to the Commons by the nobility. In the midst of the dispute Otto Craeg, a nobleman “told the President of the City; that the Commons neither understood, nor considered the privileges of the nobility, who at all times had been excepted from taxes, nor the true condition of themselves, who were no other than slaves.”<sup>107</sup> Nanson, President of the City of Copenhagen, channelled the anger this slight provoked in the Commons. He induced the Commons to declare the kingship to be hereditary and to extend the monarch’s powers. For this he and his co-conspirators received the gratitude of the sovereign:

It was but justice that the Court should pay well the principal contrivers of this great revolution; and therefore notwithstanding the general want of money, Hannibal Steestede had a present of 200,000 crowns. Swan the Superintendent, or Bishop, was made Archbishop, and had 30,000 crowns. The President or Speaker Nanson, 20,000 crowns.<sup>108</sup>

The Commons, in a state of annoyance, resolved to go along with this suggestion, deeming it necessary to drag the nobles down to their own status. They failed to recognise this implied their own demise being carried along by: “The effort of an unconstant giddy multitude...guided by wiser heads, and supported by encouragements from Court.”<sup>109</sup>

When presented with the Commons’ *fait accompli*, the nobles balked, delaying the implementation of the scheme. The King then intervened directly in their considerations. When the nobles gathered for a funeral dinner, he acted:

In the height of their entertainment, an officer comes into the room, and whispers some of the principal men that the city gates were shut, and the keys carried to Court: for the King having been informed by the Governor, that two or three had privily slipt out of town the night before, and being

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<sup>105</sup> *AD*, p. 73.

<sup>106</sup> For this interpretation I am drawing on Q. Skinner, *Liberty before liberalism*, (Cambridge, 1998).

<sup>107</sup> *AD*, p. 52.

<sup>108</sup> *AD*, p. 74.

<sup>109</sup> *AD*, p. 62.

resolved that no more should escape out of the net, till he had done his business, had ordered the Governor that morning to lock the gates, and to let no person in or out without special order.<sup>110</sup>

The nobility buckled, “the dread of losing their lives took away all thoughts of their liberty,” and they accepted the resolutions of the Commons.<sup>111</sup> The induction ceremony, held three days later, passed off without demur. The lack of virtue within the nobility proved critical, for as Molesworth reported:

I have heard very intelligent persons, who were at that time near the King, affirm, that had the nobles showed ever so little courage in asserting their privileges, the King would not have pursued his point so far as to desire an arbitrary dominion: for he was in continual doubt, and dread of the event, and began to waver very much in his resolutions; so that their liberties seem purely lost for want of some to appear for them.<sup>112</sup>

This morality play had a local counterpoint for Molesworth’s readers: “And to the people remained the glory of having forged their own chains, and the advantage of obeying without reserve. A happiness which I suppose no *English* man will ever envy them.”<sup>113</sup> Far from writing a personal account of his adventures in Denmark, Molesworth had defended the revolution of 1688. Denmark represented a vivid warning of the dangerous potential of the Stuart regime and reminded politicians of their obligation to remain virtuous in the face of a belligerent monarch. Published in 1694, the book assured its readers, albeit by default, of the need to confront the absolutist, imperial tendencies of the French throne.<sup>114</sup> Molesworth wanted to make his readers aware of the dangers of absolutist politics wherever they were found. Indeed, in 1696, Molesworth took an active role in supporting the freedoms of the British subject in a case much closer to home.

Arriving in Dublin in 1696, apparently to assist the newly appointed Chancellor John Methuen, the Donegal-born eccentric John Toland quickly entered the theological and political debates of the city.<sup>115</sup> He had already attracted the attentions of the Middlesex grand jury for putting his name to the title sheet of the second edition of a slim volume entitled *Christianity not mysterious*.<sup>116</sup> Toland had taken on the character of a well-meaning defendant of religion to criticise the Christian denominations for “priestcraft.”<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> *AD*, p. 68.

<sup>111</sup> *AD*, p. 69.

<sup>112</sup> *AD*, pp 72-73.

<sup>113</sup> *AD*, p. 74.

<sup>114</sup> See S. Pincus, “The English debate over universal monarchy,” in *A union for empire: political thought and the British union of 1707*, (J. Robertson, ed.), (Cambridge, 1995), pp 37-62.

<sup>115</sup> R. E. Sullivan, *John Toland and the deist controversy: a study in adaptations*, (London, 1982), pp 7-8.

<sup>116</sup> J. Toland, “Christianity not mysterious,” in *John Toland’s Christianity not mysterious: text, associated works and critical essays*, (P. McGuinness, A. Harrison and R. Kearney, eds.), (Dublin, 1997), pp 1-100.

<sup>117</sup> *CNM*, p. 100.



The clerics claimed authority rested upon knowledge inaccessible to ordinary believers. These esoteric truths had no basis in any rationally ascertainable fact but were to be accepted by the laity on faith alone, even if contrary to the rational understanding of the individuals involved.<sup>118</sup> Toland argued that this was unreasonable and unacceptable:

Some will have us always believe what the literal sense imports, with little or no consideration for reason, which they reject as not fit to be employed about the revealed part of religion. Others assert that we may use reason as the instrument, but not the rule of our belief. The first contend, some mysteries may be, or at least seem to be contrary to reason, and yet be received by faith. The second, that no mystery is contrary to reason, but that all are above it.<sup>119</sup>

In contrast to such hidden stores of divine truth, Toland offered a religion founded upon reason, defined as the ability to perceive relationships between ideas:

When the mind cannot immediately perceive the agreement or disagreement of any ideas, because they cannot be brought near enough together, and so compared, it applies one or more intermediate ideas to discover it...This method of knowledge is properly called reason or demonstration...and it may be defined, That faculty of the soul which discovers the certainty of any thing dubious or obscure, by comparing it with something evidently known.<sup>120</sup>

These ideas, the building blocks of knowledge, derived either from personal experience or an external authority. These sources were again divisible, so that experience was either internal or external, and authority either “humane” or “divine.”<sup>121</sup> The individual had to test the sources of authority against the empirical evidence of his experience. As Toland assumed that truth was singular in its nature, any authoritative opinion, which contradicted personal experience, ought to be rejected or result in a suspension of judgement:

But God the wise creator of all...who has enabled us to perceive things, and form judgements of them, has also endowed us with the power of suspending our judgements about whatever is uncertain, and of never assenting but to clear perceptions...We must necessarily believe, that it is impossible the same thing should be and not be at once.<sup>122</sup>

Whatever struck the observer as irrational was outside the remit of humankind. In sum, the individual ought not to submit to authority on trust:

Could that person justly value himself upon being wiser than his neighbours, who having infallible assurance that something called Blictri had a being in nature, in the mean time knew not what this

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<sup>118</sup> For Swift’s defence of this stance against the deist challenge, see D. Carey, “Swift among the freethinkers,” in *Eighteenth-century Ireland*, 12, (1997), pp 89-99.

<sup>119</sup> CNM, p. 17.

<sup>120</sup> CNM, p. 24.

<sup>121</sup> CNM, p. 26.

Blictri was? And seeing the case stands really thus, all faith or persuasion must necessarily consist of two parts, knowledge and assent. 'Tis the last indeed that continues the formal act of faith, but not without the evidence of the first.<sup>123</sup>

Nor was Toland averse to playing on his notoriety. He provided a very public target for the bishops. William Molyneux reckoned Toland's presence was highly provocative. Writing to Locke, Molyneux wryly observed of his houseguest:

I have known a gentleman in this town that was a most strict Socinian and thought as much out of the common road as any man, and was also known so to do; but then his behaviour and discourse was attended with so much modesty, goodness, and prudence that I never heard him publicly censured or clamoured against, neither was any man in danger of censure by receiving his visits or keeping him company. I am very loath to tell you how far 'tis otherwise with Mr. T. in this place.<sup>124</sup>

Toland's idiosyncratic and ill-judged stance resulted in the Anglican clergy of Dublin levelling charges of heresy from the pulpits. Then, as Toland recounted:

When this rough handling of him in the pulpit (where he could not have word about) proved insignificant, the Grand Jury was solicited to present him for a book that was written and published in England. And, to gain the readier compliance, the presentment of the Grand Jury of Middlesex was printed in Dublin with an emphatical title, and cried about the streets. So Mr. Toland was accordingly presented there the last day of the term in the Court of King's Bench, the jurors not grounding their proceeding upon any particular passages of his book, which most of them never read, and those that did confessed not to understand.<sup>125</sup>

This virulent campaign rose to the floor of the House of Commons, eventually resulting in the work being condemned to burn by the hand of the public executioner in College Green. Toland did not remain in Ireland to follow his work to the pyre, migrating to the relative safety of England in September 1697, and moving to Holland in 1699.

Throughout, Molesworth risked himself through association. He was publicly attached with a man who was on trial as a heretic (if only *in absentia*). Even after the furore he stayed friendly with the maverick.<sup>126</sup> When, in 1713, Molesworth was charged

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<sup>122</sup> CNM, pp 29-30.

<sup>123</sup> CNM, pp 81-82. "Blictri" is a nonsense word. On the concept of trust in the thought of Locke, see J. Dunn, "The concept of 'trust' in the politics of John Locke," in *Philosophy in history: essays on the historiography of philosophy*, (R. Rorty, J. B. Schneewind and Q. Skinner, eds.), (Cambridge, 1984), pp 279-302. For a survey of the literature on trust see S. Shapin, *A social history of truth: civility and science in seventeenth-century England*, (Chicago, 1994), pp 3-41. On the role of trust in Hutcheson's thought see chapter two and the conclusion.

<sup>124</sup> W. Molyneux to J. Locke, 27 May 1697, in *The correspondence of John Locke*, (E. S. De Beer, ed.), (Oxford, 1981), volume six, letter 2269, pp 133-4.

<sup>125</sup> J. Toland, "An Apology for Mr. Toland," in *John Toland's Christianity not mysterious: text, associated works and critical essays*, (P. McGuinness, A. Harrison and R. Kearney, eds.), (Dublin, 1997), p. 112.

<sup>126</sup> See the correspondence between the two men in BL Mss ADD 4465, particularly f.19, 21, 23, 27, 29, 37 dating from 1 August 1719 until 2 March 1721/2. The last letter is undated.

with insulting the Convocation his name was linked with that of Toland.<sup>127</sup> The two men corresponded throughout their lives, and exchanged books of interest.<sup>128</sup> Nor was Toland's friendship with Molesworth a political alliance. Despite the publication of an edition of Harrington's works, which included a life Toland had penned, and his declaration in 1702 "that I am a great Common-wealths-man...and value myself upon being so", Toland was not stable in his political affiliation.<sup>129</sup> Only two years after this declaration Toland sidled away from Shaftesbury and Molesworth to tie his fortunes to the good will of their opponent, Robert Harley.<sup>130</sup> Although Harley was of a Whiggish bent, he had brokered a deal with the Tories to install himself as Speaker of the House of Commons. Mediated by the Quaker leader William Penn, Harley and Toland's relationship blossomed and for the two years following August 1704, Toland acted as a pamphleteer for the Speaker.<sup>131</sup>

Molesworth's liberality of spirit, eagerness to participate in political controversy and anti-absolutist attitude acted to draw Hutcheson into his intellectual orbit. In the last years of Molesworth's life, he gathered around him a network of young, mainly Presbyterian, intellectuals, many of whom had been educated in Glasgow University. This network included figures who would become influential in Hutcheson's Dublin career: the Anglican cleric, Edward Synge the younger, John Smith, who organised the publication of Hutcheson's *Inquiry*; James Arbuckle, editor of the *Dublin Weekly Journal* in which Hutcheson refuted Thomas Hobbes and Bernard Mandeville. Also possibly included were Smith's partner, Hutcheson's cousin William Bruce and Hutcheson's collaborator in the dissenting academy, Thomas Drennan.<sup>132</sup> Also a candidate for membership was the poet Samuel Boyse, son of the minister at the dissenting congregation at Wood Street (which financially underwrote Hutcheson's academy), Joseph Boyse<sup>133</sup>

<sup>127</sup> See above.

<sup>128</sup> See the marginalia to M. Martin, *A description of the Western Isles of Scotland*, (London, 1716) in the British Museum. Toland has a signature page of observations at the front of the work, where he also notes: "Having lent this book, thus marked to the Lord Viscount Molesworth and he adding several other notes, I thought it fit to distinguish his by LM and my own by JT. Oct, 28, anno. 1721."

<sup>129</sup> J. Toland, "Vindicius liberius," in *John Toland's Christianity not mysterious*: text, associated Works and critical essays, (P. McGuinness, A. Harrison and R. Kearney, eds.), (Dublin, 1997), p. 186. The edition of Harrington, which appeared in 1700, was later re-published under the imprint of Hutcheson's cousin, William Bruce, in 1737, quite possibly on Hutcheson's advice. See "Preface," in *John Toland's Christianity not mysterious*, (P. McGuinness, A. Harrison and R. Kearney, eds.), (Dublin, 1997), p. x, n1.

<sup>130</sup> The manner and result of this political wooing by Toland is narrated by R. E. Sullivan, *John Toland and the deist controversy: a study in adaptations*, (London, 1982), pp 21-8.

<sup>131</sup> As Robert Sullivan has argued, Toland's political "writings are mazes of inconsistencies." *Ibid.*, p. 142.

<sup>132</sup> Thomas Drennan was in the divinity class in Glasgow with John Smith's initial partner, William Smith. William Bruce replaced Smith in 1725. William Smith subsequently went to Holland, where he appears to have remained in touch with Hutcheson. See J. Moore and M. A. Stewart, "William Smith (1698-1741) and the dissenters' book trade," in *Bulletin of the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland*, 22, (1993), pp 20-7

<sup>133</sup> Arbuckle acknowledges Boyse as having contributed to the *Dublin Weekly Journal* in the last issue of the journal. J. Arbuckle, (ed.), HL, 102, vol. 2, p. 428. Hutcheson thanks Synge for his help in formulating the ideas in T2, (second edition, London, 1726), p. xviii.

What seems to have brought most of these men into contact with Molesworth were events at Glasgow University.<sup>134</sup> Since the 1690s there had been a dispute about the legitimate means of appointing a college rector. The filling of the office had been the preserve of the student body, but this had been taken over, first by the faculty, and then by a coterie surrounding the Principal of the college. The students, perhaps incited by disgruntled faculty members and with Arbuckle acting as mediator, petitioned Molesworth for Parliamentary support.<sup>135</sup> Molesworth supported the students' stance, but lost his seat in the general election of 1722 before he could forward their case. When a false rumour reached Glasgow that Molesworth had succeeded in the election, a number of students celebrated by lighting a bonfire on the boundary of university grounds. The Professor of Moral Philosophy, Gerschom Carmichael, went out to douse the flames. His intervention resulted in a fracas for which John Smith was arraigned for assaulting the elderly professor. This indiscretion resulted in Smith's expulsion, upon which he decamped to Dublin to seek solace with Molesworth. Nor did matters end there, for at the time of Hutcheson's publication of the *Inquiry*, one of Hutcheson's academicians, William Robertson, was expelled for political activity against the college.<sup>136</sup>

Trouble also arose in 1720 over the production of a play in the College. The traditionalist wing of the Church of Scotland opposed drama on religious grounds. Moving premises to a hall off the college campus, the students persisted in producing *Tamerlane*, by Nicholas Rowe.<sup>137</sup>

In the play the Emperor Tamerlane, who personified the virtues of a good monarch, confronted the evil tyrant, Bajazet. The play revolved around the aftermath of a battle that had resulted in Tamerlane's victory. He dispensed justice and mercy; in stark contrast to the defeated Bajazet, who even as a prisoner longed for retribution or death:

Can a King want a cause when empire bids  
Go on? What is he born for but ambition?  
It is his hunger, 'tis his call of nature,  
The noble appetite which will be satisfied,  
And like the food of Gods, make him immortal.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>134</sup> See J. Arbuckle [?], *A short account of the late treatment of the students of the University of G-----w*, (Dublin, 1722) and M. A. Stewart, "John Smith and the Molesworth circle," in *Eighteenth-century Ireland*, 2, (1987), pp 89-102.

<sup>135</sup> See for instance J. Arbuckle to R. Molesworth, 13 February 1723 in *HMC*, VC. vol. 8., pp 354-5.

<sup>136</sup> D. Murray, *Memories of the old college of Glasgow: some chapters in the history of the university*, (Glasgow, 1927), p. 326.

<sup>137</sup> N. Rowe, "Tamerlane," [1702] in *Three plays*, (London, 1929), pp 49-156.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

Tamerlane's vision of a monarchy was closer to that installed by the Glorious Revolution in England. Speaking to his attendant and ally, Moneses, Tamerlane declared:

Let majesty no more be held divine,  
Since Kings, who are called Gods profane themselves.<sup>139</sup>

In his dedication to the Duke of Devonshire, Rowe noted the political parallels:

Some people (who do me a very great honour in it) have fancied that in the person of Tamerlane, I have alluded to the greatest character of the present age... There are many features, 'tis true, in that great man's life, not unlike his majesty: his courage, his piety, his moderation, his justice, and his fatherly love of his people, but above all his hate of tyranny and oppression.<sup>140</sup>

More controversial than the production was the students' decision to tack onto the performance a preface and conclusion, outlining the University's tyranny in its treatment of the players, which James Arbuckle and a Mr. Griffith had the temerity to read to the assembled audience of academics:

A GLASGOW stage! Where now the tragic muse  
Among the fair her residence does chuse  
Your generous candour spar'd their first essay  
When publick censure join'd to damn the play  
When furious DONS exclaimed against the sin  
And LUCKIES thus complained with pious grin  
*There's something worse than Popery come in.*<sup>141</sup>

While Hutcheson had left the College in 1719 and hence had no direct role to play in these events, by 1725 he was an active member in the network that had emerged in Dublin in the wake of these events.<sup>142</sup>

However, care must be taken in inferring from this that Hutcheson's thought can best be characterised by Commonwealthism. While Commonwealthism was of use to students in Glasgow, it did not keep Hutcheson and Molesworth together. Molesworth had retired from high political activity in 1722. Equally, academic absolutism, against which the students had rebelled, was not a threat once they had removed to the Irish capital. Yet,

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<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>141</sup> [J. Arbuckle and Griffith], *Prologue and epilogue to Tamerlane, acted in the grammar school in Glasgow, December 30th, 1720, by the students of the university*, (Glasgow, 1721), p. 7.

<sup>142</sup> There is some dispute as to continuing character of the ties Molesworth forged with the Glasgow students. The association with James Arbuckle does appear to have continued for some time, on which see chapter four. There is less evidence as to any relationship with Smith, Bruce and others. If any formal circle club or coterie can be identified it is perhaps centred on Arbuckle's editorship of the *DWJ*. Thus, while we can identify a series of interlocking personal relationships in which Hutcheson played a part, it is perhaps best to think of these

Hutcheson and Molesworth were able to continue their relationship, and to produce a text on aesthetics. As the dedication to the *Inquiry* noted, Hutcheson was indebted to Molesworth for clarifying the thinking in the first inquiry, and not the ethical study of the second inquiry.

It was from him [Molesworth] he [Hutcheson] had that shrewd objection which the reader may find in the first treatise, besides many other remarks in the frequent conversations with which he honoured the author, by which that Treatise was very much improved beyond what it was in the draught presented to him.<sup>143</sup>

Therefore, what kept Hutcheson and Molesworth together was a mutual interest in the world of learning and improvement. Molesworth filled his retirement by indulging an interest in estate management and gardening. He often enclosed detailed instructions to his wife Laetitia concerning the development of his land holding, either in regard to planting or land management:

Pray preserve and increase your doublepinks. They are a rarity and I would have a multitude of them and of other pinks on the edges of all the borders as thick as they can stand....Whoever you set Breckdenstown to, since they must have meadow, I would allow them 10, 12 or more acres of meadow yearly for their own use, but I would tie them from setting of meadow to others. For if you allow that, we shall find all our ground so impoverished by mowing that it will be worth little when you come to it again, for they will set all they can to fellows who will give 12 or 15s. an acre for mowing ground, though they can give no more, and thus they will make the most of our land, knowing they have but a short time in it.<sup>144</sup>

But Molesworth's interest in estate management went beyond the requirements of ensuring his income from the land. He had a deep moral commitment to the project of agricultural improvement and he used the lands of Breckdenstown to test his theories of agricultural practice.<sup>145</sup> He went to great lengths to supply the estate with the commodities requisite to an innovative and well-nurtured development. In 1710 Molesworth wrote to Laetitia that "if I return to town for a season, I may send you some from thence, for I hear of a great sale of trees of all sorts at Twittenham by a gardener, who is breaking up or dead

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relationships as individual friendships, rather than anything more structured. This is the approach taken here. I would like to thank Professor M. A. Stewart for discussion of this matter.

<sup>143</sup> As Hutcheson wrote: T1, pp 26-7.

<sup>144</sup> R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth, Edlington, 7 June 1704, Clements Mss, HMC, VC, volume eight, pp 229-30.

<sup>145</sup> For the social context in which Molesworth's activities took place, see, T. C. Barnard, "Gardening, diet and 'improvement' in later seventeenth-century Ireland," in *Journal of Garden History*, 10, (1990), pp 71-85.

lately.”<sup>146</sup> Molesworth evidently made the trip and found it worthwhile for three days later he told his wife to expect 212 elms to arrive by sea. More instructions followed:

Forget not the great quantities of strawberries of all sorts, especially the white....If the rains have filled your ponds everywhere, I suppose you feast upon duck and teal. I should be glad to know what stock of fish the otters and thieves have left you; the carps were such pitiful things which you bought that I do not expect that they are undevoured even by greater fish; whenever you agree for carps again, let them be at least 10 inches long each.<sup>147</sup>

He wrote with pride of his successes in estate management, telling her that: “It is wonderful about Dublin they should not as yet have attained among all the gardeners to the art of raising melons. We did it at Breckdenstown with great success many years ago.”<sup>148</sup>

So interested was the Viscount in these concerns that he made improvement the subject of his final pamphlet, *Some consideration for the promoting of agriculture and employing the poor* which appeared in 1723. He dedicated the essay to “the gentlemen of the honourable House of Commons” for they were considering “Heads of some Bills for the better providing for, and employing the poor.” While this spurred his reflections, it was not his primary concern. As he informed his reader “the business of agriculture being (next to that of the fishery) one of the most easy and profitable ways that can be thought of for that purpose” his aim was to promote its development in Ireland.<sup>149</sup>

Molesworth began his rambling dissertation by remarking upon the recent crisis in Irish agriculture, brought on by a spate of bad weather conditions:

The dearth of corn this last winter, and the inconveniencies which arose from it, both in the misery of the common people, and the exportation of our money for damaged goods, (for so the most of it proved) should set all heads a work to find out the causes of this mischief, in order to provide proper remedies for the future.<sup>150</sup>

He then remarked upon a range of commonly cited reasons for the perilous state of the industry, from “the covetousness and cruelty of landlords” to the “mismanagement ...of tenants.” As Molesworth accepted, the market in grain in the country was notoriously seasonal, and he drew upon his European ventures to conclude that “’tis most certain that there is not in any part of Europe such an inequality in markets as among us. We have

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<sup>146</sup> R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth, Hansworth, 10 October 1710, Clements Mss, HMC, VC, volume eight, p. 269.

<sup>147</sup> RM to LM, Hansworth, 13 October 1716, in *ibid.*, p. 270.

<sup>148</sup> R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth, 27 September 1710, in *ibid.*, p. 248. Barnard writes that: “melon-growing [was] an obsession of seventeenth-century gentlemen.” T. C. Barnard, “Gardening, diet and ‘improvement’ in later seventeenth-century Ireland,” in *Journal of Garden History*, 10, (1990), p. 78.

<sup>149</sup> SCA, p. i and pp i-ii. Molesworth justified his dedication by reminding the Commons of the role they played in defeating William Wood’s patent to coin money, thereby displaying their “wisdom and love to your country.” SCA, p. ii. On the Wood’s halfpence affair see chapter five.

always either a glut or a dearth, very often there are not ten days distance between the extremity of the one and the other.” But far from being the result of mismanagement or ill-conceived governmental policy, Molesworth attributed the problems to the fact that “the whole oeconomy of agriculture is generally mistaken or neglected in this kingdom.”<sup>151</sup> Using his experience of estate management in Yorkshire and in Swords, Molesworth took it upon himself to help rectify this neglect.

Molesworth believed that this systemic neglect was due to the common assumption that agricultural practice was “below the consideration of the higher ranks among us, and therefore not made the care of parliaments as it ought to be.” His dedication of the text to the Commons was therefore more calculated than his preface revealed. Molesworth demanded that the Irish Parliament solve the problem of poverty by making the agricultural sector of the economy more efficient. As in the work of any empirical scientist, the problem could only be solved by taking into consideration its local configuration, and by drawing on the experience of other attempts to solve the conundrum. As Molesworth made plain, he considered agriculture to be “not only a science, but the most useful one to mankind.”<sup>152</sup> The particularity of the Irish situation drew Molesworth’s attention:

I have often wondered (when I consider how long it is since this Kingdom of Ireland has been united and annexed to the Crown of England, and the English customs, as to habit, language and religion, have been encouraged and enjoined by laws) how it comes to pass that we should be so long a time, and so universally ignorant of the English manners of managing our tillage and lands as we now are.<sup>153</sup>

As far back as 1709 Molesworth identified different practices among his English and Irish tenants. But he did not always see the Irish as underdeveloped in comparison with their English counterparts: “They have an ill custom here not to begin sowing till they have got in all their harvest. ‘Twere better if they stacked in the field, as we do in Ireland, and fell a-sowing before they bring home any more than for seed.” Yet a gap in technical sophistication created: “English tenants who pay double the rent to their landlords for their acres (which are much shorter than the Irish acres) [and who] are able not-with-standing to supply us with corn at a moderate price...whilst we are often starving.” Molesworth remarked how “unless your tenant be both an understanding man in the way of husbandry, and a diligent, honest man,” neither inducements such as long leases, nor constraints such

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<sup>150</sup> *SCA*, p. 1.

<sup>151</sup> *SCA*, p. 2, p. 2 and p. 3.

<sup>152</sup> *SCA*, p. 3 and p. 4.

<sup>153</sup> *SCA*, p. 4.



as legal prohibitions, could create a thriving tenant. As he bluntly observed “I have known some tenants starve at half the rent which others have grown rich upon.”<sup>154</sup>

This was how Molesworth understood the situation on his Irish estates. His recalcitrance in offering long leases to his tenants was justified in a letter to his wife:

I am quite against making any leases in parchment: only letting all our tenants be tenants at will: they are so already at their own will, and it is but just they should be so at ours. It is not the intention by this to turn out or raise the rents upon good tenants but to keep them in awe and hinder them from destroying our estate, as most of ours in the county of Dublin already is quite spoiled, not to be recovered by the best management in 10 years time.<sup>155</sup>

However, Molesworth did not abandon hope of improving the state of affairs. Laws could be drafted to punish renegeing or inefficient farmers and the populace could be provided with the information necessary to improve their lot. The responsibility lay not merely on the tenant, but on the good government of the landlord:

If there be any landlord so griping as to turn an old improving good tenant out of his farm, at the expiration of his lease, let him suffer under the obloquy of his country, as such landlords do in Britain, provided the tenant give not the cause to his landlord for denying the continuance of his holding.<sup>156</sup>

Showing some sensitivity for the complexity of the issues at stake, Molesworth realised the central importance of good relations between the two categories of landed men. Yet economic circumstances put a strain upon the connection: “Tenants should also consider that our money is at least one thirteenth part worse now, than it was before the Revolution, when ‘twas on the same foot as in England.” Trust between landlord and tenant had to be created and continued, so that if rent increased, due to inflation, the tenant did not feel aggrieved and “in a humour throw up their farms, rather than comply with such a demand.”<sup>157</sup> Lack of trust led to the distressing situation whereby:

The tenants, to prevent an increase of rent upon the determination of their leases, which they pretend to think is an hardship, or injustice done them by the landlords, either in mistaken policy or spite, fall into the present mischievous methods of ruining both. The landlord’s land is spoiled for eight or ten years, and the tenant generally misses his aim or renewing his lease at undervalue.<sup>158</sup>

An example of this practice on Molesworth’s estate sorely vexed him:

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<sup>154</sup> R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth, Edlington, 24 October 1709, Clements Mss, *HMC*, VC, volume eight, p. 243, *SCA*, pp 4-5, p. 6 and p. 6.

<sup>155</sup> R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth, Edlington, 13 November 1710, Clements Mss, *HMC*, VC, volume eight, p. 249.

<sup>156</sup> *SCA*, p. 7.

<sup>157</sup> *SCA*, p. 8.

Truly I believe Dixon has left our land worth very little, for to plough and sow it all for five years together, yet during all that time never to manure it, is what a rogue would be pilloried for doing in this country, and is the worst kind of robbery....by the law we might have hindered this, notwithstanding his having a term of five years, yet, by the law and custom of the country, he ought to have managed our land after a husbandly manner, which is by giving it its seasons and its due manuring...(nay even at Edlington, which I thought as arrant knaves as Yorkshire afforded) though they hold only from year to year, no such thing has ever been practised.<sup>159</sup>

Writing to Laetitia on 19 April 1709, Molesworth instructed his wife:

You tell me there are several of our tenants in arrear a year and a half's rent. I know of none in Fingal worthy of our commiseration but the Dowdalls...but pray you make your enquiries a little more strictly, for since my tenants are so great mismanagers that, notwithstanding their rents have not been raised these thirty years, when all the rest of the kingdom have advanced double, and that my land is worn out of heart into the bargain, I think it is high time not to spare them, but to distrain for what we can get and afterwards to re-enter....Unimproving, idle people would not live on an estate though it were their own property, much less when tenants; and all those bastard degenerate English tenants to whom John gave leases of lives soon after the reducing Ireland are ten times worse than the mere Fingallians, though those be bad enough, and I long to hear that Dixon is quite off any part of my estate.<sup>160</sup>

The only remedy to tenants mismanaging holdings towards the end of a lease was for landlords to “take their estates into their own hands and management and turn husbandmen themselves;” at once an expensive and time-consuming business.<sup>161</sup>

The lack of trust between the Irish landlord and his countryman tenant, and the ensuing malpractice, was not the only cause of the intolerable circumstance into which Irish agriculture had descended. In Molesworth's opinion, many other “practices of tenants among us, in relation to their farms [were] contrary to the custom of England and of other thriving countries” and were to blame, at least in part for the poorly state of the industry.<sup>162</sup>

The demands of the Irish tenant for long leases and large holdings ensured that the farm was at once too large for “any man of a moderate fortune and stock [to] manage.”<sup>163</sup>

The large farms also encouraged the practice of sub-letting, which Molesworth disliked:

These partners or cottagers being not only beggars and thieves, but generally harbourers of all such, are the destroyers of all farms: they plough up three parts of four of the land, without regard to

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<sup>158</sup> *SCA*, p. 9.

<sup>159</sup> R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth, Edlington, 24 May 1700, Clements Mss, *HMC*, VC, volume eight, p. 222.

<sup>160</sup> R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth, 19 April n. p. 1709, in *ibid.*, pp 241-2.

<sup>161</sup> *SCA*, p. 10.

<sup>162</sup> *SCA*, p. 11.

<sup>163</sup> *SCA*, p. 11.

seasons or manuring. They sow false crops, pill-fallow, break fences, cut down quicksetts and other trees, for firing or to mend their carrs, spoil copses, dig their turf irregularly in pits and holes. These fell their straw and hay, which ought to make fulture and be expended on their farms; and indeed seldom have convenient folds to feed their beasts, and to collect it in; and if both they and their principal do not break before the expiration of the lease (which is commonly the case) they fling up the farm in a much worse condition, than 'twas in when first taken.<sup>164</sup>

The only solution Molesworth proposed was for the landlord to protect himself by discouraging the practice. He could only accomplish this by not leasing land for too long and by granting each tenant the acreage he could manage with the help of his family or servants in “a husbandly manner.” This Molesworth recalled was common in England where “you seldom or never hear of such a thing as a sub-tenant or tenant’s tenant.”<sup>165</sup>

Another common practice among Irish farmers Molesworth criticised was what was termed “the custom of the country.” This was the local custom of landholding and farm practice, which differed from region to region. Critical in the malpractice that lay at the custom’s heart was the belief that the tenant might in the last year of a lease utilise the whole of the holding for ploughing. In Molesworth’s assessment: “These customs ought to be abolished, since ‘tis certain, that the land is more damaged this last year, by this usage of the tenant, and his carrying off all his last crop of straw, than most landlords are aware of.”<sup>166</sup> Not only did the custom of the country adversely affect the landowner; it severely hampered the next tenant’s attempts to settle his new holding. To counter this Molesworth proposed a shift, which he felt ought to be encouraged as the norm in Irish society:

The true time of the year for a tenant to enter into his farm is about Michaelmas, he generally enters to all the fallows, and pays his predecessor a known rate for making them, as he is obliged to do....Now in Ireland, the tenant usually enters at Lady-Day in Lent, or May-Day, and has the first crop with the straw and fulture carried quite off his farm by the custom of the country, which impoverishes his farm and puts him behind hand extremely.<sup>167</sup>

Alongside his concerns about the trustworthy nature of the tenants, Molesworth also considered matters pertaining to the private sphere; assessing the role of women in the development of a thriving economic sector. Their role in gleaning and leasing was detrimental to the proper management of the farm, and Molesworth bitterly remarked that: “’Tis not to be imagined what great damage this sort of cattle [the women] do to the most industrious farmers, who...yearly lose near a tenth of their crop this way.” Of the role of children, Molesworth accepted that “great indulgence ought to be shown to farmers, and all

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<sup>164</sup> *SCA*, pp 11-2.

<sup>165</sup> *SCA*, p. 12 and p. 13.

<sup>166</sup> *SCA*, p. 15.

<sup>167</sup> *SCA*, pp 15-6.

sorts of poor, who are overburdened with many children; these should be eased in their taxes; parish cesses and offices.”<sup>168</sup> However as he staunchly argued “I mean such children as are the product of matrimony.” Illegitimate children he likened to

vermin, whole swarms of bastards, the produce of adultery and incest and whereof there are more in the neighbourhood of Dublin than any other part of the world, a race of people like gypsies which no priest takes any care of; yet are the seminaries of all rebellions...they are most commonly aborigines, the product of that very ditch where you find them.<sup>169</sup>

“These,” Molesworth announced, “should be shipped off to the wildest of our plantations abroad and left there to their chance in this world.”<sup>170</sup>

A further problem Molesworth confronted concerned the nature of the farming community itself. Living as he did near a large urban settlement, Molesworth was well aware of the dangers inherent in the cross-fertilisation of occupation which might ensue, distracting the occupant from success at either his merchantry or his farming. Molesworth again drew on his experience of English customs to propose a solution: “Now a manufacturer or tradesman in the English country towns, who designs to pursue his trade, desires no more land in the neighbourhood than will summer and winter him two or three cows, and a horse or two.”<sup>171</sup> Molesworth’s argument for his belief in the inherent superiority of English agricultural practice culminated in the peroration that:

The English customs in the make and fashion of their ploughs, harrows, plough-gear, carts, tumbrils, wains and wagons in their broad ridges, ploughing with oxen, drains, beast-houses, hovels, stand-racks, folds in their way of laying down land to grass, even folding of sheep in pens upon their corn lands, and forty other things necessary to the good management of our farms, ought either to be encouraged or enforced by proper laws: And why should not this be done in these instances as well as in those of prohibiting burning corn in the straw, drawing by the tail, or the enjoining the English habit and language &c. all which the wisdom of our ancestors thought necessary?<sup>172</sup>

Moving beyond the bounds of simple farm management, Molesworth proposed the introduction of a series of granaries to store excess corn in times of glut, and distribute it in times of dearth. This, Molesworth argued, would alleviate the natural swing in the supply over the year, which he had already noted was peculiar in its extent in Ireland. This was the solution Molesworth had observed working in “the cities of Dantzick, Coningsbery and many others in the East Sea.”<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> *SCA*, p. 32 and p. 40.

<sup>169</sup> *SCA*, p. 40 and p. 41.

<sup>170</sup> *SCA*, p. 41.

<sup>171</sup> *SCA*, pp 16-7.

<sup>172</sup> *SCA*, p. 21.

<sup>173</sup> *SCA*, p. 22.

The net effect of the Irish circumstance was that the agricultural sector was poor and backward. But the effect of improving the situation was not just of economic benefit. Molesworth claimed the circumstances that prevailed in Ireland were detrimental to the capacity for the Irish kingdom to govern itself adequately. Fusing his views on estate improvement to those of a political character, Molesworth explained that he was:

Sorry to find it remarked by English Gentlemen who come among us (and I fear too truly) that very many of our Gentlemen of Ireland, are constrained to manage their own lands, and turn their own husband-men, that they may avoid the destruction of their estates by bad tenants: this forces them in a manner to employ most part of their time in these low employments and mean company.... Thus they lose the best opportunities of reading and improving their natural parts, which if cultivated, do not come behind those of our neighbouring nation; but their conversation being for the most part with the ordinary rank of men, they degenerate by degrees.... How can the business of parliament, the duty owing to one's country, and the value of public liberty, be sufficiently understood under such a cramped and low education, helped by little or no reading?.... In short their morals and principals grow so debased that except it be some gentlemen of the gown, and many of the army... 'tis a shame to see in so large and plentiful a kingdom, how low the rate of generous and polite learning runs among our nobility and gentry: 'Tis true, we are told we are slaves, but it must be our care not to deserve being so.<sup>174</sup>

This fusion of agricultural and political concerns moved the discussion into the realms of political controversy. Molesworth's tolerant confessional outlook again showed when he examined the economic effect of imposing tithes upon the Roman Catholic population. These he believed to be "such drains to their purses, that it is a wonder how they can subsist and pay rent."<sup>175</sup> To remedy the fact that Roman Catholics were supporting both Protestant and Catholic clergy Molesworth proposed that the state carry the burden of paying their priests. The benefits of such a scheme were clear; giving the Catholic clergy a vested interest in the *status quo* their current circumstances denied them.

A further ecumenical gesture which Molesworth encouraged was the establishment of "a school of husbandry... in every county, wherein an expert master of the English methods should teach at a fixed yearly salary and that Tusser's old book of husbandry should be taught to the boys, instead of a Primer or Psalter." As Molesworth made plain: "I would not have any precepts, difference or distinction of religions taken notice of, and nothing taught, but only husbandry and good manners; and that the children should daily serve God, according to their own religions, this school not being the proper place to make proselytes in." Ending the pamphlet with a recognition that "the foregoing paragraphs are

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<sup>174</sup> SCA, pp 28-9.

<sup>175</sup> SCA, p. 30.

put down just as they came into the writer's head," Molesworth reiterated his belief that the burden of responsibility lay heavily on the shoulders of the Irish gentry.<sup>176</sup>

Molesworth's experience shone through in his comparative examples, drawn from England and Scandinavia. It was evident in his knowledge of agricultural practice and in his indulgent recommendation that an act of parliament ought to encourage the planting of trees. "This in process of time" he argued, "would make this naked kingdom full of fruit trees, and replenish it with necessary timber trees, which now it wants to a degree not known elsewhere in Europe."<sup>177</sup> His estate at Breckdenstown was an example of what might be achieved, with fine species of tree lining the avenues and producing fruit in the orchards.

By grounding his theoretical speculations in the mundane experience he garnered running his estates, Molesworth committed himself to an empirical methodology, however unsuccessful his actual performance.<sup>178</sup> Akin to Hutcheson's rhetorical appeal to experience, he forwarded a policy of estate-management embedded in the running of geographically disparate land holdings. Not that this led to conservatism on his part. His record showed a willingness to experiment by introducing new techniques and new crops.

Molesworth's interest in gardening was just as driven as his manner of estate management by his concern for a practically grounded theoretical concern. His interest dated right back to the Revolution, when in 1690, he expressed his concern for his estate from Copenhagen where he was acting as the King's envoy. Writing to his wife, Laetitia, he proclaimed that: "The cutting down of our trees displeases me much more than if they [Jacobites] had burnt all our houses."<sup>179</sup> By 1709 he was explaining his desire to develop the estate in line with her plans for the land:

You tell me you intend to lay out your wildernesses next winter. I do not know whom you have got to design them but whoever, let him remember to leave rounds or ovals in the middle of each for a basin and also near the corners for four small ones. The walks must be very narrow and close, yet the principal ones a little broader than the others. I really do intend to bring up the water from the tuck mill wheel to a pretty large cistern on the top of the hill behind the south flanker on a tower and this as soon as God sends me better days. I will also lay out 200l. in walling for I will wall in all the gardens including both the ash groves and then we shall keep fruit. My design have been of many

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<sup>176</sup> SCA, pp 30-1, p. 31 and p. 44. T. Tusser, *Five hundred points of good husbandry, as well for the champion or open country as also for the woodland; booke of huswifery*, (London, 1610).

<sup>177</sup> SCA, p. 35.

<sup>178</sup> See P. H. Kelly (ed.), *The improvement of Ireland*, in *Analecta Hibernica*, 35, (1992), pp 45-84 for an example of a more cogent rendition of many of the same concerns.

years standing and yet with all my experience and view of the majesty of the world, I find I cannot better them. The great large pond by the river is one of the noblest designs in Europe and the easiest executed.<sup>180</sup>

Molesworth's scheme to pipe water onto the estate and develop a system of waterworks was not an idle daydream. By the autumn of the following year Molesworth was telling Laetitia of his moves to secure the installation of a water house on the estate:

I am glad you did not set the tuck mill for any term of years for I have a project on it. Mr. Banks has by such a mill wheel brought up his water to the top of his [ ] house so easily and so cheaply that I am resolved if God sends me life and money to do the same thing at Breckdenstown and [the] only charge will be that of a leaden cistern to hold 50 or 60 tunns which must be sett a top of a water house and the place of it must be at the high [ ] west end of the long walk in the middle of the garden, near the bowling green wall and there may be a handsome open summerhouse upon pillars under it facing the sea and Swords steeple. The pipes to be of alder, which maybe had out of Wicklow pretty cheap. There are enough in the King's county [the Phillipstown estate] but the charge of carriage from thence would be too great, whereas by sea in a small open boat from Wicklow to Malahide would be nothing. Any alder straight or crooked, provided it be about the thickness of one's thigh will do, and last as long as leaden pipes. One might have a mill there, but not a tuckmill because of the ugly noise.<sup>181</sup>

A decade on from this initial scheme, Molesworth still took pride in the project and planned alterations to enhance the aesthetic charm of the Breckdenstown lands:

I suppose our engine and cistern house must please him [William Molesworth]. I know he never saw the like of it in his life, having never been out of Ireland. I depend pretty much on his skill in standing and drawing the trench through rocks from the halls but I do not like his project of lessening my great reservoirs in the 16 acres to 2 or 3 lesser basins and this for several reasons. First because I intend that large basin (if I can procure water enough to fill it) to be one of the finest things about Breckdenstown and to make it 5 or 6 foot deep, shelving towards the sides towards the depth in the middle and if it be divided into 3 or 4 small ones, it will neither contain half so much water, nor will they be pleasant; for the sallies, which he forecasts to plant about them in order to present the operation of the sun and wind, will spoil the beauty, and besides the air will not waste so much water as would be lost in the smallness of these three or four basins, in respect to what the great basin could contain. But as I do intend to have 3 or 4 reservoirs...we may plant as we please without regard to beauty or prospect and I intend that the great round one in the 16 acres shall be large and free from all encumbrances because from the rising banks about it will be the longest prospect of the sea from any place around Breck[denstown]. A great circular or oval basin is a most beautiful thing. The elms about it shall be

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<sup>179</sup> R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth. Copenhagen, 25 March 1690, Clements Mss, *HMC*, VC, volume eight, p. 215.

<sup>180</sup> R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth, London, 12 July 1709, in *ibid.*, p. 242.

<sup>181</sup> R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth, Edlington, 18 November 1710, in *ibid.*, p. 249.

planted 30 or 40 feet asunder, in double rows, by which means all the fine prospect will appear under their branches and between the intervals of trees till they grow exceedingly old.<sup>182</sup>

Alongside the installation of a water house and cistern, the largest project Molesworth oversaw at Breckdenstown also involved water. First mooted in May 1714, by June of that year, the plans for a canal were soon advanced.<sup>183</sup> Laetitia played a critical role in bringing the scheme to fruition. As she wrote from Dublin on 12 June 1714:

Mr. Stew[art] has been in the north at Mrs. Hamilton's of Tullamore, where he saw a most noble canal 300 or 400 yards long made by her gardener, an Englishman and a very understanding man. He tells me he has put him into an extraordinary method for taking a level, in which he can't possibly be out an inch in the whole. Whenever he heard it [our canal] was to be begun, he would come into this country to assist us. He says there are many very understanding workmen of this country to be had, so that you need not be at the expense of bringing anyone out of England for it, at least before you hear and see those here. What I apprehend you will most want is a mason for your stonework. I think men of skill in that trade are scarce here. They are not accustomed nor, I think, desired to work true; all their buildings run awry, and every street has one or two elbows in it, which is never minded among them, because they are used to it.<sup>184</sup>

By the time of Molesworth's death, Breckdenstown had the most elaborate and sophisticated series of artificial water works to be found on the island. But such investment was not taken on lightly, for Molesworth was constantly informing himself as to the latest developments in the planing and execution of gardens. His theoretical interest in gardening was evidenced in his persistence in asking John Molesworth for information concerning developments in Italy: "If you meet with any choice books relating to fine gardening and waterworks, fountains &c. or the manner of conveying and collecting water, pray purchase such at my expense."<sup>185</sup> Equally, Molesworth made it a matter of some pride that he was abreast of more local developments, keeping in touch with the shifting styles introduced by new projects within Ireland and England:

I thought you had known my Lord Blessington's gardener; if all your acquaintance of him be but at second hand (though it be Secretary Johnston's) I rely not a bit on it, for he is as great a maggot as any in the King's dominions, I mean Mr. Johnston; in truth I wonder how good a gardener could find matter to work upon and to sow his skill in such a mountain as Blessington. I think to send to Holland for a kitchen gardener....Is it one single carp that Nick has had a vision of in our ponds or many? I trust to none of his second sights....Have we any acacia trees? At my Lord Portmore's there is a whole walk of acacia trees as thick as my middle and as pretty trees as ever you saw.<sup>186</sup>

<sup>182</sup> R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth, London, 27 December 1720, in *ibid.*, p. 291.

<sup>183</sup> See the plans for the canal in R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth [np] 25 May [1714], in *ibid.*, p. 267.

<sup>184</sup> L. Molesworth to R. Molesworth, Dublin, 12 June 1714, in *ibid.*, p. 267.

<sup>185</sup> R. Molesworth to J. Molesworth, London, 27 February 1721/2, in *ibid.*, p. 332.

<sup>186</sup> R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth, London, 17 June 1718, in *ibid.*, pp 274-5.



Molesworth also took pride in the economic efficiency with which he managed his estate. As he explained to John: "I never exceed above 150l per annum, whatever you may hear to the contrary, except when the canal was digging, and then, it stood me in 300l.....There is neither bench, statue, fountain of stone, stairs, urn or flower pot here as yet, so that you may judge that mere grass, trees and hedges cannot cost much."<sup>187</sup>

The vision Molesworth had for Breckdenstown was of a garden in the new Dutch style. He conceived of the garden as a blend of stately formalism and the informality of natural wildernesses. A map by John Rocque of county Dublin dated 1757 illustrated the cumulative effect of Molesworth's alterations. The land in front of the house was laid out in a series of tree-lined avenues emanating in spokes from the house. These avenues were straight and formal, providing long vistas along which the approaching visitor could keep the house constantly in view. To the side were garden plots, again formally arranged. However, at the back of the house was a series of less formal walkways winding to and from the house; often removing the building from the walker's view. The effect was to distance the visitor from the controlling mind of the architect. The paths intentionally mimicked the natural world, while controlling its actual manifestation. As such, Breckdenstown emphasised the need for a mixture of formality and natural expanses; informing the viewer of the authority of the owner over the estate and enabling the viewer to relax and meditate on the natural landscape through which he moved.<sup>188</sup> This Dutch style of garden was still new to Ireland, but was increasingly popular with the English estate-owners, partially because of their desire to celebrate the Dutch-born King and to reject the formal French style in a period in which France and Britain were at war. This Dutch style of gardening made manifest the aesthetic identification of beauty with mixture Hutcheson articulated in the first of his philosophical inquiries.

For Molesworth aesthetic concerns were often paramount in developing the estate. For example, the simple matter of which trees to plant along an avenue was determined primarily by their appearance: "John Smith writes me word that the fir trees in our avenue are blasted brown, and advises me to get Scotch firs in their room, but I do not like his project. I think Scotch fir one of the ugliest fir that is. If the firs do not thrive when the shelter grows for them I will change them for elms."<sup>189</sup> He was deeply aware of the aesthetic alteration made by any development. Indeed, aesthetic concerns often led him to inaugurate changes, as in the case of:

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<sup>187</sup> R. Molesworth to J. Molesworth, Breckdenstown, 5 March, 1722/3, in *ibid.*, p. 357.

<sup>188</sup> See J. Dixon-Hunt, *The figure in the landscape: poetry, painting and gardening during the eighteenth century*, (London, 1976) and J. Dixon-Hunt, *Gardens and the picturesque: studies in the history of landscape architecture*, (London, 1992).

that little farm of Kilmainham, which hangs over the sea, and was formerly thought so romantic a situation, that a very good house and a gentleman's family was settled there, [which] is worth one's while to get improved. It is but 22 acres in our writings, but I doubt our neighbours have nibbled off 2 acres of it, which perhaps with care might be retrieved. I should be for quicksetting and planting all of it, that there might be groves of trees about the hedges, and it be made a fine, melancholy seat, as it was before.<sup>190</sup>

When aesthetic enhancement could be achieved with little expense, Molesworth was unstinting in his efforts to effect the improvements. Even in the case of the canal that he strove hard to fund, he was as taken with the beauty of the construction as with its economic benefits:

When the water from the river is brought up, and the long canal 40 yards wide made, the sides of which planted as it ought to be, and the overplus water... (which would be great in winter) conveyed by cascades down the hill again to the ponds. What a sight would this be! Yet all this, with the fine water summerhouse and leaden large cisterns upon it, and the 5 or 6 basins in the gardens and wilderness, with pipes &c. would not stand in 500l. sterling, a small sum for so great a beauty, but nature has done its work so well that it would do. All this water on the very top of a hill, with the sea, ships and rocks and steeples beyond it in view, would be such a sight that I doubt whether the world would afford the like.<sup>191</sup>

Little wonder Hutcheson was inspired to write a work on aesthetics while in the company of Robert Molesworth. From his adoption of empiricism through to his definition of beauty as "unity amidst variety," Hutcheson shared Molesworth's concerns with empiricism and aesthetics. Walking around the estate of Breckdenstown in the company of its proud owner, Hutcheson discovered a practical example of the theoretical concerns with which he was struggling in the 'Inquiry concerning beauty.' Holding them together was a concern for the empirical sciences, the philosophy of beauty and the benefits of mixture. They believed man was capable of shaping the empirical environment in which he found himself to his vision of the beautiful. They understood that the individual was also shaped by experience of that environment. They believed that neither uniformity nor the chaos of unstructured events adequately explained their sense of wonder. They understood their task as promulgating a vision of man as intertwined with and standing above the natural world; ordering it into patterns and accepting its recalcitrance in obeying those orders.

What attracted Hutcheson was an openness of mind and liberality of sentiment that went beyond the bounds of confessional or political categories. Molesworth's generosity of

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<sup>189</sup> R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth, London, 12 April 1707, Clements Mss, *HMC*, VC, volume eight, pp 235-6.

<sup>190</sup> R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth, [n.p.] 8 November 1712, in *ibid.*, p. 260.

<sup>191</sup> R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth, Edlington, 29 November 1712, in *ibid.*, p. 261.

mind brought Hutcheson into his sphere of influence, but it did not keep him there. Around the table of Breckdenstown, Molesworth's estate in Swords, Hutcheson found a model of unity amidst diversity - a range of intellects including Edward Synge, James Arbuckle, the poet Samuel Boyse, son of Joseph Boyse.<sup>192</sup> They exemplified the kind of mutual admiration and agreeable disputation that invested his definition of beauty with its social counter-point. But more fundamental was the shared concern of the Viscount and his protégé with two inter-twinned concerns. First was their acceptance of an empirical vision of the world - a world capable of comprehension through the senses of the observer. Second, was a belief that the observer was a self-reliant organism, acting independently of prescribed authority. Each individual was at once indescribably particular and utterly similar to any other. How these atomised individuals, who stood over and against nature, shaping it to their ends and altering it according to their needs, co-operated with each other in a social environment was the issue Hutcheson addressed in the second part of the *Inquiry concerning beauty and virtue*.

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<sup>192</sup> On Synge see chapter two. On Arbuckle and Samuel Boyse, see chapter four. On Joseph Boyse see chapter three.

## TWO: HUTCHESON, EDWARD SYNGE AND TRUST

Hutcheson's *Inquiry* was divided into two parts. It announced ambitiously that it provided:

An inquiry into the original of our ideas of beauty and virtue in two treatises, in which the principles of the late Earl of Shaftesbury are explained and defended, against the author of the *Fable of the bees*, and the ideas of moral good and evil are established according to the sentiments of the ancient moralists, with an attempt to introduce a mathematical calculation in subjects of morality.<sup>1</sup>

As interested as Hutcheson was in the origin and reception of beauty, the issue of morality was his main concern. Whereas the first inquiry took up ninety-seven quarto pages in the first edition, the 'Treatise on moral good and evil' was one hundred and seventy-six pages in length. The significance of this division was heightened in the reader's mind by the remainder of the title. Here, he situated himself within contemporary ethical debate. He wanted the reader to site the work in the discussion between the disinterestedness of Shaftesbury and the egoism of Bernard Mandeville.<sup>2</sup>

He also inscribed his adherence to the ancient moralists, and furthered this by including on his title page a citation from Cicero's *De officiis*:

And so no other animal has a sense of beauty, loveliness, harmony in the visible world; and nature and reason, extending the analogy of this from the world of sense to the world of spirit, find that beauty, consistency, order are far more to be maintained in thought and deed....It is from these elements that is forged and fashioned that moral goodness which is the subject of this inquiry – something that even though it be not generally ennobled, is still worthy of all honour; and by its own nature, we correctly maintain, it merits praise, even though it be praised by none.<sup>3</sup>

This clarified the rhetorical nature of Hutcheson's project. The first treatise was to convince the reader of Hutcheson's theory of internal senses. The second treatise extended this discovery, through an extended analogy, into the realm of morality.

Finally, Hutcheson asserted his relationship to the empirical sciences, with his provision of a mathematical version of his scheme. This set up the philosophical programme which he followed in the book and synopsis the contents very neatly. It also pointed towards the nexus of associations he had made before writing. Hutcheson was contributing to a debate over the capability of man to conceive of morality as a defender of the ancient vision of the moral life, using empirical language to accomplish this end.

Hutcheson's introduction laid out a set of definitions to enable the reader to explore the ensuing argument, and shore up his theory in any dispute that it might encounter. These

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<sup>1</sup> T1, title-page.

<sup>2</sup> B. Mandeville, *The fable of the bees*, (F. B. Kaye, ed.), (Indianapolis, 1988), two volumes. Only the first volume had appeared by 1725.

<sup>3</sup> T1, title-page.

included the word goodness, which in a moral context implied “our idea of some quality apprehended in actions, which procures approbation, and love towards the actor from those who receive no advantage by the action.”<sup>4</sup>

This definition contained two components shaping Hutcheson’s subsequent theory. First, he conceived of goodness as flowing from the observation of an action by a passive observer. This situated his ethical theory in Locke’s observational paradigm. Secondly, Hutcheson was stating his belief that ethical determinations were disinterested. The observer gained no advantage from the action he judged meretricious. This was crucial in his subsequent refutation of Hobbesian ethics.

Hutcheson asserted these definitions contained a “universally acknowledged difference of moral good and evil from natural.” As he understood the dichotomy, only moral good inspired love from the disinterested observer for the agent. To prove this, he retreated into empirical rhetoric, telling the reader that “in this matter men must consult their own breasts.” Only then could they observe “how differently are they affected toward those they suppose possessed of honesty, faith, generosity, kindness, even [and here Hutcheson re-introduced his important qualifier] when they expect no benefit from these admired qualities.” Those who possessed only natural goods such as “houses, lands gardens, vineyards, health, strength, [and] sagacity,” as Hutcheson recalled provoked only “contrary affections of envy and hatred.”<sup>5</sup>

This series of simple, empirical observations, provoked Hutcheson to inquire as to “whence arise these different ideas of actions” and it was this query that the book intended to answer. However, he admitted that some technical language was necessary, so, like a good scientist, he set about defining the terms of his argument. “The pleasure in our sensible perceptions of any kind, gives us our first idea of natural good, or happiness; and then all objects which are apt to excite this pleasure are called immediately good. Those objects which may procure others immediately pleasant, are called advantageous.” Hutcheson stated that “we pursue both kinds from a view of interest, or from self love.”<sup>6</sup>

Hutcheson set in opposition two schools of philosophical thought concerning self-interest. The first represented “the greatest part of our later moralists” and characterised by its belief that self-interest generated all moral qualities. For example, “we approve the virtue of others because it has some small tendency to our happiness” and is thus compatible with our own interest. The second, and to Hutcheson more convincing, school

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<sup>4</sup> T2, p. 101.

<sup>5</sup> T2, p. 102.

<sup>6</sup> T2, p. 103.

supposed “an immediate natural good in the actions called virtuous.”<sup>7</sup> Drawing on the analogous sense of beauty Hutcheson had outlined in the previous treatise, he suggested

we are determined to perceive some beauty in the actions of others, and to love the agent, even without reflecting upon any advantage which can any way redound to us from the action; that we have also a secret sense of pleasure accompanying such of our own actions as we call virtuous, even when we expect no other advantage from them.<sup>8</sup>

This introduced Hutcheson’s primary thesis of the existence of a moral sense, and placed the autonomous, passive agents of the first treatise into active social relations. This enabled him to place a moral import onto action. It also revealed the rhetorical use of the first inquiry, for “we are excited to perform these actions even as we pursue or purchase pictures, [or] statues.”<sup>9</sup> Thus he used the commonly recognised sense of beauty to propose an analogous disinterested moral sense.

Hutcheson concluded his introduction by stating that the purpose of the work was to prove two points at issue. First “that some actions have to men an immediate goodness” and that through the operation of a moral sense “we perceive pleasure in the contemplation of such actions in others.”<sup>10</sup> This pointed up the nature of his theory. He would argue for an empirical moral sense. He would understand ethics primarily from the stance of an observer. He would propose that morality is by definition disinterested.

This led Hutcheson to his second point, which concerned moral motivation. While the identification of the moral was accomplished by a moral sense, it was Hutcheson’s conviction “that what excites us to these actions which we call virtuous, is not an intention to obtain even this sensible pleasure...but an entirely different principle of action from interest or self-love.”<sup>11</sup> This involved him in a discussion of the identity and nature of moral virtue, and of what drew men to pursue moral good.

Hutcheson’s empiricism came immediately to the fore. He argued that the separation of moral and natural good was so self-evident that every reader through a simple act of self-observation could ascertain it “every one must convince himself, by reflecting upon the different manner in which he finds himself affected when these objects occur to him.”<sup>12</sup> This reminded the reader of Hutcheson’s empirical thesis in the first inquiry. This was highlighted by an aesthetic example of natural good, which was again defended through a claim on the reader’s experience:

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<sup>7</sup> T2, p. 104, p. 104 and p. 105.

<sup>8</sup> T2, p. 105.

<sup>9</sup> T2, pp 105-6.

<sup>10</sup> T2, p. 106.

<sup>11</sup> T2, p. 106.

Had we no sense of good distinct from the advantage or interest arising from the external senses, and the perceptions of beauty and harmony; our admiration and love toward a fruitful field or commodious habitation would be much the same with what we have towards a generous friend, or any noble character; for both are, or may be advantageous to us: And we should no more admire any action, or love any person in a distant country or age, whose influence could not extend to us, than we love the mountains of Peru while we are unconcerned in the Spanish trade.<sup>13</sup>

The capacity to identify in other moral agents a motivating force beyond mere considerations of our self-interest suggested “that we have a distinct perception of beauty, or excellence in the kind affections of rational agents.” This power to identify motives was what Hutcheson termed “a moral sense”<sup>14</sup>

Hutcheson then defined why moral judgements were pre-rational. He evidenced this by showing how agents reacted differently to natural and moral evil:

Our senses of natural good and evil would make us receive with equal serenity and composure, an assault, a buffet, an affront from a neighbour, a cheat from a partner, or trustee, as we would an equal damage from the fall of a beam, or tile, or a tempest....But I fancy every one is very differently affected on these occasions though there may be equal natural evil in both.<sup>15</sup>

This neat division was complicated by the fact that “in our sentiments of actions done toward ourselves there is indeed a mixture of the ideas of natural good.” This explained some level of self-interest in human judgement, but Hutcheson was at pains to indicate that the spectator system he envisioned was free from such taint “as soon as any action is represented to us as flowing from love, humanity, gratitude, compassion, a study of the good of others, and a delight in their happiness, although it were in the most distant part of the world, or in some past age, we feel joy within us, admire the lovely action and praise its author.”<sup>16</sup> It was this chain of ties that produced the trust in the actions of others that allowed men to operate successfully in social networks. Without such a link they would be atomised and disaffected. Thus trust and affective ties became the central tool by which Hutcheson placed his empirical individuals of the first treatise into the social, and thereby moral relationships of the second.

This led Hutcheson to refute theories of self-interest. The thesis, “that we hate, or love characters according as we apprehend we should have been supported, or injured by them, had we lived in their days” could not account for such sentiments of morality as he

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<sup>12</sup> T2, p. 107.

<sup>13</sup> T2, p. 107.

<sup>14</sup> T2, p. 108 and p. 109.

<sup>15</sup> T2, pp 109-10.

<sup>16</sup> T2, p. 110 and pp 110-1.

felt in his breast. As he conceived it “had we no sense of moral good in humanity, mercy, faithfulness, why should not self-love engage us always to the victorious side, and make us admire and love the successful tyrant and traitor?” This emotional attachment to the underdog could only be explained through reference to “some secret sense which determines our approbation without regard to self-interest.”<sup>17</sup>

Only the supposition of moral sense made explicable the sentiments that Hutcheson observed in his own country. Citing the examples of the Huguenot refugees and the Dutch revolt, he provided a polemical, political example of how his system operated:

A few ingenious artisans, persecuted in their own country, flee to ours for protection; they instruct us in manufactures which support millions of poor and increase the wealth of almost every person in the state, and make us formidable to our neighbours. In a nation not far distant from us, some resolute burgomasters, full of love to their country and compassion towards their fellow citizens, oppressed in body and soul by a tyrant, and inquisition, with indefatigable diligence, public spirit and courage, support a tedious perilous war against the tyrant, and form an industrious republic which rivals us in trade, and almost in power. All the world sees whether the former or the latter have been more advantageous to us. And yet, let every man consult his own breast, which of the two characters he has the more agreeable idea of; whether of the useful refugee or the public-spirited burgomaster.<sup>18</sup>

This refutation of the self-interest theory of human virtue, led Hutcheson to a startling assertion concerning the moral sense: “This moral sense, either of our own actions, or of those of others, has this in common with our other senses, that however our desire of virtue, may be counterbalanced by interest, our sentiment or perception of its beauty cannot.”<sup>19</sup> This implied that the moral sense was disinterested in a stronger sense than merely being prior to a consideration of it. Hutcheson was asserting that the moral sense judged actions independently of all considerations of interest. This ensured that despite temptations to immorality derived from self-interest the moral actor could not but conceive of the activity as immoral. The moral sense was pre-rational and disinterested and therefore the judgement could not be skewed by considerations of interest, even if a moral actor chose to pursue self-interest over virtue. Hutcheson illustrated the point by drawing an analogy with our sense of taste:

Should anyone advise us to wrong a minor, or orphan, or to do an ungrateful action toward a benefactor; we at first view abhor it. Assure us that it will be very advantageous to us, propose even a reward, our sense of the action is not altered. It is true, these motives may make us undertake it,

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<sup>17</sup> T2, p. 112.

<sup>18</sup> T2, p. 113.

<sup>19</sup> T2, p. 116.



but they have no more influence upon us to make us approve it, than a physician's advice has to make a nauseous potion pleasant to the taste.<sup>20</sup>

Hutcheson accepted human action could be diverted from the moral course by considerations of self-interest. This realism did not affect his assessment of the disinterested nature of moral judgement. Bribery, for example, could only "procure dissimulation." This finally brought Hutcheson to name the target of his reflections, a man he described as "a late witty author" and who in a footnote was identified as the author of *The fable of the bees* namely the Dutch-born satirist, Bernard Mandeville.<sup>21</sup>

Mandeville's *Fable* asserted that both heroes and traitors are commendable as useful to a state. This prompted Hutcheson to reflect how "we can love the treason...and hate the traitor." Equally, he believed "we can at the same time praise a gallant enemy who is very pernicious to us." In both cases, considerations of virtue outweighed calculations of self-interest. Of Mandeville's contention that public spirit was the invention of "wondrous cunning governors" to deflect men from considerations of their real interest, Hutcheson was equally dismissive. He mocked Mandeville as a "person who is wholly selfish" and who therefore found it difficult "to imagine others to be public-spirited."<sup>22</sup>

Hutcheson advised the reader in line with Locke, that "we are not to imagine, that this moral sense, more than the other senses supposes any innate ideas." It was to be considered that "as the author of nature has determined us to receive, by our external senses, pleasant or disagreeable ideas of objects...so he has given us a moral sense, to direct our actions."<sup>23</sup> The moral sense was a faculty of judgement and not a preconceived concept of right and wrong.

In arguing for the existence of an internal, pre-rational moral sense Hutcheson was doing more than rejecting the self-interest of Mandeville. He was consciously placing himself into the second philosophic school he had identified in his introduction. Moreover, Hutcheson was building on an insight gleaned from Shaftesbury's *Inquiry concerning virtue or merit*, where the Earl had observed:

The case is the same in the mental or moral subjects as in the ordinary bodies or common subjects of sense. The shapes, motions, colours and proportions of these latter being presented to our eye, there necessarily results a beauty or deformity, according to the different measure, arrangement, and disposition of their several parts. So in behaviour and actions, when presented to our understanding,

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<sup>20</sup> T2, p. 116.

<sup>21</sup> T2, p. 119n. Hutcheson was using the third edition. On Mandeville see chapter four.

<sup>22</sup> T2, p. 120, p. 120, p. 121, and p. 121 citing B. Mandeville, *The fable of the bees*, (Indianapolis, 1988), pp 34-6 and p. 121.

<sup>23</sup> T2, p. 124 and pp 123-4.

there must be found of necessity, an apparent difference, according to the regularity or irregularity of the subjects.<sup>24</sup>

Shaftesbury had suggested the possibility of an internal moral sense, both pre-rational, and disinterested. Shaftesbury utilised his Platonism to divest himself of emotional involvement with the world about him. Hence virtue was characterised by Shaftesbury as identical with disinterested affection.<sup>25</sup> Hutcheson followed Shaftesbury in this analysis, but whereas Shaftesbury saw a connection between the beautiful and the virtuous, Hutcheson saw the two as separate, analogous faculties.<sup>26</sup>

Hutcheson understood the similarities and differences between himself and Shaftesbury. In the preface to the second edition of the *Inquiry* Hutcheson inscribed his indebtedness to the Earl, suggesting that: "To recommend the Lord Shaftesbury's writings to the world is a very needless attempt. They will be esteemed while any reflection remains among men."<sup>27</sup> Hearty though this praise was, he limited the extent to which praise might be bestowed on a writer with a radical reputation:

It is indeed to be wished that he had abstained from mixing with such noble performances some prejudices he had received against Christianity, a religion which gives us the truest idea of virtue and recommends the love of God, and of mankind, as the sum of all true religion. How it would have moved the indignation of that ingenious nobleman to have found a dissolute set of men, who relish nothing in life but the lowest and most sordid pleasures, searching his writings for those insinuations against Christianity, that they might be the less restrained from their debaucheries, when at the same time their low minds are incapable of relishing those noble sentiments of virtue and honour which he has placed in so lovely a light.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> A. A. Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, "An inquiry concerning virtue or merit", in *Characteristics of men, manners, opinions, times etc.*, (J. M. Robertson, ed.), (Bristol, 1995), volume one, p. 251.

<sup>25</sup> See J. Stolnitz, "On the origins of 'aesthetic disinterestedness,'" in *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 20, (1961/2), pp 131-43.

<sup>26</sup> "There is a strong sense of 'disinterestedness' and a weak one: The strong defines aesthetics as an experience independent of a theoretical and practical value. This is the modern or Kantian or Nietzschean sense in which aesthetics is distinct from ethics as well as religion, and of course rhetoric; in which writers of bad faith aestheticise politics, and aesthetic distance is a disguise for bourgeois mystification (as moral sentiments are the internalising by the individual sensibility of the police state). The weak version of 'disinterestedness' defines aesthetics as independent only of personal or private interest or advantage. This is the limited sense accepted by most of the eighteenth-century theorists with the exception of Hutcheson, who held to the strong sense." R. Paulson, *The beautiful, novel and strange: aesthetics and heterodoxy*, (Maryland, 1996), p. 23.

<sup>27</sup> T1, p. 27.

<sup>28</sup> T1, p. 27. Shaftesbury has enjoyed a long reputation of theological heterodoxy. He was an associate of Toland, despite the tension which resulted from the latter's unsanctioned publication of the Earl's *Inquiry concerning Virtue*; A. A. Cooper, *An inquiry concerning virtue or merit: with a selection of material from Toland's 1699 edition*, (D. Walford, ed.), (Manchester, 1977). Hugh Heugh, a student of Hutcheson, identified the Earl as one of deism's most capable exponents: "There are others again, who without a professed opposition to Christianity, but with hearts full of enmity against it, have more cunningly attempted its ruin, by laying down such principles, and promoting such schemes as have a direct tendency to subvert and undermine it; of which sort I have always thought my Lord Shaftesbury one...He was a man of better morals, parts and education than any one of them and so much the fitter for promoting the Kingdom of Darkness." H. Heugh, *Shaftesbury's Ghost Conjur'd*, (Scotland?, 1738?), p. 3.

This may seem to be more protective of Hutcheson's religious reputation than an honourable assessment of Shaftesbury's actual influence.<sup>29</sup> However, Hutcheson reasserted that his debt was limited in a letter defending his originality, published in the *Bibliothèque Angloise* in 1726: "I mentioned Lord Shaftesbury, in order to imply, as much as I could without irritating certain good people, that this nobleman has written well on this subject."<sup>30</sup> It was hardly a glowing tribute from a self-conscious apostle of the Earl's creed.

Hutcheson did not restrict his theory of morality to the existence of a moral sense. He used the Earl's insight as a springboard for the remainder of his thesis. This involved understanding the role of the moral sense as at once a faculty of judgement and as a means "to direct our actions." Thus, he analysed "the immediate motive to virtuous actions."<sup>31</sup>

Hutcheson began by limiting his study to what was "necessary to settle the general foundation of the moral sense." Placing moral virtue into a social framework, he posited "every action which we apprehend as either morally good or evil, is always supposed to flow from some affection toward rational agents." This was divided into two forms, religious virtue, which derived from love of the deity and "social virtue" which "flow from affections toward our fellow creatures."<sup>32</sup>

The ground on which Hutcheson was building was the affections between rational agents. It was to be assumed if one felt affections that other rational agents felt the same. Thus the system was built upon an interlocking sequence of emotional ties and a philosophical trust in the operations of the emotions between similarly formed beings. Virtue had a social dimension since Hutcheson identified the moral component of any action as consisting in its social, relational element. He therefore defined self-interest as antithetical to virtue. This was since self-interest only considered the agent and not the

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<sup>29</sup> How Hutcheson encountered the writings of the Earl of Shaftesbury is a matter of academic speculation. While it is true that Molesworth was a friend and admirer of the Earl it may be that Hutcheson first read Shaftesbury's work before he knew Molesworth. One pointer towards this possibility is a letter by James Arbuckle to Molesworth while at the University: "I have lately been reading the writings of a noble friend of Your Lordship's, I mean the late Lord Shaftesbury. I had read them some time ago, when I was very young, and so had no other taste of them, than of a piece of genteel and easy writing. I need not tell your lordship what my sentiments of them now are. But there is one circumstance in them I cannot help taking notice of, as what gives me a good deal of pleasure, which is an imagination they raise in me, of My Lord Molesworth being the same person with Palemon in the Rhapsody." J. Arbuckle to R. Molesworth, Glasgow, 13 February, 1722-3, in HMC, VC, volume eight, p. 355. This suggests that Arbuckle had no need of Molesworth's recommendation to have read the *Characteristicks* even if the Viscount had put Arbuckle in mind of them again. Indeed, when Molesworth proffered William Wishart a reading list, Shaftesbury's work was not a part of it. Instead, the course of study recommended consideration of Buchanan, Tillotson, Machiavelli's discourses, Harrington's works, and Confucious' morals. See W. Wishart to R. Molesworth, Edinburgh, 7 November 1723, HMC, VC, volume eight, p 366-7. I would like to thank Professor James Moore and Professor M. A. Stewart for discussion of this issue.

<sup>30</sup> F. Hutcheson to the *Bibliothèque Angloise*, in D. R. Raynor, "Hutcheson's defense against a charge of plagiarism," in *Eighteenth-century Ireland*, 2, (1987), p. 179.

<sup>31</sup> T2, p. 124 and p. 125.

<sup>32</sup> T2, p. 125, p. 125 and pp 125-6.

society in which the agent existed. He then divided the moral affections into “love and hatred.” Although other affections existed they were subsumable into these primary categories. Love, excluding love of a sexual nature, which was relegated to simple desire, was divisible into “love of complacency or esteem, and love of benevolence.” Hatred was subdivided into “hatred of... contempt and hatred of malice.”<sup>33</sup>

Hutcheson stated that affections could not be influenced by “motives of self-interest.” So in the case of esteem, he contended that self-interest could not alter the assessment of an agent’s moral qualities “a bribe may possibly make us attempt to ruin such a man [generous and humane] or some strong motive of advantage may excite us to oppose his interest; but it can never make us hate him, while we apprehend him as morally excellent.” In the case of love of benevolence, Hutcheson was even more definite “as to the love of benevolence the very name excludes self-interest.” As to where the motivation towards benevolence came from, he ascribed it to “the very frame of our nature.” This was central to his optimistic assessment of human nature ensuring it was applicable beyond the individual “benevolence supposes a being capable of virtue. We judge of other rational agents by ourselves. The human nature is a lovely form.”<sup>34</sup>

Hutcheson then denied that virtue derived from self-interest at one remove through some affection, such as “fear, or reverence.” He also dismissed the thesis that love of others emanated from their “beneficence, whence we are led to imagine that our love of persons... flows entirely from self-interest.”<sup>35</sup> But as he asked rhetorically:

Do we only love the beneficent because it is in our interest to love them? Or do we choose to love them because our love is the means of procuring their bounty? If it be so, then we could indifferently love any character, even to obtain the bounty of a third person; or we could be bribed by a third person to love the greatest villain heartily, as we may be bribed to external offices. Now this is plainly impossible.<sup>36</sup>

In sum, Hutcheson asked whether it was conceivable that “anyone [could] say he only loves the beneficent as he does a field or garden because of its advantage?”<sup>37</sup>

Two other arguments in favour of self-interest also drew Hutcheson’s attention. The first of these consisted of the belief “that the whole race of mankind seems persuaded of the existence of an almighty being who will certainly secure happiness either now or hereafter to those who are virtuous.” Reiterating an argument from section I, Hutcheson argued that this was unacceptable as it depended upon an assumption that the aim of the

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<sup>33</sup> T2, p. 127.

<sup>34</sup> T2, p. 128, pp 128-9, p. 129, p. 131 and p. 131.

<sup>35</sup> T2, p. 134 and p. 135.

<sup>36</sup> T2, p. 135.

deity was not self-interest but our interest. He asked the reader to consider “what should engage the deity to reward virtue?” To Hutcheson, it was just as plausible that “a Manichean evil God” could be conceived of “if there is no excellence in disinterested love.”<sup>38</sup>

The second argument stated that “virtue is pursued because of the concomitant pleasure.” Hutcheson also dismissed this for assuming too much. In this case, it “plainly supposes a sense of virtue antecedent to ideas of advantage...and that from the very frame of our nature we are determined to perceive pleasure in the practice of virtue.”<sup>39</sup> However, not all virtue was pleasant, which suggested that the operation of the moral sense was prior to any consideration of pleasure. Hutcheson was not a naive hedonist:

Now there are several morally amiable actions, which flow from these passions which are so uneasy; such as attempts of relieving the distressed, of defending the injured, of repairing of wrongs done by ourselves. These actions are often accompanied with no pleasure in the meantime nor have they any subsequent pleasure, except as they are successful; unless it be that which may arise from calm reflection when the passion is over, upon our having been in a disposition, which to our moral sense appears lovely and good. But this pleasure is never intended in the heat of action, nor is it any motive exciting to it.<sup>40</sup>

It was Hutcheson’s assessment that the concept of self-love was unable to explain the sentiment of love towards another agent. However that left him with the charge of determining the identity of the “other motive than self-love or interest, which excites us to the actions we call virtuous.”<sup>41</sup> He set himself the task of ascertaining: “some determination of our nature to study the good of others; or some instinct, antecedent to all reason from interest, which influences us to the love of others, even as the moral sense...determines us to approve the actions which flow from this love in ourselves and others.”<sup>42</sup> To accomplish this, Hutcheson provided an extended example:

Suppose several merchants joined in partnership of their whole effects. One of them bustles abroad in managing the stock of the company. His prosperity occasions gain to all, and his losses give them pain from their share in the loss. Is this then the same kind of affection with that of parents to their children? Is there the same tender personal regard? I fancy no parent will say so. In this case of

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<sup>37</sup> T2, pp 135-6.

<sup>38</sup> T2, pp 137-8, p. 139 and p. 140.

<sup>39</sup> T2, p. 140.

<sup>40</sup> T2, p. 142.

<sup>41</sup> T2, p. 137.

<sup>42</sup> T2, p. 143.

merchants there is a plain conjunction of interest; but whence the conjunction of interest between parent and child?<sup>43</sup>

This enabled Hutcheson to state his conviction that “this love then is antecedent to the conjunction of interest...this love then must be disinterested.” Even if Mandeville was correct, and parental affection grew over time, Hutcheson stressed this strengthened his case “the observing of understanding and affections in children, which make them appear to be moral agents, can increase love toward them without prospect of interest.”<sup>44</sup>

Hutcheson then offered a proof of his contention that people extended their love to all humankind. Appealing to the reader’s sensibility, he illustrated how:

If we observe any neighbours from whom perhaps we have received no good offices, formed into friendships, families, partnerships, and with honesty and kindness assisting each other; pray ask any mortal if he would not be better pleased with their prosperity...you shall find a bond of benevolence further extended than a family and children, although the ties are not so strong.<sup>45</sup>

Returning to the case of the merchants, Hutcheson extended his plea for benevolence asking whether “a person, [who] for trade, had left his native country...without any view of returning...would it give him no pleasure to hear of the prosperity of his country?” He suggested “I fancy his answer will show us a benevolence extended beyond neighbourhoods or acquaintances.”<sup>46</sup>

Both these empirical examples led Hutcheson to posit universal benevolence “this argues a benevolence in some degree extended to all mankind....And had we any notions of rational agents, capable of moral affections, in the most distant planets, our good wishes would still attend them.” In his optimistic assessment, “we shall find all mankind under its [benevolence’s] influence.”<sup>47</sup>

Universal benevolence was crucial if Hutcheson’s scheme was to be credible. It extended the realm of trustworthy participants to all humans. This ensured that agents could be relied upon to act in a predictable manner and could therefore be understood through empirical observation. It also produced the emotional ties Hutcheson deemed necessary if man was to be thought of as more than a self-interested pursuer of pleasure.

The origin of Hutcheson’s system lay in the human capacity to make instinctual, pre-rational judgements, generated by a moral sense. What that sense identified in the

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<sup>43</sup> T2, p. 144.

<sup>44</sup> T2, p. 144 and p. 145.

<sup>45</sup> T2, p. 146.

<sup>46</sup> T2, p. 146 and p. 147.

<sup>47</sup> T2, p. 147 and p. 148. Hutcheson placed into this section an observation concerning the origin of the love of our country. It is interesting being at once subservient to a universal benevolence and suggesting that habits have some role to play in the formation of attachments. It is in contrast to the civic humanist panegyrics of statehood and citizenship.

actions of others and what it directed the moral agent to pursue was the good, identified as the benevolent. This equated to the good of others, fellow feeling, emotional attachment and was universal rather than particular in its reach.<sup>48</sup>

Having introduced the concept Hutcheson developed his analysis of benevolence in the third section. As he realised “if we examine all the actions which are counted amiable anywhere and enquire into the grounds upon which they are approved, we shall find that in the opinion of the person who approves them, they always appear as benevolent, or flowing from the love of others.”<sup>49</sup> This identification of benevolence with social affection enabled him to invest his optimistic outlook with a social component that ensured that people could trust each other to share similar sentiments. He suggested a range of virtues that a moral agent might have toward a benefactor:

A sincere love and gratitude toward our benefactor, a cheerful readiness to do whatever he shall require, how burdensome soever, a hearty inclination to comply with his intentions and contentment with the state he has placed us in, are the strongest evidences of benevolence we can show to such a person.<sup>50</sup>

Hutcheson included in this array “all the rational devotion, or religion, toward a deity apprehended as good;” an observation that led him to digress on how “a benefit conferred necessarily raises gratitude in the beneficiary, so the expressions of this gratitude...are wonderfully delightful to the benefactor.”<sup>51</sup> Thus he sketched a reflexive system where virtuous action generated further affections of benevolence.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> The practical consequence of this difference in the thought of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson appeared in their different approaches to conversation. The neo-Platonist, with privileged access to the mind of God, need not indulge in inconsequential or uninformed talk with the uninitiated. Thus Shaftesbury’s notebooks contain the following injunction: “Pierce into the bottom-work of their minds; the dark chambers and corners of their heart; their principles of judgement; their decisive determining thoughts and rules of action....look into their breasts laid open, reveal the mystery of their mysteries and behold how poor, how low, how shallow....Be these thy entertainments and discourses with thyself (though in company), these thy tables, when needs there must be tables and discourses of that kind; this thy table-talk within, with self, and let alone that other, no matter how it succeeds, or what it is....thou canst err in having no part of it, for there is no necessity thou shouldst have any.” A. A. Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, *The life unpublished letters and philosophical regimen of Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury*, (B. Rand, ed.), (London, 1992), pp 229-30. Hutcheson, in contrast, actively pursued comment upon his works, with manuscripts being sent to friends for admonition and improvement, and Hutcheson himself being generous in acknowledging the role such co-operation played in the development of his thought. Even following his removal to Glasgow, he remained actively engaged in the lives of his Dublin friends and journeyed across as frequently as business allowed. He offered open hospitality in Glasgow and forwarded the invitation: “I must insist on your promise of a visit whenever you find honest Mr. Haliday in good health, that he could take the whole burden for a month or six weeks. Robert Simson with you and Charles Moor would be wondrous happy till 3 in the morning: I would be with you from 5 to ten.” F. Hutcheson to T. Drennan, Glasgow, 31 January 1737, GUL MSS Gen. 1018, f.2, verso.

<sup>49</sup> T2, p. 150.

<sup>50</sup> T2, p. 151.

<sup>51</sup> T2, p. 151 and pp 151-2.

<sup>52</sup> S. Purviance, “Intersubjectivity and sociable relations in the philosophy of Francis Hutcheson,” in *Sociability and society in eighteenth-century Scotland*, (J. Dwyer and R. B. Sher eds.), (Edinburgh, 1993), pp 23-38.

Having stated his belief in the universal application of benevolence, Hutcheson turned to the “manner of computing the morality of actions.” He began by assessing the role of self-love in the motivation of moral agents. The notion of a “mistaken self-love” enabled Hutcheson to make a key distinction in his thesis. While he admitted that there was potential for conflict between individuals when two or more agents pursued an identical end and that a zero-sum game might ensue, this was not always the case. Even when self-love acted as a motive, Hutcheson suggested that so long as the results “evidence no want of benevolence, having no hurtful effects upon others, [the action] seem[s] perfectly indifferent in a moral sense, and neither raise the love or hatred of the observer.” Inasmuch as every individual required some degree of self-love to survive, Hutcheson was content to note that “the want of such self-love would be universally pernicious.”<sup>53</sup>

Hutcheson contended, “that every moral agent justly considers himself as part of this rational system... so that he may be in part an object of his own benevolence.”<sup>54</sup> This was vital in his attempt to set his moral agents in a social framework. It ensured that the system was reflexive, turning back upon the agent who was also an object of the observational capacity of the moral sense. It was therefore plausible that self-analysis and self-judgement could take place. The individual was not an isolated agent but a socially formed actor whose actions were both shaped by and had consequences for the communities in which he lived. This placed the agent in a relationship of dependency upon others and gave him a degree of influence over them. The grounds on which this system operated were Hutcheson’s optimistic assessment of human nature and a belief that other humans would act consistently, with similar motivations when confronted with similar challenges.

Hutcheson included a second assumption in his scheme of moral calculation “in comparing the moral qualities of actions... we are led by our moral sense of virtue thus to judge, that in equal degrees of happiness expected to proceed from the action, the virtue is in proportion to the number of persons to whom the happiness shall extend.” This led him to contend “that the virtue is a compound ratio of the quality of good and number of enjoyers.” In effect, he argued that “that action is best, which accomplishes the greatest happiness for the greatest numbers.”<sup>55</sup>

Hutcheson further posited that both long-term and short-term consequences had to be incorporated in any such calculation. Even “those events which otherwise would not have happened” had to be considered. This justified the creation of a moral code. Any particular

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<sup>53</sup> T2, p. 159, p. 160 and p. 160.

<sup>54</sup> T2, p. 161.

<sup>55</sup> T2, p. 163, p. 164 and p. 164.



action which while acceptable in a given case, if generalised could lead to moral chaos or “mischief” ought to be prohibited.<sup>56</sup>

From these assumptions and observations, Hutcheson concluded “our moral sense would most recommend to our election as the most perfectly virtuous...such [actions] as appear to have the most universal unlimited tendency to the greatest and most extensive happiness of all the rational agents to whom our influence can extend.” Building from particular, local and limited forms of benevolence, he attested “All strict attachments to parties, sects, factions have but an imperfect species of beauty.” Only “universal benevolence” would answer his strict criteria for the identity of the foundation of moral good.<sup>57</sup>

Hutcheson then supplied a series of algebraic equations for the calculation of morality. He contended that the moral sense applied this calculus to the judgement of any observed act, determining whether to approve or disapprove of the act and actor. He followed the reflexive nature of his system to the point where the moral calculations concerning the benevolence of an action were carried out with regard to one’s own actions. The viewers judged their own moral motivation. Hutcheson had developed a philosophic explanation for the concept of a conscience.

Hutcheson produced five basic axioms for the computation of morality in a given course of action. Firstly, “the moral importance of any character...is in a compound ratio of his benevolence and abilities.” This he inscribed as “M[oment of good] = B[enevolence] x A[bilities].” Placing these agents into a social context, Hutcheson then assessed how the scheme would work if “the abilities of the agents are equal” or if “benevolence in two agents is equal.”<sup>58</sup>

In the first case, “the benevolence is as the moment of public good produced by them in like circumstances” as in the second “the moment of public good” was dependent upon the abilities of the two agents compared. These ideas were expressed through the equations “ $B = Mx1$ ” and “ $M = Ax1$ ” This led to his fourth axiom, “the virtue then of agents or their benevolence, is always directly as the moment of good produced in like circumstances, and inversely as their abilities or  $B=M/A$ ”<sup>59</sup>

The final axiom was also the most complex. Hutcheson tried to include in it a realisation that “the natural consequences of our actions are various, some good to ourselves and evil to the public, and others evil to ourselves and good to the public.”

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<sup>56</sup> T2, p. 164 and p. 165.

<sup>57</sup> T2, p. 165, p. 166 and p. 166.

<sup>58</sup> T2, p. 168, p. 168, p. 168 and p. 169.

<sup>59</sup> T2, p. 169.





Equally, he accepted that “the entire motive to good actions is not always benevolence alone.” This prompted Hutcheson to suggest “the [self-]interest...be deducted to find the true effect of the benevolence.”<sup>60</sup>

Hutcheson admitted that “the applying a mathematical calculation to moral subjects may appear perhaps at first extravagant and wild” but defended his schema through its empirical application. In one case in particular, Hutcheson believed the scheme showed its worth, namely the philosophical foundation it gave to the belief in universal moral capacity. In a paean to the common man, Hutcheson extolled the virtues of ordinary life

no external circumstances of fortune, no involuntary disadvantages, can exclude any mortal from the most heroic virtue....Thus not only the prince, the statesman, the general, are capable of true heroism; though these are the chief characters whose fame is diffused through various nations and ages. But when we find in an honest trader, the kind friend, the faithful, prudent advisor, the charitable and hospitable neighbour, the tender husband, and affectionate parent, the sedate yet cheerful companion, the generous assistant of merit, the cautious allayer of contention and debate, the promoter of love and good understanding among acquaintances; if we consider that these were all the good offices which his station in the world gave him an opportunity of performing to mankind, we must judge this character really as amiable, as those whose external splendour dazzles an injudicious world.<sup>61</sup>

This peroration of social rather than political virtue opened Hutcheson’s argument onto a new vista. He accepted that this optimism posed a problem for his system when it came to comprehending why evil motives were acted upon. He had, however, already set the framework for his answer before the readers, and he turned now to fill in the detail of his thesis. He provided three “grounds of this diversity” of moral principles. First, he blamed “different opinions of happiness, or natural good and of the most effectual means to advance it.”<sup>62</sup> In a passage foreshadowing the thinking of Montesquieu, Hutcheson postulated a link between the spirit of a nation and the kind of characteristics it valued:

In one country, where there prevails a courageous disposition, where liberty is counted a great good, and war an inconsiderable evil, all insurrections in defence of privileges will have the appearance of moral good to our sense, because of their appearing benevolent. And yet the same sense of moral good in benevolence shall, in another country, where the spirits of men are more abject and timorous, where civil war appears the greatest natural evil, and liberty no great purchase, make the same action appear odious.<sup>63</sup>

Recognition of this limitation led Hutcheson to refine his theory. He warned the reader “we are not to imagine that this [moral] sense should give us antecedent to

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<sup>60</sup> T2, p. 169, p. 169 and p. 170.

<sup>61</sup> T2, p. 177 and p. 178.

<sup>62</sup> T2, p. 183.

observation, ideas of complex actions, or of their natural tendencies to good or evil: It only determines us to approve benevolence, whenever it appears in any action.”<sup>64</sup> Errors of computation were not attributable to a failure in the moral sense but to the observations made by the actor. The computation was accomplished by reason.

Hutcheson’s setting of reason in his scheme was the cause of much subsequent controversy, for he separated the tasks of moral judgement and moral computation into the capacities of the moral sense and reason. Of the latter, he stated, “men have reason given them to judge and compare the tendencies of actions that they may not stupidly follow the first appearance of public good, but it is still some appearance of good which they pursue.” Thus diversity of opinion in morality bespoke a variation of reason not a collapse in the moral sense “the absurd practices which prevail in the world are much better arguments that men have no reason than that they have no moral sense of beauty in actions.”<sup>65</sup>

The second of Hutcheson’s three reasons for moral diversity “is the diversity of systems to which men, from foolish opinions, confine their benevolence.” For example, it was the “low or base opinion of any body or sect of men” that produced a limitation on the effects of universal benevolence. If “they imagine them bent upon the destruction of the more valuable parts or but useless burdens of the earth, benevolence itself will lead us to neglect the interests of such, and to suppress them.” He extended this into the urban environment of his readership: “If we observe the discourse of our professed debauchees, our most dissolute rakes, we shall find their vices clothed, in their imaginations, with some amiable dress of liberty, generosity, just resentment against the contrivers of artful rules to enslave men and rob them of their pleasures.” Appealing to a sense of decency, he suggested “the idea of an ill-natured villain is too frightful ever to become familiar to any mortal.” As he explained “it is not a delight in the misery of others, or malice which occasions the horrid crimes which fill our histories, but generally an injudicious unreasonable enthusiasm for some kind of limited virtue.”<sup>66</sup> In effect, they were condemned for pursuing a lesser good.

The final ground of diversity in moral judgement was “the false opinions of the will or laws of the deity.” While Hutcheson accepted that the deity was obeyed “from gratitude and a sense of right imagined in the deity,” he suggested “this is so abundantly known to have produced follies, superstitions, murders, devastations of kingdoms.”<sup>67</sup> All these fell into line with his philosophical optimism and the latitude he required in the judging of

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<sup>63</sup> T2, p. 183.

<sup>64</sup> T2, p. 184.

<sup>65</sup> T2, p. 186 and p. 187.

<sup>66</sup> T2, p. 187, p. 187 and pp 187-8, p. 188, p. 189 and p. 189.

others. Only through tolerance and trust in the motivations of others could the moral agent come to a fair, judicious and accurate assessment of the principal motive behind actions.

Moreover, as Hutcheson ascertained, an informed moral sense could overcome the objection that such a sense, pre-rational and implanted in the human frame was “independent on custom and education.”<sup>68</sup> As an educator, Hutcheson was unlikely to ascribe to an extreme reductive principle. Instead he provided a thesis that accepted that many moral actions were informed by custom and habit.

Choosing the example of the crime of incest, Hutcheson noted how: “Incest, among Christians, is abhorred at first appearance as much as murder, and yet we cannot find any necessary tendency of it to the detriment of mankind....[Moreover] this abhorrence cannot be from nature, since in Greece the marrying half-sisters was counted honourable.”<sup>69</sup> Instead Hutcheson placed the abhorrence of incest in its perceived offence to the deity. In countries where the deity forbade incest, it was deemed a crime. The moral sense underpinning gratitude and obedience toward a deity remained constant whatever the positive content of the law prescribed.

Hutcheson then complicated his thesis further. He had developed a system that saw virtue as identical to universal benevolence. It was recognised by an internal, pre-rational moral sense, found in all actors. This two-fold theory was simple and far-reaching, but it failed to comprehend the variations in the nature and force of emotions felt by moral agents: “we are not to imagine that this benevolence is equal, or in the same degree toward all.”<sup>70</sup> He therefore posited a sequence of lower and higher attachments felt by the agent.

The scheme Hutcheson proposed began within the bosom of the family, a category under which fell “collateral relations,” though the emotion felt there was “in a weaker degree.” Familial emotion was the primary source of benevolent feeling for it was “antecedent to all acquaintance.” Nature provided for the support of infant children to ensure their growth and thriving, whereas it had “left it to reflection and a sense of gratitude, to produce returns of love in children.”<sup>71</sup>

Gratitude was the essential term in this analysis, for Hutcheson considered it capable of giving a “juster idea of the wise order in which human nature is formed for universal love.”<sup>72</sup> As he explained the phenomenon:

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<sup>67</sup> T2, p. 190.

<sup>68</sup> T2, p. 191.

<sup>69</sup> T2, p. 191. On the issue of incest, Hutcheson may have had a vested interest. He may have married his cousin, Mary Wilson. On this see A. O. Aldridge, “The meaning of incest from Hutcheson to Gibbon,” in *Ethics*, 61, (1950), pp 309-13.

<sup>70</sup> T2, p. 195.

<sup>71</sup> T2, pp 195-6, p. 196 and p. 196.

<sup>72</sup> T2, p. 197.

Now because of the vast numbers of mankind, their distant habitations, and the incapacity of any one to be remarkably useful to vast multitudes, that our benevolence might not be quite distracted with a multiplicity of objects...nature has more powerfully determined us to admire and love the moral qualities of others which affect our selves, and has given us more powerful impressions of good will towards those who are beneficent to our selves; which we call gratitude; and thus has laid a foundation for joyful associations in all kinds of business and virtuous friendships.<sup>73</sup>

Thus Hutcheson comprehended and incorporated societies of friends and associates, positing a foundation for wider benevolence than was provided for by the family network. He moved from the private, intimate world of the household into the society at large.

Noting that the gratitude on which he was placing so much weight was disinterested in its character, Hutcheson analysed the role played in such social networks by “delight in the good opinion and love of others...whereby honour is made an immediate good.”<sup>74</sup> The desire for honour, or the esteem of others, Hutcheson called ambition while the awareness of the unfavourable opinion of others he denoted as shame. Drawing on the commercial landscape of Dublin, he illustrated the separation of shame from loss by portraying:

A merchant [who]...from interest conceals a shipwreck, or a very bad market, which he has sent his goods to. But is this the same with the passion of shame? Has he that anguish, that dejection of mind, and self-condemnation, which one shall have whose treachery is detected? Nay, how will men sometimes glory in their losses, when in a cause imagined morally good, though they really weaken their credit in the merchant's sense; that is, the opinion of their wealth, or fitness for business? Was any man ever ashamed of impoverishing himself to serve his country or his friend?<sup>75</sup>

The role of the opinion of others was vital in the creation of social norms. As Hutcheson realised, it was not within the wherewithal of every individual to consider the moral nature of every opinion or action. Thus, “if any opinion be universal in any country, men of little reflection will probably embrace it.” It was imperative that while “the company we keep may lead us without examining, to believe that certain actions tend to the public good...that our company honours such actions, and loves the agent must flow from a sense of some excellence in this love of the public.” He accepted that “the opinions of our company may make us rashly conclude that certain actions tend to the universal detriment, and are morally evil, when perhaps they are not so.” Yet he was adamant that “had we no sense of moral qualities in actions, nor formed any conceptions of them, but as advantageous or hurtful we never could have honoured or loved agents for public love.”<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> T2, pp 197-8.

<sup>74</sup> T2, p. 200.

<sup>75</sup> T2, p. 201.

<sup>76</sup> T2, p. 203, p. 204, p. 205 and pp 205-6.

The difference between internal motivation and the external justification or appearance of an action could result in a tension between the social adjudication of the morality of an action, and the inner conscience of an agent. Hutcheson realised this and asserted that far from disproving his theory, this buttressed it for “men shall never be fond of such [self-interested] actions in solitude....Therefore we must have by nature a moral sense of it [virtue] antecedent to honour.”<sup>77</sup> What Mandeville had mistaken was outward appearance and inner contemplation, assuming the first sufficed to explain the second.

The dichotomy also explained why “men are often ashamed for things which are not vitious, and honoured for what is not virtuous.” Moreover, it suggested why “we shall be ashamed of every evidence of moral incapacity, or want of ability, and with good ground when this want is occasioned by our own negligence.” Even when confronted with actions which, while not naturally immoral, contravened custom we responded with horror, as with “some of the functions of nature, which are counted indecent and offensive.”<sup>78</sup>

This awareness resulted in distinctive social practices. Hutcheson noted how “we always see actions which flow from public love accompanied with boldness and openness; and not only malicious, but even selfish ones, the matter of shame and confusion; and that men study to conceal them.” When in pursuit of self-interest, Hutcheson observed how men were wary of their social appearance, and inspired to conceal even such selfish pleasures as those “venereal pleasures between persons married, and even eating and drinking alone any nicer sorts of meats or drinks.”<sup>79</sup> From this awareness sprung the virtue of modesty.

Hutcheson then considered one further “determination of our mind, which strongly proves benevolence to be natural to us, and that is compassion.” He ascribed this to the uneasiness produced by “any grievous misery he sees another involved in.” Although he admitted “another disinterested view may even in cold blood overcome pity,” suggesting “love to our country or zeal for religion” as an example, he thought pity was still a factor in determining action. In the case of a persecutor for religion, pity was a motive force “unless his opinion leads him to look upon the heretic as absolutely and entirely evil.”<sup>80</sup>

That compassion was embedded in our nature was shown through the instinctive reaction of observers to misery and distress. As Hutcheson remarked, “we mechanically send forth shrieks and groans upon any surprising apprehension of evil.” Indeed, people were found to “expose themselves to this pain when they can give no reason for it, as in the

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<sup>77</sup> T2, p. 208.

<sup>78</sup> T2, p. 209, p. 210 and p. 210.

<sup>79</sup> T2, p. 211 and p. 212. On civility see chapter four.

<sup>80</sup> T2, pp 215-6, p. 216, p. 216 and p. 216.



instance of public executions.” Compassion provided him with a means to relate his treatise on beauty to the moral realm. He told how an audience responded to a tragedy depicted on stage with emotions of compassion. The tragedy worked through inflicting misery upon characters of moral worth, for “I doubt whether any audience would be pleased barely to see fictitious scenes of misery if they were kept strangers to the moral qualities of the sufferers.”<sup>81</sup>

Having provided a comprehensive treatment of benevolence and complicated the system he was espousing to involve a study of complex emotions like honour, ambition, shame and compassion, Hutcheson returned to the main theme of his dissertation; the moral sense. To this faculty he ascribed a large influence over the nature of mankind, even though, as he admitted “it is often directed by very partial imperfect views of public good, and often overcome by self-love.” Investigating the breath of influence held by the moral sense led him to analyse “the sentiments which men universally form of the state of others, when they are no way immediately concerned,” for only here did the sentiments show their “true face” void of interest and partiality. This subject could be drawn so as to “imagine a rational creature in a sufficiently happy state,” who alongside pleasant sensations of smell and touch was put at ease by the actions of his moral sense. For complete satisfaction, one had to place the creature into a society, for “would we not think the state low, mean and sordid if there were no society, no love or friendships, no good offices?”<sup>82</sup>

How influential such disinterested virtue was in the human frame could be seen by how men understood their own actions and ideas. In a rhetorical plea to his readership, Hutcheson asked if they would “ever wish to be in the same condition with a wrathful, malicious, revengeful or envious being, though we were at the same time to enjoy all the external sensations of pleasure, or all the opportunities of seeing the most beautiful, regular prospects?” In an echo of an article by James Arbuckle for the *Dublin Weekly Journal*, Hutcheson enquired: “What castle-builder [day-dreamer] who forms to himself imaginary scenes of life, in which he thinks he would be happy, ever made acknowledged treachery, cruelty or ingratitude the steps by which he mounted to his wished for elevation?”<sup>83</sup> Even in the imagination, virtue was the primary motive of all actions.

Examining “our sentiments of the happiness of others in common life” Hutcheson accepted that “wealth and external pleasures bear no small bulk in our imaginations.” However, he inquired as to whether there does not “always accompany this opinion of happiness in wealth some supposed beneficent intention of doing good offices to persons

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<sup>81</sup> T2, p. 217, p. 217 and p. 218.

<sup>82</sup> T2, p. 221, p. 222, p. 222 and p. 222.

dear to us, at least to our families or kinsmen.” This extended from the blood ties of family to social relations of a more tenuous kind: “In our imagined happiness of external pleasure some ideas are always included of some moral enjoyments of society, some communication of pleasure, something of love, of friendship, of esteem, of gratitude.” Virtue was by definition social.<sup>84</sup>

Hutcheson then connected his speculations concerning virtue to those of the first treatise, by debating the “external beauty of persons” and the influence such appearances held over man’s judgmental faculty. Hutcheson believed the external appearance was shaped by the internal emotions of the observed actor, so that “the natural air of any face approaches to that which any passion would form it unto,” from whence “we make a conjecture...concerning the leading disposition of the person’s mind.” This informed a sequence of observations concerning the relationship between manners and mores. The association of ideas generated by custom between appearances and moods of mind was, he suggested “one reason among many others, for men’s different fancies, or relishes of beauty.” Despite a certain general adherence to the values of benevolence and virtue, the actual cases in which such qualities were recognised by the observer partially depended upon assumptions of how such qualities ought to be displayed “military men may admire courage more than other virtues. Persons of smaller courage may admire sweetness of temper. Men of thought and reflection, who have more extensive views, will admire the like qualities in others.” Hutcheson further asserted that this connection could be “extended to the whole air and motion of any person.”<sup>85</sup> Thus, the role of custom and of cultural sensitivity became central to any assessment of the virtue of another actor

considering the different ceremonies, and modes of showing respect, which are practised in different nations, we may indeed probably conclude that there is no natural connection between any of these gestures, or motions, and the affections of mind which they are by custom made to express. But when custom has made any of them pass for expressions of such affections, by a constant association of ideas, some shall become agreeable and lovely, and others extremely offensive, although they were both in their own nature perfectly indifferent.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> T2, p. 223 and p. 224. See chapter four.

<sup>84</sup> T2, p. 227. More specifically, Hutcheson identified virtue with polite living. In an urban environment, simple acts of common courtesy ensured that the populace flourished in close proximity. The heroism of the civic humanist was oddly out of kilter in an environment where people had to maintain standards of accommodation to ensure the city did not descend into chaos. Cities required a philosophy of harmony and accord, not of dynamism and military courage. The identification of virtue with benevolence, and not glory, supplied the modern subject with a theory of morality as interdependent rather than the moral independence celebrated in the civic humanist paradigm.

<sup>85</sup> T2, p. 229, pp 229-30, p. 231, p. 232 and p. 233.

<sup>86</sup> T2, p. 233.

This led Hutcheson to celebrate marriage. Far from being satisfied by the sating of natural desires, “as we see hunger and thirst determine us to preserve our bodies,” the association of ideas enabled humans to supply a concept of worth, a moral value to the chores of child-rearing and marital compromise

beauty gives a favourable presumption of good moral dispositions, and acquaintance confirms this into a real love of esteem, or begets it where there is little beauty. This raises an expectation of the greatest moral pleasures along with the sensible, and a thousand tender sentiments of humanity and generosity, and makes us impatient for a society which we imagine big with unspeakable moral pleasures.<sup>87</sup>

Indeed as Hutcheson noted, the association of ideas of moral pleasure with marriage explained the irony “that chastity itself has a powerful charm in the eyes of the dissolute, even when they are attempting to destroy it.”<sup>88</sup>

The same considerations operating in the formation of marital attachments operated in the creation of “common friendships and acquaintances.” What the spectator sought in others was “engaging evidences of love, good-nature and other morally amiable qualities,” the most important of which Hutcheson identified as “cheerfulness.”<sup>89</sup>

Moving the discussion even closer to the theories elucidated in the first treatise, Hutcheson used his theory of association to analyse oratory. In a passage that illuminates his awareness of the nature of public speaking, Hutcheson explained how:

All the bold metaphors, or descriptions, all the artificial manners of expostulation, arguing, and addressing the audience, all the appeals to mankind, are but more lively methods of giving the audience a stronger impression of the moral qualities of the person accused, or defended... and all the antitheses, or witticisms, all the cadences of sonorous periods, whatever inferior kind of beauty they may have separately, are of no consequence to persuade if we neglect moving the passions by some species of morality.<sup>90</sup>

Vital to his understanding of rhetoric was that it was not necessary to be aware of the rules of rhetoric to be swayed by it. The appeal of the orator was not primarily to the reasoning faculties of his audience, but to their pre-rational, moral sense. This was central to Hutcheson’s democratising thesis and his understanding of the role and responsibility of a teacher “reflection and study may raise in men a suspicion of design, and caution of assent,

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<sup>87</sup> T2, pp 234-5.

<sup>88</sup> T2, p. 235.

<sup>89</sup> T2, p. 236.

<sup>90</sup> T2, pp 237-8.

when they have some knowledge of the various topics of argument and find them employed upon themselves. But rude nature is still open to every moral impression.”<sup>91</sup>

Finally, Hutcheson noted how the association of ideas supplied language with the tool he was using in his own theory of morality, analogy. “We join the contemplation of moral circumstances and qualities along with natural objects, to increase the beauty or deformity, and affect the hearer in a more lively manner.” From this came the ideas that “a shady wood must have its solemn, venerable genius, and proper rural Gods. Every clear fountain its sacred chaste nymph.”<sup>92</sup>

Hutcheson acknowledged “this natural determination to approve and admire, or hate and dislike actions, is no doubt an occult quality.”<sup>93</sup> However, this was not a disqualification of his theory, for it was no more a mystery than the observed truth that volition created bodily motion in humans. It was an act of faith in humankind to accept the moral sense operated in others. It was an act of philosophical trust.

The faith Hutcheson was recommending was built upon a faith in the existence of a “good God.” In his view the self-interest theories were untenable precisely because they rejected such a deity. They fell into the contradiction of “perpetually recurring to this moral sense which they deny, not only in calling the laws of the deity just and good, and alleging justice and right in the deity to govern us, but by using a set of words which import something different from what they will allow to be their only meaning.”<sup>94</sup> Chief among these, and the subject of the final section of the treatise, was obligation.

What Hutcheson produced was a concept of obligation which as he admitted was to be “abstract[ed] from any law, human or divine.”<sup>95</sup> This moved him beyond the strict remit of ethical philosophy narrowly considered into matters of political consequence. What he brought from his moral theory to his consideration of political organisation was twofold. First, he brought a belief in the democratic potential of the moral sense. All men had within their frame the capacity to judge morality. This was coupled with a belief that the moral end was identifiable as the pursuit of the common good. The tension led him to extol a form of natural law theory that recognised the moral dignity of all citizens. All members of society had by definition a series of pre-political natural rights.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> T2, p. 239.

<sup>92</sup> T2, p. 242. Hume uses a similar theory in D. Hume, “The natural history of religion,” in *Dialogues and the natural history of religion*, (J. G. A. Gaskin, ed.), (Oxford, 1993), pp 134-86.

<sup>93</sup> T2, p. 246.

<sup>94</sup> T2, p. 247 and pp 247-8.

<sup>95</sup> T2, p. 249.

<sup>96</sup> Hence Hutcheson’s celebrated position within the philosophical refutation of slavery. See W. Sypher, “Hutcheson and the ‘classical’ theory of slavery,” in *Journal of Negro History*, 24, (1939), pp 263-80.

But first Hutcheson had to resolve the problem of moral obligation. This was in line with his criticism of seventeenth-century natural law theory for failing to produce a moral goal.<sup>97</sup> Only if he could resolve the question of why we ought to obey others could he accommodate political structures into his thesis and explain how we ought to submit ourselves to perceived virtue rather than merely pursue self-interested vice.

The sense Hutcheson wished the word obligation to carry involved “a determination without regard to our own interest, to approve actions, and to perform them, which determination shall also make us displeas’d with ourselves and uneasy upon having acted contrary to this sense.” So powerful was this obligation that “no mortal can secure to himself a perpetual serenity, satisfaction, and self-approbation, but by a serious inquiry into the tendency of his actions and a perpetual study of universal good.”<sup>98</sup>

Hutcheson also admitted two other senses of the concept of obligation into his scheme. First, self-interest might become an obligation so long as the interest led to a recognition of the “determination of our nature to approve virtue.” This was also the case when the interest involved a recognition that the pursuit of self-interest was achieved through the pursuit of the general. This was the case with obligation as understood by “Cumberland and Pufendorf.”<sup>99</sup>

Second was the concept of obligation to a law, designed so as to protect those with ill-developed or weakened moral senses, or to restrain those who suffered from rushes of passion. This was the only sense in which we had an obligation to follow a law given by a superior; when it was a defence of, support for and in line with the concepts of obligation already outlined, i.e.: obligation grounded on the moral sense.

Hutcheson then outlined what he conceived of as “the principal business of the moral philosopher.” This involved an illustration of the grounds for believing “universal benevolence tends to the happiness of the benevolent.” Moreover, “he is to enquire by reflection upon human affairs, what course of action does most effectually promote the universal good, what universal rules or maxims are to be observed and in what circumstances the reason of them alters so as to admit exceptions.” Crucially, Hutcheson was convinced that “virtue itself, or good dispositions of the mind, are not directly taught, or produced by instruction, but are the effect of the great author of all things, who forms our nature for them.”<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> See for example *Locating Francis Hutcheson*.

<sup>98</sup> T2, p. 249 and p. 250.

<sup>99</sup> T2, p. 251.

<sup>100</sup> T2, p. 252, p. 252, p. 253 and p. 253.

Fundamental to Hutcheson's considerations on obligation was that it derived, not from an act of will by any superior, be they a teacher, a political ruler, or even a deity, but from a moral quality to the rule that was identifiable by all the subjects to that law. The law was to be judged through the actions of the moral sense, and was followed upon determination of its moral rectitude. From this consideration, he derived "the difference between constraint and obligation." As he observed "we never say we are obliged to do an action which we count base, but we may be constrained to it," where constraint was defined as arising from "the threatening and presenting [of] some evil, in order to make us act in a certain manner."<sup>101</sup>

Just as the complex idea of obligation derived from the moral sense, so too did the concept of rights. These Hutcheson discerned to arise whenever "a faculty of doing, demanding or possessing anything, universally allowed in certain circumstances, would in the whole tend to the general good."<sup>102</sup> They subdivided into perfect and imperfect rights.

Perfect rights were those "of such necessity to the public good that the universal violation of them would make human life intolerable." Equally, they promoted the general good "either directly or by promoting the innocent advantage of a part." So fundamental were these rights that they had to be considered pre-political; they existed in a state of nature wherein no civil government had yet been constructed.<sup>103</sup> Instances supplied by Hutcheson of such rights included

those to our lives, to the fruits of our labours, to demand performance of contracts upon valuable considerations, from men capable of performing them, to direct our own actions either for public or innocent private good, before we have submitted them to the direction of others in any measure, and many others of like nature.<sup>104</sup>

Imperfect rights included those that if violated did not necessarily produce misery in the agent subjected to intrusion. These Hutcheson believed "tend to the improvement and increase of positive good in any society, but are not absolutely necessary to prevent universal misery." It was Hutcheson's considered opinion that in this case "a violent prosecution of such rights would generally occasion greater evil than the violation of them." Hutcheson then supplied a series of examples of such imperfect rights, which included "those which the poor have to the charity of the wealthy; which all men have to

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<sup>101</sup> T2, p. 254 and p. 255.

<sup>102</sup> T2, p. 256.

<sup>103</sup> T2, p. 256. This is in line with a negative theory of liberty, wherein all agents have certain rights the protection of which can legitimate all action that does not infringe the commensurate rights of other moral agents.

<sup>104</sup> T2, p. 257.

offices of no trouble or expense to the performer, which benefactors have to returns of gratitude and such like.”<sup>105</sup>

He termed a third series of rights “external.” These arose when “the doing, possessing, or demanding of anything is really detrimental to the public in any particular instance, as being contrary to the imperfect right of another.” Instances of such external rights included those “of a wealthy miser to recall his loan from the most industrious poor tradesman at any time; that of demanding the performance of a covenant too burdensome on one side” and so forth.<sup>106</sup> They were the perfect rights held by a moral actor that lay in contradiction with the imperfect rights held by another. These might be upheld or rescinded depending on the moral character of the holder of those external rights. They were a recognition by Hutcheson that the concept of an imperfect right might well conflict with a perfect right, or another imperfect right, and displayed his critical awareness of the need for compromise in social conditions.

Hutcheson then arrived at a key declaration. “Civil societies [he wrote] substitute actions in law, instead of the force allowed in the state of nature.”<sup>107</sup> This enabled Hutcheson to envisage society as a peaceful world, regulated and directed by laws and controlled by the presiding presence of a state. Central to this vision were the layers of rights he had delineated. Perfect rights could not be contravened even by a legitimate state power. The others, imperfect and external could, when the occasion arose in the judgement of the political leadership of the community.

Hutcheson then drew a second distinction within the concept of rights as a whole. He declared that some rights were “alienable,” others “unalienable.” This distinction could only be clarified by determining whether “the alienation be within our natural power” and if such a transference “may serve some valuable purpose.” His view was that “the right of private judgement, or of our inward sentiments is unalienable.”<sup>108</sup> This ensured that the moral sense could not be diverted by the judgement of others, and that moral actors retained their moral autonomy.

Furthermore, Hutcheson asserted that from the second consideration it could be deduced “that our right of serving God in the manner which we think acceptable is not alienable, because it can never serve any valuable purpose to make men serve him in a way

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<sup>105</sup> T2, pp 257-8, p. 258 and p. 258.

<sup>106</sup> T2, p. 259, p. 259 and p. 260.

<sup>107</sup> T2, p. 260. Hutcheson used the term civil society in its pre-modern sense as a cover term for political society writ large, and not for that sector of the community which is independent of both the family and the state. In Hutcheson’s usage the term rests in opposition to the state of nature. For a survey of the varied uses to which the term ‘civil society’ has been put see D. Colas, *Civil society and fanaticism: conjoined histories*, (Stanford, 1997). For a discussion of the modern concept see Locating Hutcheson’s contribution.

<sup>108</sup> T2, p. 261. For a similar stance taken by John Abernethy see chapter three.

which seems to them displeasing to him.”<sup>109</sup> This was a crucial and highly charged assertion for a Presbyterian to make in the context of the first quarter of the eighteenth century in Ireland, as shall be discussed below, and was one of the primary polemical motives for the development of the treatise.

Hutcheson then moved on to the rights surrounding ownership and labour. As he explained “the depriving any person of the fruits of his own innocent labour takes away all motives of self-love from industry and leaves benevolence alone.” Hutcheson admitted that this was unlikely to produce a sufficient incentive to procure labour from the agent. He was also appalled at the potential that such an infringement would cause serious injustice as “it exposes the industrious as a constant prey to the slothful and sets self-love against industry.” He thought this right to ownership was offset by the right to alienate goods in commerce for “the labour of each man cannot furnish him with all necessaries.”<sup>110</sup>

Having dealt with the two great issues of political organisation, obligation and rights, Hutcheson concluded with a word of warning. He told the reader that he did not intend it to be understood “that the wise and benevolent have a perfect right to dispose of the labours or goods of the weak and foolish.”<sup>111</sup> He remained democratic and individualist in his politics as in his morality. Autonomy was crucial in giving action a moral colour, even if the end, universal benevolence, could be better served by the intervention of the administration in the actions of citizens.

What then, as Hutcheson asked, was the case with reference to a “deity supposed omniscient and benevolent”? To the laws of the deity, Hutcheson admitted one ought to give submission for “a good and wise God must have a perfect right to govern the universe and that all mortals are obliged to universal obedience.” It was Hutcheson’s opinion that the obligation arose more from gratitude than any dominion the deity might have in the creatures of his creation. As to why the deity ought to be considered good and virtuous by the moral sense, Hutcheson admitted that this was beyond the remit of his investigation and entered theological domains of which he was unprepared to speak. As he noted, of the deity’s intrinsic benevolence “we shall perhaps find no demonstrative arguments *a priori* from the idea of an independent being to prove his goodness; but there is abundant probability deduced from the whole frame of nature.”<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> T2, p. 262.

<sup>110</sup> T2, pp 263-4, p 264 and p. 265.

<sup>111</sup> T2, pp 270-1.

<sup>112</sup> T2, p. 272, p. 272 and p. 275.



The approach Hutcheson adopted to political morality and obligation was akin to his predecessor in the chair of moral philosophy in Glasgow University.<sup>113</sup> Although it is unclear whether Hutcheson ever attended Gerschom Carmichael's lectures on jurisprudence during his time as a student, he showed a high degree of awareness of Pufendorf's natural law, upon which Carmichael expounded, and shared a similar theory of rights to Carmichael's. Upon returning to Glasgow, Hutcheson was complimentary of his forerunner. He claimed Carmichael's exegesis of Pufendorf was of greater worth than the work itself. His admiration did not pass unnoticed by his students, for in 1808 James Wodrow, a student in Hutcheson's class, told the Earl of Buchan that "Hutcheson was his [Carmichael's] scholar and successor frequently spoke of him to us, with esteem gratitude and affection."<sup>114</sup> Carmichael was a scholar of some renown. As a student recalled:

He was scarce six weeks in teaching our class [logic]. He dictated [to] us several sheets of peripatetic physics, *de materia prima*, which I used to jest with him afterward. He was then pretty much Cartesian, and taught us Rohault. Afterward he made himself master of the mathematics and the new philosophy. He was a hard student, a thinking, pooring man, and applied himself mostly to Moral Philosophy....But above all, in his advanced years he was singularly religious....He was a little warm in his temper, but a most affectionate friendly man....In short, for those twelve or fifteen years last he was of very great reputation, and was exceedingly valued both at home and abroad, where he had considerable correspondence with learned men, such as Barbyrack, and other learned men abroad; and he brought a great many scholars to Glasgow.<sup>115</sup>

Carmichael's natural law system differed from that of Pufendorf's in the number of principles.<sup>116</sup> Against Pufendorf's emphasis on man's inherent sociability, Carmichael asserted that natural law built "on not one, as does our distinguished author [Pufendorf], but three fundamental precepts." These were "that God must be worshipped, that everyone must seek his own harmless advantage so far as it does not injure others, and that sociability must be fostered."<sup>117</sup> They all derived from man's desire for moral goodness

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<sup>113</sup> Carmichael has been the subject of a series of penetrating essays by J. Moore and M. Silverthorne. See "Natural sociability and natural rights in the moral philosophy of Gerschom Carmichael," in *Philosophers of the Scottish enlightenment*, (V. Hope, ed.), (Edinburgh, 1984), pp 1-12; "Gerschom Carmichael and the natural jurisprudence tradition in eighteenth-century Scotland," in *Wealth and virtue*, (I. Hont and M. Ignatieff, eds.), (Cambridge, 1983), pp 73-88; and "Protestant theologies, limited sovereignties: natural law and conditions of union in the German Empire, the Netherlands and Great Britain," in *A union for empire*, (J. Robertson, ed.), (Cambridge, 1995), pp 171-97. The similarities between Hutcheson's thinking on the passions and Carmichael's on natural law are striking. Both have a theory of moral calculation, both suggest the possibility of moral improvement, and both posit a theory of obligation based on moral appreciation.

<sup>114</sup> Quoted in R. B. Sher, "Professors of virtue: the social history of the Edinburgh moral philosophy chair in the eighteenth century," in *Studies in the philosophy of the Scottish enlightenment*, (M. A. Stewart, ed.), (Oxford, 1990), p. 95.

<sup>115</sup> R. Wodrow, *Analecta*, (Edinburgh, 1843), volume four, pp 95-6.

<sup>116</sup> S. Pufendorf, *On the duty of man and citizen according to natural law*, (J. Tully, ed.), (Cambridge, 1981).

<sup>117</sup> G. Carmichael, *On Samuel Pufendorf's De officio hominis et civis: supplements and appendix*, (J. N. Lenhart and C. H. Reeves eds.), (Ohio, 1985), p. 14.

and his reflection upon the love of, and esteem towards, his maker. While an individual was motivated to become “as happy as he can become, and as far removed as possible from all misery” he was able to discern

with that power of reasoning...that he has been created not by himself, nor for himself alone, but that from God, equally the best and the greatest, he derives himself and all his possessions; who since He has created all things and from them most justly no less than most wisely makes arrangement for the illustration of His own glory.<sup>118</sup>

Consequently the essence of man’s obligation and his moral duty was “bound up with the preservation of the due subordination of himself to God” as expressed through his actions either directly, through active worship, or indirectly, through love of others. Man felt indebted to his benefactor. Worship, for Carmichael, equated to gratitude, expressed through actions which “give witness to his love and veneration of his Creator and Lord, and so in a certain practical way serve the latter’s glory.”<sup>119</sup>

The question of will and determination on the part of the agent was troubling to a natural law thinker such as Carmichael. The essence of natural law was

the very constitution of human nature and of other things which present themselves to the observation of men, that constitution, by the existence of which, provided at the same time with the perfections of the godhead which shine forth therefrom, certain acts of men are necessarily enfolded in certain circumstances, whence on the one hand is drawn a conviction of love and veneration toward the godhead, on the other of contempt or hatred...The will of God, however in so far as indicated in this...mode, is called natural law.<sup>120</sup>

How and why such a nature might choose to express hatred and contempt towards its benefactor was inherently problematic. The coincidence of experience with celestial plans which permeated both Carmichael’s thought and the writings of Hutcheson was thrown askew by the evident existence of evil. Carmichael acknowledged that the scheme he adopted implied predestination and he puzzled over the dilemma which morally repugnant activity posed:

How much indeed, for achieving that highest blessedness or avoiding equal wretchedness, any disposition of our actions could, in this debased condition of human nature, contribute is, from the very nature of things, determined with difficulty. Meanwhile, this is sufficiently established: that, if there be any way left to men of achieving the former, of avoiding the latter (and concerning this matter the kindly dispensation of divine providence toward the human race does not utterly bid us

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<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2, and pp 1-2.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

despair), each member of the human race can hope more rightly that he will be competent in so far as in his individual actions he may demonstrate his state of mind devoted to the divine spirit; moreover of obtaining the infinite good, or of avoiding the infinite evil.<sup>121</sup>

This only accentuated the problem Hutcheson confronted throughout his literary career.<sup>122</sup>

What is clear from the *Inquiry* is the central position Hutcheson granted to the issue of individual natural rights. This, coupled with a belief in man's sociability led Hutcheson to accentuate the intersubjective nature of morality. Each man determined the moral worth of actions he witnessed. Yet this moral sense was social in that it required both an actor and an observer for a moral judgement to occur. It was not an individualistic, but a social vision of morality, that emphasised the repercussions of men's actions on the society at large. In that it was a system dependent upon trust.<sup>123</sup> One had to trust that the actions of another were motivated by generous, worthy motives. Only by assuming that others were motivated by virtue could Hutcheson set the individual of the 'Inquiry concerning beauty' into the sociable relations as he desired. If individuals mistrusted each other, and assumed self-interest motivated others, society would segment. The question of evil intent was the dark underbelly of Hutcheson's optimistic assessment of human nature. The system in the *Inquiry* required trust, sociability and virtue to operate successfully.

But why did Hutcheson take the trouble of writing the *Inquiry* and steering it through the printing presses? What was his motivation to write? The work, while predominantly a work of ethics had ended with an extended discussion of the political rights of humans and had thereby entered a more controversial realm of debate. His awareness of the potential for an adverse response to the book had perhaps led him to withhold his name from the cover of the first edition, only admitting to authorship when a generally positive response from the public had allayed any fears he might have had.

The provocative character of Hutcheson's book was heightened by the nature of the writer's life. He was of Presbyterian stock, and he remained loyal to his Church's doctrine throughout his life. In the context of early eighteenth-century Dublin, that was sufficient to ensure wariness about publishing. It also suggests a motivation for Hutcheson to write.

The political context of the period was shaped, for those of Roman Catholic or Presbyterian persuasion, by penal legislation. The Irish parliament had introduced a series of punitive laws against the Roman Catholic and dissenting populations of the country. The aim was to exclude them from the state, to ensure their presence did not contaminate the godly community and support the smooth exercise of providence in Ireland. For a

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<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>122</sup> For a study of his most extensive attempt to answer the question of evil see chapter six.

Presbyterian like Hutcheson to seek to be a public figure in the Irish republic of letters requires some explanation.

The penal laws began in 1695 with an act against Catholics bearing arms or owning horses above the value of five pounds. These were a military tool and symbol of status. This act was furthered when a second act in the same year made it illegal for Catholics to be educated abroad, or to run schools at home. This ensured that the practice of sending children to foreign seminaries was curtailed and hit at the Catholics churches capacity to replicate itself in the long term. 1697 saw further legislation against popery. The Bishops Banishment Act intended to ensure that no new priests could be created within the jurisdiction of the Irish state. Interdenominational marriage was also legislated against, with a range of measures providing for the continuance of Protestant land holding on any occasion when a Catholic and a Protestant wed.

Land was at the core of the next burst of penal legislation. In 1704 the Act to Prevent the Growth of Popery provided the most extensive buttress yet against the Catholic threat. It prevented Catholics from inheriting land or from purchasing it outright. Long leases were outlawed, and the remaining Catholic land was to be subdivided to ensure it was not economically capable of supporting the gentry ranks to the status they demanded.

The following year further legislation against the authorities of the Roman Church was passed, tightening the regulations in the Bishops Banishment Act concerning the registering of priests by local authorities before they were allowed to fulfil their duties in the parish. The sporadic campaign finally drew to a halt when in 1709 the Parliament decided to extend the abjuration oath to Roman Catholic priests.<sup>124</sup> Simultaneously they introduced the category of discoverer, who would benefit financially or through land, if they discovered that an estate had been placed in Catholic hands through the exploitation of any loopholes in the system.<sup>125</sup>

The justification for this series of laws was that Roman Catholics had forsaken their civil rights through their confessional allegiance to a foreign prince: the Pope in Rome. The Anglicans understood themselves as 'The English in Ireland.' They realised that their proximity to the native Catholics, the capacity of Roman Catholics to migrate to the continent, and the unstable relations between the two communities, meant that their defeat of James II, if not protected might prove pyrrhic. Thus the politics of the island were more

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<sup>123</sup> Just as Molesworth's schemes for agricultural improvement depended on trust between the landlord and the tenant. On this see chapter one.

<sup>124</sup> It was briefly revived in 1728 with the removal of voting rights from Roman Catholics.

<sup>125</sup> M. Wall, "The penal laws, 1691-1760" in *Catholic Ireland in the eighteenth century: collected essays of Maureen Wall*, (G. O'Brien ed.), (Dublin, 1989), pp 1-60. C.f. S. Connolly, *Religion, law and power: the making of Protestant Ireland 1660-1760*, (Oxford, 1992), pp 263-313.

confessional in hue than those of England. The Irish House of Commons was dominated by Tories closer in spirit to the Non-jurors than to their Whiggish English counterparts.

The justification for the penal legislation against the Presbyterian community was subtler than that used to rebut Roman Catholic pretensions. The Anglican community was caught in a bind by the Presbyterians. While their shared Protestantism could inspire moves towards toleration and the creation of a united Protestant front capable of facing down the threat of Roman Catholicism, the Anglican community was acutely aware of the potential for Presbyterianism to become the dominant form of Protestantism on the island. As early as 1672 the Anglican speculator William Petty estimated that the two confessions had the loyalty of an equal number of adherents, about 150,000. He estimated the Catholic population stood around 800,000.<sup>126</sup> The Presbyterian immigration from Scotland in the wake of economic failure in the 1690s had since accentuated the problem.<sup>127</sup>

This fear was coupled with a fear of Presbyterian political theology. Where Catholics placed the Pope over the King, Presbyterians placed loyalty to their doctrine over loyalty to the crown. This was evidenced in the Presbyterian doctrine of justifiable rebellion. To Tory minds the concept of legitimate rebellion was repulsive. To Whig minds the issue was equally emotive and the distrust of dissenters this doctrine created was the motive force behind the introduction of penal legislation against Presbyterians.

The aim of the penal laws against the Presbyterians was to exclude them from offices of state. Intriguingly the distrust of the dissenters expressed in the Test Act of 1704 was that of the English Whiggish government and not the Tory-inclined Irish parliament. Despite its evident effect on the Presbyterian community, both in terms of its actual power and in terms of its self-identity, the Test Act came into being rather by accident.

While Anthony Dopping, Bishop of Meath and Edward Synge the elder, Bishop of Tuam had both actively sought the introduction of a Test Act, the actual initiative for the measure was not Irish at all. In 1703 the Heads of Bills the Irish government sent over the water included legislation against the inheritance of Protestant lands by Catholic heirs, and criminalised the purchase of land by Catholics unless the land was already held by a Roman Catholic. It had also legislated to limit the number of Catholic merchants in the towns of Limerick and Galway and to restrict the ease with which Catholics had been able to get an education on the continent.

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<sup>126</sup> Cited in S. Connolly, *Religion, law and power: the making of Protestant Ireland 1660-1760*, (Oxford, 1992), p. 144.

<sup>127</sup> As T. C. Smout has written: "In 1690 and for half a century after that, Scotland showed in a peculiarly acute form all the evils of a traditional underdeveloped economy." The crops failed in 1695, 6, 8 and 9, leading to anything up a third of the population having "died or fled." T. C. Smout, *A history of the Scottish people, 1560-1830*, (London, 1970), pp 241-2.

The English Privy Council tacked the Test onto this bill for 'the prevention of the growth of popery,' when it was put before them in December 1703. Indeed the Privy Council, despite their Whig character, strengthened the bill as a whole.<sup>128</sup> Why they added a Test clause to the bill has been the subject of speculation ever since. Bishop Gilbert Burnet speculated it was added in a miscalculated attempt to have the entire bill thrown out upon its return to the Irish Parliament. However, it would appear that the motive was to bring Irish legislation into line with England. Either way, the bill met with little resistance in the House of Commons. Debated on 22 February 1704, the test clause was the thorniest issue in the discussion. Despite this no more than twenty voices opposed the Test Act.

Despite the domination of the Tories in the Irish episcopacy, the debate did reveal a divide in the Irish polity concerning how to best engage with the dissenting community within the establishment. Alongside the high-minded and authoritarian approach of the bishops was a belief that it was necessary to make common cause with the dissenters if the real enemy, the Roman Catholics were to be overcome. This second attitude advocated the construction of a common front based upon the Protestant root of the matter. The protagonists of this position lobbied for a bill of indulgence to be granted supplying the dissenters with a reason to remain loyal and quiescent. But for Presbyterians the Test, far from being an opportunity for the development of an accord across the chasm, was a thinly disguised tool for Anglicans to proselytise among the dissenters. The Test allowed for the easy identification and civil discipline of nonconformists.<sup>129</sup> Ultimately, the Test Act passed into law without a bill of indulgence, leaving dissenters at risk from persecution.

The Act disqualified Presbyterians from holding places within the Irish administration and from participating in local government.<sup>130</sup> While it did not disqualify Presbyterians from becoming Members of Parliament, it did adversely affect their capacity to do so. Most importantly, the Test Act deeply damaged the urban power bases of the faith in the north of the country. Through utilising membership of the city corporations, the dissenters had established a role in the politics of the post-Restoration era. The Test Act made such public activities illegal. Londonderry was the most affected corporation, with the mass resignation of the dissenting burgesses in 1704. Belfast, the other stronghold of Presbyterian influence in Ulster, did not experience such a dramatic cull of its social leaders. The authorities ignored the Test until a faction-fight flared in 1706. This drew the

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<sup>128</sup> For an analysis of the passage of the bill see J. G. Simms, "The making of a penal law, 1703-4," in J. G. Simms, *War and politics in Ireland, 1649-1730*, (London, 1986), pp 263-76.

<sup>129</sup> In this: "The Test...was trying to reverse a process [of acculturation] that had been evolving for thirty years." P. Kilroy, *Protestant dissent and controversy in Ireland, 1660-1714*, (Cork, 1994), p. 193.

<sup>130</sup> The 1719 Toleration Act relieved the community of the first of these exactions. However, the proscription on participation in corporations remained in force.

government's attention to the anomalous position of the Presbyterians on the corporation. This culminated, in 1707, in the removal of the five Presbyterian councillors.<sup>131</sup> As Archbishop King of Dublin reported to Edward Southwell, the secretary of state:

The Test got a parting blow for on a disputed election for Belfast it was found that only four burgesses of Belfast were at the election, and on enquiry the reason was given that the other burgesses durst not act having not taken the Test. The question then came in very naturally whether they were obliged to take it or no, and on a fair division the House resolved that they were. This is looked on to be a fuller declaration of the sense of the House than all that happened before for they were under no necessity to make any such declaration.<sup>132</sup>

The situation in Dublin appears to have been similar to that in Londonderry. Of the situation in the capital, Jacqueline Hill has surmised:

The two decades that followed the introduction of the Sacramental Test appear to have been the most barren of the entire century as far as dissenter representation on the aldermanic board was concerned.... After the withdrawal of Bell, and the retirement, c.1705, of Jervis, no dissenter has been identified on the Dublin [aldermanic] board before the elevation of Joseph Kane in 1722.<sup>133</sup>

This removal of the dissenters from their power base on the corporations had serious repercussions for their ability to stand for Parliament. The loss of parliamentary representation in both Derry and Belfast seems attributable to the malign influence of the Test Act. While Coleraine and Carrickfergus were relatively unaffected, the overall picture made for gloomy reflections in the dissenting community. Parliamentary representation by active Presbyterians declined dramatically, for as David Hayton elucidated:

At no general election between 1692 and 1727 were more than nine dissenters returned to parliament, out of an Irish House of Commons comprising three hundred members. Interestingly, that peak was reached in 1703, the year before the imposition of the Test. At the next election, in 1713, the total fell to five, at least in part as a result of determined efforts made by Tories and high churchmen within the Dublin administration against the return of Whiggish and dissenting candidates. In the more favourable political climate of 1715 the number rose to seven or eight...but by 1727 it had dropped once more, to five, or even four.<sup>134</sup>

While this slump is not entirely attributable to the presence of the Test in statute law, the statistics indicate the straits into which the state directed the Presbyterian interest.

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<sup>131</sup> D. Hayton, "Exclusion, conformity and parliamentary representation: the impact of the sacramental test on Irish dissenting politics," in *The politics of Irish dissent, 1650-1800*, (K. Herlihy, ed.), (Dublin, 1997), pp 60-2 and pp 64-5.

<sup>132</sup> W. King to Mr. Southwell, Dublin, 8 November 1707, NLI MS 2055.

<sup>133</sup> J. Hill, "Dublin corporation, Protestant dissent, and politics, 1660-1800," in *The politics of Irish dissent, 1650-1800*, (K. Herlihy, ed.), (Dublin, 1997), p. 32.

Although the British administration had introduced the Test, and the Irish parliament had little to do with the legislation, their roles were quickly reversed. The Irish Anglican community was content to have the measure on the statute book and were not to be convinced of the desirability of removing it. An invasion scare in 1707 resulted in moves by the government to shore up Presbyterian loyalty. In a speech at the opening of the parliamentary session on 7 July 1707, the Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Pembroke requested that the Parliament consider repealing the Test. Nothing came of the proposal. The appointment of the Lord Wharton in 1708 saw the Presbyterian issue again on the agenda. Once again a Lord Lieutenant hinted at removing the Test in the opening session of a parliament. That he had to repeat his hint at the end of the session of 1709 and at the opening of the 1710 session only indicates how little came of these appeals.<sup>135</sup>

Opposition to the removal of the Test was strongest among the churchmen. Archbishop King of Dublin opposed any toleration of the dissenting population, and the Dean of St. Patrick's, Jonathan Swift, penned a vigorous defence of the legislation.<sup>136</sup> The churchmen were however speaking to an audience of believers. The parliamentarians were content to keep the Test and the British government was not prepared to force the issue. With the rise of the Tories to power in Britain in 1710, the issue fell off the agenda.

Throughout the period, the Presbyterians actively petitioned for the removal of the Test, but they could do little in the face of the obdurate opposition of the Parliament. This appeared likely to change in 1714, with the death of Queen Anne, the accession of King George and the fall of the Tories from power in England. The payment of the Regium Donum, which had been stopped in 1710, was resumed and the English government was broadly pro-dissenter in its temper.

The net effect of the Test Act was to keep Presbyterians outside the limits of the Irish Anglican confessional polity. The degree to which they were left alone was by way of Anglican condescension, not because of any intrinsic rights or liberties that they could claim from the state. They were, as the Anglican politicians understood, left with no place to go. The Presbyterians could not conform to the idea of a Jacobite and Catholic polity, and nor could they, despite efforts in that direction, develop an opposing civil and religious polity. They were, by the grace of God, left between the rock of Catholicism and the hard place of an Anglican dominated confessional state.

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<sup>134</sup> D. Hayton, "Exclusion, conformity and parliamentary representation: the impact of the sacramental test on Irish dissenting politics," in *The politics of Irish dissent, 1650-1800*, (K. Herlihy, ed.), (Dublin, 1997), p. 58.

<sup>135</sup> For a discussion of this see J. C. Beckett, *Protestant dissent in Ireland, 1687-1780*, (London, 1946).

<sup>136</sup> For a collection of Swift's pamphlets on the Test Act see J. Swift, *Writings on religion and the church*, volume two, (T. Scott, ed.), (London, 1898), pp 1-111.



The extent of this predicament was illustrated by the passage in 1719 of a Toleration Act. Far from being an acknowledgement of the rights and liberties of the dissenting community, it was a tacit reminder of the truth that the dissenters' freedom was dependent on the good will of their Episcopalian neighbours. The Toleration Act did not alter the fundamental shape of the problem. The Presbyterians were granted space through the good will of the Anglicans and not because of rights they held.

The bill developed out of the invasion scare of 1715. With the neighbouring kingdom of Scotland overrun by Jacobite forces, the Anglican and dissenter communities were frightened of the potential success of a French invasion fleet, which, they imagined, might appear along the coastline. Confronted with this possibility, the government mobilised the Anglican militias to counter the threat. This prompted the Presbyterians, many of whom had close connections to those being overrun in the Scottish lowlands, to arm and drill in preparation for the expected battle. The Anglican polis turned a blind eye to these developments, accepting these unexpected allies so long as they did not turn against the state. This was in line with the events surrounding the Glorious Revolution, where the dissenters were loyal to their co-Protestants rather than siding with the Jacobites.

Hutcheson's family had some experience of these matters. In 1714, when George I's succession to the throne of England was a matter of dispute, John Hutcheson, father of Francis, had been at the forefront of efforts in the Synod of Ulster to provide a show of support for the Hanoverian claimant. Having garnered support for a show of force, John Hutcheson was instrumental in the drawing up of a list of able bodied Presbyterians, prepared, if need arose, to fight for the Hanoverians and against the Jacobite disputant:

When this calculation was made, they had a difficulty to get the Court of Hanover made acquaint with it, it being most inconvenient that any of the Ministers should go [to] Hanover; and so they deputed one Du Board, a French Minister, and bore his charges, and sent him over to Hanover, where he had quick access to the Elector, King George the First, and let him see the list and their officers. The Elector was very fond to hear there were fifty thousand stanch friends to him. He promised, as soon as possible, to endeavour to provide them arms, and received the proposal with many thanks.<sup>137</sup>

While the Toleration Act gave the Presbyterians immunity from prosecution for joining militias, it was not a renunciation by the state of the power of prosecution. Parliament had to renew the Act regularly and it was no more than a dispensation granted by the Irish state in specific circumstances. It did not recognise any actual legal rights of the Presbyterian

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<sup>137</sup> T. Wodrow, *Analecta*, (Edinburgh, 1843), volume four, p. 233.

community. It was quite specifically, an act of tolerance by a powerful polity of a community within its midst.

At the heart of the debate that evolved around the imposition of the Test Act and the content of the Toleration Act was the question of whether the Anglican community could trust the Presbyterians. While the dissenters had remained loyal to the Protestant community in Ireland during the vital years from 1685 to 1690, the tension was never far from the surface.<sup>138</sup> The threat of a combined Catholic-dissenting force was a recurring nightmare for Irish Anglicans. The intermittent invasion-scares reminded them of the precarious nature of their existence.

The issue of trust made the militia issue and the matter of office holding central. If the Presbyterians could be trusted they ought to be included in the defence and running of the polity. If they could not be trusted their exclusion from these posts was a priority for the Anglican community. Moreover, this circumstance was central to the development of Hutcheson's ethical and political philosophy. It placed him in a peculiar rhetorical position. He had to argue for the recognition of rights not to defend rights already held. Thus he developed a theory of natural rights to legitimate the dissenting community's position. They were not able to enact political virtues and defend their rights from a central authority, as was the case with the Anglicans.

In this Hutcheson's position was compatible with family tradition. His grandfather was also a central actor in the granting of the Regium Donum to the Presbyterian community:

One day, old Mr. [Alexander] Hutcheson was with the Earl of Granard, and the Earl gave him account what pains he had been at in settling the Civil List; and that now all the Crown rents and revenues were disposed of all collocated to proper services, save six hundred pound. On this, a thought came in Mr. Hutcheson's mind, which he ventured to propose to the Earl; and this was the occasion and foundation of the Royal bounty to the Presbyterian Ministers in that kingdom. Mr. Hutcheson ventured to tell the Earl that all the King's friends were provided for, and taken a care of; only the dissenting Ministers, who had been firm Royalists in Oliver's time, were still under incapacities, though they would never join with the Usurper, pray for him, or countenance him: That they had been considerable sufferers for their loyalty, and had no small share in forwarding the King's Restoration; and the allocating of that small matter of six hundred a year, to be divided in small portions among them, for the support of their families would be an act of generosity, and worthy of the King. The Earl knew what Mr. Hutcheson said was fact, and promised to use his interest at Court to get the thing done; and he accomplished it.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> There was no effort on the part of James to make a pact with Irish dissenters.

<sup>139</sup> R. Wodrow, *Analecta*, (Edinburgh, 1843), volume four, p. 232. The Regium Donum was a grant of money from the king's purse.

This was more of symbolic than financial importance for it constituted legal recognition by the monarch of the dissenting community in Ireland. It was a statement of the trust the King had for his Presbyterian subjects and was a step on the road to a more general inclusion in the polity. That its payment was halted and renewed as parties took power emphasised its role as a barometer of trust.

What this may imply is that Hutcheson wrote the *Inquiry* for the Dublin establishment as argument for tolerating the Presbyterian community. It can be read as a polite essay with a polemical edge. A pointedly political piece ran the danger of alienating the audience he may have been trying to attract - the Irish establishment. The *Inquiry* showed how man might live a virtuous life which was not limited to participation in the political realm of action. It might therefore be read as supplying an ethical, if not a political life for the dissenters.

This reading of the *Inquiry* does have the merit of making sense of the series of relationships that Hutcheson cultivated while in the Irish capital. A participant in Molesworth's social circle, Hutcheson befriended members of the political religious establishment.<sup>140</sup> He used the *Inquiry* to introduce himself to these circles. It was his means of gaining access to the powerful and may have been his argument for how power ought to be exercised. If this is so, the *Inquiry* was less an attempt to inculcate the virtues of tolerance into a recalcitrant Anglican establishment, than an example of Hutcheson's philosophical optimism. He may have trusted that given sufficient encouragement and reassurance the benevolent nature of the Anglicans would inspire them to do the right thing by their Presbyterian neighbours.

It is perhaps indicative of this concern with the attitude of the Irish Anglican elite towards his work that the sole acknowledgement that Hutcheson offered in reference to the 'Inquiry concerning moral good and evil' was to Anglican cleric. In the preface to the *Inquiry* he recalled how the work had benefited from the perceptive criticism of a friend:

To be concerned in this book can be no honour to a person so justly celebrated for the most generous sentiments of virtue and religion, delivered with the most manly eloquence; yet it would not be just toward the world should the author conceal his obligations to the Reverend Mr. Edward Synge, not only for revising these papers, when they stood in great need of accurate review, but for suggesting several just amendments in the general scheme of morality. The author was much confirmed in his opinion of the justness of these thoughts upon finding that this gentleman had

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<sup>140</sup> See particularly the relationship with John Carteret in chapter five and with William King in chapter six.

fallen into the same way of thinking before him, and will ever look upon his friendship as one of the great advantages and pleasures of his life.<sup>141</sup>

In his later years Hutcheson went to great lengths to inquire after Synge's opinion of his work. When Hutcheson sent the manuscript of his *System of moral philosophy* to Ireland, risking the vagaries of travel across stormy waters, to receive the annotations of his friends, he hoped William Bruce would give the text to Synge. Expressing his desire in a letter to his friend Thomas Drennan, Hutcheson wrote of how:

in November last I sent some papers at Will[iam] Bruce's desire to be perused by Dr. Rundle, a traik as they call it here, attends them. They came to Will only on the 8th of February, by contrary winds, and though my design was to get Will's and Abernethy's opinion, he without looking into them gave them immediately to the Bishop, where perhaps they may lie a good time to little purpose; and it may be resented, unless Synge sees them too.<sup>142</sup>

As William Leechman affirmed in his account of Hutcheson's life: "The reverend Dr. Synge, now Lord Bishop of Elphin, whose friendship Dr. Hutcheson always regarded as one of the greatest pleasures and advantages of his life, likewise revised his papers, and assisted him in the general scheme of the work [the *Inquiry*]"<sup>143</sup>

Synge also remembered the friendship with pleasure. In the subscription list to the *System*, ten sets were put aside for "The Right Revd Lord Bishop of Elphin."<sup>144</sup> More remarkable was the dedication to the work, signed by Hutcheson's only surviving offspring, his son Francis. He chose to honour the "Right Reverend Father in God, Edward, Lord Bishop of Elphin." Explaining his decision he recalled how:

Your Lordship's known regard for the sacred interests of virtue and religion is sufficient to ensure your favourable reception of any work which tends to promote those great and important ends. The following has yet a farther claim to your Lordship's favour. The author, my excellent father, (your Lordship knows I exceed not the truth in calling him so) was formerly honoured with a place in your friendship. As this was a source of the highest pleasure to him while he lived, so it must reflect particular honour upon his memory.<sup>145</sup>

Edward Synge was the product and last exemplar of a dynasty of Anglican clerics, whose lineage began with his late granduncle, George. Born in 1594 in England, George had risen in the church administration, becoming the Bishop of Cloyne in 1638. He held

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<sup>141</sup> T1, (second ed.), (London, 1726), p. 27.

<sup>142</sup> F. Hutcheson to T. Drennan, GUL MSS Gen. 1018 f. 4b recto. Thomas Rundle (1688?-1743) was the Bishop of Derry (1735-43) and seems to have had Arian leanings. See *DNB*, volume seventeen, pp 403-5.

<sup>143</sup> PSMP, p. vii.

<sup>144</sup> Subscription list, SMP

<sup>145</sup> Dedication, SMP

onto his Irish see until his nomination to the archbishopric of Tuam, a post he never attained thanks to the vagaries of the civil wars.

Synge's grandfather, also named Edward, had followed his elder brother into the church. Born in England in 1614, he had also served in the Irish Church as Bishop of Limerick from the Restoration until his translation to the diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross in 1663, once the seat of his deceased brother. He died in 1677, not living to see the elevation of his son, and Synge's father, to the see of Raphoe. The most successful of the dynasty, Edward Synge II was born in 1659 in Ireland and was educated at Christ Church College, Oxford. Recipient of an MA from Trinity College, Dublin, he began his career as vicar at Christ Church in Cork. Elevated to the see of Raphoe in 1714, he was made Archbishop of Tuam in 1716, holding the post for twenty-five years.

This longevity enabled him to see the final product of the family rise in the church. Edward Synge III, Hutcheson's companion, was born in Ireland in 1691. Upon receiving an M.A. from Trinity College, Dublin, he dedicated himself to the church. He served in the office of vicar to the Lord Lieutenant and as Chancellor of St. Patrick's Dublin, before his father consecrated him in St. Edburgh's upon his elevation to the see of Clonfert on 28 May 1730. He was translated to Cloyne a year later, subsequently heading the diocese of Ferns and Leighlin from 8 February 1733 until 15 May 1740. From then, until his death in Dublin on 26 January 1762, he was the Bishop of Elphin.

It was while serving at St. Patrick's Cathedral, under the watchful eye of Archbishop William King, that Synge made Hutcheson's acquaintance. They may have encountered each other at Breckdenstown, where religious latitude and political radicalism were openly espoused. The proximity of their world-view, despite the confessional differences dividing them, can be seen in Synge's finest sermon, preached in the same year as Hutcheson's *Inquiry*. On 30 October 1725, the *Dublin Weekly Journal* recorded:

Saturday last, being the anniversary of the execrable Irish rebellion, the same was celebrated here with the usual solemnities. The Right Reverend Father in God, the Lord Bishop of Clonfert [Arthur Price] preached before his excellency the Lord Lieutenant [John Carteret] at Christ Church; as did also the Reverend Mr. Edward Synge at St. Andrew's before the House of Commons.<sup>146</sup>

Chaplain to the Lord Lieutenant, Synge was preaching before an influential audience on a significant date. The sermon was read at commemorative service for those Protestants who died in the 1641 Ulster rebellion.

The rebellion had broken out on the night of 22 October 1641, spreading rapidly throughout Ulster. Roman Catholic tenants who were forced to extreme measures by

economic hardship rose in a violent attempt to evict their Protestant neighbours. Predominantly Presbyterian, the victims had streamed south to Dublin, bringing with them tales of torture, torment and death. Although greatly exaggerated these tales of atrocity appalled the Irish Houses of Parliament who responded by actively repressing the insurgents. Sending troops northwards, the two parties became entangled in the greater controversy between the English monarch and his own legislature. The rebels claimed, however spuriously, the authority of King Charles I for their actions, while the Irish Parliament understood itself to be defending themselves against the absolutist schemes of the king. The conflict exacerbated the tensions in both Ireland and England, with John Pym, the leader of the opposition, utilising the tales of violence and mayhem to great effect in the English House of Commons.<sup>147</sup> In this regard the events of 1641 in Ulster destabilised the British polity as well as leaving a scar on the memory of the Irish Protestant community.<sup>148</sup>

That memory was kept fresh by the establishment of a commemorative sermon on the anniversary of the rebellion's outbreak in the Anglican community's liturgical year.<sup>149</sup> Alone in its distinctively Irish character, it joined the anniversary of the Gunpowder plot and subsequently the coming of King William, as one of the rituals celebrating the evidence of God's providential favour towards the Anglican creed. These sermons were often bloodthirsty, anti-Catholic and patriotic in their tenor, and remained part of the calendar until the end of the eighteenth century.

Synge chose a segment from Luke, xiv, 23 that read "compel them to come in." He used this verse to expound upon the dangers under which the Irish polity was put. Alongside those common to other states, the character of which he did not indicate, Synge revealed "there is one almost peculiar to it, which has contributed not a little, to make the public peace of the society, at all times uncertain and precarious."<sup>150</sup> This was that

whereas in other kingdoms, all the members of the community, or at least a vast majority of them, however they differ in matters of less moment, are, in the main, united in their civil interests, and, unless at some certain times, when they are heated with ambition, or resentment, heartily concur in their endeavours to support the constitution, in this kingdom, great numbers of those, who have

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<sup>146</sup> *DWJ*, 31, 30 October 1725, p. 124.

<sup>147</sup> See A. Fletcher, *The outbreak of the English civil war*, (London, 1981), pp 166-8.

<sup>148</sup> This account draws from R. Gillespie, "The end of an era: Ulster and the outbreak of the 1641 rising," in *Natives and newcomers*, (C. Brady, ed.), (Dublin, 1986), pp 191-214 and B. MacCurta, *Ulster 1641: aspects of the rising*, (Belfast, 1993).

<sup>149</sup> For a study of their character and history see T. C. Barnard, "The uses of 23 October, 1641 and Irish Protestant celebrations," in *English Historical Review*, 106, (1991), pp 889-920.

<sup>150</sup> *CTC*, p. 1.

enjoyed the protection of the government, have yet been enemies to it, and have shown themselves ready, on any favourable juncture, to exert their utmost force and power to overthrow it.<sup>151</sup>

Having raised this spectre, Synge explicitly identified the threat as emanating from “the Romish religion.” He outlined a history of deceit and betrayal by the Catholics, citing “the many conspiracies formed against Queen Elizabeth, the Gun powder plot and the dreadful massacre of this day [23 October 1641]” as empirical evidence of his assertion. The cause of this deceit and vengefulness lay squarely upon the Catholics’ “furious and blind zeal for their religion and not any difficulties or pressures they laboured under in their civil interests.”<sup>152</sup>

Up to this point, Synge’s oration was in line with the traditional content of these sermons; anti-Catholic, self-justificatory and triumphalist. But, determined to place into the argument an objection which he noted “has been urged against the laws made in both kingdoms for the security of the government against the Popish faction,”<sup>153</sup> he asserted:

That the true cause of that opposition of interests, which divides the power of the community, and renders one part of it so justly suspected to the other, being a difference in their principles of religion, arising from their different notions of the Christian law, ‘tis impossible to frame any laws for the public security without forcing men’s consciences and invading that liberty which all persons ought to be allowed of following their dictates, in order to their own eternal salvation. And since it is certain that this ought in no case be done, it follows on this supposition that all laws of this sort, however necessary or useful they may be thought to the weal-public, are in themselves unjust and unreasonable and therefore ought not to be made or continued.<sup>154</sup>

Beginning with the state of the controversy, Synge observed how “ever since the Christian religion has been the religion of states and empires, almost all parties have discovered a strong disposition to use force against those who differ from them.”<sup>155</sup> This had resulted in the development of a range of contrasting views among supporters of such actions and among those who had suffered at the hands of the state. Furthermore, he noted a second issue concerning the legitimacy of the state:

In a state where the magistrate is Christian, ‘tis possible to conceive this power of using force placed in the hand either of the governors of the Christian society or of the civil power....Here then the question is, whether this right of using force, be originally in the governors of the Christian society

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<sup>151</sup> *CTC*, p. 1.

<sup>152</sup> *CTC*, p. 2.

<sup>153</sup> *CTC*, p. 3.

<sup>154</sup> *CTC*, p. 3. For the consequences of this argument in Presbyterian thought see chapter three.

<sup>155</sup> *CTC*, p. 5.

or in the civil magistrate? And if in the latter, whether it be in consequence of a particular divine appointment, or of the general nature of his office?<sup>156</sup>

Synge took time to question as to “whether, to justify the use of force, we are to consider the opinions and practices, to restrain or punish which it is applied, merely as errors in religion, or...[as] prejudicial to the public peace and security of the state?” He considered these to be “the principal points which have arisen on this controversy” and he used them as points on a compass to navigate the stormy waters in which he sailed.<sup>157</sup>

He began his consideration of the Church of Rome, which he understood to have had “on all occasions made the greatest use of force.”<sup>158</sup> As Synge understood the Roman Catholic stance, it accepted the use of force in matters theological, and extended it to capital punishment in cases of heresy. As to the identity of the legitimate authority the view was much less clear. Synge claimed to be uncertain as to whether the Roman Catholic church was in favour of permitting the secular authority a role in the running of religion or not but he believed that

if the matter be considered with any attention, it will soon appear that the right of inflicting even capital punishments...is really according to their principles in the rulers and governors of the church....When they deliver any person over to the magistrate, 'tis not left to his choice whether he'll execute him or no.<sup>159</sup>

His ground for this was the Catholic monopoly over the identification of heresy “this right they say is by divine appointment vested in the church.” Those who refused to recognise this claim ran the risk of being excommunicated “and they who are thus cut off, they say, ought to be punished with corporal punishments.”<sup>160</sup>

Synge bemoaned the fact that “in this doctrine, several Protestants have unhappily agreed with them.” In a swipe against the resistance theories of the Calvinists he expressed his dismay at how some maintained that they held “a coercive power over the prince, if he refuses to extirpate a false religion.” He wryly pointed out how “the only difference then, between them and the Church of Rome, in this point, is, that they do not think the same doctrines true, nor the same persons heretic.”<sup>161</sup>

Following this assault upon the ecclesiastic policies of the Church of Rome, which had put Synge's listeners at ease, the preacher considered the opposite stance. Whereas the Roman Catholic Church placed the sacred government over the secular, the reverse error

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<sup>156</sup> *CTC*, p. 6.

<sup>157</sup> *CTC*, p. 6.

<sup>158</sup> *CTC*, p. 7.

<sup>159</sup> *CTC*, pp 7-8.

<sup>160</sup> *CTC*, p. 8.

<sup>161</sup> *CTC*, p. 11.



was of equal import. This proposition, that the secular power shaped and directed proper church government, Synge associated with Hobbes.<sup>162</sup>

Thomas Hobbes had identified the “right of using this force...in the supreme civil power in every community...of prescribing what doctrines shall be professed and practices in religion followed by all members of the society.” Drawing his understanding of Hobbes’ convictions from *De cive*, Synge expounded how Hobbes contended: “This power [of the state] is universal and absolute in all cases, only that the civil power cannot decree against the being of God or his providence.” The consequences of such emphasis upon the public profession of faith for the private conscience were obviated by Hobbes’ deft introduction of a distinction between “inward opinions and their outward professions and actions.” As he understood, this ensured that no dissent could be legitimately expressed in public, thereby negating all threat to the public order. Hobbes justified this stance by asserting: “That they who enter into society do transfer all the right, which they can transfer, to the supreme civil power, and this right, he [Hobbes] says, is transferable.”<sup>163</sup> This opened the way for Synge to confirm his suspicions concerning the Hobbist theory:

The sum then of Mr. Hobbes’ principles is this, the supreme magistrate as head of the society, and not by any particular appointment of God, has a right to direct the religion of the state, what doctrines are to be professed, what practices followed. To these directions the people are obliged to give obedience. If not, he [the magistrate] may by force exact it, and punish the obstinate, even with capital punishments. And the reason of inflicting these punishments is not because the differing doctrines and practices are errors in religion, which affect the eternal salvation of those who adhere to them [which Synge accepted to be the case in Catholicism], but because they have evil effects on the civil state.<sup>164</sup>

Having outlined the theories of the Catholic Church and of the followers of Hobbes Synge considered “the truth on the several points that arise in this controversy, and answer[ed] the principal objections that have been made against it.” In relation to the implementation of the Christian law, he stated “’tis most evident that neither the governors of the Christian church, nor the civil magistrate have any right to use any sort of force to restrain or punish them [believers].” That this was so could be shown by considering the effect of “that memorable declaration of our blessed Saviour, My Kingdom is not of this world, [which] plainly cuts off all pretence to [the use of temporal force or coercion].”<sup>165</sup> Equally, the secular authority’s power was curtailed as

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<sup>162</sup> On Hutcheson’s refutation of Hobbes see chapter four.

<sup>163</sup> *CTC*, pp 11-2, p. 12, p. 13 and p. 13.

<sup>164</sup> *CTC*, p. 14.

either this right [to coerce] must arise from the nature of magistracy in general, or it must be some peculiar privilege to which he is entitled by being at the same time a magistrate and a Christian. Now it cannot be the former, because all power with which the magistrate, as such, is vested, is and must be limited to the concerns of the civil society, and therefore does not extend to punish any offences against the Christian law, when as the case is now put, they do not affect the public welfare. Nor can this be the particular privilege of the Christian magistrate, because 'tis plain that Christ Jesus has nowhere vested him with it.<sup>166</sup>

Central to Synge's rejection of the legitimacy of coercion in matters spiritual was the conviction that the only end towards which such actions ought to be directed was the saving of the soul. Yet this required a change in the heart of the heretic. This could not be effected by the infliction of corporal pain. He argued that coercion would "make men hypocrites, and tempt them to dissemble their opinions."<sup>167</sup>

The effect on the society as a whole would be just as catastrophic. Synge believed that if one considered "the many differences which actually subsist among Christians, [to provide magistrates with coercive power] must introduce the wildest and most universal confusion, so can it not be in the whole for the advantage of truth." The dilemma lay in the lack of any one "common superior on earth" to whom adjudication could be delegated.<sup>168</sup> Instead, he envisioned a world in which

every sect must and will take those opinions to be true and those practices to be agreeable to the Word of God, which they think to be so....Nothing certainly can be in itself more wild and extravagant. Nor was there [Synge concluded] ever any practice, more destitute of even a plausible foundation...than that of propagating religion by force.<sup>169</sup>

Faced with this problem, Synge proposed using "calm reasoning, persuasion, explaining our own opinions, showing the falsehood and absurdity of other men's, proofs from the holy scripture" to attain voluntary conformity from the heretic.<sup>170</sup>

Turning to consider his chosen text, "compel them to come in," Synge offered two observations to confute its use as scriptural justification for the use of force in matters spiritual. First he noted that the words appeared as "part of a parable" and therefore "'tis scarce allowable at all to argue from." Then he explained how "there is no necessity to understand them in the sense which favours force and corporal punishments." Examination

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<sup>165</sup> *CTC*, p. 20.

<sup>166</sup> *CTC*, p. 21.

<sup>167</sup> *CTC*, p. 21.

<sup>168</sup> *CTC*, p. 22.

<sup>169</sup> *CTC*, pp 22-3.

<sup>170</sup> *CTC*, p. 23.

of the parable led him to conclude “the compulsion here meant, is not any external force but strong and vehement persuasions.”<sup>171</sup>

Having refuted all the arguments in favour of the use of force, Synge applied his theory to the problem of heresy. He did not flinch from its repercussions

Though heresy be a great crime, yet that which is often called so, is really no crime at all, being nothing more than a speculative opinion different from what is, or is accounted orthodox, but whether true or false, does no way affect men’s eternal salvation. But be the crime ever so great, it does not follow that it must be punished with death, or other corporal infliction, unless there be, what ‘tis certain there is not, a power in some person in this manner to punish it.<sup>172</sup>

Synge then offered a vision of how a tolerant church might discipline its members. Given the voluntary nature of the institution he envisioned the membership could not be coerced into accepting doctrine. The only punishment available to church authorities was to exclude troublesome members: “The church may indeed excommunicate heretics, i.e. they may declare or pronounce them to be in their judgement unfit to continue visible members of the Christian society and accordingly may exclude them from it.” This punishment, was “purely spiritual” and so within the power of the church.<sup>173</sup>

From this Synge drew a controversial conclusion, considering the likely expectations of his gathered audience. Far from turning his sermon into a sabre-rattling condemnation of the Romish miscreants, Synge proposed to the House of Commons “that all persons in a society, whose principles in religion have no tendency to hurt the public have a right to a toleration.” Synge then went on to describe how: “By a toleration I mean a liberty to worship God according to their consciences, without any encouragement from the civil government on the one hand, or fear of infliction of punishment on the other.”<sup>174</sup>

Crucially, Synge accepted that the state could, if it so wished exclude people of a differing faith from holding office, as was the case with the Test Act in relation to the dissenters. But this did not impede the liberty of conscience all law-abiding citizens ought to have recognised by the state. This was in the state’s interest for:

Where men are oppressed and persecuted on account of their religion, where a reasonable liberty of following their consciences, in order to their eternal salvation, is denied them, they cannot but be uneasy and restless. In such a situation they are easily disposed to be factious and seditious, and to endeavour perhaps by violent ways, to free themselves from the yoke which galls and torments them. But then this factious spirit is not so much occasioned by their religious principles, as by the

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<sup>171</sup> *CTC*, p. 26.

<sup>172</sup> *CTC*, p. 27.

<sup>173</sup> *CTC*, p. 27 and p. 28.

<sup>174</sup> *CTC*, p. 30.

severities used against them, and the remedy is not to increase the severities but entirely to remove them.<sup>175</sup>

Even in the extreme, and to Synge's mind difficult, case of the holders of doctrine that tended to incite action detrimental to the state, unless those acts were perpetrated, toleration was still the best option. Synge argued this was the case on two grounds, namely "the denial of it [toleration] is unlawful, and secondly, that instead of being any way useful to the public, it really hurts it more than a toleration would do." This was so because toleration enabled the magistrate to legislate for and observe the nature of their practice, rather than driving the movement underground, and beyond the supervision of the state: "Persons who think themselves bound under pain of eternal damnation to worship God in a certain way will run any hazard to do it.... 'Tis therefore a vain thing to hope that any laws however severe in themselves or punctually executed can entirely hinder their holding religious assemblies."<sup>176</sup>

It was for the state to recognise its limitations when confronted with a recalcitrant and dangerous populace. As Synge pointed out, the state had little to lose by granting of toleration. Moreover, the security of the state could be maintained through other means than the withholding of toleration. The example he outlined, in accordance with the penal legislation, was the possession of landed property:

Though men's religion be not, yet their property, as long as they continue members of a society, is and must be at all events subject to the supreme power. It may be taken from them either in whole or in part, and their right of acquiring more, or even of disposing of what they have in a certain way, may be abridged, whenever the public good necessarily requires it.<sup>177</sup>

He conceded that "some moderate restraints may be put on their civil liberty."<sup>178</sup>

However, Synge clarified that it was the responsibility of the civil magistrate to "take care that proper methods be used to instruct and convince them [the heretics] and to lead them in a moral and Christian way to a discovery and a renunciation of their errors." If this failed, the option of last resort "which though a violent one, is in a case extremity, [it is] undoubtedly lawful [for the state]...to remove them [the heretics] out of the society."<sup>179</sup>

Synge legitimated this dramatic and violent vision of forced removal of the Roman Catholics out of Ireland through an appeal to a social contract theory of government. In the case of such a philosophy

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<sup>175</sup> *CTC*, p. 31.

<sup>176</sup> *CTC*, p. 34 and p. 36.

<sup>177</sup> *CTC*, p. 38.

<sup>178</sup> *CTC*, p. 38.

the society may refuse such persons [as contravene the contract's terms through pursuit of ends likely to result in the collapse of the state] any further benefit of that protection which arises from the union of their forces, and at the same time absolve them from that submission which they had stipulated or were bound to pay to the civil government.<sup>180</sup>

This principle having been enunciated and defended in the abstract, Synge then proceeded to the last of his considerations, the application of "the general doctrine to our particular case."<sup>181</sup> As he recognised:

According to the principles laid down in this discourse, all those of the Church of Rome among us are to be considered either as persons professing a false and corrupt religion, or as persons maintaining certain doctrines which are really dangerous to all, but especially to Protestant governments.<sup>182</sup>

Synge then concluded as to how the state ought to respond to the threat posed by the Catholic population. He argued that the "best and most effectual method [to counter the threat the Roman Catholics posed]... would be if possible to convert them." To this end, he proposed three measures. First that the state "provide for the support and residence of the clergy, in those parts of the kingdom, especially, where the vastly greater numbers are of the Romish religion." Second, the formation of a voluntary society "of persons of honour and distinction, laymen as well as ecclesiastics," to co-ordinate religious instruction. Finally, the state should provide for the "education of their [Catholic's] children."<sup>183</sup>

Should all this fail, Synge proposed that "the next thing to be done is to endeavour to secure the nation against the evil influence of their corrupt principles." To this end, he proposed that the state should differentiate between those of pernicious principles and those more harmless to the state, by means of an oath, for: "Though the Church of Rome does... maintain or countenance these wicked doctrines, yet all the members of it do not." If the oath of abjuration were to be refused "all ground or even colour of complaint... would be entirely removed." This would leave the state free to impose whatever sanctions it deemed necessary short of execution on the Catholic populace. As he concluded: "'Tis evident they could not justly complain, though they were at once banished out of the society."<sup>184</sup>

Intriguingly, Synge's sermon failed to mention the dissenting community overtly. He restrained his allusion to the extent that the Presbyterians could be identified as Hobbists,

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<sup>179</sup> *CTC*, p. 38 and p. 39.

<sup>180</sup> *CTC*, p. 39.

<sup>181</sup> *CTC*, p. 41.

<sup>182</sup> *CTC*, p. 41.

<sup>183</sup> *CTC*, p. 47, p. 48, p. 49 and p. 49.

<sup>184</sup> *CTC*, p. 49, p. 49, p. 50 and p. 51.

who placed the power of the state over that of the church. Although that identification is not entirely satisfactory, this interpretation is bolstered by a sermon he had preached at the consecration of Theophilus Bolton as Bishop of Clonfert on 30 September 1722.<sup>185</sup>

Synge chose as his topic for consideration the ‘constitution of our established church as founded on law, divine and humane;’ a topic which led him into direct confrontation with the congregationalist and Presbyterian communities. Defending a positive vision of the church, Synge perceived the conflict between the Anglican creed and its opponents as resting on two hypotheses concerning church government:

From the beginnings of Christianity, though all ages, certain persons...have been in a solemn manner ordained and constituted public officers in the Christian church to whom power and authority has been given to preach the gospel, to admit men into the church by baptism, to communicate to them the body and blood of Christ by the outward symbols of bread and wine, to exclude notorious and obstinate offenders out of Christian society<sup>186</sup> and lastly to ordain and appoint others in the name of Christ to perform these same offices....[Secondly] very soon after the apostles’ time the government was, in all parts of the Christian church, so settled that in every convenient district one single person taken from the presbyters did preside and rule over all the other public officers and ministers and the Christian people within their respective districts.<sup>187</sup>

The force of the congregationalist criticism (as with that of the Hobbists the later sermon on toleration) was generated by their denial that the office of minister or priest was anything more than a civil office. This belief was grounded on the “absurdity of admitting two independent powers in the same society.”<sup>188</sup>

The second hypothesis was challenged by “the reformed churches abroad as well as from the dissenters of several denominations among ourselves.”<sup>189</sup> Their critique of episcopacy was of the same kind as that which led the congregationalists and sectarians to withhold recognition of the office of the priest. Alongside the lack of a scriptural justification for the priesthood and the terrible consequences of a confusion of authority in a community, lay a third, unstated assumption; that the episcopacy was the invention of the state; the same assumption held by the Hobbists.

Synge stated his conviction of the legitimacy of the episcopacy in three ways. First, as episcopacy was “owned to have been very soon after the apostle’s days established in all parts of the Christian church, it follows that this form of government is of apostolic

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<sup>185</sup> E. Synge, *The constitution of our established church as founded on law divine and humane considered in a sermon*, (London, 1723).

<sup>186</sup> Synge defended this attribute of the clergy later in the sermon through reference to scripture, notably to: “the powers given to the apostles to bind and loose (Matt xvi, 19 and xviii, 18) to remit and retain sins (John xx, 23) to put a man into the state of a heathen or publican who shall neglect to hear the church.” *Constitution*, p. 14.

<sup>187</sup> *Constitution*, p. 4.

<sup>188</sup> *Constitution*, p. 6.

institution.” Second, he noted the presence of episcopacy in Scripture where “many instances are given, some mentioned in the scriptures and others in the most authentic writings of antiquity of single persons appointed by the apostles themselves to preside in and govern the churches planted by them.” Finally, he stated episcopacy was the smoothest and most efficient means of governing a church and that “the church established...does most firmly adhere to this primitive and apostolic form of government.”<sup>190</sup>

The considered nature of Synge’s opposition to the Presbyterian creed would suggest that the foundation of the friendship that blossomed between the Anglican divine and the Presbyterian Francis Hutcheson was as much personal liking as political compatibility. However, the crux of their relationship may have been an agreement upon the centrality of the issue of toleration. Both men appear to have accepted the need for the Irish polity to confront a persistent threat from outside its confessional limits. It was an essential article of faith for Synge that no religious community had to remain excluded. In the case of the Roman Catholics a deal could be negotiated in which toleration was granted in exchange for their refutation of the Pretender. One must remember however, that Synge’s toleration was qualified. Were the Roman Catholics to remain obstinate in their political allegiance, only mass forced migration would suffice to ensure political stability. Intriguingly, Hutcheson nowhere mentions the condition of the Roman Catholics, despite the fact that both Synge and Molesworth held latitudinarian views on this issue. But this is of a piece with his caution concerning controversy; a discretion heightened by any danger of religious sentiments being offended and his own liminal status in the Irish capital.

It might be asserted that Hutcheson and Synge agreed about the importance of the issue of trust even if they differed as to its shape and form. Synge’s latitude in offering a deal to the Catholics may have been conducive to Hutcheson. It admitted the centrality of the problem embodied by the dissenters and was a real attempt to articulate a solution. The capacity of Synge to engage with the claims to recognition of creeds beyond his own was critical in the development of his relationship with Hutcheson. It recognised that for Ireland to create a stable political environment, the Anglicans would have to learn to trust those of other religious persuasions, and that those non-conformists, of whatever hue, would have to act in a trustworthy manner. To that extent, Synge’s sermon on 23 October

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<sup>189</sup> *Constitution*, p. 5.

<sup>190</sup> *Constitution*, p. 9, p. 9 and p. 10. Synge then examined “the nature of the office of a bishop as it has anciently been settled in the Christian and now stands in our national church” and: “how those persons ought to be qualified who at any time are called to this high and important station.” *Constitution*, p. 11. These considerations provided Synge with a role for and limit to the powers of the state in the running of the church. The model he forwarded was one of a “friendly union between the spiritual and temporal powers” personified in the monarch as head of the church. *Constitution*, p. 16.

1725 was akin to Hutcheson's *Inquiry* and its dependence upon trust in the generation of social relations and virtuous action.

Synge's generosity of mind in the sermon on toleration may have enabled Hutcheson to trust Synge with his philosophical speculations, and resulted in Hutcheson seeking out the advice of the Anglican churchman, both in the 1720s and in decade that followed. The capacity of each man to understand the stance of the other while unconvinced by the case put was central to the friendship. That they agreed about the role of the conscience in matters of church government can be seen by examining Hutcheson's response to a spilt in his denomination - the non-subscription controversy of the 1720s. This, and his response to the challenge of the rationalist philosophers, who inspired it, is the subject of the next chapter.



### THREE: HUTCHESON, JOSEPH BOYSE AND DISSENT

By March 1725 Hutcheson's *Inquiry* had elicited a response. On 27 March, the *London Journal* ran a review article of some 2,000 words under the pseudonym of Philopatris.<sup>1</sup> Addressed to the journal's editor, the theologian, Benjamin Hoadley, who went under the tag of Britannicus, the reviewer celebrated the recent appearance of "A new treatise, entitled *An inquiry into the original of our ideas of beauty and virtue*." The reviewer excused calling the attention of the reader to this event, noting how "no attempt to recommend virtue to the world and especially to the highest part of it upon whose example and influence so much of the virtue of the lower rank of men depends, when this attempt is prosecuted in an agreeable, engaging manner, should pass without the regard and notice due to it."<sup>2</sup>

The essence of the *Inquiry*'s argument was then laid out, using quotations from the source. But what drew Philopatris to the text was Hutcheson's assessment that "We have made philosophy as well as religion, by our foolish management of it, so austere and ungainly a form that a gentleman cannot easily bring himself to like it."<sup>3</sup> This slight on polite society, which the reviewer was addressing, led him to comment:

One would hope, such a reproof as this may not fall to the ground without use; not only as it is levelled at some writers of morals, but as it ends with a satire upon the indolence and unconcern about a matter of the greatest importance, too visible in that part of the world, who have so much leisure that their time is a burden to them; and who yet waste so much of it in the pursuit of the most unmanly relishes, that hardly a moment is left for the supreme relish of human nature in its most exalted state.<sup>4</sup>

It was therefore the intention of the reviewer, by serving notice of the *Inquiry*'s publication to "excite their curiosity, to enter into such subjects." The book, while not free from fault would at least provide "a noble entertainment for an inquisitive mind, mixed with a very agreeable and uncommon delicacy of thought."<sup>5</sup>

Philopatris then honed in on one key component of the work, to illustrate the whole. The passage he chose, the second section of the 'Inquiry concerning good and evil'

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<sup>1</sup> Mautner tentatively suggests Philopatris was: "an acquaintance of [Benjamin] Hoadley's, living in Ireland....It is by no means unlikely that he can be found among persons associated with the Molesworth circle." T. Mautner, *Francis Hutcheson: two texts on human nature* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 164.

<sup>2</sup> GBL, 1735, p. 1. Contrast this statement of the audience the reviewer believed Hutcheson was addressing with Hutcheson's statement that: "old arguments [i.e.: those found in Hutcheson's work] may sometimes be set in such a light by one, as will convince those who were not moved by them, even when better expressed by another; since for every class of writers, there are classes of readers adapted, who cannot relish anything higher." T3, p. iv.

<sup>3</sup> GBL, 1735, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> GBL, 1735, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> GBL, 1735, p. 3.

dwelt upon “the immediate motive to virtuous actions.”<sup>6</sup> Philopatris showed how Hutcheson based his moral scheme in affection and denied the motive of self-interest or self-love. Only benevolent, disinterested actions qualified for moral recognition.<sup>7</sup> As Philopatris identified, “the author does not exclude the pursuit of our own happiness, but is labouring to found virtue upon something more divine and exalted than self-love.”<sup>8</sup>

This positive notice must have been welcome to the author. Less welcome was the rejoinder which Philopatris’ essay prompted from the son of the celebrated Bishop Burnet, the chaplain of King George, Gilbert Burnet.<sup>9</sup> Under the name of Philaretus, Burnet thanked the reviewer for drawing attention to the *Inquiry* “both because...he recommends to the world a very ingenious treatise and because he professes his design and hopes were to excite the curiosity of men of leisure and inquisitiveness to enter into such subjects.”<sup>10</sup>

Burnet graciously noted that Hutcheson had promoted the cause of virtue, but expressed his fear that “without some study and cultivation the bare moral sense of virtue...would continue lurking in their breasts without ever exerting itself in any constant and regular course of useful and agreeable products.”<sup>11</sup> In line with this, Burnet suggested

as nothing seems to me more likely to stir up the attention of mankind to this study than the hearing the different opinions of men on such subjects when they are delivered in a truly philosophical manner and appear to proceed from a real desire of truth without any mixture of contention and cavil, I have taken the liberty to send you my thoughts on this subject.<sup>12</sup>

Burnet’s problem with Hutcheson’s thesis went to the heart of the entire scheme. As Burnet observed, despite his admiration for Hutcheson’s deductive powers once the scheme was erected, “when I considered his principle [of a moral sense] itself more closely, I could not find in it that certainty which principles require.” Burnet admitted he was “at a loss to know how it came there and whence it arose.” Even more worrying was his concern whether “it was not a deceitful and wrong sense,” for he “could not see any good reason to trust it more in one case than in another.”<sup>13</sup> He thereby raised the question of whether the moral sense could be trusted to work regularly and whether the sense could discriminate between good and bad as Hutcheson had optimistically asserted. Burnet had

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<sup>6</sup> GBL, 1735, p. 3. The passage is in T2, pp 125-49.

<sup>7</sup> GBL, 1735, pp 3-6. The passages transcribed are T1, p. 125, p. 127, pp 129-31.

<sup>8</sup> GBL, 1735, p. 6.

<sup>9</sup> 1690-1726. Educated at Leiden and Merton College, Oxford. Received an MA from Peterhouse, Cambridge in 1713. A Fellow of the Royal Society he was rector at East Barnet from 1719 until 1726.

<sup>10</sup> GBL, p. 203.

<sup>11</sup> GBL, p. 203.

<sup>12</sup> GBL, p. 203.

<sup>13</sup> GBL, p. 203, p. 204 and p. 204.

placed his finger astutely on a key weakness in Hutcheson's scheme. If the moral sense was prone to error it could not, as Hutcheson hoped, be a guide to moral action.

Having isolated these problems, Burnet provided "some further test, some more certain rule, whereby I could judge whether my sense (my moral sense, as the author calls it), my taste of things, was right and agreeable to the truth of things or not." In the face of such uncertainty over the accuracy of the moral sense's operation, he suggested the necessity for a higher authority to assess the exactitude of the empirical determination "it must be a reasonable pleasure before it be a right one or fit to be encouraged or listened to." He saw that this made reason essential "if it be so, then it is the reason of the thing and not the pleasure that accompanies it which ought to conduct us."<sup>14</sup>

Burnet then turned Hutcheson's empirical rhetoric back on the author, appealing to the common experience of men as proof of his contention:

The constitution of all the rational agents that we know of is such indeed that pleasure is inseparably annexed to the pursuit of what is reasonable. And pleasure ought never to be considered as something independent on reason, no more than reason ought to be reckoned unproductive of pleasure. But still [he reiterated] the ideas of reason and right are quite different from those of pleasure and must always in reasoning be considered distinctly.<sup>15</sup>

Burnet drew a sharp distinction between reason and pleasure. Reason provided man with the information necessary to make a moral judgement whereas pleasure excited the agent to pursue what was right. Pleasure for Burnet was "the sense of joy which any ideas [of right] afford us." Conflating Hutcheson's two distinct internal senses, beauty and morality, Burnet asserted that the moral sense provides us with our definition of beauty, being "no more than what pleases us" either in aesthetic or ethical terms.<sup>16</sup>

Burnet was accusing Hutcheson of mistaking what was prior in the argument. Where Burnet believed that morality was derived from rational judgement, and that therefore reason was prior to the senses, Hutcheson's emotivist ethics placed the internal sense prior to reason. As Burnet explained his sense of the difference:

Things do not seem to us to be true or right because they are beautiful or please us [which is how Burnet understood Hutcheson's position], but seem beautiful or please us because they seem to us to

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<sup>14</sup> GBL, p. 204.

<sup>15</sup> GBL, p. 204.

<sup>16</sup> GBL, p. 205. This conflation, which is actually the stance of the Earl of Shaftesbury, is a common error for commentators and critics alike to make when dealing with Hutcheson. It is most common in the rationalist critique of which Burnet was an eloquent exponent. See also the letters in the *London Journal* of 1728, dealt with in the conclusion. For a modern example see *Life*. See also Thinking about Francis Hutcheson.

be true or right. And always, in our apprehensions of things...the reason of the thing or the sense of its being true or right is antecedent to our sense of beauty in it or of the pleasure it affords us.<sup>17</sup>

By a Hutchesonian technique, Burnet offered a geometric theorem as proof of his contention: "In a theorem or problem in geometry we perceive beauty. But we first discern truth or we should never find out any beauty in it. And so in moral science we first conclude that a certain action is right and then it appears to us likewise beautiful."<sup>18</sup>

The one objection Burnet admitted to this scheme was the evidence of how moral judgement often came about after "a long deduction of reasoning which many are incapable of who yet discern beauty."<sup>19</sup> However, he believed this could be accommodated into his system. The experience of finding beauty in an object without a moral component was simply an error, a mistaken attribution of morality where none existed. The proof of this was in "the abstruser sciences" where men often deduced right and wrong without having reasoned every step of the way:

Upon this confidence in their own penetration and sagacity they shall perceive beauty or pleasure in the proposition. And when they enquire further, if they find they judged right, it confirms them in that beauty or pleasure which they conceived from a more partial and slight view and increases it. If they find they judged wrong, the beauty immediately vanishes away and a sentiment of the contrary succeeds.<sup>20</sup>

More damaging than this criticism was the one that followed. Burnet examined the end of Hutcheson's system of ethics, namely the concept of benevolence. The intention was to reinterpret the core thesis of the Irishman so as to explain away his entire structure. Were Burnet correct in his analysis of benevolence as dependent upon prior reasoning, Hutcheson's edifice collapsed. Appealing once again to the reader's experience, Burnet narrated the concept of benevolence as follows:

Every man of any degree of understanding who has observed himself and others, immediately with one glance of thought perceives it reasonable and fit that the advantage of the whole should be regarded more than a private advantage or the advantage of a part only of that whole. And taking this quick conclusion for granted, even before he has examined every step that conduces to it, he sees beauty in every moral action by which the advantage of the whole is designed – not because it is advantageous or useful to himself or even to the whole, but because he sees or thinks he sees it to be fit and reasonable that the advantage of the whole should take place.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> GBL, p. 205.

<sup>18</sup> GBL, p. 205.

<sup>19</sup> GBL, pp 205-6.

<sup>20</sup> GBL, p. 206.

<sup>21</sup> GBL, p. 206.

The stakes were high. The issue was the manner of encouraging men to virtue. The key was whether virtue derived from a rational calculation or from human emotion. The cornerstone of the debate was the issue of benevolence, and whether it was identified by reason, or a pre-rational sensual response to the exterior world.

Hutcheson was not long in responding to the challenge. In issues appearing on 12 and 19 June 1725, little more than two months after Burnet's article had appeared, Hutcheson published a lengthy rejoinder. Pointedly writing under the penname of Philanthropus, meaning lover of humanity and thereby defending his public persona as a believer in universal benevolence, Hutcheson examined the nature of the language used in the dispute, so as to point up the validity of his own interpretation. He suggested that: "There are certain words frequently used in our discourses of morality, which, I fancy, when well examined, will lead us into the same sentiments with those of the author of the late *Inquiry into beauty and virtue*." Expanding on this observation Hutcheson incorporated Burnet's argument: "The words I mean are these, when we say that actions are reasonable, fit, right, just, conformable to truth. Reason denotes either our power of finding out truth or a collection of propositions already known to be true."<sup>22</sup> This definition of reason was made consistent with Hutcheson's ideas through its expansion:

Truths are either speculative – as when we discover, by comparing our ideas, the relations of quantities or of any other objects among themselves – or practical – as when we discover what objects are naturally apt to give any person the highest gratifications, or what means are most effectual to obtain such objects.<sup>23</sup>

Hutcheson underlined the division of truth into pure and practical by remarking "speculative truth or reason is not properly a rule of conduct; however rules may be founded upon it." This enabled him to pose a question: "Let us inquire then into practical reason both with relation to the end which we propose and the means."<sup>24</sup>

Hutcheson began this investigation with the issue of ends. He defended his belief that: "To a being which acts only for its own happiness, that end is reasonable which contains a greater happiness than any other which it could pursue."<sup>25</sup> This formulation was crucial to the entire edifice of his argument against Burnet. Practical reason was capable of providing the means of obtaining your desires, but left unexplained the origin of the ends pursued. One had to assume that man pursued happiness for the system to make sense.

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<sup>22</sup> GBL, p. 209.

<sup>23</sup> GBL, p. 209.

<sup>24</sup> GBL, p. 209.

<sup>25</sup> GBL, p. 209.

This definition allowed Hutcheson to offer his own understanding of human activity. He explained that the system of practical reason could only countenance moral behaviour if one assumed the existence of

beings which by the very frame of their nature desire the good of a community or which are determined by kind affections to study the good of others and have withal a moral sense which causes them necessarily to approve such conduct in themselves or others and count it amiable and to dislike the contrary conduct as hateful.<sup>26</sup>

Only then could one account for the adoption of such practical actions.

The system was further complicated, and brought closer to observed reality, by assuming that self-love and benevolence coexisted in the human frame. This assumption, combined with an awareness of their part in a greater society could ultimately result in the discovery by individuals of the truth “that their own highest happiness does necessarily arise from kind affections and benevolent actions, that [that] end which would appear reasonable would be universal happiness.”<sup>27</sup> Through this manoeuvre, Hutcheson moved from the adoption of Burnet’s rationalist rhetoric to arguing for a moral sense theory.

Hutcheson’s thesis, that reason was inadequate to account for the choosing of ends in man’s behaviour, was then illustrated in detail. He explored how “if anyone should ask concerning public and private good, ‘which of the two is most reasonable?’ the answers would be various, according to the dispositions of the persons who are passing judgement.”<sup>28</sup> The rationality of the action was determined by its capacity to reach the ends set. It bore no relation to the choosing of an end as intrinsically worth pursuing. In an image proximate to the Hobbist vision Hutcheson was anxious to refute, he observed how

A being entirely selfish and without a moral sense will judge that its own pursuit of its greatest private pleasure is most reasonable. And as to the actions of others, it can see whether the actions be naturally apt to attain the ends proposed by the agents or whether their ends interfere with its own ends or not; but it would never judge of them under any other species than that of advantage or disadvantage and only be affected with them as we are now with a fruitful shower or a destructive tempest.<sup>29</sup>

In arguing this case, Hutcheson was turning Burnet’s theory back on itself. Just as Burnet had equated Hutcheson’s ideas with Hobbism, the thrust of Hutcheson’s analysis was that if Burnet were correct, so too was Hobbes. Nothing could assuage mankind from acting

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<sup>26</sup> GBL, p. 209.

<sup>27</sup> GBL, p. 210.

<sup>28</sup> GBL, p. 210.

<sup>29</sup> GBL, p. 210.

solely from its own, crudely constructed view of its interest. Social mores would be lost and the atomised vision of the state of nature that Hobbes envisaged would be inaugurated.

Hutcheson contrasted this apocalyptic moral environment with his vision of a world informed by the actions of a moral sense. He postulated that only the moral sense accounted for the choice of general good over individual interest. Indeed “without this sense and affections I cannot guess at any reason which should make a being approve of public spirit in another farther than it might be the means of private good to itself.” The fact that men believed it reasonable to pursue the common good, evidenced how “all mankind have this moral sense and public affections.”<sup>30</sup>

In Hutcheson’s view, all moral judgement derived from a pre-rational moral sense. No other system provided a competent and inclusive scheme for understanding morality. The failure lay, not in the analysis of actuality, for morality was real enough, but in the language and terms used to describe it. The failure of Burnet and other rationalist philosophers was to mistake the reasonable identification of means for the choice of ends, and to conflate the two. This could only be avoided by the careful definition of the terms used in the discussion. Anticipating David Hume, Hutcheson warned against the misappropriation of language:

It were to be wished that writers would guard against, as far as they can, involving very complex ideas under some short words and particles which almost escape observation in sentences, such as ‘ought’, ‘should’, ‘as’, ‘according’ – nay, sometimes in our English gerunds, ‘is to be done’, ‘is to be preferred’ and such like.<sup>31</sup>

Hutcheson, for whom the shift from factual observation to judgement was the fundamental issue in dispute, did not appreciate this trickery. His *Inquiry* was into ‘the original of our ideas of beauty and virtue.’ To elide this issue was to defeat the purpose of philosophical investigation in favour of undefended assertions, and uncritical speculations.

Hutcheson then answered Burnet’s question as to where the moral sense came from. His answer was plain and direct: “The author of the *Inquiry* takes it to be implanted by the author of nature.”<sup>32</sup> God was the first and final cause. Only a benevolent deity ensured the moral sense was not deceitful and untrustworthy. As to the second issue raised by Burnet, concerning the actual content of the good life, Hutcheson was just as forthright:

As he does not profess to give a complete treatise of morality he [Hutcheson] recommends to us Cumberland and Pufendorf, who show that benevolence and a social conduct are the most probable

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<sup>30</sup> GBL, pp 210-1 and p. 211.

<sup>31</sup> GBL, p. 213.

ways to secure to each individual happiness in this life and the favour of the deity in any future state.<sup>33</sup>

Hutcheson was convinced that the moral sense was a consistent basis for moral action. Burnet argued that the selfish and benevolent passions were too conflictual to ensure a stable judgement on the grounds Hutcheson proposed. Hutcheson replied that he was not excluding selfish action as a motive, particularly when it corresponded to the demands of the moral sense, but this did not contradict any assertion of the independent existence of a moral sense. "The end" as Hutcheson saw it "must be either the good of the agent or of the public, or both consistently with each other."<sup>34</sup> In either case, reason was insufficient to ascertain the correct end and was only capable of identifying the means through which predetermined ends were to be pursued.

On 31 July 1725 Burnet published a comment on Hutcheson's rebuttal. He acknowledged Hutcheson to be "a person of...ingenuity and candour" and thanked him for taking the trouble to "examine my sentiments of things." Yet he was not satisfied with the Irishman's defence. Again Burnet utilised the rhetorical ploy of turning Hutcheson's manner of argument back upon him: "I entirely agree with him [Hutcheson] as to the method he proposes in arguing on these subjects, viz., to examine into the meaning of the words used in our discourses of morality."<sup>35</sup> To this end Burnet provided Hutcheson with a series of his own definitions, beginning with the key word in his vocabulary:

By 'reason', I understand, strictly speaking, that method of thinking whereby the mind discovers such truths as are not self-evident by the intervention of self-evident truths and such truths as are less evident by such as are already supposed to be more so. The perception of evident truths is knowledge which is, therefore, acquired and improved by reasoning, i.e. by connecting remote or less evident truths with self-evident or more evident ones.<sup>36</sup>

This definition provided Burnet with a rather schematic and deductive method to identify truths and build upon them. All truths were for Burnet "speculative" for "they are seen and perceived by the mind." Thus, his scheme was closer to mathematics than Hutcheson's, for the Irishman was primarily concerned with practical truths. However, Burnet did not limit his scheme to speculative truths, but extended his scheme into the realm of action: "When such truths are relative to the actions of rational agents they are in

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<sup>32</sup> GBL, p. 214.

<sup>33</sup> GBL, p. 214.

<sup>34</sup> GBL, p. 215-6.

<sup>35</sup> GBL, p. 217.

<sup>36</sup> GBL, p. 217.



common usage styled practical truths....Speculative truths are not themselves rules of action, but only the practical truths or conclusions drawn from them.”<sup>37</sup>

From this definition of reason Burnet expanded his argument to encompass the ends of moral agents. He argued that the reasonableness of ends was dependent not “on their conformity to the natural affections of the agent nor to a moral sense representing such ends as amiable to him, but singly on their conformity to reason.” For Burnet “reason would always represent the end in the same manner to the rational agent, whatever his affections or inward sense of amiableness were.”<sup>38</sup> Only reason, cold and impersonal, would provide the agent with the neutral faculty of judgement required for ethical decision making. It could not be swayed by considerations of interest or emotional ties.

Burnet accepted Hutcheson’s error was understandable, given “that we find in fact, it is always reasonable to act according to natural affection and the moral sense,” but this did not dissuade Burnet from his conviction that reason was prior. As he asserted: “We deem our affections and our moral sense to be reasonable affections, and a reasonable sense, from their prompting us to the same conduct which reason approves and directs.”<sup>39</sup>

This was the crux of Burnet’s argument. Where Hutcheson believed that reason only provided the means to gain already pre-determined ends, and ends were the product of the moral sense, Burnet argued that reason was the faculty of judgement, and determined how we ought to respond to our emotional impulses. Nor was this argument concerning the priority of emotion and reason merely semantic. Reason was the final arbiter in Burnet’s scheme. It was the faculty of judgement and determined both ends and means. It commanded and directed the passions and made sense of the universe in which the moral agent existed. It justified and legitimated belief in God and enabled men to live moral lives. In sum, as Burnet remarked: “‘Reasonable,’ therefore, when said of actions or of the ends of rational agents, denotes the agreeableness of those actions and those ends, not to the natural affections of such agents, not to a moral sense rendering the compliance with those affections amiable, but to reason only.”<sup>40</sup>

The following Saturday, 7 August 1725, Burnet continued his response. In further definitions for Hutcheson to consider, he attended to the concept of ‘right’ “which denotes nothing more in effect than reasonable, only taking it for granted that reason represents to us the nature of things truly as it is.” This assumption was then set in social context allowing society to recognise “what we owe to other persons.” Conflating the two ideas,

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<sup>37</sup> GBL, p. 217.

<sup>38</sup> GBL, p. 218.

<sup>39</sup> GBL, p. 218 and pp 218-9.

<sup>40</sup> GBL, pp 219-20.

Burnet asserted “The expression ‘agreeable to truth’ when used with respect to actions, is to the same effect with ‘agreeable to reason.’”<sup>41</sup> Thus he had moved his system from the realms of speculative, geometric and empirical truth, through to practical truth in a social setting, without changing the words used to describe the scheme. This linguistic subtlety was then repeated to ensure the argument was clear:

Though truth, meaning thereby such propositions as express the nature of things as it is, is the real foundation of all moral good or evil, yet as this truth must be apprehended by the agent before it can be a rule for his actions, so truth considered as a rule to act by, i.e. moral truth, is the same with reason or what reason dictates. And acting agreeably to truth can mean no more than acting agreeably to our knowledge of it, i.e. to reason, for reason leads us to that knowledge.<sup>42</sup>

Burnet then asserted with some confidence that he had “examined all the terms which Philanthropus [Hutcheson] proposes” and was still of the mind that reason “alone discovers and delivers to us the proper rule and measure of action.” Indeed Burnet claimed that “if we consider the matter closely, we shall find that we cannot so much as form an idea of obligation without introducing reason as its foundation.”<sup>43</sup> Only reason could provide a motive for action and in so doing provide the end to be pursued.

Burnet’s two articles were taken up two months later, on 9 October 1725. Hutcheson thanked Burnet “for engaging me in a further inquiry into the foundation of virtue.” As Hutcheson observed “our debate is drawn into narrower bounds by his reducing ultimately all other moral attributes of actions to reasonableness or conformity to truth.”<sup>44</sup> He accepted the definitions Burnet had supplied and launched into a sustained refutation of Burnet’s scheme centred on the one term Burnet had evaded - obligation.

The problem Hutcheson isolated within Burnet’s scheme was that truthful and untruthful statements could be made with reference to both good and evil actions. The truth-value in the statement did not arise from any qualitative component in the statement but in the accuracy of the information transferred. This implied that “it must be some other attribute which can be ascribed to one and not to the other which must make the distinction [between good and evil] and not the agreeing with a truth.”<sup>45</sup> What was missing was a theory of obligation. Hutcheson asked Burnet to provide a cogent analysis of why people act in a particular way rather than another. What was needed was a theory of motivation

Illustrating his theory with a practical example, Hutcheson inquired “why does a sensual man pursue wealth?” Replying he divided his answer in two. Sometimes: “Wealth

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<sup>41</sup> GBL, p. 222.

<sup>42</sup> GBL, p. 222.

<sup>43</sup> GBL, p. 223 and p. 224.

<sup>44</sup> GBL, p. 226.

is useful to purchase pleasures” and was pursued solely in order to gratify the senses. These were termed “exciting reasons” as they provided a positive motive.<sup>46</sup> However

at other times by the reason of actions we mean the truth which shows a quality in the action of any person engaging the approbation either of the agent or the spectator or which shows it to be morally good. Thus why do I observe the contracts I have made? The reason is this, mutual observation of contracts is necessary to preserve society.<sup>47</sup>

This later rationale, Hutcheson termed justifying reason, and he ascribed to Burnet the confounding of the two kinds. Rationalism to Hutcheson’s mind only supplied exciting reasons, and left the justifying reasons unanalysed. For Hutcheson the exciting reasons remained in need of an end to pursue, and this had to be prior “nothing can be an end previous to all desires, affections, or instincts determining us to pursue it.”<sup>48</sup> Imagining a wealthy man without a moral sense, Hutcheson projected:

Ask a being who has selfish affections why he pursues wealth. He will assign this truth as his exciting reason, that wealth furnishes pleasures or happiness. Ask again why he desires his own happiness or pleasure. I cannot divine what proposition he would assign as the reason moving him to it....there is a quality in his nature moving him to pursue happiness.<sup>49</sup>

It was this quality which Hutcheson identified as a sense of morality.

The same reduction to final cause could be completed for public affections, and for the love of the deity. Man only obeyed God because he felt it incumbent upon him as a moral being to do so. But where Burnet had halted his inquiry with the simple statement that one must obey the deity, Hutcheson inquired after the origin of this obligation:

When Philaretus [Burnet] to evade a circle brings in the end of the deity as a reason of pursuing public good, if he means an exciting reason, let him express the truth exciting men to pursue the end proposed by the deity. Is it this, no creature can be happy who counteracts it? This is a reason of self-love exciting all who consider it. But again, what reason excites men to pursue their own happiness? Here we must end in an instinct. Is this the truth, the deity is my benefactor? I ask again the reason exciting to love or obey benefactors. Here again we must land in an instinct. Is this the truth, the end of the deity is a reasonable end? I ask again what is the truth, a conformity to which makes the desire of public good reasonable in the deity? What truth either excites or justifies the deity in this desire? As soon as I hear a pertinent proposition of this kind, I shall recant all I have said.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> GBL, p. 226.

<sup>46</sup> GBL, p. 226, pp 226-7 and p. 227.

<sup>47</sup> GBL, p. 227.

<sup>48</sup> GBL, p. 227.

<sup>49</sup> GBL, p. 227.

<sup>50</sup> GBL, p. 228.

Having dealt with the nature of exciting reasons and shown how they could be reduced to an assumed instinctual base, Hutcheson then examined the justifying reasons that men offered for their actions, asking “what are the justifying truths about ultimate ends? Hutcheson owned that: “I must ultimately resolve all approbation into a moral sense as I was forced to resolve all exciting reasons into instincts.”<sup>51</sup> This Hutcheson proved through another rhetorical reduction of Burnet’s ideas. Asking: “What is the truth for conformity to which we approve the desire of public good as an end?” Hutcheson replied:

Is it this, public good is a reasonable end? This amounts to a very trifling argument, viz. it is reasonable because it is reasonable. Is it this one, this desire excites to actions which really do promote public happiness? Then for conformity to what truth do men approve the promoting of public happiness? Is it this truth, public happiness includes that of the agent? This is only an exciting reason to self-love. Is this the justifying truth, public happiness is the end of the deity? The question returns, what truth justified concurrence with the divine ends? Is it this, the deity is our benefactor? Then what truth justified concurrence with benefactors? Here we must end in a sense.<sup>52</sup>

Hutcheson had offered a two-sided refutation of Burnet’s ideas. Where Burnet failed to account for any obligation towards the good life, Hutcheson provided his moral sense theory to fill the gap. According to Hutcheson the moral agent chose certain actions because he sensed them to be morally right. This was his exciting reason. But in answer to the issue of how the agent ascertained such a judgement, Hutcheson argued that the moral sense acted to enable successful identification of the morally virtuous act. This was the agent’s justifying reason, his final cause. The moral sense was the end of the thesis because the deity designed the agent to ensure the safe workings of the moral sense. No further justifying reason could be ascertained, for even obligation towards the deity resided in the operations of the moral sense.

Burnet did not let matters end there. On 27 November the *London Journal* carried a further response to Hutcheson’s theory. Therein Burnet isolated as the crux of the disagreement the “single question, whether or no there are reasons previous to all desires, affections, instincts or any moral sense arising from them.” In addressing this problem, Burnet accused Hutcheson of making “a great mistake” in his “logical or metaphysical argument.”<sup>53</sup> In relation to the thesis that correct and incorrect statements could be made of good and evil acts, Burnet accused Hutcheson of mistaking the nature of his argument

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<sup>51</sup> GBL, p. 229.

<sup>52</sup> GBL, p. 229.

<sup>53</sup> GBL, p. 231.

when it is said that moral goodness consists in the acting in conformity to truth, the meaning is not that it consists in a conformity to any single and detached true proposition but to the whole chain and compages of truth in acting agreeably to the state and connection and mutual relation of things.<sup>54</sup>

Burnet used this holistic vision to answer Hutcheson's specific objections concerning the division of reasons into exciting and justifying.

Burnet argued that the method was to consider the action's relationship to the "nature and constitution of things." He attested "moral goodness...consists in acting agreeably to those true propositions and moral badness in acting disagreeably to them." Of Hutcheson's moral sense, he argued that "he esteems that to be the whole proof which seems to me but a branch of the reasoning and the quarry whence we are to fetch some of the materials which help us in examining those propositions which are the foundations of our rules for acting." For Burnet, "the very point in question is, what is, or ought to be, the ultimate end of action," a puzzle which he solved by asserting "he who proposes his pleasure as his ultimate end can scarce be a very good man, whereas he who makes truth his ultimate end can scarce be a bad man."<sup>55</sup> This end was justified by reason.

This was to separate the issue of motivation towards immediate action, and motivation towards a long-term end. As for immediate responses, Burnet admitted "passions and affections generally do lead them." However, he was insistent that "it is reason alone which informs us beforehand that such actions would be right as well as afterwards that such actions were right."<sup>56</sup> In effect, reason supplied both the real exciting and legitimating motives to action.

As for Hutcheson's objection that to ensure the smooth working of Burnet's system the latter was forced to resort to an appeal to the deity, Burnet was unapologetic. He countered by recalling how Hutcheson

offers me my choice of several truths which, though they are all very weighty truths, yet are not those I should choose to build upon in this argument. The single truth I would pitch upon is, 'because the end is a reasonable end.' And the truth which makes this end, viz., public good or happiness, a reasonable end is that it is best that all should be happy. This is the truth a conformity to which makes the desire of public good reasonable in the deity and, I add, in all rational creatures who would imitate the wisdom and goodness of the deity.<sup>57</sup>

Again adopting a mathematical argument, Burnet stated "if anyone asks why it is best, I would answer him as I would do if he asked me why four is more than two. It is self-

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<sup>54</sup> GBL, p. 231.

<sup>55</sup> GBL, p. 232.

<sup>56</sup> GBL, p. 233.

<sup>57</sup> GBL, p. 233.

evident.”<sup>58</sup> This self-evidence was true of all rational creatures, according to Burnet. But moral agents did have differences in their capacity to isolate the good end in everyday life, and it was this that made for more or less moral actors.

Burnet then identified the cause of the confusion in Hutcheson’s thinking in his erroneous definition of the nature of exciting reasons. He noted how Hutcheson “means exciting as the passions and affections do by giving us uneasiness.” Burnet in contrast saw the term as meaning “proposing an action to us as most eligible and right.”<sup>59</sup> This could only be accomplished by the power of reason. Burnet then defined obligation:

Obligation is a word of a Latin original signifying the action of binding which, therefore, in a moral sense... must import the binding an intelligent agent by some law, which can be no other than that of reason. For all other ties are reducible to this, and this is primary and reducible to no other principle.<sup>60</sup>

On Christmas Day, 1725, Burnet published his last article on Hutcheson’s thesis. He dealt with two objections Hutcheson claimed Burnet had levelled at the theory:

The first objection is that there must be a standard to judge of the affections and moral sense themselves whether they are right or wrong....The other objection...is that if there is no moral standard antecedent to a sense, then all constitution of senses had been alike good and reasonable in the deity.<sup>61</sup>

Of the first of these Hutcheson had responded that the moral sense could not be judged moral or immoral, for as an in-built faculty it was of itself neutral. Burnet agreed “the question is not whether the moral sense can be called morally good or evil, which I admit it cannot, properly and strictly speaking, because moral good and evil belong to agents and their actions, not to affections and inclinations.” However, Burnet believed that “the true question is whether the moral sense may be called right or wrong or not....And this it certainly may, as well as any other sense”<sup>62</sup> The moral sense’s accuracy in directing man’s inclinations towards rationally legitimate ends could be measured and judged.

This was, in fact, done regularly by all moral actors. As Burnet remarked “we judge any sense to be wrong or vitiated when it represents things otherwise than we know it would do if we were in a right state of body. And even in our best state our senses often deceive us.” In realising this, Burnet was driving a hole through Hutcheson’s thesis. If the moral sense could not be trusted to identify moral courses of action without the support of

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<sup>58</sup> GBL, p. 233.

<sup>59</sup> GBL, p. 234.

<sup>60</sup> GBL, p. 235.

<sup>61</sup> GBL, p. 236 and p. 238.

<sup>62</sup> GBL, p. 236 and p. 237.

rationality, the moral sense was of no intrinsic use as a basis for moral judgement. Hutcheson's entire edifice would crash to the ground. Indeed, Burnet argued, Hutcheson had conceded the point: "He admits that reason may show men that their moral sense, as it is now constituted, tends to make the species happy and that a contrary sense would have been pernicious. Why, if this be allowed, we have the greatest truth we wanted and the most complex and difficult to be demonstrated." As to why men should wish to be happy, Burnet halted the inquiry as "no reason can be ever given for a self-evident maxim."<sup>63</sup>

Turning then to the second objection Hutcheson had noticed, Burnet summarised Hutcheson's refutation as consisting of the belief: "That we can conceive no exciting reasons of the divine actions antecedent to something in the divine nature of a nobler kind...by which the deity desires universal happiness as an end." This Hutcheson had equated to the existence in the divine frame of a moral sense "which makes us approve such a kind beneficent constitution of our nature." Burnet inquired of Hutcheson as to "by what kind of reasoning it is that we attribute benignity to the deity."<sup>64</sup> To answer this, Burnet believed Hutcheson had to appeal to a prior cause; one Burnet identified with the power of reasoning, for this was the force of the consideration that all moral judgements required reasoning to direct them.

Despite the sustained and repeated assaults on Hutcheson's system, and the philosophical differences between the men the correspondence revealed, Burnet parted with an assurance of his sentiments towards the author of the *Inquiry*:

I think [Burnet wrote] the 'Treatise of the original of virtue' which gave occasion to this debate, as well as the other, 'Concerning beauty and order' exceedingly ingenious and well argued from the principles laid down. And if the author had laid his principles deeper, he would have made his discourse as useful and solid as it is delightful and entertaining.<sup>65</sup>

Hutcheson however, was dissatisfied with the correspondence for having "too visible marks of the hurry in which they were wrote." To overcome this deficiency, he intended, as he noted in the preface to the *Essay on the passions*, to "send a private letter to Philaretus to desire a more private correspondence on the subject of our debate."<sup>66</sup> This did not occur as the debate was foreshortened by Burnet's death in 1726.

Hutcheson's dissatisfaction with the correspondence only makes it more puzzling that he had responded so publicly. While Hutcheson was by no means insensitive to criticism, it was one of only two occasions he entered into a public debate concerning the

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<sup>63</sup> GBL, p 237, p. 238 and p. 238.

<sup>64</sup> GBL, p. 239.

<sup>65</sup> GBL, p. 240.

<sup>66</sup> T4, p. 112.

import and implications of his work.<sup>67</sup> Even when challenged as to his religious orthodoxy by a student in Glasgow University, he left it to his students to respond, and distanced himself from the affair. The series of critiques that Burnet used to assail Hutcheson's system riled him sufficiently to persuade him that his system needed defending. Three explanations suggest themselves.

Foremost of these is that Burnet's rationalism was indicative of a real philosophic problem for Hutcheson's system. What Burnet was challenging was Hutcheson's trust in the senses to produce reliable information concerning the outside world, without the need for a rational mind interpreting, decoding and deciphering the information. In the case of the moral sense, trust was paramount in the generalisation of ethics from particular, individual cases to social injunctions. Burnet grasped that Hutcheson's scheme required a rational mind, capable of patterning and interpreting the evidence of the senses, and that without such an arbiter the system was inherently flawed.

That Hutcheson was aware of the stakes is evident from his sensitivity on this point, not only in his animated response to Burnet, but in a letter he sent to William Mace in the autumn of 1727. As Hutcheson admitted to Mace: "I was well apprised of the scheme of thinking you are fallen into, not only by our Dr. Berkly's [sic] books, and by some of the old academics, but by frequent conversation with some few speculative friends in Dublin."<sup>68</sup> The scheme Mace had fallen into involved a belief that the mind was little more than a series of perceptions, which generated little order of its own and was intrinsically incoherent. This Hutcheson believed illogical:

I imagine you'll find that everyone has an immediate simple perception of self; to which all his other perceptions are some way connected, otherwise I cannot conceive how I could be any way affected with pleasure or pain from any past action, affection or perception, or have any present uneasiness or concern about any future event or perception; or how there could be any unity of person, or any desire of future happiness or aversion to misery.<sup>69</sup>

Coherence was a product of our consistency as humans. Hutcheson admitted that beyond this reduction of certainty to the existence of the self, he was unable to answer the challenge of uncertain data: "As to material *sub strata*, I own I am a sceptic; all the

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<sup>67</sup> The other occasion Hutcheson retorted to criticism was prompted by the analysis of John Clarke of Hull. For this see chapter five. Two other possible candidates are both dealt with in detail in the conclusion. One of these, Hutcheson's letter to the *Bibliothèque Angloise* was a refutation of a slur on his character, and not a debate concerning the merits of his work. The second, the debate in the *London Journal* of 1728 is not clear-cut. Hutcheson may or may not have been a contributor to this series. Even if he was, he did not openly admit it, as he did in his debate with Burnet in the republication of the series in 1735.

<sup>68</sup> F. Hutcheson to W. Mace, Dublin, 6 September 1727, in S. Deane (ed.) *The Field day anthology of Irish writing*, (Derry, 1991), volume one, p. 786. On Hutcheson's response to Berkeley, see Locating Hutcheson's contribution.



phenomena might be as they are, were there nothing but perceptions, for the phenomena are perceptions. As yet, were there external objects, I cannot imagine how we could be better informed of them than we are.”<sup>70</sup>

This last sentence held the key, for although Hutcheson admitted of uncertainty as to the production of accurate sense-data, he attested that his system was trustworthy. Hutcheson considered the consistency of our sense-perceptions by addressing the ‘Molyneux problem.’ As Locke, who first published the philosophical puzzle in the pages of the *Essay concerning human understanding*, stated it:

I shall here insert a problem of that very ingenious and studious promoter of real knowledge, the learned and worthy Mr. Molyneux, which he was pleased to send me in a letter some months since; and it is this: Suppose a man born blind, and now adult, and taught by his touch to distinguish between a cube and a sphere of the same metal, and nighly of the same bigness, so as to tell, when he felt one and t’other, which is the cube, which the sphere. Suppose then the cube and sphere placed on a table, and the blind man to be made to see; *quaere*, whether by his sight, before he touched them, he could now distinguish and tell which is the globe, which the cube?<sup>71</sup>

Hutcheson refuted both Locke and Molyneux by answering the question positively:

Messrs. Locke and Molyneux are both wrong about the cube and sphere proposed to a blind man restored to sight. He [the blind man] would not at first view know the sphere from a shaded plane surface by a view from above; but a side view would discover the equal uniform round relieve in one and the cubic one in the other. We can all by touch, with our eyes shut, judge what the visible extension of a body felt shall be when we shall open our eyes; but cannot by feeling judge what the colour shall be when we shall see it; which shows visible and tangible extension to be really the same idea, or to have one idea common, viz., the extension, though the purely tangible and visible perceptions are quite disparate.<sup>72</sup>

Hutcheson claimed that however limited the senses may be, for example in the case of colour, they were of sufficient power as to enable man to function safely in the world. As Hutcheson expressed it, were Locke and Molyneux correct “it would be impossible that one who had only the idea of tangible extension could ever apprehend any reasonings formed by one who argued about the visible; whereas blind men may understand mathematics.”<sup>73</sup> Expanding upon this point, Hutcheson used the example of

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<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 786.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 786.

<sup>71</sup> J. Locke, *An essay concerning human understanding*, (P. H. Nidditch, ed.), (Oxford, 1979), pp 145-6.

<sup>72</sup> F. Hutcheson to W. Mace, Dublin, 6 September 1727, in S. Deane (ed.) *The Field day anthology of Irish writing*, (Derry, 1991), volume one, p. 786. On the range of answers to this problem and for the rediscovery of Hutcheson’s own response see D. Berman, “Francis Hutcheson on Berkeley and the Molyneux problem,” in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 74, (1974), c, no. 8, pp 259-65

A person, paralytic and blind, with an acute smell, who had no idea of either extension; [visible and tangible] suppose there were a body whose smell continually altered with every change of its figure; one man seeing the several figures changing in a regular course foresees which shall come next, so the other knows the course of smells; he agrees with the blind man about names; the one noting by them the various figures, the other the various smells. The seer reasons about the figures, or forms one of Euclid's propositions concerning the proportion of the sides: is it possible the blind man could ever assent to this or know his meaning from the smells? And yet, men may so far agree, one of whom had only the idea of tangible extension.<sup>74</sup>

As Hutcheson viewed the problem, the senses were capable of reliable generalisation, although not because of the consistency of the external world but because of the consistency of the human senses.<sup>75</sup>

The second, and superficially the most general of the considerations forcing Hutcheson to respond to Burnet, was the nature of Burnet's scheme. What Burnet represented was the philosophical stance of rationalism. This was sufficiently common in Hutcheson's day, and Burnet sufficiently representative of the school of thought, for Hutcheson to believe it necessary to refute his assault on the moral sense. The response Hutcheson received throughout his life was in large part directed from a rationalist perspective. From reviewers such as Philopatriss, to respondents such as John Gay and George Berkeley, the criticism Hutcheson encountered was from this school of thought.<sup>76</sup> But while this may appear to be such a broad observation that it escapes proper analysis, two considerations bear out the truth of this statement. Firstly, Hutcheson was to return to the threat posed to his philosophy in the *Illustrations on the moral sense* of 1728. Secondly, and this is the third of the elements motivating Hutcheson to respond to Burnet, Hutcheson was confronted with the polemical power of rationalism on an almost daily basis. It affected the nature of his public identity in a direct way, challenging his affiliation

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 787.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 787.

<sup>75</sup> Application of post-Kantian categories had led David Fate-Norton, to read Francis Hutcheson as a moral realist. That this debate revolved around terminology like moral realism and cognitivism displays its weakness. Too much in debt to Kantian critique and Post-Kantian philosophy it falls foul of Richard Tuck's timely reminder: "In order to vindicate his own philosophy, Kant was located by both himself and his successors in a new version of the history of philosophy, sweeping away what had been commonplaces for more than a century. The transformation was most complete in the area of modern moral philosophy, for there not only did an old interpretation vanish, but so did a complete cast of characters. Given Kant's own views this was understandable, but the survival of the post-Kantian history into our own time has proved a great barrier to a genuine understanding of the pre-Kantian thinkers." See D. Fate-Norton, *David Hume: common sense moralist, sceptical metaphysician*, (Princeton, 1982), pp 55-93; D. Fate-Norton, "Hutcheson's moral realism," in *Journal of the history of philosophy*, 23, (1985), pp 397-418; K. Winkler, "Hutcheson's alleged realism," in *Journal of the history of philosophy*, 23 (1985), pp 179-94; R. Tuck "The 'Modern' Theory of Natural Law", in *The languages of political theory in early modern Europe*, (A. Pagden, ed.), (Cambridge, 1987), p. 99.

<sup>76</sup> See Locating Hutcheson's contribution for an analysis of these views.

with the Irish Presbyterian community. Burnet's challenge was therefore indicative of a real problem facing Hutcheson in his local context.

Hutcheson had been drawn to Dublin by the promise of establishing and running a preparatory school for Presbyterian boys, aimed at providing them with the basic education required for entry, first to the Scottish higher education system and subsequently to the ministry. What Hutcheson taught there, with the help of his life-long friend Thomas Drennan, can only be speculated on, but by way of surmise we can suggest that the curriculum contained a broadly humanist education.

An examination of the student signatures in Glasgow University's matriculation albums provides some interesting grounds for that speculation.<sup>77</sup> While students could sign the albums at any stage of their university career with the implication that Hutcheson would have taught many students who appear under another faculty member's name, the results of a geographical breakdown are suggestive.<sup>78</sup> The breakdown makes clear his influence over the education of Irish Presbyterians in the first half of the eighteenth century. While the average for the student population as a whole reveals 15.5% of the student body had Irish roots, Hutcheson's matriculation records reveal a marked discrepancy, with Irish students comprising some 51.9% of the whole. As he was teaching in the final compulsory year of the Arts degree many of these students may have embarked on their higher education in Ireland. They studied at dissenting academies of the kind Hutcheson founded in Dublin, arriving in Glasgow to complete their studies under the eminent Irish Professor. This statistical analysis can be coupled Leechman's assertion that both English and Irish students arrived in Glasgow upon Hutcheson's appointment specifically to study with him.<sup>79</sup> What this suggests, if Hutcheson's academy was in line with others in Ireland, is that the academy in Dublin offered courses in the latter stages which complemented, or even replaced, the courses on offer in the universities themselves.

The other piece of circumstantial evidence concerning the nature of the academy is the existence of Hutcheson's Latin *Compendiums*. These works, on logic, metaphysics and morality were in line with the courses offered in Glasgow University.<sup>80</sup> Although published in the 1730s, Hutcheson was then teaching in the vernacular and was confined to

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<sup>77</sup> W. M. Mathew makes clear: "The albums do not offer complete coverage of the student body. Matriculation was compulsory only for Arts men who intended graduating and for those who wished to vote in rectories elections." See: W. M. Mathew, "The origins and occupations of Glasgow students, 1740-1839," in *Past and Present*, 33, (1966), p. 74.

<sup>78</sup> See appendix two.

<sup>79</sup> Leechman notes that "Several young gentlemen came along with him from the Academy, and his just fame drew many more both from England and Ireland." PSMP, p. xi.

<sup>80</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Philosophiae moralis institutio compendiaria, ethices et jurisprudentiae naturalis elementa continens*, (Glasgow, 1742), (Translated as SIMP, (Glasgow, 1747); *Metaphysicae synopsis ontologiam et pneumatologiam compectens*, (Glasgow, 1742); *Logicoe compendium*, (Glasgow, 1756).

moral philosophy. That he would have spent a great deal of time writing Latin primers for fields of study not his own, and that all this effort would leave little trace in his albeit limited correspondence, does suggest that the works may date from his time in Dublin.<sup>81</sup>

Whatever occurred within the walls of Hutcheson's academy, its very existence was the bone of some contention in the capital. Located, as we have seen, on the corner of Drumcondra Lane and Dorset Street, it was part of the development of the north bank of the Liffey and lay directly across the river from the power-base of the Anglican creed, Patrick's liberty. As such it posed a direct challenge to the Anglican claim to uniformity in matters confessional. That the congregation gathered at Wood Street, situated in the shadow of St. Patrick's Cathedral, sponsored Hutcheson's academy could only have heightened the tensions. The Archbishop of Dublin, William King must have been aware of the Presbyterian presence from in palace beside the cathedral.<sup>82</sup>

What made the academy's position all the more galling to Anglicans, and made Hutcheson's position in Dublin all the more precarious, was that the teaching of dissenters in such establishments had once been explicitly prohibited by law. The keystone of the Anglicans' defensive construction against irreligion was the Irish Act of Uniformity of 1666. The only portion of the intolerant Clarendon code to make it onto the Irish statute books, this act justified the expulsion of Calvinist ministers from the Church of Ireland. It had further proscribed the establishment of dissenting academies by insisting that bishops licensed all prospective teachers in their diocese.<sup>83</sup>

While the Toleration Act of 1719 had eased the restrictions in this regard, Hutcheson's position as a teacher at such an institution undermined his security in Dublin from the start. Nor was it the sole assault on the sensibilities of his sponsors. Although the Wood Street congregation was fashionable, rich and for its type, politically powerful, it had been unable to prevent the passage into law in 1704 of the wide ranging and potent Test Act, directed at removing Presbyterians from the active life of the Irish polis.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> In this I am in agreement with the tentative suggestion of James Moore. See J. Moore, "The two systems of Francis Hutcheson: on the origins of the Scottish enlightenment," in *Studies in the philosophy of the Scottish enlightenment*, (M. A. Stewart ed.), (Oxford, 1990), pp 37-59. I would also like to thank Professor Fred Michael and Professor Emily Michael for discussing the nature of Hutcheson's *Logic* with me. They have suggested that Hutcheson's text follows a similar design to the course he followed when a student, under his regent and later Professor of Logic, John Loudon. See E. Michael, "Francis Hutcheson's confusing university career," in *Notes and Queries*, 42, (1995), pp 56-9.

<sup>82</sup> On King's views on Presbyterianism, see chapter six.

<sup>83</sup> See P. Kilroy, *Protestant dissent and controversy in Ireland, 1660-1714*, (Cork, 1994); and J. Richardson, *Archbishop William King: man of faith, man of reason*, Ph.D. (Maynooth NUI, 1998), chapter four.

<sup>84</sup> For the details of this Act see chapter two. Thomas Witherow writes of how: "in 1710, the Presbyterian gentry and ministers residing there [Dublin] by deed bearing the date the 1<sup>st</sup> of May in that year, founded the General Fund for the support of religion in and about Dublin and the south of Ireland....The great bulk of the money, £6750 out of the £7670 originally raised, was contributed by the congregation of Wood Street alone."

More important, if harder to analyse than the direct impact of the Test on the confessional identity of aldermen and the political make-up of the House of Commons, is the impact of the Test on the minds and outlooks of the Presbyterian community. As the issue of converts makes clear, the leading dissenters were under political pressure to shift their confessional ground.<sup>85</sup> The Test added to the sense of isolation felt by such men, and provided another incentive for their translation into the established church.<sup>86</sup>

Tensions internal to dissenting affairs exacerbated the external threat posed by the attitude of the state. That these surfaced concurrently with the passage of the Test Act left the Presbyterian community facing a serious crisis; a challenge to the faith; a time of trouble, in which they had to act decisively or be lost. The Wood Street minister Thomas Emlyn posed the most explicit of these internal challenges.<sup>87</sup> Emlyn's doubts concerning traditional credal formulations were of long standing. He had been a friend and disputant of the English dissenter and covert Socinian, William Manning of Suffolk. In his dealings with Manning, Emlyn had been driven into Arianism by the logic of his own position.<sup>88</sup> Yet, despite his discontent at the credal limitations placed upon him by his church, Emlyn accepted the post of minister to the Wood Street congregation. Their minister Joseph Boyse extended the invitation when the post became vacant following the removal of Dr. Daniel Williams to London.<sup>89</sup>

Installed in May 1691, Emlyn maintained a high degree of circumspection concerning his doctrinal heterodoxy. He preached until 1702 before the congregation became uneasy. The matter only flared into the public domain when an elder of the church, Dr. Duncan Cumming, queried Emlyn closely on the preacher's perception of the nature of Christ's divinity. That this was the first occasion anyone broached the matter with Emlyn may be inferred by his adoption of an honest, and subsequently highly damaging, position in response. In Emlyn's account of the encounter, he recalled how: "I fully owned myself

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T. Witherow, *Historical and literary memorials of Presbyterianism in Ireland*, (Belfast, 1879), volume one, pp 324-5.

<sup>85</sup> T. P. Power, "Converts," in *Endurance and emergence: Catholics in Ireland in the eighteenth century*, (T. Power and K. Whelan, ed.), (Dublin, 1990), pp 101-28.

<sup>86</sup> J. Boyse, "Sermon on the death of Sir Arthur Langford," in *Works*, (London, 1728), volume two, pp 304-11. Langford took the Sacramental Test before becoming MP for Antrim in 1715.

<sup>87</sup> Thomas Emlyn, b. 1663 d. 1741. Chaplain to Countess of Donegal 1683-8. Chaplain to Sir Robert Rich 1689-91. Minister at Wood Street, 1691-1702.

<sup>88</sup> William Manning, 1630?-1711. Educated Caius College, Cambridge, perpetual curate of Middleton, Suffolk; ejected 1662. Congregational teacher at Peasenahll. Author of: sermons. Socinianism is the heretical doctrine that denies the Trinity. Arianism is the heresy that denies the divinity of Christ.

<sup>89</sup> For Joseph Boyse see below. Daniel Williams, (1643?-1716). Educated Glasgow University Chaplain to the Countess of Meath. Minister at Wood Street 1667-1687. Minister at Hand Alley, Bishopsgate, London, 1687-1716.

convinced that God, and Father of Jesus Christ is alone the Supreme Being and superior in excellency and authority to his Son (or to that effect), who derives all from Him.”<sup>90</sup>

This statement of faith by a man in an important post within the capital’s dissenting community was a matter of much embarrassment to his fellow ministers for: “They were Trinitarian and he was not.” The matter of contention was, for Emlyn, more complex. As he was to subsequently protest: “I professed myself ready to give my assent to the Scriptures, though not to their explication; judging I might justly use my reason where they so much used theirs, or other men’s.”<sup>91</sup> This defence rested on the twin claims of the potency of man’s reason and the right to the privacy of the individual in the exercise of that ability. Echoes of the Toland affair of 1696 only added to Presbyterian nervousness.<sup>92</sup>

By 1702, Emlyn was friendless in an uncaring, and from his vantage-point, intolerant city. The revelations concerning the private thoughts of the Wood Street minister led swiftly to his removal from the pulpit, following the deliberations of the Dublin ministers at a general gathering. Emlyn’s subsequent attempt to offer a defence and thereby mitigate the effect of being “cast off” so unceremoniously, backfired dramatically.<sup>93</sup> It engaged him in a hostile and personal pamphlet war with his old friend, Joseph Boyse.

Boyse penned a brief rebuttal of Emlyn’s views, disassociating the Presbyterian community in Dublin from the heterodoxy of its member. As Boyse outlined: “The sacred ministers take the foundation of the difference between Mr. E[mlyn] and them to lie in his not owning the Word and the Holy Spirit to be as truly God as the Father is.”<sup>94</sup> The error on their part was to have been taken in by the similarities between Emlyn’s heterodoxy and their own, more dogmatically correct beliefs:

‘Tis indeed true that Mr. E[mlyn] in general worships the same divine nature that we do, but he does not worship it under that threefold distinction that we do, of Father, Word and Spirit. Nor does he think our Blessed Saviour to be one of that sacred three and as such the object of divine worship. And this they take to be such a difference in judgement as leads to an important difference in practice: i.e. the giving or not giving divine worship to the Son as distinguished from the Father.<sup>95</sup>

Boyse thought Emlyn guilty of duplicity in declaring that he ascribed to the divinity of Christ. As he explained: “[Emlyn] knows that he does deny him [Christ] to be God in the sense that the Christian Church understands it, viz., God by essence and believes him to be

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<sup>90</sup> G. Mathews, *An account of the trial on 14, June 1703, before the court of the Queen’s bench, Dublin, of the Revd. Thomas Emlyn for a publication against the doctrine of the Trinity*, (Dublin, 1839), p. 11.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7 and p. 12.

<sup>92</sup> See chapter one on the Toland affair.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>94</sup> J. Boyse, *The difference between Mr. E[mlyn] and the Protestant dissenting ministers of Dublin truly represented*, (Dublin, [1703]), p. 2.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 5-6.

God in no sense but what the Socinians themselves own, viz., God by office.” This left Boyse to offer Emlyn a means of escaping censure; recantation: “Now if Mr. E[mlyn] will own the former, that Christ is God by nature and essence, all the difference is at an end. But if he allow him to be no otherwise God than by office ‘tis plain he falls in with both Arians and Socinians in the main point of their difference from the Christian Church.” Boyse then appealed for general support for the actions of the Presbyterian church in this matter. He believed that Christians of any hue “will arraign either their [the Presbyterian ministers’] prudence or their charity for discountenancing a doctrine which they think strikes so deep at the foundation of Christianity and particularly robs our Blessed Saviour of that divine worship which the Christian Church pays to him.”<sup>96</sup>

Boyse was proven correct in his confidence on this matter, for the justification Emlyn entered only succeeded in so annoying the civil authorities that he found himself in the dock, charged not merely for his own private convictions, but for the public proclamation of heresy.<sup>97</sup> The religious court, on which Archbishop King sat, had Emlyn gaoled and fined £1,000. He remained incarcerated from 14 June 1703 until 21 July 1705.

Faced with an external and an internal challenge to the legitimacy of the church, the Presbyterian Synod of Ulster decided to exert their governing power, adopting the Westminster Confession of Faith for the examination of potential ministers. Introduced as a qualifier for the holding of ministerial office in 1705, it was a direct response to the need for theological orthodoxy in the wake of the Test Act and the Emlyn affair.

The Westminster Confession was the last great flower to bloom in the confessional strand of Presbyterian theology in Scotland, which had begun with the “First Bond” of 1559.<sup>98</sup> A brand of Calvinist scholasticism infused the document, applying a Ramist concept of reason to the Scriptures in order to construct a coherent and fully developed Presbyterian theology.<sup>99</sup> The bulwark of this edifice was a restatement of the five points of Calvinist doctrine first established at the Synod of Dort in 1619: total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace and perseverance of the saints.

The aim of using this highly structured, legalistic and formulaic doctrinal statement, to test the orthodoxy of prospective candidates for the ministry was to ensure

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<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6, p. 8 and p. 11.

<sup>97</sup> For the charges see G. Mathews, *An account of the trial on 14 June 1703, before the court of the Queen's bench, Dublin, of the Revd. Thomas Emlyn for a publication against the doctrine of the Trinity*, (Dublin, 1839), pp 26-8.

<sup>98</sup> For the central place of the covenant in Calvinist theology see Q. Skinner, *Foundations of modern political thought*, (Cambridge, 1978), volume two, pp 236-8. On its place in English Presbyterianism see C. Hill, *The English Bible and the seventeenth-century revolution*, (London, 1994), pp 271-83. On Scottish thinking in this direction see T. F. Torrance, *Scottish theology*, (Edinburgh, 1996), particularly pp 125-56.

<sup>99</sup> S. D. Fratt, *Scottish theological trends in the eighteenth century: tensions between the head and the heart*, (University of California, Ph.D., 1987), (Michigan, 1994), pp 17-32.

they would not embarrass. Moreover, subscription enabled the Presbyterian church to petition the government for the abolition of the Test Act. It provided the Synod with a rhetorical strategy. The Synod could argue that subscription ensured that the dissenting community in Ireland was not a sect, but a church, akin to, and sistered with, that in Scotland. The Confession, drawn up with the aid of English Puritan divines in the 1640s, was a statement of orthodoxy, which would enable the government to recognise, control and give legal status to the Presbyterian church. The Synod was reassuring the civil authorities that it was no haven for free-thought, heterodoxy and heresy.

The dilemma for the Synod was that a different strategy was also being developed to argue for the toleration of Presbyterianism. This was grounded on the belief that if Presbyterians were to request tolerance for themselves, they had to be exemplary in their exercise of it towards others. In 1705 a group of like-minded, predominantly Glasgow-educated ministers founded the Belfast Society.<sup>100</sup> The Society argued that it was only by being tolerant of different theological views within Presbyterianism, could the church plausibly petition for toleration from the Church of Ireland.

This difference in the rhetorical tactics advocated by the traditionalists in the Synod of Ulster and by the Belfast Society derived from a divergence in the philosophical methods used by the Synod and the Belfast Society. Contrary to the Ramist logic of the Synod, with its demand for the logical exegesis of sacred text, the Belfast Society emphasised rationalism. The emphasis of study within the Society fell, not upon the Gospel or the ancillary doctrinal statements of the Synod inspired by Scripture but upon the natural capabilities of the individual who trusted in the Lord to comprehend his universe. This is the third reason why Hutcheson found it important to refute Burnet. Only by doing so could he make it clear that he was not a supporter, however personally sympathetic he may have been, of the philosophical tenets that split the Presbyterian Church in the 1720s. Hutcheson was therefore not of either camp, and was in need of a third legitimacy theory to explain and justify his Presbyterian identity.

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<sup>100</sup> "At every meeting, two were appointed to read and seriously consider three or four chapters of the Bible, or more, according to the nature of the subjects contained in them, and to present to the next meeting that doubts that should occur to them, or that they should find in commentators, about the true meaning of difficult passages, with the best solutions of them; the one beginning with the Old Testament, the other with the New. These doubts and solutions were canvassed by the meeting, to whom they were presented. If the solution proved universally satisfactory, and yet had something uncommon; or in the case nothing satisfactory was offered in the society; in either of these cases a paper was ordered to be prepared and laid before the next society, where the subject was resumed.... Another branch of our business was what we called a communication of studies; that is that every member should at every meeting communicate to the whole the substance of everything he had found remarkable in the books he had read since the former meeting." James Duchal cited in T. Witherow, *Historical and literary memorials of Presbyterianism in Ireland*, (Belfast, 1879), volume one, pp 162-4.



The tensions between the Society and the wider community of the church were heightened by the presence in the Society's midst of the tempestuous and headstrong John Abernethy, minister for Antrim. As his old friend John Mears diplomatically recalled at his funeral oration in 1740:

He would never...submit to anything that he judged to be wrong, or unreasonable, or to have a tendency to betray the cause of truth, virtue, or liberty; in these things he was steady and inflexible, firm and immovable as a rock. It was a ruling principle with him to retain his integrity, to keep a good conscience and faithfully to discharge his duties.<sup>101</sup>

Abernethy graduated from Glasgow University with a Masters of Arts and a brilliant reputation, and moved to Edinburgh to pursue divinity studies there.<sup>102</sup> He turned down a number of lucrative offers to stay in Scotland, in order to return to his native Ireland, where he became a minister at Antrim in 1703. His loyalty to this calling embroiled him in his first public controversy when, in 1717, the Synod decreed he should move to Ussher's Quay in Dublin as part of their plans to proselytise in the capital.<sup>103</sup> Abernethy opposed the move, and upon spending three months in the capital, illicitly returned to his Antrim congregation and preached to them. This act of disobedience raised the hackles of the religious authorities in the Synod, but Abernethy stood firm.

The doctrinal justification for this act of temporal disobedience came two years later, when, on 9 December 1719, Abernethy preached a sermon with the provocative title: *Religious obedience founded on personal persuasion*.<sup>104</sup> In a style which Mears described as "correct, nervous and masculine," Abernethy provided his listeners with an exegesis of the Biblical text, Rom. xv, 5: "let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."<sup>105</sup>

Therein, Paul dealt with the division between Gentile and Jewish Christians over the issue of meats and days: the customary prohibition on eating pork and the correct ceremonial observances of the faith. While the Gentiles did not carry across any ceremonial usage from their previous faiths, the Jewish Christians insisted on retaining the

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<sup>101</sup> J. Mears, *A sermon on the occasion of the much lamented death of the Reverend Mr. John Abernethy, preached in Wood Street, 7 December 1740*, (Dublin, 1741), pp 44-5. John Mears, died 1767. Ordained 1720. Minister at Newtownards 1720, Clonmel 1735 and Strafford Street Dublin 1740. Strafford Street had separated from Capel Street in 1738 and in 1762 merged with Wood Street.

<sup>102</sup> The account of Abernethy's career in this paragraph draws on R. F. Holmes, "The Reverend John Abernethy: the challenge of new light theology to traditional Irish Presbyterian Calvinism," in *The religion of Irish dissent, 1650-1800*, (K. Herlihy, ed.), (Dublin, 1996), pp 100-11; A. W. G. Brown, "John Abernethy 1680-1740: scholar and ecclesiast," in *Nine Ulster lives*, (G. O'Brien and P. Roebuck, eds.), (Belfast, 1992), 125-47; and R. B. Barlow, "The career of John Abernethy (1680-1740), father of non-subscription in Ireland," in *The Harvard Theological Review*, 78, (1985), pp 399-419.

<sup>103</sup> See below.

<sup>104</sup> J. Abernethy, "Religious obedience founded on personal persuasion: a sermon preached at Belfast, the 9th of December 1719," in *Scarce and valuable tracts*, (London, 1751), pp 215-53.

concept of clean and unclean food. The apostle intervened in this dispute arguing that in such non-essential matters each disputant should avoid discord by exercising tolerance towards the other party's beliefs. Abernethy took such food for thought and provided the Antrim congregation with a recipe for toleration and latitude.

For Abernethy, the text justified an overriding reliance on man's conscience above the consensus of the community. Only the purity and internal consistency of man's reason with his behaviour ensured salvation. In the full flow of his powerful style he proclaimed: "If every man in order to his acceptance with God, ought to be fully persuaded in his own mind, then surely it is reasonable they should be left to their own freedom and not compelled by methods of violence to act with a gainsaying or doubting conscience."<sup>106</sup>

In being persuaded the individual had to be deliberate. Moreover, his deliberation "ought to be unprejudiced, free from passion or the influence of any consideration except that which should rationally determine us, that is in the present case anything but the pure evidence of the mind and will of God."<sup>107</sup> Abernethy had effectively placed the burden of truth on the faculty of reason, expressing the belief that it alone could act to justify man's acceptance of ethical norms and positive values.

This rationalism subsumed doctrinal orthodoxy to an individualistic account of knowledge-formation. Every God-fearing man had to engage personally in the struggle to overcome the human passions, which thwart the search for truth. Through deliberate rational inquiry man endeavoured to approximate the divine good, conducting a personal exploration of Scripture. In return, God demanded that people remained true to their own convictions and did not cower beneath the dogmas of a clerisy:

Acting according to a persuasion thus qualified, is the very essence of sincerity; by which only it is that any of the sons of men can assure their hearts before God...He is a sincere person and may enjoy the comfortable assurance of his sincerity who, in opposition to his worldly interest and the sinful inclinations of his heart, faithfully endeavours to do the will of God and to abstain from every known sin, who willingly, and with a ready mind, embraces every discovered truth and renounces every discovered error and who continually labours to find out his remaining sins and mistakes, that he may reject them.<sup>108</sup>

This rationalist attitude, with its implicit conception of man's perfectibility, could only remain coherent if each rational agent maintained a critical distance from any other:

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<sup>105</sup> J. Mears, *A sermon on the occasion of the much lamented death of the Reverend Mr. John Abernethy, preached in Wood Street, 7 December 1740*, (Dublin, 1741), p. 40.

<sup>106</sup> J. Abernethy, "Religious obedience founded on personal persuasion: a sermon preached at Belfast, the 9th of December 1719," in *Scarce and valuable tracts*, (London, 1751), p. 220.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 227-8.

In every case let a man preserve his own liberty inviolable and not be induced, by respect to men, or any worldly consideration, while he is persuaded on the contrary...to do or forebear anything that falls within the wide sphere of conscience, wherein the last decision of his own understanding must be immediate rule.<sup>109</sup>

This emphasis upon the primacy of conscience left little room for the communal nature of faith and its concomitant co-ordination by church government. It devolved responsibility for defining the content of moral behaviour onto each individual, leaving Abernethy open to accusations of inciting anarchy and destroying the structure of the church.

Abernethy only exacerbated the problem when he attended to the content of the “wide sphere of conscience,” that is, the proper object of persuasion. He made a blurry distinction between the essential and inessential elements of faith. The latter are those elements in which disagreement was conscionable without rending the fabric of the faith. Essential matters were fundamental to the confession’s identity, but rather than embark upon the development of a doctrinal system, Abernethy was content to illustrate such essential matters by noting such isolated doctrines as: “Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and repentance towards God.” Although in the ensuing wrangle this distinction remained the cornerstone of his rebuttal of doctrinal critics, he here acknowledged that such a division was, for all practical purposes, all but impossible to discern. In effect, persuasion was also necessary for essential matters: “The things wherein our full persuasion is required are things of an inferior nature, not fundamental doctrines and precepts of Christianity; yet in matters of the highest importance we cannot possibly be accepted without persuasion.” The problem for Ulster Presbyterianism was that the Westminster Confession consisted of doctrinal statements inferred, rather than directly drawn, from the pages of Scripture.<sup>110</sup>

The dilemma Abernethy raised through the division between essential and inessential forms resided in such inferences. Whose rationality could the individual trust to deduce the system inferred in Scripture? His answer was all believers through their examination of the biblical source. To place one’s trust in another and to accept the authority of such a system without being fully persuaded of its credentials and credibility was, Abernethy declared, to risk the wrath of the almighty Lord. Such meek submission

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<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229, p. 230 and p. 232. “The scholastic style of the Confession was based on the dual authorities of revelation and reason. The foundation of the Confession rested on the Christian’s faith in the authority of the Bible as God’s infallible revelation to mankind. From the authority of Scripture, the Confession deduced rationally a series of doctrinal truths, which were then organised and presented in a systematic order. The truth of the resulting rationalist theological system was guaranteed by the twin supports of *a priori* commitment to the authority of Scripture and the careful use of logic to uncover additional knowledge, present, but not clearly organised in Scripture.” S. D. Fratt, *Scottish theological trends in the eighteenth*

was “in effect to say we may be saved by a mere profession and a course of external actions, that is by hypocrisy.”<sup>111</sup>

Instead of seeing the church as a body deliberating on, and defining, theology, Abernethy declared the church’s role to be exhortatory. It was an advisory body for the laity, imploring people to look to their own conscience in the search after God. Edification of the populace was therefore its primary function:

A power for edification is a power to promote truth and sincere religion, which can never be promoted by men’s being obliged to act contrary to the inward conviction of their own minds, or without it, therefore, the Apostles must be understood to have disclaimed any authority obliging Christians in such a manner. And from hence we may see the just limits of church power: Its decisions bind the conscience as far as men are convinced and no farther.<sup>112</sup>

Abernethy’s challenge was twofold. In theological terms he prioritised the individual over obedience to the church. His contention that deliberate and dispassionate examination of the Bible and the application of man’s reason led to salvation undermined the Confession; most notably the dogma of man’s essential reprobation. Abernethy’s philosophical optimism led him to state the second and more pragmatic of his challenges. It was Abernethy’s contention that the necessity to subscribe to the Confession, as demanded by the Synod of Ulster, was detrimental to the quest for man’s salvation. It was therefore contrary to God’s will as expressed by Christ. Abernethy was thus querying the Synod’s legitimacy as a governing body in both theological and secular matters.

The response from the orthodox wing of the church was immediate. The minister for Dunmurry, John Malcome, published a direct rebuttal of Abernethy’s pamphlet.<sup>113</sup> An elderly and orthodox man, Malcome viewed the Bible as the only accurate guide to correct moral behaviour. Any other foundation for conduct was false and deceitful: “Our faith and obedience must be founded on Christ Jesus, speaking by his prophets and Apostles; if we build upon another foundation we’ll be like the man that built his house upon the sand.”<sup>114</sup>

In the specific case of Abernethy’s claim that reason was a sufficient guide to right religious conduct, Malcome was scathing:

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century: *tensions between the head and the heart*, (University of California, Ph.D., 1987), (Michigan, 1994), p. 30.

<sup>111</sup> J. Abernethy, “Religious obedience founded on personal persuasion: a sermon preached at Belfast, the 9th of December 1719,” in *Scarce and valuable tracts*, (London, 1751), p. 232.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 246-7.

<sup>113</sup> John Malcome, (1662?-1729) Educated Glasgow University, ordained 1687. Minister for Lower Lilledale co. Antrim. Removed in 1699 to Dunmurry near Belfast. J. Malcome, *Personal persuasion no foundation for religious obedience: or some friendly reflections on a sermon preach’d at Belfast December 9 1719*, by John Abernethy, (Belfast, 1720).

I do not deny but conscience being enlightened by the word of God directs the man to his duty....By no means can it be justly called the foundation of our obedience...unless we fall in with the cursed Socinians, who tell us plainly that humane reason is our rule and guide even in points that directly relate to our eternal salvation; and with them our author plainly agrees.<sup>115</sup>

Malcome accused Abernethy of undermining the place of the Bible in the moral sphere. In contrast, the Westminster divines, for all of their logical deductions, had founded their system firmly on scripture.

Malcome pointed out the unscriptural nature of Abernethy's claims by producing a litany of biblical citations contradicting Abernethy's central assertion. Malcome confirmed the centrality of Scripture, contending that Abernethy "ought first to have shown us how this doctrine [toleration over meats and days] is founded on the text, before he had attempted to show that religious obedience is founded on personal persuasion".<sup>116</sup>

Malcome's second line of argument was an extension of the first. To argue that religious obedience emanated from man's reason was to undermine the authority of the civil magistrate. As he pointedly inquired: "Have not many in these three nations refused to take the Oath of Abjuration because they were persuaded the Pretender was their only rightful King?" Malcome used this rhetorical question to effect a general condemnation of Abernethy's principles. He enquired: "Shall we allow the magistrate power to punish breaches of the second table of the law of God [murder, etc] and no power at all to take notice of the breaches of the first table [blasphemies] which are directly against God?"<sup>117</sup>

The answer to this question justified in Malcome's mind a drastic solution to Abernethy's challenge; the separation of communions:

What if some differ from us in points that are essential? Shall we then allow them the tokens of Christian communion? And what if their light be darkness? Must we not refuse the token of communion to them?...And if I should give them all the tokens of Christian communion; what sort of Communion will it be, betwixt them and me? Even such as is between light and darkness, Christ and Belial, a believer with an infidel.<sup>118</sup>

That this solution might be effective was a real possibility thanks to the nature of the sacrament of communion in Presbyterianism.<sup>119</sup> The ceremony was irregular and involved not one congregation but many, who travelled many miles to take the sacrament. Due to the vast numbers involved the entire proceedings went on for some days. The

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<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 8-9. The reference is to Matt, vii, 26.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8. For examples of biblical citation in Malcome's rebuttal of Abernethy see p. 17 and p. 27.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9 and pp 18-9.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 26-7.

celebrants filled the time with preparatory prayer and services of thanksgiving. As elders sanctioned parishioners' participation, those in low standing or moral doubt were denied communion. All this took time, enabling parishioners to meet and forge a sense of community within the Presbyterian fold. Were the non-subscribers to remove themselves from communion with the subscribers, those who chose not to follow their lead need not attend such services. Moreover, they could maintain semi-formal contact as preachers from subscribing parishes were able to attend such gatherings even if they chose not to receive communion while there.

The crux for Malcome was his lack of trust in individual reason in the making of moral judgements. One man's light was another's darkness, and in a corrupted world the only guide to behaviour was the direct revelation of the Bible. As Malcome insisted: "This condition [Abernethy's system for morality] might have done well in the state of innocency, but now, in our fully fallen state..."<sup>120</sup> This pessimism was in accord with the theological world-view outlined by the Westminster Confession.

Despite Abernethy's challenge to orthodoxy and the brewing pamphlet war, the Synod of 1720 was relatively sanguine about the affair. As a compromise the Synod gave prospective candidates for the ministry the opportunity, provided the consent of the licensing ministers was forthcoming, to adapt the Confession to their tender consciences. While the Pacific Act, as the Synod termed this deal, satisfied some, notably Abernethy, it did not remain unchallenged for very long. On 28 July 1720, Samuel Haliday, prospective candidate for the lucrative and prestigious post of First Congregation, Belfast, declared his opposition to subscribing to the Confession at all.<sup>121</sup> Despite this recalcitrance, he was duly installed.<sup>122</sup> Faced with the increasingly brazen challenge by ministers within the church, the Synod reaffirmed the Pacific Act in the General Synod of 1721. This ensured that the pamphlet war rumbled on until in the June of 1724 the case of Thomas Nevin came before the church authorities.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> On Presbyterian communions, see P. Kilroy, *Protestant dissent and controversy in Ireland, 1660-1715*, (Cork, 1994), pp 176-8 and C. Hill, *The English Bible and the seventeenth-century revolution*, (London, 1994), pp 78-108.

<sup>120</sup> J. Malcome, *Personal persuasion no foundation for religious obedience: or some friendly reflections on a sermon preach'd at Belfast December 9 1719, by John Abernethy*, (Belfast, 1720), p. 31.

<sup>121</sup> Samuel Haliday, (1685-1739) Educated Glasgow University, ordained in Geneva in 1709, Chaplain to the Scots Cameronians in Flanders.

<sup>122</sup> For an account of this development see R. Finlay Holmes, "The Reverend John Abernethy: the challenge of new light theology to traditional Irish Presbyterian Calvinism," in *The religion of Irish dissent: 1650-1800*, (K. Herlihy, ed.), (Dublin, 1996), p. 107.

<sup>123</sup> Thomas Nevin (1686?-1744) Educated Glasgow University, minister of Downpatrick, 1711.

Nevin, minister at Downpatrick, was already associated with the non-subscribers when a parishioner, Mr. Echlin of Bangor, accused him of holding Arian opinions.<sup>124</sup> When Nevin sued Echlin for defamation, Echlin drew upon a rumoured conversation Nevin had held with a Captain Hannynnton some months before. Therein Nevin had apparently denied the power of the civil magistrate to punish theological transgressors and had made remarks Hannynnton construed as contrary to the divinity of Christ. When the case came before the Synod of Ulster in 1724, it aroused enormous interest, being seen as a test of strength between the subscribing and non-subscribing factions. A committee drew up a list of six articles for Nevin to answer. The case hinged on the fifth charge that “tho’ he owns...he made a confession of our Saviour’s deity before the General Synod 1721, yet he says, *that for his part he is sorry that ever he gave way to it, and shall for the future take care that no temptation whatsoever shall make him venture so far again.*”<sup>125</sup>

While nothing was proven against Nevin and a number of senior ministers, including Joseph Boyse, declared their satisfaction with his orthodoxy, an evening session and a perfunctory vote demanded he declare his orthodoxy by means of an oath. This, as a good non-subscriber, he refused to do, and the Synod excluded him immediately from their communion. Peculiarly, he remained in charge of his congregation for another year.

The argument continued to simmer until, in 1725, the Synod finally acted, adopting the solution suggested by Malcome back in 1720. Following a set of proposals offered by the subscribers, the Synod gathered the non-subscribers into the Presbytery of Antrim. A year later the Synod finally expelled the faction from “ministerial communion with Subscribers in church judicatories,” which implied expulsion from the Synod.<sup>126</sup>

Emotional ties associated Francis Hutcheson with the non-subscribers’ camp. His cousin William Bruce was a friend of Abernethy and co-wrote a volume with him in 1731.<sup>127</sup> More important was Hutcheson’s temperamental acceptance of the non-subscribers’ theological optimism. As with Abernethy, Hutcheson held that man was not intrinsically corrupt. Indeed anecdotal evidence from both Ireland and Scotland suggests that observers noted similarities in their approach.

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<sup>124</sup> The following account is drawn from J. S. Reid, *History of the Presbyterian church in Ireland*, (Belfast, 1867), volume three, pp 174-185; but see also T. Nevin, *The trial of Thomas Nevin MA*, (Belfast, 1725).

<sup>125</sup> T. Nevin, *The trial of Thomas Nevin MA*, (Belfast, 1725), p. 30.

<sup>126</sup> For a full narrative of the non-subscription controversy, see J. S. Reid, *History of the Presbyterian church in Ireland*, (Belfast, 1867), volume three, pp 110-211.

<sup>127</sup> J. Abernethy and W. Bruce, “Reasons for the repeal of the sacramental test,” in *Scarce and valuable tracts*, (London, 1751), pp 1-73. Originally published as J. Abernethy, *The nature and consequences of the sacramental test considered, with reasons humbly offered for the repeal of it*, (Dublin, 1731). This work while initially anonymous was recognised by Abernethy in 1751 and was, as he described it: “written in concert, and with the assistance of two friends, one of whom is still living, Mr. William Bruce of Dublin, a

Shortly after Hutcheson's return from his studies in Glasgow University, possibly in 1719, his father John Hutcheson sent Francis to deputise for him at the Sunday service for his congregation in Armagh. As the morning proceeded, John Hutcheson, feeling an improvement in the rheumatic pain that had prevented him from preaching went forth to inquire of his parishioners about his son's performance. One of the elders of the congregation swiftly set the preacher to rights as to his views of the young man's skill:

We a' feel muckle wae for your mishap, Reverend Sir, but it canna be concealed. Your silly loon, Frank, has fashed a' the congregation wi' his idle cackle; for he has been babbling this oor about a gude and benevolent God, and that the sauls of the heathens themsels will gang to Heeven, if they follow the licht o' their ain consciences. Not a word does the daft boy ken, speer, nor say about the gude auld comfortable doctrines o' election, reprobation, original faith and salvation. Hoot mon, awa' wi' sic a fellow.<sup>128</sup>

Years later, after the Irish Presbyterian church had split, Hutcheson was still associated with heterodoxy. In 1738, while teaching in Glasgow, Hugh Heugh claimed Hutcheson's teaching contradicted the Westminster Confession in eleven basic tenets. As Heugh reminded Hutcheson, this was still used as the benchmark of orthodoxy in Scotland, and Hutcheson had been "solemnly engaged, before your admission to your present office, to assent, maintain and defend all the truths contained in the said confession."<sup>129</sup> Investigation revealed to Heugh's satisfaction that Hutcheson broke his oath. Given Hutcheson's influential position in the college, Heugh determined to point out how.

In the eleven propositions Heugh provided a litany of Hutcheson's ethical errors; the belief that the tendency to happiness rather than the ten commandments was the basis of moral behaviour, that suicide could in certain circumstances be considered lawful, and that it was sometimes justifiable to tell a lie. More fundamental were Hutcheson's explicitly theological errors. These included his contention that "we could have knowledge of moral good and evil, although we know nothing of the being of a God," that "there is a superiority of good in the world," an article which contradicted the essential pessimism of Calvinism, and that "it is not probable that the same bodies that are laid in the grave, will be raised again at the Resurrection." Finally, Heugh laid out Hutcheson's faults regarding government. These included the view that "the divine right to dominion over creatures is not properly founded upon creation, or upon their absolute dependence, nor upon benefits received" and that "it is wrong to say that God acts for his own glory, or that we ought to

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gentleman of distinguished understanding, piety and goodness." J. Abernethy, *Scarce and valuable tracts*, (London, 1751), pp iv-v.

<sup>128</sup> Cited in *Life*, pp 20-1.

<sup>129</sup> H. Heugh, *Shaftesbury's ghost conjur'd*, [Scotland, 1738] p. 5.



have that end always in view.” Also cited was the thesis that “sin is not aggravated from the consideration of the infinite majesty of God, against whom it is committed” and that “the government of God belongs to the civil magistrate.”<sup>130</sup>

Hutcheson was aware of his reputation for heterodoxy. He admitted that the orthodox members of his community were wary of his views. In a letter to his old colleague from the Dublin academy, Thomas Drennan, in which he offered some funds for the support of ministers in the region, he stated: “I think it altogether proper you should not mention my name to your brethren, but conceal it. I am already called new light here. I don’t value it for myself, but see it hurts some ministers here who are most intimate with me.”<sup>131</sup> Yet, this is by no means conclusive. Many of the doubts expressed concerning his theological character came from the doctrinal wing of the church that viewed any innovation with caution. Two other pieces of evidence point in a different direction.

The first of these is a direct response to Heugh’s assault. In the same year a group of Hutcheson’s students combined to write a refutation of *Shaftesbury’s ghost conjur’d* entitled *A vindication of Mr. Hutcheson from the calumnious aspersions of a late pamphlet*. At the end of the text were fourteen names, although the authors claimed “we could have mentioned many more.” These included two ministers, the Reverend Henry Miller at Neilston and the Reverend John Hamilton of the Barony. Also present were Mr. George Rosse, Professor of Humanity at the university and the university’s library keeper, Mr. Gerschom Carmichael. Two preachers of the gospel and an elder, Mr. Robert Hall, Mr. Thomas Cleland and Mr. Robert Marshall also gave their names. A merchant, Mr. William Broun and six students of the professor filled the rest of the list.<sup>132</sup>

The text refuted Heugh point by point and regretted that such a maladroit action as publication had been chosen as a method of slandering their esteemed Professor:

All who know anything of the University, know there are proper superiors to whom regular application should have been made, upon the misdemeanour of any member: particularly the dean of faculty, as to matters of faith....Let the world judge whether it was the spirit of truth, charity and love or the father of lies and hypocrisy... who inspired him [Heugh].<sup>133</sup>

They expressed their belief that he had been singled out as: “Mr. Hutcheson is almost a stranger in this country [and] they [the perpetrators of the accusation] thought fewer perhaps would espouse his quarrel.” Hutcheson was a victim of circumstance and

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6, p. 11, p. 14, p. 6, p. 22, p. 27, p. 29, p. 19, p. 33, and p. 35.

<sup>131</sup> F. Hutcheson to T. Drennan, (n.d., circa 1743), GUL MS Gen. 1018, f. 15, verso.

<sup>132</sup> Mr. Robert Foulis, Mr. Andrew Foulis, Mr. George Muirhead, Mr. James Moore, Mr. Alexander Dunlop, and Mr. Matthew Brisbane. *A vindication of Mr. Hutcheson from the calumnious aspersions of a late pamphlet*, by several of his scholars, [n.p.], (1738), p. 20.

had been caught in a local dispute of which he was not a part: "Considering our present animosities about religious matters, no man is safe from such insidious attacks upon his character."<sup>134</sup> Taking a final swipe they asserted that Heugh was guilty of the kind of religious pride he had been attacking:

We had never thought of writing against this author, had it not been at the desire of some good men, who informed us a few days ago that they were afraid the mask of piety he has put on, and the assurance with which he vents his falsehoods, might influence some who were strangers to Mr. Hutcheson and him.<sup>135</sup>

The second indication that Hutcheson was not unorthodox came by way of his relationship with, and influence over the appointment of, Glasgow University's professor of divinity. The most explicit of all his political manoeuvrings was the lengths he went to ensure a reliable candidate filled this pivotal chair.

The man Hutcheson recommended, and who was to become his biographer, was William Leechman.<sup>136</sup> Leechman had attended some of Hutcheson's early classes in Glasgow. Their friendship had blossomed and Hutcheson could not recommend his young companion highly enough to Drennan as preacher to a parish in Belfast:

You never knew a better, sweeter man, of excellent literature, & except his air, & a little roughness of voice, the best preacher imaginable. You could not get a greater blessing among you of that kind...Leechman is well as he is and happy, though preaching to a pack of house-copers & smugglers of the rudest sort.<sup>137</sup>

However, Leechman did not prove as pliant as Hutcheson might have hoped. Recently married, and with a wife anxious to stay among friends, Leechman was not to be swayed from his post in Beith. Hutcheson's irritation with the young man's contentment was expressed to Drennan in September 1743:

'Tis very difficult to persuade a modest, worthy man who is tolerably settled to adventure upon a new scene of affairs among strangers. I shall use my utmost endeavours to prevail upon him, as I have been doing for some time past. I am sorry I cannot give you great hopes of success, but I don't yet so despair as to quit solicitation.<sup>138</sup>

Yet, as Hutcheson sorrowfully admitted to Drennan on 29 October: "His wife's friends as well as his own urged much that he should not go with a view to settle for life in Belfast.

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<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>136</sup> 1706-1785, Principal of Glasgow University, 1761.

<sup>137</sup> F. Hutcheson to T. Drennan, Glasgow, 5 August 1743; GUL MS Gen. 1018, f. 12, recto

<sup>138</sup> F. Hutcheson to T. Drennan, Glasgow, 20 September 1743; GUL MS Gen. 1018, f. 13, recto.

For my own part I would prefer Belfast to either Edinburgh or Glasgow, unless one had many son[s] disposed to be scholars. I am heartily sorry you are all disappointed.”<sup>139</sup>

Despite his failure to convince Leechman of the prudence of this venture, Hutcheson was determined to make use of his friend’s talents. A month after Leechman rejected the scheme, Hutcheson was again plotting Leechman’s removal from his flock. With the death of the elderly Professor of Divinity, Michael Potter on 23 November 1743, Hutcheson moved to ensure his friend would fill the vacancy. Despite the opposition of the local Presbytery and Lord Islay, and a strong rival in the conservative theologian John McLaurin, Hutcheson secured victory. He wrote of his delight to Thomas Drennan that: “I have at last got a right Professor of Theology, the only right thorough one in Scotland.”<sup>140</sup>

Hutcheson was justified in his choice. Alexander Carlyle testified to the influence the two Professors wielded over the theological character of the Scottish landscape: “It was owing to Hutcheson and him [Leechman] that a new school was formed in the western provinces of Scotland, where the clergy till that period were narrow and bigoted and had never ventured to range in their mind beyond the bounds of strict orthodoxy.”<sup>141</sup>

While Hutcheson admitted he was associated with the new light Presbyterianism then emerging, he was by no means endorsing all of its tenets. The non-subscribers made reason central to their faith. Yet he repeatedly refuted rationalism. The optimism Hutcheson had for the human being was different in kind from that of the non-subscribers. They based their hopes in man’s capacity to think independently of external guidance. He in contrast, based his optimism in the passions. When confronted with rationalist philosophy, Hutcheson dissociated himself from it. His desire to do so may have been motivated by the role rationalism had played in dividing the Irish dissenters in the 1720s.

The key to understanding Hutcheson’s variation on the Presbyterian creed lies in the institution that attracted Hutcheson to Dublin in the early 1720s. The Wood Street congregation, located on the corner of Whitefriar Street, was one of the city’s oldest dissenting congregations. Founded in the Elizabethan period as a Puritan church, it metamorphosed into a non-conformist meeting-house in the Inter Regnum. Ministered by Stephen Charnock and Edward Veale, both of whom were fellows of Trinity College, Dublin, the Act of Uniformity of 1665 finally drove the congregation out of the established church.<sup>142</sup> With the installation of the Reverend Daniel Williams from 1667, it became the

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<sup>139</sup> F. Hutcheson to T. Drennan, Glasgow, 29 October 1743; GUL MS Gen. 1018, f. 14, recto.

<sup>140</sup> F. Hutcheson to T. Drennan, [Glasgow], n.d.; GUL MS Gen. 1018, f. 17, verso.

<sup>141</sup> A. Carlyle, *Autobiography of Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk, 1722-1805*, (Edinburgh, 1910), (Dated 1743), pp 93-4.

<sup>142</sup> Stephen Charnock (1628-1680) MA Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 1649. Preacher in Southwark. Intruder in Fellowship of New College, Oxford 1650. Proctor, 1654. Chaplain to Henry Cromwell in Ireland,

principal dissenting congregation in the capital.<sup>143</sup> His colleague from 1682, Gilbert Rule, continued the tradition of highly educated ministers, being a sub-principal in King's College, Aberdeen, before removing to Scotland as Principal of Edinburgh University.<sup>144</sup>

The coming of Joseph Boyse in 1683 provided the congregation with some stability. He resided there for the forty-five years until his death in 1728. In sole charge from 1691 until 1702, the ill-fated Thomas Emlyn then aided him. Emlyn's removal resulted in the first non-English appointment. Richard Choppin, a boyhood member of the congregation, officiated for thirty-seven years.<sup>145</sup> His family, rich and influential members of the church, illustrates the rise in the congregation's social fortunes.<sup>146</sup> Following Joseph Boyse's death in 1728, Choppin remained in sole charge until the transfer of the irascible John Abernethy in 1730: he finally accepted the city of Dublin he had rejected in 1717.

The history of the Wood Street congregation reflects a division within the Presbyterian tradition in the capital. Whereas Hutcheson was a product of the Scottish Presbyterian tradition, the grandson of a Scottish minister, the son of a Ulster-Scots minister, and himself trained for the ministry in Glasgow University, the men who ministered in the parish, and who paid him his income, were of English stock.

Dublin was at the confluence of these two traditions. In the city were five congregations whose heritage dated back to the introduction of the Act of Uniformity. Of these, Wood Street, New Row and Cook Street were drawn from the English Puritan tradition and remained characteristically English in their outlook. These drew their ministers from England and formed a Dublin Presbytery, along with a number of country-based congregations. From 1716, in an attempt to co-ordinate efforts on the campaign for toleration, this presbytery sent two corresponding members to the Synod of Ulster.

In contrast, Plunkett Street and Capel Street were connected with presbyteries in Ulster and their ministers were of that extraction. Indeed Hutcheson's grandfather, Alexander Hutcheson, co-officiated at Capel Street with the Independent founder William

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1657, withdrew to London, 1658, co-pastor at Bishopsgate street Church, 1675. Edward Veale (1632?-1708) MA Christchurch Oxford, 1654. Presbyterian minister of Dunboyne, 1655. Fellow of TCD 1661, left Ireland, 1662. Church in Wapping 1668 and a school in Stepney

<sup>143</sup> Daniel Williams (1643?-1716) Chaplain to the Countess of Meath, (d. 1685) Preached at Drogheda. Minister at Wood Street 1667-87. Presbyterian minister at Hand Alley, Bishopsgate, London 1687-1716. DD Glasgow.

<sup>144</sup> Gilbert Rule, (1629?-1701) educated at Glasgow University. Sub-principal King's College, Aberdeen, 1651. Minister at Wood Street 1682-7. Principal of Edinburgh University 1690.

<sup>145</sup> Richard Choppin, native of Dublin, 1704: ordained to Wood Street congregation. Sympathised with non-subscribers. Died 1741.

<sup>146</sup> For the social status of the Wood Street congregation see Joseph Boyse's funeral sermons for Ms Mary Choppin and Dr. Cumyng in J. Boyse, *Works*, (London, 1726), volume two, pp 344-50 and pp 311-7.

Jacque from 1690 to 1692.<sup>147</sup> While Hutcheson was in the city, the Reverend Thomas Maquay and Francis Iredall ministered at Plunkett Street and Capel Street respectively.<sup>148</sup>

Ulster Presbyterianism did not directly enter the social picture until the formation of the Ussher's Quay congregation in 1712. This gathered many of the Ulster Presbyterians in the city in one meeting-house, and were ministered from 1713 until 1720 by the Reverend James Arbuckle. He had moved from Plunkett Street where he had ministered from 1703.<sup>149</sup> Mr. Gray, who passed the ministry on to the Reverend Robert McMaster in 1724, followed him. McMaster officiated there until his death in 1751.<sup>150</sup>

The organisation and character of the two traditions varied as a consequence of their respective histories. The northern tradition, which saw its birthplace in the parliamentary reforms of the Church of Scotland in the sixteenth century, mirrored the tight organisation of its Scottish counterpart. As in Scotland, where local presbyteries and a General Assembly controlled the ministers, the Ulster-based ministers pledged obedience to the presbyteries and a general body, known as the Synod of Ulster.

The southern communities bore the scars of their birth pangs in the civil wars of the 1640s and 1650s.<sup>151</sup> Due to their common heritage with many of the more radical non-conformist groupings, English Presbyterians in Ireland maintained close links with the Independent churches in the city of Dublin. On occasion, they even shared meeting-houses in the city as a means of overcoming the difficulties of finding secure space in the urban landscape.<sup>152</sup> The organisation of the southern tradition was therefore looser than its northern counterpart, with the presiding body, the Southern Association, being more a

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<sup>147</sup> Alexander Hutcheson, minister at Saintfield co. Down, 1657-1711. William Jacque (d. 1699), b Scotland, edud Edinburgh University. Ordained 1655. Organised congregation in Bull Alley (Later Plunkett Street) 1662. Possibly involved in Blood's plot. Withdrew in 1667 and founded Capel Street Congregation. Removed to Scotland 1692.

<sup>148</sup> Thomas Maquay (1694-1729) Ordained 1717. Minister at Bull Alley 1717-1729; Francis Iredall, Irish born, 1684 preacher in Donegane Co. Antrim, 1699 Capel Street, 1701-2 Moderator of the Synod of Ulster. Subscriber, died 1739.

<sup>149</sup> James Arbuckle, b. Scotland, edud, Glasgow University, BA 1684. Minister at Plunkett Street 1703. Merged with Ussher Street 1713.

<sup>150</sup> Robert McMaster, died 1754, minister at Ussher's Quay 1729. Moderator of Synod of Ulster 1739-40; William Gray, 1672-1730. Edud Glasgow University, ordained 1699, minister at Ussher's Quay 1713-7, left to organise congregation at St Johnston, for which he was discharged from preaching 1727. The congregation was recognised in 1731. Information concerning the social history of Dublin Presbyterianism can be found in G. Mathews, *An account of the trial of Thomas Emlyn*, (Dublin, 1839); S. ffearry-Smyrl, "'Theatres of worship': dissenting meeting houses in Dublin, 1650-1750," in K. Herlihy, *The Irish dissenting tradition*, (Dublin, 1995), pp 49-64.

<sup>151</sup> The extent to which these events were a British concern is a matter of some historical debate. See C. Russell, *The fall of the British monarchies, 1637-1642*, (Oxford, 1991), c. f. A. Fletcher, *The outbreak of the English civil war*, (London, 1985). See also J. G. A. Pocock, "The Atlantic archipelago and the war of the three kingdoms," in *The British problem, c.1534-1707: state formation in the Atlantic archipelago*, (B. Bradshaw and J. Morrill, eds.), (London, 1996), pp 172-91; and J. Ohlmeyer (ed.), *Ireland: from independence to occupation, 1641-1660*, (Cambridge, 1995).

<sup>152</sup> S. ffearry-Smyrl, "'Theatres of worship': dissenting meeting houses in Dublin, 1650-1750," in (K. Herlihy, ed.), *The Irish dissenting tradition, 1650-1750*, (Dublin, 1995), pp 49-53.

clearing house for ideas and a site for discussion than a control centre for the determination and regulation of doctrine.

Despite all the Ulster brethren's demands that subscription be uniform, the less institutionally minded English Presbyterians in Ireland ensured that loopholes for the tender of conscience remained open. While this may not have had a great effect on the character of the isolated rural congregations of the north, which represented the majority of those under the jurisdiction of the Synod, the same was not the case in the capital. It was not that the English Presbyterians were any less orthodox. However, they gave more leeway to the individual conscience, emphasising the communitarian aspects of the creed in preference to the scripturalism of the north.

The prime exponent of this blend of orthodoxy and latitude was the man who in all probability brought Hutcheson to Dublin to found the academy, the minister of the Wood Street congregation, Joseph Boyse. Born in Leeds in 1660, Boyse was the son of a Puritan who had resided for eighteen years in Boston. Boyse was educated in dissenting academies at Kendal and Stepney. By 1679 he was preaching in Kent before acting as chaplain to the Countess of Donegal. He also spent six months ministering in Amsterdam before answering the call of the congregation in Wood Street, which came in 1683.

As a minister, Boyse was within the English Puritan tradition. His theology was Calvinist, yet he had an awareness of the characteristics of Christianity that were shared by those in the Anglican church. This had its limits. Heterodoxy, Quakerism and the Roman Catholic creed were excluded from his vision of a tolerant society.<sup>153</sup> His open-mindedness came to the fore however when the unity of his confession was tested by the non-subscription controversy. Throughout the 1720s Boyse sought a compromise.

On 24 June 1724, during the sitting of a General Synod held at Londonderry, Boyse used a sermon to heal the wounds caused by the non-subscription controversy. The mission of "healing" he took to involve him in the task of a "peacemaker... [who] endeavoured the preservation both of truth and love among you." To this end the sermon promoted: "our Saviour's new command of mutual love among his disciples." As he observed in the prefatory note to the sermon, he believed that Christ "put no bar in the way of our communion by imposing such terms of it" as would lead to the exclusion of others.<sup>154</sup> He remarked, in an analysis of the nature of the Presbyterian community

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<sup>153</sup> This paragraph and the last is informed by A. W. G. Brown, *The great Mr. Boyse: a study of the reverend Joseph Boyse*, (Belfast, 1988).

<sup>154</sup> J. Boyse, *A sermon preached at Londonderry, 24 June 1722* in *Works*, volume one, p. 377, pp 377-8 and p. 378.

we have here in this part of the kingdom [Dublin] a different method for the admission of entrants into the ministry from what your General Synods have appointed. (And what we have found by the divine blessing a sufficient barrier against heresies and dangerous errors). But God forbid that we should declare non-communion with you, or you with us on the account of that difference.<sup>155</sup>

The sermon took as its text John xiii, 34, 35: “a new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love to one another.”<sup>156</sup> This passage allowed Boyse to extol the virtues of toleration between the two contending factions without having to side with either.<sup>157</sup> He could thereby adopt the stance of a neutral observer; a position outside the fray he was to persist in taking throughout the disruption. The only interest he admitted to having was that of avoiding a split in the church. Presbyterianism as envisioned by Boyse was to be a house with many mansions.

Two years earlier, in 1722, Boyse acted as a leading light in a preface placed before one of Abernethy’s contributions to the debate, the *Seasonable advice to the Protestant dissenters in the north of Ireland*. Abernethy had by then tempered his views and was proposing a compromise between the two factions. Along with Nathaniel Weld and Richard Choppin, Boyse used this opportunity to suggest a solution of his own.<sup>158</sup> As the writers acknowledged

it is...matter of great trouble to us to hear that some congregations in the north (or at least some part of them) have had so little regard to the charitable declarations of the late Synod [which had reiterated their support of the Pacific Act] as to give great uneasiness and disturbance to their worthy pastors, on the account of their declining that voluntary subscription, which the Synod only allowed but never pretended to enjoin.<sup>159</sup>

That Boyse was an advocate of the Pacific Act was made clear in his recollection of how

we ourselves, who were then present in the Synod and had the honour of sitting and voting as correspondents and members in it, heartily approved those mutual charitable declarations; so we had hoped that they would have laid a solid foundation for amity and peace between our subscribing and non-subscribing brethren.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 378.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 379.

<sup>157</sup> The sermon was on Christian brotherhood and is of more theological than polemical interest. The polemical component is made plain in the preface and it is this I have concentrated on here. For the full sermon, see *Ibid.*, pp 379-85.

<sup>158</sup> Nathaniel Weld, (1660-1730) born in Cork. Minister at New Row in Dublin, 1682-1728. Moved with congregation to Eustace Street 1728. English Presbyterian by outlook.

<sup>159</sup> J. Boyse et al, “Preface” in J. Abernethy, *Seasonable advice to the Protestant dissenters in the north of Ireland*, in J. Boyse, *Works*, (London, 1728), volume two, p. 333.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 333.

Boyse's desired to forward a tolerance of the non-subscribers among those ministers who had subscribed. Boyse repeatedly reiterated the voluntary character of the oath. He inquired as to why the non-subscribing ministers "should be in any danger of being deserted by their people, merely because they decline complying with their humour in a matter contrary to their own judgement." He provided his readers with a model of Christian tolerance in "those worthy ministers in the north, who though they fell in with the voluntary subscription allowed by the Synod, have yet shown that just regard to their non-subscribing brethren as to disapprove the uncharitable censures passed upon them."<sup>161</sup>

It was not that Boyse was surprised that differences had emerged over minor matters of theology. This was to be expected when man lived "in this present state of darkness and imperfection." His concern was the unity of the Presbyterian church: "They who are happily agreed in all the important truths and duties of Christianity" should not feel it requisite upon them to "avoid communion with each other [and] rashly attempt to divide and break congregations, whose members have hitherto lived in mutual amity."<sup>162</sup> The paradoxical nature of the subscribers' rejectionist stance was not lost on Boyse:

How unseasonable the conduct of such deserters is with respect to the late act of toleration. It effectually deprives their ministers of that legal liberty which the government has thought fit to allow them and fixes an indelible reproach on our common profession when, though the government has given all of our persuasion such a liberty, we cannot in lesser differences tolerate one another.<sup>163</sup>

This led Boyse and his co-authors to propose a solution to the crisis:

There is...an easy and safe expedient that would entirely remove that embarrassing difficulty, viz. allowing the entrant his choice, either to subscribe according to the pacific act, or to make a declaration of his faith in his own words, in which if anything be found contrary to sound doctrine and the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Presbytery that are to concur in his ordination may refuse to admit him.<sup>164</sup>

This was a satisfactory compromise for Boyse for two reasons. It simultaneously allowed latitude for those of tender conscience and ensured that the rules of entry into the voluntary church of the Presbyterian faith were upheld. Both authoritarianism and licentiousness were avoided. The church remained a broad organisation built upon unshakeable doctrine.

Boyse continued his appeal for a sane compromise of this kind in the postscript to the same text, added in 1724. As Boyse recognised there had been no let up in the dissension in Presbyterian ranks:

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<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 333 and p. 334.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 334.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 334.



Had the charitable declarations of the General Synod at Belfast, 1721, been adhered to, and the people acted pursuant to them...we had never seen the jealousies of so many of the people rise to so lamentable a height, as the deserting their once beloved, and justly esteemed pastors, merely on the account of their declining the voluntary subscription.<sup>165</sup>

Defending the proposal concerning the possibility of new entrants to the ministry making a declaration of faith, Boyse enquired as to whether such a solution was as detrimental to church unity as his opponents made out:

Did we pretend to the least authority over their [northern Presbyterians] determinations, or the least right to direct them? Did we expect any compliance with our overture, any farther than they themselves found it in reason, a safe and effectual expedient to preserve their peace and prevent a rupture that all wise and good men feared?<sup>166</sup>

Moreover, Boyse asserted that the course events had taken at the annual Synod since the publication of the preface had shown the worth of these proposals. In a manner indicative of the middle road Boyse was trying to traverse, he inquired of his adversaries:

Have the charitable declarations and resolutions which at the two successive General Synods, we earnestly persuaded them to come into, shown any unequal regard to the contending parties? Have we done any more than persuaded them to allow some difference in practice with respect to the ordination of entrants where there is a real difference in judgement, concerning the expediency of the method of admission and dissuading them from too rigidly pressing an exact uniformity in admitting entrants and tying up all Presbyteries by Synodical rules...? These our humble advices were offered before their last General Synod, at Dungannon, had come to a resolution of rejecting the alternative we proposed. And the unhappy altercations at that Synod, have the more confirmed us in our thoughts of the reasonableness of that expedient for peace.<sup>167</sup>

All this was in line with Hutcheson's own attempts to delineate a middle path between the two contending parties of the orthodox subscribers and the rationalist non-subscribers. Moreover, his affinity with the sentiments of English Presbyterianism may well explain another of the anomalies in the matriculation rolls for the University. 30.0% of those undersigned by Hutcheson were of English origin.<sup>168</sup>

However, Hutcheson signed the confession twice: once to become a preacher in 1719 and again to enter the University of Glasgow in 1730, years after the non-

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<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 334.

<sup>165</sup> J. Boyse et al, "Postscript" in J. Abernethy, *Seasonable advice to the Protestant dissenters in the north of Ireland*, in J. Boyse, *Works*, (London, 1728), volume two, p. 335.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 342.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 342.

<sup>168</sup> Mathew's statistics are summarised in a table in W. M. Mathew, "The origins and occupations of Glasgow students, 1740-1839," in *Past and Present*, 33, (1966), p. 75.

subscription controversy. In this he was at odds with the non-subscribing sympathies of his cousin William Bruce. His determination to adhere to the rules of the institution to which he was loyal was at one with the thinking of Joseph Boyse.

Hutcheson, like Boyse, was sympathetic to many of the theological scruples of the non-subscribers. This may have been because of his own intellectual proximity to the more liberal environment of English Presbyterianism. The Southern Association did not demand subscription of its members and Boyse's desire to create a broad church of adherents to the principles of Calvinism, without enquiring too deeply of the nature of those beliefs, was typical of this brand of Presbyterian thought and conducive to Hutcheson's needs. Even it had its limits, however, as the unfortunate Emlyn had discovered.

Where did Hutcheson's affinity with this English latitudinarian version of Calvinism come from? One possibility is that it found its roots in the teaching of the maverick teacher of divinity when he was attending Glasgow University as a student; John Simson.<sup>169</sup> Leechman notes that "after he [Hutcheson] had finished the usual course of philosophical studies, his thoughts were turned toward divinity, which he proposed to make the peculiar study and profession of his life. For prosecution of which design he continued several years more at the University of Glasgow studying theology under the direction of the reverend and learned Professor John Simson."<sup>170</sup> Thus, the travails of the Professor and the views that led to a series of trials before the General Assembly do repay examination in this light. Intriguingly, Abernethy was a friend of Simson.<sup>171</sup>

Shortly after Hutcheson's departure from Glasgow University Simson came under sustained and damaging fire for his teachings on the divinity of Christ. Founded in 1451, Glasgow University prided itself as a stronghold of the Calvinist faith, keeping Knox's theological flame alight in the late seventeenth century. Simson, appointed to the chair of divinity in 1708 was an unusual choice. His views, thanks to the very charges that brought his unorthodox attitude to light, are difficult to ascertain. Faced with the possibility of losing his post, if not his very life, if found guilty, Simson was understandably wary of declaring his theological hand too explicitly. Equally, his accusers were intent upon expounding heretical opinions for the professor, despite his own reluctance to claim them as his own. For a professional teacher like Simson, charges of this kind were extremely dangerous, particularly given his position of authority over the impressionable minds of his

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<sup>169</sup> John Simson (1668?-1740) MA Edinburgh 1692. Minister at Troqueer 1705-8. Professor of Divinity in Glasgow, 1708-29.

<sup>170</sup> PSMP, p. iii.

<sup>171</sup> See, J. K. Cameron, "Theological controversy: a factor in the origins of the Scottish enlightenment," in *The origins and nature of the Scottish enlightenment*, (R. H. Campbell and A. S. Skinner, eds.), (Edinburgh, 1982), pp 119-20.

students. His only sanctioned publication was a record of his trial before the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, which first appeared in 1715, and received a sequence of updates and alterations during the length of the legal process against him. The essence of the accusation was direct and damning: “That Simson had attributed too much to the light of nature” in his effort to extend the limits of man’s knowledge of God’s divine purpose and had thus drawn a false demarcation-line over the extent and power of the deity.<sup>172</sup> In effect he was accused of theological pride. The case dragged on until in the May of 1717 when he finally buckled under the pressure and issued a formal apology for any deviations found in his teachings. The Assembly accepted his recantation and permitted him to continue to hold his chair in Glasgow, with the provision that he desisted from involving himself in any further controversy.

The matter lay dormant until 1726, when following a complaint to the local Glasgow Presbytery the Assembly again submitted Simson’s methods to public scrutiny. The Assembly began formal proceedings against the Professor, with the Presbytery acting as the prosecutor and the Assembly sitting in judgement. On this occasion the charges were even more particular, resting not in such personality traits as pride and provocation, but in a set of distinct theological dogmas, enunciated in the Westminster Confession of Faith which Simson had contravened. Simson had sworn to the Confession upon taking up the post, but now stood accused of knowingly contradicting it in his classroom. The key charge was that Simson had denied the divinity of Christ.

According to this maverick professor, Christ was subservient to, but not a part of, God’s eternal essence. His defence to this theoretical accusation was paradoxically, practical in nature. Simson claimed that in 1722 he had shifted the direction of his classes from an analysis and refutation of the Arian doctrines of Samuel Clarke to contravening Sabellianism which he perceived to be the greater threat in the context of the time.<sup>173</sup> This shift in Simson’s didactic practice, he claimed, had ironically led to the charge that he had converted to the Arianism he had publicly condemned. Although student notes taken at the lectures supported Simson’s case, the assembly did not find such a practical defence an adequate refutation of the doctrinal charge, and he was suspended from his post for a year in 1727. The duration of the suspension was made indefinite when the Assembly reconsidered the issue at its session of 1728. However, despite the damage to his

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<sup>172</sup> 1668-1740, *DNB*, volume eighteen, pp 284-7.

<sup>173</sup> Samuel Clarke (1675-1729) BA Caius college, Cambridge 1695 DD 1710, Fellow 1696-1700. Disciple of Issac Newton. Rector of Drayton, near Norwich, of St. Benet’s, Pauls’ Wharf in London and of St. James’ Westminster. Master of Wigston Hospital, Leicester, 1718. Declined mastership of the mint 1727. Sabellianism is the theological tenet that the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Ghost are one and the same person in different aspects.

reputation, he did not receive further punishment, leaving him in the innocuous position of claiming a salary from the University for the discharge of duties he no longer dispatched. Needless to add, he claimed the wage promptly until his death in 1740.

What Abernethy and Hutcheson appear to have drawn from Simson's teaching seems to have been quite different. Abernethy drew a rationalist credo. He found in Simson information from which he could develop his own highly schematic and rational ethos. Hutcheson drew from Simson that love of scholarly investigation which, while being the downfall of the incautious master, made his student into one of the most celebrated teachers of his generation. He found in Simson a breath of knowledge and a generosity of intellect that he brought to his work as a teacher when he returned the lecture theatres of Glasgow in the 1730s. Even in the 1720s, Hutcheson's curiosity of mind was a defining characteristic of his work, and a motive behind his rejection of the overly schematic and doctrinaire principles of rationalist thought.

In the cases of John Simson and the non-subscription controversy, what was at stake was the role of the individual in the shaping of a social institution. Whereas Abernethy's creed was centred on the individual, and argued that the conscience shaped society, the subscribers insisted that the club ought to set the rules for its members, and they could either accept them or leave. What Hutcheson attempted to do was find a middle path between the polarities of rationalism and doctrine. Despite the worries of the traditionalists, including the congregation in Armagh and Hugh Heugh, Hutcheson rejected the rationalist philosophy that underpinned the non-subscribers theology. He also took the Confession.

At the heart of these events, therefore, was the character of voluntary organisations in a complex society. The debate focussed on the character of the Presbyterian community in Ireland, a voluntary body whose existence was under suspicion from an Anglican state. But as with John Simson, the issue had a wider bearing, and could be extended to encompass any of the voluntary institutions that sprung from the state and lay within the shadow of the state. The political implications of Hutcheson's moral sense theory are complex. In trying to envisage a compromise between the demands of variety and the need for order, he was balancing two centrifugal forces against each other. It was by no means easy to do so, and his compromise position left such traditionalists as his father disturbed.<sup>174</sup>

Hutcheson's compromise can be read as implying a loyalty, not to external authorities such as the Bible or the state, nor to the demands of reason and authenticity, but

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<sup>174</sup> John Hutcheson, only son of Rev. Alexander Hutcheson. Educated at Edinburgh University, BA 1681. Conducted a philosophical school at Newtownards before 1679. Ordained Downpatrick 1690. Moved to Armagh in 1697. Died 10 February 1729. Wrote a pamphlet in favour of subscription: *A brief review of a paper entitled a letter from the presbytery of Antrim by some subscribing ministers*, (Dublin, 1730).

to the emotional ties that bound the individual to the community. His loyalty was to the emotional bonds that constituted society, and not to the rules that bound them.

As the original reviewer, Philopatris, took note, the *Inquiry* was not valuable for its attack on rationalism alone. He ended his review by celebrating what he termed Hutcheson's "ingenious thought about the foundation of what we call national love." This was Hutcheson's argument concerning the emotional nature of men's attachment. Quoting from page one hundred and forty-seven, Philopatris transcribed: "Whatever place we have lived in for any considerable time, there we have most distinctly remarked the various affections of human nature; we have known many lovely characters; we remember the associations, friendships, families, natural affections and other human sentiments."<sup>175</sup> Concluding a letter to his father, Hutcheson stated firmly his conviction that

the ecclesiastic power in any body associated, seems to me founded in the same manner as the civil, and to oblige all who have consented to it once, to obedience, unless when the abuse of power is so great as to overbalance all the advantages of the government, and to compensate all the disorders arising from an alteration of it. I imagine the original of both to be in the same manner from God, which requires of us to do whatever may tend to the general good and particularly to submit the ordinary debated points either about civil or ecclesiastical matters to the cognisance of arbitrators chosen by ourselves and limited according to our prudence.<sup>176</sup>

In the conflict between the universal demands of the community and the demands of the particular conscience that the non-subscription controversy embodied, Hutcheson discovered a median point which appealed to sentiment, emotion and the moral sense.

Hutcheson did not dismiss rules. Indeed, by giving his loyalty to a voluntary organisation like the Presbyterian church, he was acknowledging the necessity for society to create norms and requirements for behaving that extended beyond the anarchic pursuit of individual ends. The issue of how this was to occur presented him with the question that informed and invigorated much of the work that followed. He was to return repeatedly to the issues raised in the debate with Burnet, and was to tease out the manner in which the moral sense theory to which he had committed himself might provide a means for, and justification of, moral regulations. The issue was, in its clearest formulation, one of moral improvement. That his professional career was that of a teacher only illustrates that the question of how one could improve people and convince them of the benefits of the moral life lay at the heart of Hutcheson's concerns. It is to that issue that we now turn.

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<sup>175</sup> GBL, 1735, p. 7. See T2, p. 147.

<sup>176</sup> F. Hutcheson to J. Hutcheson, PRONI D/971/34/G/1/1C.

#### FOUR: HUTCHESON, JAMES ARBUCKLE AND CIVILITY

On three successive weeks in June 1725, and again in February 1725/6, the *Dublin Weekly Journal* played host to the thoughts of Philomedes. The muse from Hesiod's *Theogony*, which literally translated means lover of laughter, supplied three instalments each time addressing the thought of Thomas Hobbes and Bernard Mandeville.<sup>1</sup> The identity of the writer was not revealed until, some two years later, Arbuckle owned that it became him

to divest myself of a great deal of reputation I have got by the papers of some other gentlemen, who have more frequently lent me their assistance. The learned and ingenious author of the *Inquiry into the original of our ideas of beauty and virtue*, will therefore, I hope excuse me, if to do justice to myself, I am obliged to name him for the three papers upon laughter, which are written in so curious and new a strain of thinking; and also for the forty-fifth, forty-sixth and forty-seventh papers containing so many judicious and valuable remarks on that pernicious book, the *Fable of the bees*.<sup>2</sup>

Hutcheson told Arbuckle that he had written "upon a very common subject, laughter; which you may publish, if you think they can be of any use, to help us understand what happens in our own minds, and to know the use for which it is designed in the constitution of our nature." Thus the motive was two-fold. Primarily Hutcheson was interested in the psychology of the individual. He was intrigued by occurrences within the mind and wished to explore their nature. Secondly, he was acting, not as a physician of the mind, but as a philosopher of the world. He was fascinated by the practical consequences of human nature and was speculating as to laughter's ultimate meaning or final cause. This was made plain through his reference to Aristotle's *Art of poetry*.<sup>3</sup>

Hutcheson used Aristotle to open his short history of the philosophical theory of laughter. Aristotle, he explained, "justly explained the nature of one species of laughter, viz. The ridiculing of persons, the occasion or object of which...[was] some mistake, or some turpitude, without grievous pain."<sup>4</sup> But this account had in-built limitations and Aristotle "never intended" that it might supply a general theory.

This, Hutcheson implied, was the error perpetrated by "Mr. Hobbes," for whom "Laughter is nothing else but sudden glory, arising from some sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmity of others, or with our own formerly." The "authors of the Spectator No. 47." illustrated that this error was influential. Moreover, Hobbes' success was due, not to any clarity or penetration in his thought, but to the nature of his programme: "That bold author having carried on his inquiries, in a

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<sup>1</sup> TOL p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> HL, p. 428.

<sup>3</sup> TOL, p. 1 and p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> TOL, p. 2.

singular manner, without regard to authorities; and having fallen into a way of speaking, which was much more intelligible than that of the schoolmen, soon became agreeable to many free wits of his age.” In Hutcheson’s opinion Hobbes “very much owes his character of a philosopher to his assuming positive solemn airs, which he uses most when he is going to assert some palpable absurdity.”<sup>5</sup>

More damaging was the manner in which Hobbes’ theory of human nature had infiltrated the “learned world.” Samuel Von Pufendorf “had strongly imbibed Hobbes’ first principles, although he draws much better consequences from them.” Dangerously, thanks to Pufendorf’s “distinct, intelligible reasoning” Hobbes had become “the grand instructor in morals to all who have of late given themselves to that study.”<sup>6</sup>

Hutcheson set out to deny Hobbes’ account of laughter, to refute his portrait of human activity as grounded in self-love, and to reinstall in ethical theory “the old notions of natural affections and kind instincts, the *sensus communis*, the decorum, and *honestum*” which he believed lost in modern philosophical accounts. In order to do so, Hutcheson centred his attention on the Hobbist conception of humankind. This decision drew him away from Hobbes’ most notorious text, *Leviathan*, and towards *Human nature*.<sup>7</sup>

Therein Hobbes dissected the human personality into separate faculties:

Man’s nature is the sum of his natural faculties and powers, as the faculties of nutrition, motion, generation, sense, reason, &c. For these powers we do unanimously call natural, and are contained in the definition of man, under these words, animal and rational. According to the two principal parts of man, I divide his faculties into two sorts, faculties of the body and faculties of the mind.<sup>8</sup>

He then left aside the faculties of the body and examined the workings of the mind. Here again he separated two elements: powers cognitive and motive - the understanding and the desires.<sup>9</sup> Of the passions Hobbes explained how the external motions of the universe, while impacting on the brain and thereby causing impressions, did not stop there

but proceeding to the heart, of necessity must there either help or hinder that motion which is called vital; when it helpeth, it is called delight, contentment, or pleasure, which is nothing really but

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<sup>5</sup> TOL, pp 2-3, p. 3, p. 3 and p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> TOL, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> TOL, p. 4. The work is today republished with an essay on political anatomy, *De corpore politico*, as Hobbes had initially intended. He planned to publish them under the common title, *The elements of law*, which was the title given to the overall manuscript Hobbes passed around among his friends during the 1640s. However, in the edition of 1650, *Human nature* was published as a separate work. It remained separate until 1889. Hutcheson therefore treated *Human nature* as a distinct work, as it shall be considered here.

<sup>8</sup> T. Hobbes, “Human nature,” in *The elements of law (Human nature and de corpore politico)*, (Oxford, 1994), pp 21-2.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

motion about the heart, as conception is nothing but motion within the head...when such motion weakeneth or hindereth the vital motion, then it is called pain.<sup>10</sup>

Hobbes then subdivided the passions into their particular forms, be they the reflexive sense of honour experienced when we perceive and rejoice in our own power, or an array of passions resulting from our experience of the external world: humility, shame, anger, hope and so forth.<sup>11</sup> These were the active forces in human nature. They produced desires and wants that forced the individual into action. They were the generators of morality, or the choice of certain ends from a set of possibilities. What inspired laughter was

nothing else but a sudden glory arising from sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmities of others, or with our own formerly: for men laugh at the follies of themselves past, when they come suddenly to remembrance, except they bring with them any present dishonour.<sup>12</sup>

This had its roots in pusillanimity, which Hobbes described as “the doubt of” magnanimity, or a feeling of uncertainty concerning one’s abilities. Laughter was an expression of this “because it is affectation of glory from other men’s infirmities, and not from any ability of their own.”<sup>13</sup>

Hutcheson began by stating the form a successful refutation would take:

If Mr. Hobbes’ notion be just, then first, there can be no laughter on any occasion where we make no comparison of our selves to others, or of our present state to a worse state, or where we do not observe some superiority of our selves above some other thing: and again, it must follow, that every sudden appearance of superiority over another, must excite laughter, when we attend to it. If both these conclusions be false, the notion from whence they are drawn must be so too.<sup>14</sup>

He did not locate the task of refuting on a theoretical plain the confusions and internal contradictions of Hobbes’ reasoning. Instead he hoped to illustrate in a characteristic appeal to the everyday experience of the reader that the thesis was insufficient to account for all forms of mirth. As it was incomplete Hutcheson deduced it was flawed.

This Hutcheson ascertained through reference to occasions in which laughter arose without reference to any comparative superiority. Citing parody and burlesque, Hutcheson entreated the reader to concur that though you may laugh at Homer or Butler “few who read this imagine themselves superior to either Homer or Butler.”<sup>15</sup> Quoting a range of

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>11</sup> On honour, see *Ibid.*, p. 48. For the rest of the “Passions of the mind” see *Ibid.*, pp 50-60.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 54-5.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>14</sup> TOL, p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> TOL, p. 6. Samuel Butler, *Hudibras: in three parts*, 1663, 1664, 1678. Samuel Butler, b. 1612, d. 1680, satirist. Author of *Hudibras*, *Characters* etc.



humorous moments in poetry, Hutcheson supplied evidence of the paucity of Hobbes' contention: "To what do we compare our selves, or imagine our selves superior, when we laugh at this fantastical imitation of the poetical imagery, and similitude's of the morning?"

The sun, long since, had in the lap  
Of Thetis taken out his nap  
And, like a lobster boil'd, the morn,  
From black to red, began to turn.<sup>16</sup>

This developed his theory of beauty in imitation of the first treatise. If beauty resided in fine imitation, comedy was caused by intentionally juxtaposing ill-fitting allegories.

Hutcheson expanded upon his empirical refutation of Hobbes by retelling a tale which as he claimed left "many an orthodox Scotch Presbyterian (which few can accuse of disregard for the Holy Scriptures)" hard put to "preserve his gravity."<sup>17</sup>

Dr. Pitcairn, as he observed a crowd in the streets about a mason, who had fallen along with his scaffold, and was overwhelmed with the ruins of the chimney which he had been building, and which fell immediately after the fall of the poor mason, [remarked] 'blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours, and their works follow them.'<sup>18</sup>

The source of the mirth was not any imagined superiority, even to the deceased mason, for any superiority that existed "could never have raised such laughter for this occurred to them [the crowd] before the doctor's consolation." Nor was it any impropriety in the Doctor's use of Scripture, for "We often laugh at such allusions, when we are conscious that the person who raises the laugh knows abundantly the justest propriety of speaking, and knows, at present, the oddness and impropriety of his own allusion as well as any in company." Indeed, the listener was often impressed with the wit of the protagonist, inspiring them to imitate him, thus producing a cycle of imitation and a circuit of laughter, which bound humanity into social relationships. Hobbes, Hutcheson contended, was so erroneous "that one would imagine from some instances the very contrary: for if laughter arose from our imagined superiority, then the more that any object appeared inferior to us, the greater would be the jest."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> TOL, p 7.

<sup>17</sup> TOL, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> TOL, p. 8. Pitcairn was quoting Rev. xiv, 13: Dr. Pitcairn may be a reference to Archibald Pitcairne MD (1652-1713) who practised in Edinburgh. He had a spell as Professor of physic at Leiden but returned to Edinburgh in 1693. He was renowned for his satirical attitude towards Presbyterian religiosity and was ascribed responsibility for the pamphlets *The Assembly: or Scotch Reformation: a Comedy* (1692) and *Babel: a satirical poem* (1692).

<sup>19</sup> TOL, p. 8, pp 9-10 and pp 10-1.

Having marshalled evidence to display how Hobbes' thesis concerning laughter was insufficient, Hutcheson moved to the more damaging claim that "opinion of superiority suddenly incited in us does not move laughter." Taking a satiric line, he drew the image of a man of the town, roaming Dublin: "It must be a very merry state in which a fine gentleman is, when well dressed, in his coach, he passes our streets, where he will see so many ragged beggars, and porters and chairmen sweating at their labour, on every side of him." Generalising from this flourish, Hutcheson inferred a set of psychological characteristics from the Hobbist thesis: "Pride, or a high opinion of ourselves, must be entirely inconsistent with gravity; emptiness must always make men solemn in their behaviour; and conscious virtue and great abilities must always be upon the sneer."<sup>20</sup>

Hutcheson thought Hobbes was guilty of confusing "laughter and ridicule." He confused a part with the whole, narrowing the philosophical vision to misrepresent human nature. Far from emanating from superiority, laughter was a diverse phenomenon, which Hutcheson suggested was caused by such "out of the way" occurrences as witty descriptions of natural objects "to which we never compare our state at all."<sup>21</sup> One such was the poem "The City Shower."<sup>22</sup> What generated laughter, as in *Hudibras* or in Dr. Pitcairn's witticism, was not imagined superiority, for in these the target of the mirth was the Presbyterianism to which Hutcheson was attached, but "the wild resemblance of a mean event." Hutcheson understood laughter as a social, not as an individual, pleasure. So anti-social and retrograde was the Hobbist ideal that the mind must have suppressed its existence in order to cope with society at all "many a kind compassionate heart was never conscious of it." Far from the Hobbist reading of laughter being philosophically acute, Hutcheson denied its efficacy in both public and private spheres. He emphasised instead "a kind instinct of nature, a secret bond between us and our fellow creatures."<sup>23</sup>

In the second contribution to the *Journal*, Hutcheson attempted "to discover some other ground of that sensation, action, passion, or affection." He admitted that his perception of laughter was cloudy, being unable to ascertain "which of them a philosopher would call it."<sup>24</sup> He then revealed his debt to Addison's treatise, the 'Pleasures of the imagination,' thereby indicating the suitability of the topic to a polite journal of the kind

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<sup>20</sup> TOL, p. 12, p. 12 and p. 13.

<sup>21</sup> TOL, p. 14 and p. 15.

<sup>22</sup> TOL, p. 15. *The City Shower* is quite probably Jonathan Swift's poem, "A description of a city shower," first published in the *Tatler*, 238, 17 October 1710. See J. Swift, *The complete poems*, (P. Rogers ed.), (London, 1983), pp 113-4. I would like to thank S. M. Hynes for help in identifying this poem.

<sup>23</sup> TOL, p. 15, p. 17 and p. 18.

<sup>24</sup> TOL, p. 19.

Arbuckle was editing.<sup>25</sup> Despite his debt to Hobbes, Addison had “observed many sublimer sensations than those commonly mentioned among philosophers.” The range was such that “it is unquestionable, that...one can scarcely reduce [them] to any of the five senses.”<sup>26</sup> Hutcheson was enlisting Addison into his thesis on the existence of internal senses.

Hutcheson then argued for an associationalist psychology: “It may be farther observed, that by some strange associations of ideas made in our infancy, we have frequently some of these ideas recurring along with a great many objects, with which they have no other connection than what custom and education, or frequent allusions give them.”<sup>27</sup> He also supplied concrete examples of such associations

sanctity in our churches, magnificence in public buildings, affection between the oak and the ivy, the elm and vine; hospitality in a shade, a pleasant sensation of grandeur in the sky, the sea and mountains, distinct from a bare apprehension or image of their extension; solemnity or horror in shady woods.<sup>28</sup>

Referring directly to issue 62 of the *Spectator*, Hutcheson used Addison to develop a theory of artistic creativity.<sup>29</sup> The pleasure of art arose from the artist’s success in “filling the mind with great conceptions.” As a counterpoint to this, “what we call grave wit consists in bringing such resembling ideas together, as one could scarce have imagined had so exact a relation to each other.”<sup>30</sup> Thus he associated wit with art, and derived both from the association of ideas. He fused his theory of art and humour with his theory of epistemology in the first inquiry. Moreover, he explicated humour through a theory of relationships. This was critical in his justification of laughter as a social phenomenon.

Hutcheson then offered a definition of the cause of laughter “the bringing together of images which have contrary additional ideas, as well as some resemblance in the principal idea.” It was a blend of appropriate and inappropriate imagery which “seems to be the very spirit of burlesque and the greatest part of our raillery and jest are founded upon it.” Yet this was not the sole cause of laughter. Despite Hutcheson’s determination to refute Hobbes, he was careful not to fall into the trap of replacing one determining factor with another. Instead, he created a complex causal theory for the phenomenon. He identified a number of causes “sudden glory for ridicule, as in Hobbes; unusual and inappropriate similes for the burlesque, and “an overstraining of wit, by bringing

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<sup>25</sup> Addison’s “Pleasures on the imagination,” constitute issues 411-21 of J. Addison and R. Steele, *The Spectator*, (D. F. Bond ed.), (Oxford, 1965), volume three, pp 535-82.

<sup>26</sup> TOL, p. 20.

<sup>27</sup> TOL, p. 21.

<sup>28</sup> TOL, pp 21-2.

<sup>29</sup> J. Addison and R. Steele, *The Spectator*, (D. F. Bond ed.), (Oxford, 1965), volume one, pp 263-70. The essay is on the difference between wit and judgement and builds out of an analysis proffered by Locke.

resemblances from subjects of a quite different nature from the subject to which they are compared” in puns. Hutcheson then justified his thesis empirically by providing a series of examples from classical and modern writers. Indeed: “*Hudibras* and *Don Quixote* will supply one with instances of this in almost every page.”<sup>31</sup>

Moving from the literary to the practical, Hutcheson then applied his theory of laughter to common life. It was the same association of unusual ideas to events which raised mirth in the reader that raised laughter in the observer:

Any little accident to which we have joined the idea of meanness, befalling a person of great gravity, ability, dignity is a matter for laughter...thus the strange contortions of the body in a fall, the dirtying of a decent dress, the natural function which we study to conceal from sight are matter for laughter, when they occur to persons of whom we have high ideas.<sup>32</sup>

Hutcheson postulated that it was “this contrast, or opposition of ideas of dignity and meanness, which is the occasion of laughter.”<sup>33</sup>

This contrast between dignity and meanness could be found in the resemblance which man held to the animals or in the peculiar and unexpected behaviour of one social group in the eyes of another. Hutcheson identified the difference in social norms between the Irish and the English as a common source of humorous reflection: “Our countrymen are very subject to little trips of this kind, and furnish often some diversion to their neighbours, not only by mistakes in their speech, but in actions.” This however was not occasioned by a sense of superiority for as Hutcheson observed “if the most ingenious person in the world, whom the whole company esteems, should, through inadvertent hearing, or any other mistake, answer quite from the purpose, the whole audience may laugh heartily, without the least abatement of their good opinion.”<sup>34</sup>

Hutcheson’s theory of laughter was not intended to be either uniform or complete. Only multiple causes explained the phenomenon. “According to this scheme,” he wrote, “there must necessarily arise a great diversity in men’s sentiments of the ridiculous in actions or characters, according as their ideas of dignity and wisdom are various.”<sup>35</sup> He illustrated this with examples from commercial and polite society:

When a gentleman of pleasure, who thinks that good friendship and gallantry are the only valuable enjoyments in life, observes men with great solemnity and earnestness, heaping up money, without

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<sup>30</sup> TOL, p. 22 and p. 23.

<sup>31</sup> TOL, p. 24, p. 24, p. 24 and p. 26.

<sup>32</sup> TOL, p. 27.

<sup>33</sup> TOL, pp 27-8.

<sup>34</sup> TOL, p. 28 and p. 29.

<sup>35</sup> TOL, p. 30.

using it, or encumbering themselves with purchases and mortgages, which the gay gentleman with his paternal revenues, thinks very silly affairs, he may make himself very merry upon them: and the frugal man, in his turn, makes the same jest of the man of pleasure.<sup>36</sup>

He acknowledged that “there is indeed in these last cases an opinion of superiority in the laughter” but he tempered Hobbes’ theory with the proviso that “this moves no laughter, unless in representing the pursuits of others, they do join together some whimsical image of opposite ideas.”<sup>37</sup> He linked this to civility by locating fashion within his paradigm:

In the more polite nations there are certain modes of dress, behaviour, grandeur, and dignity are generally joined; hence men are fond of imitating the mode: and if in any polite assembly, a contrary dress, behaviour, or ceremony appear, to which we have joined in our country the contrary ideas of meanness, rusticity, sullenness, a laugh does ordinarily arise.<sup>38</sup>

It was this diversity in manners that accounted for the relativity of taste in matters comic. Citing the classics, he remarked how, even Homer might occasion unintended mirth in a reader in Hutcheson’s time: “We are apt to laugh at Homer when he compares Ajax unwillingly retreating, to an ass driven out of a cornfield.” This could only be accounted for by a change in the associations such images produced “which it is very probable they had not in Greece in Homer’s day.”<sup>39</sup>

Turning in his final instalment of his essay on laughter to the task of delineating the purposes it served, Hutcheson was wary of treating the subject “gravely.” This fault had afflicted Longinus’ essay on the sublime which Hutcheson considered to be written “in a manner very unsuitable to the subject.”<sup>40</sup> However, in a series of observations, Hutcheson noted the serious effects of the faculty on our behaviour.

Firstly, laughter was “necessarily pleasant to us”, and a natural response when “something ludicrous” occurred to the observer. The state of laughter was, as “everyone is conscious...an easy and agreeable state...[which] tends to dispel fretfulness, anxiety or sorrow.” Therefore it served a healing purpose for the individual. It was also cumulative in its action for, as Hutcheson proceeded to relate “an easy and happy state is that in which we are most lively and acute in perceiving the ludicrous in objects.”<sup>41</sup>

This reflexivity of laughter emanated from the individual for as Hutcheson observed: “Laughter, like other affections, is very contagious.” Therefore laughter served a purpose for the individual and the society. Laughter illustrated the “sociable” nature of

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<sup>36</sup> TOL, p. 31.

<sup>37</sup> TOL, p. 32.

<sup>38</sup> TOL, pp 32-3.

<sup>39</sup> TOL, p. 33 and p. 34.

<sup>40</sup> TOL, p. 35.

<sup>41</sup> TOL, p. 36.

human affection: "One merry countenance" Hutcheson remarked "may diffuse cheerfulness to many." Critically, laughter not only supported sociable affections, but also forged them: "We are disposed by laughter to a good opinion of the person who raises it."<sup>42</sup> It operated as a means of social inclusion.

This had its limitations however, for Hutcheson believed that "Laughter is none of the smallest bonds of common friendships, though it be of less consequence in great heroic friendships." This was because, as Hutcheson acknowledged: "If an object, action or event be truly great in every respect, it will have no natural relation or resemblance to any thing mean or base." Any attempt to debase such valuable coinage with "forced remote jests" only illuminated the poor judgement of the comic and "raise[d] contempt of the ridiculer." The deity was above satire or ridicule. Fine sentiments were also beyond the slings and arrows of the humorists: "All their art will never diminish the admiration which we must have for such dispositions, wherever we observe them pure and unmixed with any low views, or any folly in the exercise of them."<sup>43</sup>

It was the mixture of the great and the mean in objects which ensured that humour had a role to play. Just as beauty came from "uniformity amidst variety" so humour was a consequence of blending qualities in objects and circumstances.<sup>44</sup> Thus humour had to be used carefully for if it could result in making "the whole appear weak or contemptible." Only in the hands of a "person of just discernment and reflection" would it operate successfully and "separate what is great from what is not so." Laughter did more than produce pleasure and promote sociability. It moderated the passions and thereby provided ballast against enthusiasm. It helped men to judge: "When any object either good or evil is aggravated and increased by the violence of our passions, or an enthusiastic admiration, or fear, the application of ridicule is the readiest way to bring down our high imaginations to a conformity to the real moment or importance of the affair."<sup>45</sup>

These different purposes produced a different reaction in the listener when they heard humour being used. The response to ridicule, for example, varied depending on whether the humorist "evidences good nature, friendship and esteem of the person whom he laughs at, or the contrary." The humorist had to be careful in choosing his targets for an ill-chosen jibe resulted in "the guilty" being "made sensible of their folly." The danger was of aggravating the target more than the humour deprecated their follies, for "ridicule upon the smallest faults, when it does not appear to flow from kindness, is apt to be extremely

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<sup>42</sup> TOL, p. 37.

<sup>43</sup> TOL, p. 37, pp 37-8, p. 38 and pp 39-40.

<sup>44</sup> T1, p. 76.

<sup>45</sup> TOL, p. 40.

provoking.” Crucially the motive of the jester determined the response. Well-meant mockery could be taken in jest; ill-mannered criticism clothed as ridicule only annoyed and insulted: “Ridicule applied to those qualities or circumstances in one of our companions, which neither he nor the ridiculer thinks dishonourable, is agreeable to every one; the butt himself is as well pleased as any in company.”<sup>46</sup>

Summing up the purpose of laughter, Hutcheson reiterated his three conclusions: “It is plainly of considerable moment in human society. It is often a great occasion of pleasure, and enlivens our conversation exceedingly, when it is conducted by good nature.” It thereby played a fundamental role in the creation of communicative ties between otherwise isolated individuals and enabled social links to be forged and sustained. It was a key element in the make-up of friendship networks and hence society at large. Equally it moderated our passions and ensured that admiration or awe was tempered with a sense of proportion. Although this ran the danger of ill use, it was crucial in the promotion of good judgement. “Ridicule, like other edged tools, may do good in a wise man’s hands, though fools may cut their fingers with it, or be injurious to any unwary by-stander.” Finally it served an educational purpose, educating men out of their foibles “which a sermon could not reform.”<sup>47</sup> Hutcheson here placed laughter within a moral framework, and conceived of it as serving as a pastoral tool. Thus Hutcheson argued that morally informed humour ought to take as its target, those characteristics which were capable of improvement. Laughter indicated the outlook of the individual, bound him to his society and educated him. It was a potent tool in the creation and sustaining of a moral community.

What upset Hutcheson upon reading Hobbes’ account was the belief that social affection was reducible to ideas of self-interest and self-glorification. Hutcheson replied with a complex and suggestive account of the springs of laughter in the human frame. He even argued that when laughter was occasioned by circumstances tinged with distress, the humour was a result of thoughtlessness and not the sight of misfortune. Using a graphic illustration Hutcheson wrote that: “To observe the contortions of the human body in the air, upon the blowing up of an enemy’s ship, may raise laughter in those who do not reflect on the agony and distress of the sufferers; but the reflecting on this distress could never move laughter of it self.”<sup>48</sup>

Yet his account was more than a refutation of an ill-judged paragraph by Hobbes. By exploding the Hobbist account of one the human passions Hutcheson was raising a question mark against the entire theory constituted by *Human nature* and the later,

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<sup>46</sup> TOL, p. 41, p. 43, p. 44, and p. 44.

<sup>47</sup> TOL, p. 45, p. 49 and p. 51.

controversial *Leviathan*. In effect, Hutcheson was refuting the entire edifice of Hobbist philosophy. The *Leviathan* was a remarkably cogent account of the nature of social behaviour. Hobbes was scathing about the possibility of social life without the guiding influence of the state. Natural man lived in a perpetual war that could only be halted by the artificial construction of a state which had the ability to legislate for man's anti-social passions. Civility and civilisation were, for Hobbes, artificial constructs. Man was inherently uncivilised and lived in a state of conflict.

Ireland certainly provided sufficient anecdotal evidence for Hobbes' contention. Eighteenth-century Ireland was believed by contemporaries to be a notoriously violent place.<sup>49</sup> The first issue of the *Dublin Weekly Journal* with this material on laughter carried news of the execution of one "William Mollny, for a robbery in Golden Lane of clothes to the value of 30 or 40 pounds."<sup>50</sup> It noted that "he confessed the fact at the place of execution." The last week of his refutation of Hobbes had alongside it news of shots being fired when excise officers dismantled "a private still house in Great Britain street."<sup>51</sup>

Over the weeks the journal compiled a litany of robberies, muggings and murders which left the reader in little doubt as to the violent nature of the city and would have supplied ample evidence to support a Hobbist theory of human nature. One peculiarly violent week, that of 11 September 1725, saw the robbery of "several hounds" from Right Honourable Henry Earl of Drogheda, the death of "a horse, belonging to Mr. William Roberts, coast officer...[which] was stabbed in thirteen places," and a reminder of the mugging and assault of "John Briscoe Esquire, Coast Surveyor and Mr. Thomas Ellis coast builder" on 10 August. "A servant of the Lord Chancellor was [also] set upon, and robbed in Grafton Street, by four foot pads."<sup>52</sup> John McCoy, Thomas Barnet, Owen Gaughegan and John Smith were subsequently caught and hanged for the offence.<sup>53</sup>

The casual interpersonal violence that blighted Irish society appalled many of its inhabitants. Molesworth made his dismay clear in a letter to his wife:

I am sure if we had not removed from Ireland when we did, we should have been exposed to all the miseries our neighbours suffered; but I never commended England with any intention to derogate from Breckdenstown, which I love as heartily as you can do for your life, and know no fault it has

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<sup>48</sup> TOL, pp 41-2.

<sup>49</sup> For a discussion of how accurate that belief was see: N. Garnham, "How violent was eighteenth-century Ireland?" in *Irish Historical Studies*, 30, (1997), pp 377-92. Garnham concluded: "when compared with eighteenth-century England, a society that was arguably unusually peaceful and in which social relationships were increasingly governed by new imperatives, Ireland may be seen as a brutal and violent society." p. 391.

<sup>50</sup> DWJ, 5 June 1725, p. 41.

<sup>51</sup> DWJ, 19 June 1725, p. 48.

<sup>52</sup> DWJ, 11 September 1725, p. 96.

<sup>53</sup> DWJ, 16 October 1725, p.115.



but lying in a distressed country, and where one is insulted every day by both Protestant and Papist, which makes me choose a worse place to spend my days in, for here [Hansworth] we are not slaves.<sup>54</sup>

In Hutcheson's experience, Irish students were noticeably more poorly disciplined than were their Scottish contemporaries. He despaired of the behaviour of many of his Irish compatriots. Writing to Thomas Drennan he wistfully remarked:

You recommended to me one James Stuart from Dublin College. I wish he had continued there. I am cautious of hurting a lad's character, but I much fear he has had some bad influence to lead some people you wish very well into idleness & drinking. We almost constantly suffer by such as come from Dublin College. I never desire to see one of them.<sup>55</sup>

This was of little surprise when one considers that their Provost, Richard Baldwin, was renowned for his leadership in a riot that pitted the gown of the college against the boys of the town, in the shape of the apprentices in the liberties.<sup>56</sup>

The lack of self-restraint evident in the violence of the Irish community was mirrored by a laxity of manners that appalled the author of the 53rd *Hibernicus letter*:

Above an age ago, when the inhabitants of this country were very rude and uncivilised, the immortal Spenser lived peaceably among them.... We, the successors of that unpolished race, pretend to have refined our taste, and introduced the true elegance of life and manners. But we have reason to blush.<sup>57</sup>

Equally, the Irish had a distinct inclination towards immodest expenditure. Excessive indulgence in food and drink and ostentatious displays of wealth were both common.<sup>58</sup> Molesworth noticed the differences between the dietary habits of the Irish and their neighbouring islanders:

I heartily believe there is something either in the air or in the malt drink there which is not agreeable to either of us, now that we are used to the English diet, for I protest, I found a sensible difference for the better as soon as I trod upon Welsh ground, and so along the road, my appetite being twice as good as it used to be in Dublin.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> R. Molesworth to L. Molesworth, Hansworth, 24 June 1704, in Clements Ms in *HMC*, VC, volume eight, p. 231. Here, Molesworth makes an explicit link between the manners of Ireland and its dependent political status. This he actively campaigned to alleviate, taking part in a Commons Committee which drew up proposals for an act of union and speaking against the extension of that dependence through the Declaratory Act. For his speech see *HMC*, VC, volume eight, pp 283-5. For Molesworth's political views see chapter one.

<sup>55</sup> F. Hutcheson to T. Drennan, Glasgow, 27 February 1738, GUL MS Gen. 1018 f4, recto.

<sup>56</sup> C. Maxwell, *A history of Trinity College, Dublin: 1591-1892*, (Dublin, 1946), p. 114.

<sup>57</sup> HL, p. 452.

<sup>58</sup> T. C. Barnard, "Integration or separation?: hospitality and display in Protestant Ireland, 1660-1800," in *A union of multiple identities: the British Isles, c.1750 - c.1850*, (L. Brockliss and D. Eastwood, eds.), (Manchester, 1997), pp 127-46.

<sup>59</sup> R. Molesworth to his wife, Edlington, 22 March 1713/4, in Clements MS *HMC*, VC, volume eight, p. 265.

Menus were inordinately large and bouts of intemperance were common. Molesworth complained of the effect such imbibing had on his servants “especially Andrew, who does not give service in any proportion to the great (and never before heard of wages in this country) of 20l. per annum. He is either drunk and foolishly opiniastre or else governed like a child by the obstinate humours of the worst folks of this country.”<sup>60</sup> The effect of such decadence was dramatic. The *Dublin Weekly Journal* recorded in its death statistics that in the week of 24 April 1725 someone succumbed to what it delicately termed a “surfeit of drink.”<sup>61</sup>

The lack of moderation in consumption was echoed in patterns of expenditure. Ireland was a large-scale importer of alcohol and other luxury goods.<sup>62</sup> All this developed in the country a deep concern for the capacity of Irish society to sustain itself. The threat of social disintegration loomed.<sup>63</sup> In a sermon concerned with “The wretched condition of Ireland” Swift pointed the finger of blame at the propensity for women to indulge their

monstrous pride and vanity...who in the midst of poverty, are suffered to run into all kind of expense and extravagance in dress, and in particular priding themselves to wear nothing but what cometh from abroad, disdainning the growth and manufacture of their own country....Neither are men less guilty of this pernicious folly.<sup>64</sup>

As might be expected of the Irish manifestation of the Leviathan, the state played a role in reforming manners and civilising the populace. The dilemma was that by claiming a monopoly over the use of force they had a tendency to answer force with force. Hutcheson, Arbuckle, Molesworth and Synge appear to have been wary of the state. Molesworth explicitly expressed his concern in a letter to his wife: “If matters in Ireland take a turn so that you think one can be safe from the clutches of the government and informers, I will once more venture the sea, and go over to spend the winter with you.”<sup>65</sup>

But, the policing of the country was not the only tactic open to the state. Moreover acts of violence could do little to alter manners and patterns of expenditure. To this end the state encouraged a range of social reform movements in the first half of the century. The

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<sup>60</sup> R. Molesworth to his wife, Edlington, 18 September 1708, in Clements MS, *HMC*, VC, volume eight, p. 239.

<sup>61</sup> Statistics drawn from *DWJ*, 24 April 1725, p. 15.

<sup>62</sup> See L. M. Cullen, “The Dublin merchant community in the eighteenth century,” in *Cities and merchants: French and Irish perspectives on urban development, 1500-1900*, (P. Butel and L. M. Cullen, eds.), Dublin, 1986), pp 195-210.

<sup>63</sup> In contrast to contemporary concerns, Sean Connolly has argued that the carnivalesque culture this behaviour indicates helped stabilise social relations in Ireland, creating a series of vertical linkages between landlord and tenant. See S. Connolly, *Religion, law and power: the making of Protestant Ireland, 1660-1760*, (Oxford, 1992), p. 62.

<sup>64</sup> J. Swift, “A sermon on the causes of the wretched condition of Ireland,” in J. Swift, *Writings on religion and the church*, volume two, (T. Scott, ed.), (London, 1898), p. 212.

<sup>65</sup> R. Molesworth to his wife, 3 May 1712, in Clements MS, *HMC*, VC, volume eight, p. 257

administration promoted Societies for the Reformation of Manners and later the charity school movement, which although informed by Christian morality tried to promote civility among subaltern groups.<sup>66</sup> Social discipline and good manners were seen as necessary to make the commercial environment conducive to Christian living.

It was the blend of Christian morality with commerce, which such endeavours represented, that infuriated the Dutch-born social theorist, Bernard Mandeville; the target of Hutcheson's second series of articles for the *Dublin Weekly Journal*. A creative disciple of Hobbes, Mandeville believed that the state was confronted with a stark choice: either inculcate Christian social morality or promote commercially successful behaviour. Any attempt, as with the bees in his doggerel poem, 'The grumbling hive; or knaves turned honest,' to live virtuously, sacrificed the possibility of being a commercially successful hive. The bees pleaded to the Gods for their help in curbing anti-social sentiment. The Gods punished the bees for their *hubris* by granting their wish. The loss of vice as a motive force within the hive had disastrous repercussions:

Now mind the glorious hive, and see,  
How honesty and trade agree;  
The show is gone, it thins apace,  
And looks with quite another face,  
For t'was not only that they went,  
By whom vast sums were yearly spent;  
But multitudes, that lived on them,  
Were daily forced to do the same.  
In vain to other trades they'd fly;  
All were o'erstock'd accordingly.<sup>67</sup>

This polemic, founded on the contention that the vice of luxury is necessary for the commercial success of a state and that "Fools only strive/ To make a great an honest hive," received little initial attention when it was published in 1704.<sup>68</sup> The *Fable*, which Mandeville developed around the poem, expanded this analysis into a critique of Christian asceticism, acclaiming the vanity, fickleness and pride associated with women of fashion:

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<sup>66</sup> See T. C. Barnard, "Reforming Irish manners: the religious societies in Dublin during the 1690s," in *The Historical Journal*, 35, (1992), pp 805-38; R. B. Shoemaker, "Reforming the city: the reformation of manners campaign in London, 1690-1738," in *Stilling the grumbling hive: the response to social and economic problems in England, 1689-1750*, (L. Davison, ed.), (Stroud, 1992), pp 99-120; M. G. Jones, *The charity school movement: a study of eighteenth-century Puritanism in action*, (Cambridge, 1938).

<sup>67</sup> B. Mandeville, *The fable of the bees*, (F. B. Kaye, ed.), (Indianapolis, 1988), volume one, p. 32.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36. This remained the case despite the emergence of the fuller work, *The Fable of the Bees* in 1714. The new, larger version worked a series of prose "Remarks" around the poem and added an attack on the philosophy of the Third Earl of Shaftesbury, entitled "An Enquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue."

[C]all to mind the temporal blessings, which men daily hear not only toasted and wished for, when people are merry and doing of nothing; but likewise gravely and solemnly prayed for in churches, and other religious assemblies, by clergymen of all sorts and sizes: And as soon as he [the reader] shall have laid these things together, and, from what he has observed in the common affairs of life, reasoned upon them consequentially without prejudice, I flatter my self, that he will be obliged to own, that a considerable portion of what the prosperity of London and trade in general, and consequently the honour, strength, safety, and all the worldly interest of the nation consist in, depends entirely on the deceit and vile stratagems of women; and that humility, content, meekness, obedience to reasonable husbands, frugality, and all the virtues together, if they were possessed of them in the most eminent degree, could not possibly be a thousandth part so serviceable, to make an opulent, powerful, and what we call a flourishing kingdom, than their most hateful qualities.<sup>69</sup>

He contrasted Christianity, with its assumptions concerning the essential morality of mankind, with a social analysis based on Hobbes' theory of human nature. Mandeville argued that the individual's passions could, through the skilful management of 'dextrous politicians' or by the actions of God's providence, actually advance society:

There are, I believe, few people in London, of those that are at any time forced to go a-foot, but what could wish the streets of it much cleaner than generally they are; while they regard nothing but their own clothes and private conveniency; but when once they come to consider, that what offends them is the result of the plenty, great traffic, and opulency of that mighty city, if they have any concern in its welfare, they will hardly ever wish to see the streets of it less dirty.<sup>70</sup>

At the core of the *Fable* was a paradox, to which Mandeville alluded in his subtitle: "Private vices, public benefits," which co-ordinated the text.<sup>71</sup> Yet for the paradox to work, it required a synthesis. Mandeville tried to convince readers that the self-interest and avarice of man was actualised in the general good of the community.<sup>72</sup> As the verse concluded:

To enjoy the world's conveniences  
Be famed in war, yet live in ease,  
Without great vices, is a vain  
Eutopia seated in the brain.  
Fraud, luxury and pride must live,

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 228.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 10-1.

<sup>71</sup> "By its equation private vices = public benefits, [*The fable of the bees*] sought exactly to divorce moral imperatives on the one hand and economic progress on the other." E. P. Thompson, "Moral economy reviewed," in *Customs in common*, (London, 1991), p. 270.

<sup>72</sup> "If we can assign genre to the *Fable*, it is simply a paradox, with no other purpose but to show the paradoxical nature of 'private vices; public benefits'. This seems perhaps a simple-minded way of taking Mandeville at his word. The fact is that the *Fable* revolves around the paradox. The paradox is the beginning and the end of the work and its entire point." P. Pinkus, "Mandeville's paradox," in *Mandeville studies (1660-1733): new explorations in the art and thought of Dr. Bernard Mandeville*, (I. Primer, ed.), (The Hague, 1975), p. 205

While we the benefits receive<sup>73</sup>

Consumption and avarice were fundamental to the smooth running of a successful modern polity. Luxury, which the Christian moralists disdained, was intrinsic to the running of the Leviathan. Moreover the pursuit of luxury was inherent in humanity, for without it man would never have progressed

If every thing is to be luxury (as in strictness it ought) that is not immediately necessary to make man subsist as he is a living creature, there is nothing else to be found in the world, no, not even among the naked savages; of which it is not probable that there are any but what by this time have some improvements upon their former manner of living; and either in the preparation of their eatables, the ordering of their huts, or otherwise added something to what once sufficed them. This definition everybody will say is too rigorous; I am of the same opinion; but if we are to abate one inch of this severity, I am afraid we shan't know where to stop.<sup>74</sup>

Such a rigorous definition denied the possibility of a prosperous Christian Commonwealth for which the moral reformers agitated, and thereby proclaimed that state success resided in characteristics Christianity sought to hunt out and destroy.<sup>75</sup> Only luxury satisfied the desires and wants of the consumer. Mandeville asserted that society ought to recognise the creative power of interest, avarice, pride and luxury even when confronted with religious recalcitrance:

The only thing of weight that can be said against modern honour is that it is directly opposite to religion. The one bids you bear injuries with patience, the other tells you if you don't resent them you are not fit to live. Religion commands you to leave all revenge to God. Honour bids you trust your revenge to nobody but your self, even where the law would do it for you. Religion plainly forbids murder, honour openly justifies it: Religion bids you not shed blood on any account whatever: Honour bids you fight for the least trifle. Religion is built upon humility, and honour upon pride. How to reconcile them must be left to wiser heads than mine.<sup>76</sup>

In Mandeville's scheme reform of the state took precedence to reform of the individual. Empirical evidence showed that the populace had not absorbed Christianity's reforms. The efforts of the Charity Schools, the Society for the Reformation of Manners, the Society for the Promulgation of Christian Knowledge, the workhouses and the law had failed to effect a reformation of the spirit in line with the demands of Christianity. Therefore Mandeville argued that they should cease.

<sup>73</sup> B. Mandeville, *The fable of the bees*, (F. B. Kaye, ed.), (Indianapolis, 1988), volume one, p. 36.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>75</sup> For an interesting attempt to link the moral reform movement of the 1690s to the politics of civic humanism, see D. Hayton, "Moral reform and country politics in the late seventeenth-century House of Commons," in *Past and Present*, 128, (1990), pp 48-91. As Hayton points out, both movements depended on an analysis of society and politics as infected by commercial and moral corruption.

<sup>76</sup> OFB, pp 221-2.

This was anathema to Hutcheson on two distinct grounds. First, he believed that society was capable of generating moral norms and was not dependent upon the actions of “dextrous politicians” for civility. Secondly, he believed that commerce was not intrinsically opposed to morality. It was to refute both claims that Hutcheson re-entered the pages of the *Dublin Weekly Journal* in February 1725/6, under the nomenclature of P.M.

Beginning on 14 February and running for three successive weeks, Hutcheson defended the possibility of an independent moral life lived within society rather than in submission to a moral code imposed and dependent upon the artifice of the state. To do so, Hutcheson perceived he had to defend commercial activity and redefine luxury. He began by flattering his readers by assuming that “A great number of your readers must have heard of a book entitled, *Private vices, public benefits*,” before beginning his assault on Mandeville’s thesis by accusing him of clouding it in intentional ambiguity.<sup>77</sup> To illustrate this he supplied the reader with five variants on the implication of the title:

Viz. private vices are themselves public benefits; or private vices naturally tend, as the direct and necessary means, to produce public happiness: or private vices by dextrous management of governors may be made to tend to public happiness: or private vices natively and necessarily flow from public happiness: or lastly private vices will probably flow from public prosperity through the present corruption of men.<sup>78</sup>

As Hutcheson acknowledged in a backhanded compliment, the work carried all these meanings and did not favour any.

Moving away from the ambiguity of the overall synthesis, Hutcheson examined the distinct components of the thesis, beginning with private happiness “anyone may know by reflecting upon the several sorts of pleasant perceptions he is capable of.” This empirical observation, in line with his theories concerning beauty and virtue, could be generalised for “we imagine our fellows capable of the same, and can in a like manner conceive of public happiness.” The positive content of this happiness was defined as to “have what they [the subject’s] desire, and [to be] free of what occasions pain.”<sup>79</sup>

This led Hutcheson to re-articulate what he accepted was an “old distinction of our desires, according as some of them are preceded naturally by a sense of pain...whereas other desires arise only upon a previous opinion of good in the object.” Thus hunger was both a desire and a cause of discomfort. Other desires only caused pain when their satisfaction was uncertain. Hutcheson then declared that “The former sort of desires are called appetites; the latter affections or passions.” This dichotomy enabled Hutcheson to

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<sup>77</sup> OFB, p. 57.

<sup>78</sup> OFB, p. 58.

delimit the range of emotions which individuals had to satisfy and allowed him to introduce the regulation of desires. This was achieved “by correcting the false opinions, or by breaking foolish associations of ideas, by which we imagine the most momentous good or evil to be in these objects or events, which really are of little consequence in themselves.” The appetites admitted no check: “No reason or instruction will prevent sensible pain, or stop a craving appetite.” They had to be sated “before they [men] can be made happy.” The balance between pleasure and pain in the case of the bare necessities was weighted heavily in favour of the latter and: “Whatever farther pleasures men enjoy, we may count so much positive happiness above necessity.”<sup>80</sup>

Optimistically, Hutcheson assessed that this was not so difficult to accomplish as to make the pursuit of happiness forlorn, for: “The world is so well provided for the support of mankind, that scarce any person in good health need be straitened in bare necessities.” It was this plethora of opportunities for pleasure that ensured men were able to seek a range of preferences. Men, Hutcheson asserted “must be supposed to have a great variety of desires, even beyond the necessaries of life.” These ranged from the desire for “those objects which give some more grateful sensations, as well as allay their pain” through the desire for beauty to the social desires.<sup>81</sup> Restating his belief in the benevolence of man, he redrew the comparison he had made between a moral sense and a sense of beauty:

There is no mortal without some love towards others, and desire of the happiness of some other persons as well as his own. Men naturally perceive something amiable in observing the characters, affections and tempers of others, and struck with a harmony in manners, some species of morality, as well as with a harmony of notes.<sup>82</sup>

From this, Hutcheson derived the desire of man for approbation from others, as well as the simple pursuit of their good. Moving away from the issue of individual happiness and towards the social context, Hutcheson used two philosophical components; the division of wants into appetites and affections and the variety of goals which man might pursue, to refute Mandeville’s vision of society. Hutcheson posited three possible methods of satisfying the wants of society: “It must be necessary, either to gratify all desires, or to suppress, or at least to regulate them.”<sup>83</sup>

Confronted with a choice between these three options, Hutcheson openly accepted that: “The universal gratification is plainly impossible, and the universal suppressing or

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<sup>79</sup> OFB, p. 59.

<sup>80</sup> OFB, p. 60, p. 60, p.61, p. 61 and p. 61.

<sup>81</sup> OFB, p. 61, p. 62 and p. 62.

<sup>82</sup> OFB, pp 62-3.

<sup>83</sup> OFB, p. 63.

rooting them out as vain an attempt.” This left the possibility of introducing some form of regulation or control of the desires, with the stated provision that they could not and did not include the appetites. The best method for regulating the affections was, the teacher believed “to study...[so as to form] just opinions of the real value of their several objects, so as to have the strength of our desires proportioned to the real value of them, and their real moment to our happiness.”<sup>84</sup>

The Presbyterian moralist asserted that, the educated man, from Socrates to Addison, understood that: “The truest, most constant and lively pleasure, the happiest enjoyment of life consists in kind affections to our fellow-creatures, gratitude and love to the deity, submission to his will, and trust in his providence, with a course of suitable actions.” Thus the good life consisted in the control of unnecessary affections and the modest satisfaction of the unavoidable appetites. This moderation extended beyond the realm of appetites: “We may in a like manner break the foolish conjunction of moral ideas with the finer sort of habitation, dress, equipage, furniture, so as not to be dejected upon the unavoidable want of such things.”<sup>85</sup> Hutcheson saw the good life as constituted by the interior life of the subject and not the external pursuit of loosely defined external goals.

Importantly, this temperance limited the dissatisfaction caused by lack and the “many vain anxieties” caused by the potential of failure. However, Hutcheson was aware that: “No person is thereby rendered insensible of any real pleasure which these objects do give.” To sate or regulate one desire was not to temper any other. This enabled man to pursue the higher, finer passions while managing the lower passions with stringent self-control. As he succinctly illustrated: “An affectionate temper never stupefied the palate; love of a country, a family or friends, never spoiled a taste for architecture, painting or sculpture; the knowledge of the true measures and harmony of life, never vitiated an ear, or genius for the harmony of music or poetry.”<sup>86</sup>

Despite his inherent optimism, Hutcheson acknowledged that man was not always happy in the instant. This gave the concept of hope its value. Hope resided in the existence of a future world, and gave man the resolution to continue in the miserable present one:

If the present seeming disorders and calamities, sometimes befalling the best of men, and the insolent prosperity of the worst, disturb an honest compassionate heart: the hope of a future state is the only universal support to all conditions of good men, which can make them fully satisfied with their existence at all adventures.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> OFB, pp 63-4 and p. 64.

<sup>85</sup> OFB, p. 64 and p. 66.

<sup>86</sup> OFB, p. 66, pp 66-7 and p. 67.

<sup>87</sup> OFB, p. 68.



Neither was Hutcheson sanguine about the capacity of men to control their passions successfully: "'Tis too improbable, I own that all men will ever thus correct their vain opinions and imaginations: but whoever does so in any measure are so much the happier: and if all did so, all would be as near happiness as our present state would allow."<sup>88</sup>

Hutcheson then made explicit how his vision of man held consequences for an understanding of commerce and society. Where Mandeville posited a desirous individual and described a society which serviced the egos of its members, Hutcheson argued for the regulation of the passions and declared: "No trade, no manufacture, or ingenious art would be sunk by it, which produces any new pleasures to the senses, imagination or understanding, without bringing along with it prepollent evil."<sup>89</sup> He outlined his vision of commercial society, which was capable of including civility and morality. The ethically virtuous commercial society, which Mandeville had theorised out of existence, was described in loving detail.

Hutcheson began by explaining why commerce existed at all. It depended on the capacity of a portion of the community to provide sustenance for the entire populace, thereby satisfying the basic appetites of the society:

It is obvious to all that in a nation of any tolerable extent of ground, three fourths employed in agriculture will furnish food to the whole. Were this land divided to all, except a few artificers to prepare instruments of husbandry, the whole nation must want all the pleasure arising from other arts, such as fine convenient habitations, beautiful dress, furniture and handy utensils. There would be no knowledge of arts, no agreeable amusements or diversions.<sup>90</sup>

This condemned society "to their huts, and caves, and beast skins, to secure them from cold; allowing them no farther compensation for the conveniences they might procure by industry, than the pleasure of idleness for half their lives?" Hutcheson asked, "what other answer do we need to this question, than what everyone will give for himself?"<sup>91</sup>

Having thus dismissed the vision of a world free from the satisfaction of the affections as a dystopia, akin to the image painted by Mandeville of a world without luxury strictly defined, Hutcheson accepted that "the universal choice of mankind, in preferring to bear labour for the conveniences and elegancies of life [shows] that their pleasures are greater than those of sloth, and that industry, notwithstanding its toils, does really increase the happiness of mankind." The only souls who might disagree were "some few pretended

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<sup>88</sup> OFB, p. 69.

<sup>89</sup> OFB, p. 69.

<sup>90</sup> OFB, pp 69-70.

<sup>91</sup> OFB, p. 70.

gentlemen inured to sloth from their infancy, of weak bodies and weaker minds, who imagine the lower employments beneath their dignity.”<sup>92</sup>

Hence, Hutcheson accepted that commerce was a fundamental component of the social fabric. Empirical evidence backed this assumption up: “In every nation great numbers support themselves by mechanic arts not absolutely necessary.” What ensured that this was possible was the existence of commercial exchange: “The husbandman is always ready to purchase their manufactures by the fruits of his labours.” This centralised the concept of exchange in Hutcheson’s world-view, and echoed the intersubjectivity at the heart of his moral scheme. Arguing that exchange was crucial to the possibility of human flourishing, Hutcheson stated that “this may show how little justice there is in imagining an Arcadia, or unactive golden age, would ever suit the present state of the world, or produce more happiness than a vigorous improvement of arts.”<sup>93</sup>

In a mode of argument that shared much with the mercantilist understanding of the economy, Hutcheson argued that the wealth of a country was a measurement of “the quantity of the whole produce of husbandry, and other mechanical arts which it can export.” Furthermore, in correspondence with the mercantilist thesis, Hutcheson proclaimed: “Upon the wealth of any country, when other circumstances are equal, does its strength depend, or its power in comparison to others.”<sup>94</sup>

Arguing in favour of foreign trade Hutcheson proposed that a balance sheet be prepared which included “not only...the bare quantities of good and evil, but the probabilities on both sides.”<sup>95</sup> He then offered an extended illustration:

Now had a country once as many inhabitants as would consume its natural wild product in their caves or thickets, ‘tis plain that according to the usual increase of mankind in peace, the next generation could not subsist without labour, and vigorous agriculture. ‘Tis certain also that many diseases and deaths are occasioned by the labours of husbandry: is it therefore for the public good that a thousand should barely subsist as Hottentots without labour, rather than double the number by agriculture, though a small number should die by that means?<sup>96</sup>

Projecting this observation onto the theoretical plane of the economy, he postulated:

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<sup>92</sup> OFB, p. 71.

<sup>93</sup> OFB, p. 71, p. 72 and p. 72. It is worth noticing that Hutcheson uses the term Arcadia, a region of Greece, rather than Utopia to name an ideal state. It is one indication of the extent to which he internalised his classical education. See chapter five.

<sup>94</sup> OFB, p. 72.

<sup>95</sup> OFB, p. 73

<sup>96</sup> OFB, pp 73-4. Here Hutcheson closely approximates nineteenth-century utilitarianism, arguing for the sacrifice of some for the greater good of the whole.

If the agriculture of three fourths can support the whole, the other fourth, by applying themselves wholly to the mechanic arts, will produce more conveniences or pleasures than could be hoped from a fourth of the labours of each man; since by confining their thoughts to a particular subject, the artificers acquire greater knowledge and dexterity in their work.<sup>97</sup>

The losses at sea incurred by foreign trade were outweighed by the benefits incurred by commercial links. Hutcheson here showed an awareness of the mechanics of the commercial activity in the port of Dublin.<sup>98</sup> He spoke of the low rates of insurance which were demanded of the ships, which he argued “teach us that the losses at sea” were low by comparison to the gains made.<sup>99</sup>

Hutcheson admitted Mandeville was correct to assert the beneficial nature of trade, even if it were for the wrong reasons. Modern society was by its nature a commercial society, and promoted “the present happiness of human kind in the whole.” However, Hutcheson turned on his protagonist. Mandeville was wrong to contend that commercial society, while good for the whole, was “vicious” for the individual.<sup>100</sup> Having considered man as a passionate, desirous being, and thought on the moral consequences of commerce for society, Hutcheson now considered Mandeville’s contention that commerce was derived from the “vice” which lay within the individual subject.

Hutcheson offered definitions for a variety of consumerist vices: “Intemperance is that use of meat and drink which is pernicious to the health and vigour of any person in the discharge of the offices of life.” Central to this definition was its subjectivity, a characteristic that became explicit in his definition of luxury. In contrast to Mandeville’s notion of the use of inessential goods, Hutcheson defined luxury not through its use-value but its net effect “the using more curious and expensive habitation, dress, table, equipage, than the person’s wealth will bear, so as to discharge his duty to his family, his friends, his country or the indigent.”<sup>101</sup> As he attested:

There is no sort of food, architecture, dress or furniture, the use of which can be called evil of itself. Intemperance and luxury are plainly terms relative to the bodily constitution, and wealth of the person. Pride, as it affects our expenses, is also relative to the station and fortune of the person, so that it is impossible to fix one invariable quantity of food, one fixed sum of expenses, the surpassing of which should be called intemperance, luxury or pride.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>97</sup> Here Hutcheson foreshadowed the theory of the division of labour outlined in the *Wealth of nations* by his intellectual progeny, Adam Smith. A. Smith, *An inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations*, (R. H. Campbell and A. S. Skinner, eds.), (Indianapolis, 1981), two volumes. For a comparative analysis see W. Taylor, *Francis Hutcheson and David Hume as precursors of Adam Smith*, (Durham N. C., 1965).

<sup>98</sup> The *DWJ* always carried information concerning the shipping passing through the port.

<sup>99</sup> OFB, p. 75.

<sup>100</sup> OFB, p. 76.

<sup>101</sup> OFB, p. 80 and pp 80-1.

<sup>102</sup> OFB, pp 81-2.

Over-expenditure and not expenditure as such, was the key indicator. It was not the mere possession or consumption of goods, but the capacity of the consumer to perpetuate his expenditure that determined luxury. This varied dramatically depending on the individual circumstance of the consumer involved. Prudence and economy, not self-denial, were at the core of Hutcheson's vision of the morally virtuous consumer. This placed the individual at the centre of his economic theory and emphasised the role of the domestic economy in the functioning of the larger public economy.

Hutcheson defined the virtues of temperance, frugality and moderation, not as "fixed weights or measures or sums" but as relative to the individual circumstance. Drawing a parallel with his aesthetic theory Hutcheson remarked that "Great and little are relative to a species or kind." Just as "Those dimensions are great in a deer which are small in a horse" so too "a man of good sense may know how far he may go in eating and drinking, or any other expenses, without impairing his health or fortune." In finding this level "he has found the bounds of temperance, frugality, and moderation for himself."<sup>103</sup>

Hutcheson utilised the works of the "moralists ancient and modern" to buttress his view. The only exception to this understanding of luxury came from "a few Cynics of old, and some popish hermits." Citing the Stoics, he argued for a balance between the control of the passions, which he had examined in the first letter on Mandeville, and the recognition of those passions in the frame of man, which had supplied the second letter with its thesis. Hutcheson argued that "the use of them [the passions] they [the moralists] all allow, when it is not inconsistent with the offices of life." Equally, Hutcheson stated: "The Christian law suggests nothing contrary to this....It nowhere condemns the rich for being so, or for desiring high stations, unless when these desires are so violent as to counteract our duty." So common was this notion of vice that he could not avoid thinking that the change in definition proposed by Mandeville derived from a duplicitous motive. He identified this as the intention to deceive readers who "will still imagine that these sounds denote vices; and finding that what they confusedly imagine as vitious is necessary to public good, they will lose their aversion to moral evil in general."<sup>104</sup>

Keeping the definition of luxury as relative in mind, Hutcheson assessed the impact it had on the economy and the public welfare. In a manner akin to his separation of passions into appetites and affections, Hutcheson discerned a difference between short term and long term effects of over-expenditure. As in his refutation of Hobbes, he began refuting Mandeville's paradox by setting out the standard that his argument had to meet:

<sup>103</sup> OFB, p. 82, p. 82, p. 83 and p. 83.

<sup>104</sup> OFB, p. 84, p. 84, p. 84, pp 84-5 and p. 86.

If it can be made appear that there may be an equal consumption of manufactures without these vices, and the evils which flow from them; that wealth and power do not naturally tend to vice, or necessarily produce it; then, though we allow that these vices do consume manufactures and encourage industry in the present corruption of manners, and that these vices often attend wealth and power, yet it will be unjust to conclude that ‘vices naturally tend to public prosperity, or are necessary to it; or that public happiness does necessarily occasion them.’<sup>105</sup>

This simple criterion Hutcheson then attempted to satisfy. Although he was aware that “luxury, intemperance and pride tend to consume manufactures” in the short term, this did not moderate the morally reprehensible nature of these actions: “The luxurious, the intemperate, or proud, are not a whit the less odious, or free from inhumanity and barbarity, in the neglect of their families, the indigent or their country, since their whole intention is a poor selfish pleasure.”<sup>106</sup> Immorality remained immorality whether it had a slight economic gain or not.

Hutcheson condemned the Mandevillian universe for advocating an immoral social vision. Mandeville had argued, through a sequence of rhetorical ploys which Hutcheson highlighted in his final instalment in the *Dublin Weekly Journal*, that commercial society was driven by vice and not by virtue.<sup>107</sup> Hutcheson denied this, by examining the individual the heart of Mandeville’s theory, and by redefining the key concept of luxury as relative to the individual consumer.

Both of these endeavours defended a vision of society as virtuous and morally vigorous. Mandeville, in line with Hobbes, believed that only the state could act as a civilising force within the greater social network in which it resided. For Hobbes only the absolutist state had solidified civility out of the lava of the state of nature. Mandeville believed that it required the work of “skilful politicians” to create a successful and thriving commercial polity.<sup>108</sup> Were society left to its devices immorality would follow. To produce a commercial polity out of anything other than a realistic assessment of man’s selfish nature was bound to fail. One either civilised man or commercialised him.

Hutcheson refuted these arguments through a denial of the philosophical portrait they offered of mankind and through a technical redefinition of virtue and vice. The purpose of these expositions became clear in the final pages of the second letter on Mandeville. Here Hutcheson explained how he conceived it possible for society to generate commercial success and moral norms simultaneously, without the intervention of

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<sup>105</sup> OFB, p. 80.

<sup>106</sup> OFB, p. 87.

<sup>107</sup> OFB, pp 101-23.

<sup>108</sup> B. Mandeville, *The fable of the bees*, (F. B. Kaye, ed.), (Indianapolis, 1988), p. 47.

a political Leviathan. As he expressed it, his aim was to “examine if an equal consumption of manufactures, and encouragement of trade, may be without these vices.”<sup>109</sup>

The key to understanding how this might come about was, once again, to view the situation in the long, rather than in the short term. Hutcheson accepted that: “Any given number, in a small time, will certainly consume more wine by being drunkards, than by being sober men; will consume more manufactures by being luxurious or proud...than by being frugal and modest.” However, he argued that over the long term, these actions would be so detrimental to the individual consumer that they would foreshorten their lives, and by default, their continuing capacity to consume goods. Hutcheson asked “whether the same number would not of consumed more in their whole lives, by being temperate and frugal: since all allow that they would probably live longer, and with better health and digestion.” He then applied this to the macro-economic scale, positing that: “temperance makes a country populous, were it only by prolonging life.”<sup>110</sup>

He illustrated this thesis by exploring the long-term effect of expenditure and moderation in the life of a case-study merchant or nobleman:

Would there be a less consumption, if those of greater wealth kept themselves within the bounds of temperance; and reserved the money thus saved to supply the interest of money lent *gratis* to a friend, who may be thereby enabled, consistently with temperance, to drink as much wine, as, had it been added to the quantity drunk by the lender, would have taken away his senses?<sup>111</sup>

Thus the positive effect of moderation in consumption was twofold in character. First, it enabled the individual to extend their health and vitality and thus to increase the total consumption by limiting the daily intake. Secondly it ensured the availability of funds which could be used to increase social bonding and the sense of obligation and solidarity. By limiting the individual’s consumption, Hutcheson was able to extend the benefits of commercial life to the “poorer friend” who could be empowered to “consume the same, or other manufactures, with equal advantage to the public.” Hutcheson made clear that the correct management of the individual’s personal economy had a direct correlation with the domestic economy: “If the single luxury of the master of a family consumes manufactures, might not an equal quantity be consumed by retrenching his own expenses, all allowing conveniences to his family?”<sup>112</sup> This remained within the confines of the relative definition of luxury Hutcheson had already established:

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<sup>109</sup> OFB, p. 89.

<sup>110</sup> OFB, pp 89-90, p. 90 and p. 90.

<sup>111</sup> OFB, p. 91.

<sup>112</sup> OFB, p. 91 and p. 92.

If a man of wealth has no children, his own moderate enjoyment, with what he may enable worthy friends to consume in their own houses, or what he may spend temperately at a hospitable table and genteel equipage, may amount to as much as the squandering of a luxurious Epicure, or vain fool, upon his own person.<sup>113</sup>

All this was, as Hutcheson reiterated, to argue that “it is still possible, without any vice, by an honest care of families, relations, or some worthy persons in distress to make the greatest consumption.” Why, he asked rhetorically, “if there be sufficient wealth to furnish the most sumptuous dress, habitation, equipage, and table to the proprietor, and discharge all offices of humanity, after a proportionable rate, should this be called vice?” Hutcheson believed that “it plainly tends to the public good, and injures no man.”<sup>114</sup>

Although Hutcheson was prepared to argue for the efficacy of society as moral and successful, he was not so naïve as to believe that this was in fact the case. He acknowledged that: “’Tis probable indeed we shall never see a wealthy state without vice. But what then?....Wise governors will force some public good out of vices if they cannot prevent them and yet much greater public good would have flowed from opposite virtues.”<sup>115</sup> Arguing with Hobbes and Mandeville on their ground, that of the realm of ‘men as they are,’ Hutcheson drew on his own observations to write:

As to the fact in this matter, perhaps whoever would look into the ranks of men, will find it is but a small part of our consumptions which is owing to our vices. If we find too splendid dress at court, or at Lucas’, or at public meetings for diversion; we shall find plain dresses at the exchange, at the custom-house, at churches.<sup>116</sup>

Moreover, “The expensive gaiety continues but a few years of most people’s lives, during their *amours*, or expectation of preferment: nor would a good-natured man call this gaiety always vitious.” Remarking upon the very excess which so surprised and perplexed English visitors to the island, Hutcheson contended that these bursts of excess were at best neutral, at worst self-defeating. Showing some disgust with the manners of his rural brethren, Hutcheson rather caustically remarked: “Our gentlemen in the country seldom suffer in their fortunes by their dress....[The] extraordinary consumption of revels occasions generally abstinence for some time following; so that in a sober week as much may be consumed as in the week one has had a debauch.”<sup>117</sup>

Bringing his reflections home to the concerns of his audience, Hutcheson delivered his verdict on the manner of his countrymen and raised the thorny issue of Irish woollen

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<sup>113</sup> OFB, p. 93.

<sup>114</sup> OFB, p. 93, p. 94 and p. 94.

<sup>115</sup> OFB, p. 96.

<sup>116</sup> OFB, pp 97-8.

<sup>117</sup> OFB, p. 98 and pp 98-9.

wear. Of this hoary old concern of Irish political life, Hutcheson argued that were his contemporaries “to examine our own manufactures, either linen or woollen, we should find that coarse cloths and stuff, the wearing of which none count extravagant, employ ten times as many hands as the fine. And of the fine cloths which are bought, not one of the buyers in ten can be called extravagant.”<sup>118</sup>

In these final observations Hutcheson displayed his practical knowledge of the economic environment in which he was working. He remarked matter of factly of his personal experience in the exchange-house, displayed his working knowledge of the intricacies of insurance policy in the period, and inscribed his belief in the use of the domestic manufactures of linen and wool which made up a large proportion of the economic life of the city. He also showed an instinctive awareness of the audience his work addressed. He noted the “free wits” who had adopted a Hobbist mentality and remarked of his awareness of Lucas’ coffee-house, which he used to represent a burgeoning society of fops, wits and new wealth.<sup>119</sup>

Against their fashionable Hobbism Hutcheson rebelled. He did so by arguing that laughter resulted from fellow-feeling, and not from power relationships. This sidelined politics in the passions. Concerning Mandeville, Hutcheson argued that from the perspective of the micro-economy of the individual, rather than from the macro-economic vantage-point of the state, the society could generate and sustain concepts of virtue.

Between them, Hutcheson’s two series of contributions to the *Dublin Weekly Journal* argued for the civilising effect of society over and against that of the state. Where Hobbes and Mandeville saw the state as fundamental to the maintenance of civic order, Hutcheson perceived a capacity within society for a self-regulating civility. It is for this reason that the vehicle of the *Dublin Weekly Journal* was of such importance to Hutcheson’s programme. If Hobbes was as predominant in the thought of the “free wits” as Hutcheson feared, it was important that his assault was available to that audience.<sup>120</sup>

More pertinently, Hutcheson was addressing the specific audience which, while in danger of swallowing the Hobbist understanding, was crucial to the development of any socially generated concept of civility. It made up the educated public upon whom he was placing his trust for the project as a whole. That public needed to be addressed as the potential for civilising Ireland lay in their hands. They equally needed to be addressed through a medium that was familiar to them, namely the newspapers that appeared on the tables of the coffee shops they frequented.

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<sup>118</sup> OFB, p. 99.

<sup>119</sup> It is also cited as a fashionable location in HL, 21, 21 August 1725, p.170.



Every Saturday, the *Dublin Weekly Journal* delivered to its readers a blend of opinion, local and international news. As its first issue on 3 April 1725, stated:

This journal will be printed every Saturday, the news carefully collected from the most authentic papers, and shall be sent to the houses of persons who are subscribers, at ten shillings per year. Advertisements will be inserted at reasonable rates. All letters directed to the author will be taken in (post paid) by the printer hereof.<sup>121</sup>

This was part of an emerging print culture in Dublin that aimed to cater for the need for information and the thirst for gossip in the recently opened coffee-shops of the city. Hutcheson mentioned the most fashionable, Lucas', situated on Cork Hill in the shadow of the gates of Dublin Castle.<sup>122</sup> Nor was it alone, for the advertisements in the journal mention Dempster's coffee-house in Essex Street, where a Doctor Patrick Anderson sold his "Angelical Pills", Dick's coffee-house on Skinner's Row where the estate of James Stevenson Esquire was auctioned on Monday, 1 November 1725, and Merchants coffee-house where John Frezell, a merchant, took orders for shipping of freight abroad.<sup>123</sup>

Nor was the coffee-house a safe haven from the violence outside. The *Dublin Weekly Journal* recorded on 13 November 1725 that "last week Captain Jones and one Mr. Nugent son to the honourable Colonel Nugent fought at Lucas' coffee-house. The latter was killed on the spot."<sup>124</sup> Jones was swiftly tried and found guilty of manslaughter.<sup>125</sup>

These new cultural loci were centres for gossip and opinion, with merchants depending on the information gleaned from their visits there to determine their investments and pattern of expenditure. To feed the demand for news which these establishments generated the city saw the launch of numerous daily and weekly papers. The *Dublin Weekly Journal* carried an announcement on 15 May 1725 of a newly launched competitor:

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<sup>120</sup> The phrase comes from TOL, p. 3.

<sup>121</sup> DWJ, p. 4.

<sup>122</sup> Lucas' was founded in 1690.

<sup>123</sup> DWJ, p. 28, May 15, 1725; DWJ, p. 120, October 23, 1725; DWJ, p.150, December 11, 1725. Aytoun Ellis writes "Ireland had many coffee-houses, all in the south. Dublin had several and Cork, Galway, Kilkenny and even Clonmel and Wexford followed the London fashion.... It was men like Sir William Petty who had acquired the coffee-house habit in London or at the universities, and whose business took them frequently to Ireland, who saw to it that they had a similar meeting-place in Dublin, where they could meet their friends, hear the latest news, and have their favourite drink. Not that the Irish would have needed any prompting. They would be the first to appreciate these gossip-shops.... It needed no coffee to loosen the tongues of the Irish and it was the company to be met with rather than any actual drink that was the attraction. That any of the Irish coffee-houses ever started as temperance seems most unlikely." A. Ellis, *The penny universities: a history of the coffee-houses*, (London, 1956), pp 200-1. See also E. Robinson, *The early English coffee-house* (Surrey, 1972); and S. Pincus, "'Coffee politicians does create': coffee-houses and Restoration political culture," in *Journal of Modern History*, 67, (1995), pp 807-34.

<sup>124</sup> DWJ, p. 133, 13 November 1725.

<sup>125</sup> DWJ, p. 140, 27 November 1725.

*The Dictator* will be published twice every week, viz. Mondays and Fridays, several gentlemen, the most eminent for birth and learning having promised their assistance thereof. Any gentleman in town that has a mind to become subscribers shall have them constantly left at their houses at 2 British crowns per ann. Such are desired to send their names and places of abode to Pressick Ryder and Thomas Harbing at the General Post Office printing house in the Exchange on Cork Hill.<sup>126</sup>

What made the *Dublin Weekly Journal* stand out from its many competitors was the work of its publisher, its distributor and its editor, James Carson, John Smith and James Arbuckle. They collaborated in creating a vehicle for the inculcation of a new language of civility in the Irish context. Carson's business was located in Coghill Court, Dames Street, "opposite the Castle Market."<sup>127</sup> This put him along a row of other printers and publishers who congregated along Dame Street, in all likelihood due to their proximity to the Castle, which ensured that the political authorities could keep a close eye on their publications.

This was a necessary precaution for many in the trade, like Carson, appear to have been of Presbyterian stock. His print history includes polemical writings by both Joseph Boyse of Wood Street and the controversial non-subscriber John Abernethy.<sup>128</sup> Carson was related by marriage to Ebenezer Rider, another Presbyterian publisher, and was soon to publicise his links with Hutcheson's publisher John Smith whose house took in advertisements for the journal after 17 April.<sup>129</sup>

Smith appears to have had an interest in radical thought. Working alongside Hutcheson's cousin William Bruce, Smith co-operated in a printing house that provided their customers with a range of works brought to Dublin from England, France and Holland.<sup>130</sup> A list of imported works contains a cornucopia of radical tracts. Work by the deist John Toland, the commonwealthman James Harrington and the regicide John Milton coexist with more establishment thinkers such as the churchmen Swift, Edward

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<sup>126</sup> DWJ, p. 28, 15 May 1725. The advertisement concludes that "Next Monday's Dictator will be an essay upon wit and humour in which are explained the nature and difference of both and the mistaken notion of them examined after a new and very beautiful method."

<sup>127</sup> He had previously had establishments in Christchurch Yard (1713-14) and in the King George, Fishamble Street (1715-16). He moved to Coghill Court in 1718 and stayed until 1743. He then moved to the Bagnio Slip, Temple Bar (1748-65), where he was when he died. R. Munter, *A dictionary of the print trade in Ireland, 1550-1775*, (New York, 1988), p. 50.

<sup>128</sup> J. Boyse, *Popery prov'd a different gospel from that of our blessed Saviour*, (Dublin, 1718); J. Abernethy, *Seasonable advice to the Protestant dissenters in the north of Ireland*, (Dublin, 1722).

<sup>129</sup> The following appeared on page 4 of issue 3 dated 17 April 1725: "This journal will be published every Saturday and subscribers living in town shall have them sent to them early, at a British Crown per Ann to be paid Quarterly. Two British Shillings shall be paid in the first quarter. Care will also be taken that the Post Office shall have them at a reasonable price, for the benefit of subscribers in the country. Advertisements will be inserted by the printer at the usual rates. And all letters directed to the author, will be taken in (postage being paid) by John Smith, bookseller on the Blind-Key and the printer hereof."

<sup>130</sup> The connection with Holland can be explained through reference to John Smith's namesake (and possible relative) William Smith who co-operated in the book-firm until going to Holland in 1725 or 1726. On this see, J. Moore and M. A. Stewart, "William Smith (1698-1741) and the dissenters' book trade," in *Bulletin of the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland*, 22, (1993), pp 20-7.

Stillingfleet and Gilbert Burnet the elder.<sup>131</sup> They even produced books under their own imprint. It was John Smith's first partner, William Smith, who arranged for Hutcheson to find a publisher in London.<sup>132</sup>

Carson's publication record is sketchier, but it did include a range of literary products.<sup>133</sup> He was a master printer/bookseller, who had set up business in Christ Church Yard and Fishamble Street before moving to Coghill Court. He was listed as an intruder in 1718 before being admitted free of the guild in 1728, and was one of the cornerstones of the Irish dramatic community. He published the first edition of James Sterling's sole dramatic effort, *The rival generals*, which was performed in the Theatre Royal in 1722. He also republished a number of English plays, introducing the Irish audience to Colley Cibber's *The comical lovers* in 1730 and Henry Fielding's *An old man taught wisdom* in 1747. He was also interested in periodicals. He took over the publication of the *Dublin Intelligence* in 1720, only for the original publishers, Richard and Elizabeth Dickson, to reclaim the masthead in 1724.<sup>134</sup> This led him to launch the *Weekly*. Drawing on his awareness of Richard Steele and Joseph Addison (he had published an Irish collection of Steele's *Englishman* in 1714) the journal was an innovation in the Dublin market.<sup>135</sup>

This was the result of the labour put in by the editor of the paper, James Arbuckle. He too was a Presbyterian, the son of the minister (also James) to the congregation at

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<sup>131</sup> W. Bruce and J. Smith, *A Catalogue of Books, newly arrived from England, Holland and France, to be sold by Smith and Bruce, Booksellers, at the sign of the Printing Press, Copper Alley, Dublin, where may be had a variety of maps, prospects of buildings, copperplates, mezzotints & co.*, (Dublin, 1726). That the list is indicative of the business' produce, and is not a peculiarity in much other than in the publicity which surrounded their receipt in Dublin, has been illustrated by the detective work of Mary Pollard. In an analysis of the publications which bear the imprint of Smith and Bruce, Pollard has suggested that while the number of original publications found in the sample of 131 editions; 43 in all, is in part due to the publishers association with the Non-subscriber faction of the Presbyterian Church, the overall content of the list is still dominated to a surprising degree by a "high proportion of philosophy - political and religious" Nor was the philosophical agenda which the publishing house forwarded traditional and conservative in its manner: "In addition to Hutcheson, Harrington edited by John Toland, and Shaftesbury, Smith issued reprints of several works by Bolingbroke and Hoadley, and translations of Tacitus and Sallust by Thomas Gordon, one of the editors of the *Independent Whig*, John Smith it seems, was one of the "Commonwealth's men", a believer in classical republicanism." M. Pollard, *Dublin's trade in books, 1550-1800*, (Oxford, 1989), p. 201.

<sup>132</sup> Hutcheson's *Inquiry* actually came out a few months before William Bruce joined the firm. See M. A. Stewart, "John Smith and the Molesworth circle," in *Eighteenth-century Ireland*, 2, (1987), p. 92. As M. Pollard has indicated, it also bears, as does the *Essay*, a "curious imprint, possibly unique in Dublin eighteenth century publishing history: 'London: printed by J. Darby for Wil. and John Smith in Dublin; sold by W. and I. Innys, J. Osborn and T. Longman and S. Chandler, 1725; and 'London: printed by J. Darby and T. Browne for John Smith and William Bruce, booksellers in Dublin; and sold by J. Osborn and T. Longman and S. Chandler, 1728'.... Though it might appear that the Dubliners were the copyright holders, both titles were entered in the Stationers' Register to the printer J. Darby." in M. Pollard, *Dublin's trade in books, 1550-1800*, (Oxford, 1989), p. 94.

<sup>133</sup> See appendix three.

<sup>134</sup> This biographical account is drawn from R. Munter, *A dictionary of the print trade in Ireland 1550-1775*, (New York, 1988), p. 50.

<sup>135</sup> Robert Munter has noted that the enterprise represented: "the first literary journal in Ireland." It was also the first to illustrate advertisements with woodcuts. R. Munter, *A dictionary of the print trade in Ireland, 1550-1775*, (New York, 1988), p. 50.

Ussher's Quay. Both editor and main contributor of the *Hibernicus* series that headed every issue, Arbuckle was an old comrade in arms of Hutcheson. Their friendship may have dated back to their days in Glasgow University, where Arbuckle had received an MA on 8 July 1720.<sup>136</sup> He had made his name there as a student activist and as a minor versifier. One, entitled *Snuff* and dated 1719, was indicative of his future interests.

Arbuckle celebrated snuff for its medicinal virtues and its ability "to rouse the sleeping mind."<sup>137</sup> It held the ability to invigorate and inspire artists in their labours. More important was the social contribution made by snuff when used by politicians:

Who deeply plunged in the grand affairs  
Of Europe, disregards all meaner cares  
Whose nightly thoughts deep politics employ  
Whilst wife in vain groans for the nuptial joy:  
...The more profound attention to engage  
At proper intervals his snuff box draws  
Sucks up a pinch, and makes a solemn pause  
Which shows there's something weighty in the clause  
What e'er it be, the snuff has strange effects  
Sudden Machiavel his brow erects  
The supercilious muscles large extend  
The knotty puzzle now is at an end.<sup>138</sup>

Trade also benefited from the presence of snuff in the cargo-holds of ships, but it was its place in the world of fashion which was foremost in Arbuckle's assessment of its virtues:

From it [beauty] the rules of elegance we draw,  
It gives mankind the fashion and the law  
The snuffbox recommended by the choice  
Of all the fair soon gains the public voice.<sup>139</sup>

This interest of Arbuckle's in the social effect of snuff indicates the concern he brought to his grander design. He had come to Dublin after finishing his studies and soon renewed his association with Viscount Molesworth, whom he had contacted concerning political events in Glasgow University.<sup>140</sup> If Hutcheson had not made Arbuckle's acquaintance in Glasgow, they certainly met at Breckdenstown. Arbuckle acknowledged

<sup>136</sup> He was a childhood friend of Hutcheson's assistant in the academy, Thomas Drennan. See P.R.O.N.I., D/531/2A/4/156-7.

<sup>137</sup> J. Arbuckle, *Snuff: a poem*, (Edinburgh, 1719), p. 4.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 7-8.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

that “many of them [the *Hibernicus letters* were] composed under your [Richard Molesworth’s] own roof and first published under the protection, and by the command of your noble father.”<sup>141</sup>

The *Hibernicus letters* gave the periodical its distinctive flavour. Arbuckle modelled them on Joseph Addison’s *Spectator*.<sup>142</sup> He revealed the admiration he felt for Addison in a poem commemorating the demise of the English writer:

A perfect genius, sole possessor born,  
Of all those gifts that separate adorn  
Whose soul capacious, not confined to parts  
Grasps the whole circle of the heavenly arts.<sup>143</sup>

The motive in Addison’s programme of education was, as Arbuckle versified it:

To smooth the rugged manners of mankind  
And give a virtuous polish to the mind<sup>144</sup>

The *Weekly Journal* was conceived as more than a literary vehicle. It was a concerted attempt to introduce English “polish” to the minds of Irishmen.<sup>145</sup> Arbuckle’s opening gambit made this clear. He announced that: “I have always been of opinion, that great part of the grievances we in this kingdom complain of, have been in a good measure owing to ourselves. And though I am very far from justifying the real hardships we suffer, or any attempts to make them greater; yet I must still think our misfortunes are rather owing to our own ill conduct, than to any ill dispositions of others against us.” This raised the issue of the poor conduct and need for self-improvement among the Irish. No political or social dependence could, in Arbuckle’s mind, be used to explain away the shoddy nature

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<sup>140</sup> J. Arbuckle to R. Molesworth, Glasgow, 31 October 1722, in Clements MS, *HMC*, VC, volume eight, pp 351-2 and J. Arbuckle to R. Molesworth, Glasgow, 13 February 1722/3, in Clements MS, *HMC*, VC, volume eight, pp 354-5.

<sup>141</sup> HL, p. v. Caroline Robbins speculated that Arbuckle lived for a spell with the Viscount, but it seems more probable that the two men simply enjoyed each other’s company before departing for the evening. C. Robbins, *The eighteenth-century commonwealthmen*, (Cambridge MA, 1959), p. 171.

<sup>142</sup> In this I differ from W. R. Scott. He reads Arbuckle as part of a Shaftesburian school. This does not square with Arbuckle’s reference to Shaftesbury in a letter to Molesworth: “I have lately been reading the writings of a noble friend of Your Lordship’s, I mean the late Lord Shaftesbury. I had read them some time ago, when I was very young, and so had no other taste of them, than of a piece of genteel and easy writing. I need not tell your Lordship what my sentiments of them now are. But there is one circumstance in them I cannot help taking notice of, as what gives me a good deal of pleasure, which is an imagination they raise in me, of my Lord Molesworth being the same person with Palemon in the Rhapsody.” J. Arbuckle to R. Molesworth, Glasgow, 13 February 1722/3, in Clements MS, *HMC*, VC, volume eight, p. 355. Scott dismisses the influence of Joseph Addison.

<sup>143</sup> J. Arbuckle, *An Epistle to the right honourable Thomas Hadington on the death of Joseph Addison Esq.*, (London, 1719), p. 5.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>145</sup> This was a long-term interest of Arbuckle’s. See J. Arbuckle, *A poem inscribed to the Dublin Society*, (Dublin, 1737).

of Irish society. Luxury was endemic despite “the great scarcity of money” with individuals and corporations unashamed to “bestow every year considerable sums in purchasing several commodities from our neighbours, which we might be as well and cheaply furnished with at home.”<sup>146</sup>

Included in these commodities was the literary produce of the neighbouring island, and that, Arbuckle took it upon himself to resolve: “I own, good writers are a pretty great rarity in this country. But what is the reason why it is so? No other in short than that wanting suitable encouragement at home, men of genius and education born in this kingdom are forced out of it to a more kindly soil, for making a fortune by their abilities...England boasts among her illustrious names, that have excelled in arts as well as arms, multitudes that had the misfortune to be born in Ireland.” The net result was that Irish “brains [are] being manufactured abroad,” with work by émigré writers only appearing in imported volumes. To counter this tendency Arbuckle used the journal as a site for the conscious acculturation of the Irish people. He told the “author of the *Dublin Journal*” that “several honest gentlemen have resolved to make your paper a canal, for conveying to the public some little essays they have lying on their hands, that may either instruct some of your readers, or be amusing to others.”<sup>147</sup> The paper was a vehicle for authors to illuminate, educate and entertain. In the final instalment Arbuckle indicated that

There are also some other pieces of the same nature, interspersed through the work, for which I am beholden to the assistance of several ingenious gentlemen. Of this sort is the paraphrase of a passage in the book of Job, in the fiftieth Paper, communicated to me by Mr. Samuel Boyse, who is also the author of the ninety-seventh.<sup>148</sup>

Also involved were the poets James Sterling and Thomas Parnell who contributed verses to the journal. Also included were a number of anonymous entries “which seem to me the performances of so many different persons, and came to me at different times, in the same order in which they lie in the Journals.”<sup>149</sup>

Arbuckle immediately limited the nature and content of the discussion. As he wrote in his declaration of intent:

I would not...have you expect that you shall be furnished with much of that sort of discourse, which is the usual entertainment we receive from our weekly writers; I mean politics. It is very true, that

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<sup>146</sup> HL, pp 1-2 and p. 2.

<sup>147</sup> HL, p. 3, p. 3 and p 4. Scott’s error in the title of the paper derives from this reference. See Life, pp 34-5.

<sup>148</sup> HL, 102, 25 March 1727, p. 428. Samuel Boyse (1708-1749) was the son of Joseph, the Presbyterian minister; on whom see chapters three and six. Samuel was educated in Glasgow but did not settle to any profession. He was the author of a series of works which include *The deity: a poem*; *The new pantheon* and *An historical review of the transactions of Europe*.

religion and government are the noblest and most useful subjects that can exercise the thought and reason of mankind. But at the same time I do not apprehend that the ends of writing upon them will be best promoted, by making them the everlasting theme of our public papers. When a constitution is in visible danger; when a state is overrun with an universal corruption; or when tyranny and superstition are breaking in upon a people; then indeed it is time, and the indispensable duty of every one that is able to rouse the latent spirit of liberty, and set his fellow citizens on their guard. But as (God be praised) none of these is our case at present, I cannot see any necessity, why we should be always talking in the dialect of statesmen, or examining the principles of a Leviathan or an Oceana.<sup>150</sup>

This self-denying ordinance on Arbuckle's part was a direct imitation of the stance taken by his hero and inspiration, Joseph Addison. The *Spectator* had made a virtue of eschewing political argument, although its motives may have been somewhat less altruistic than Arbuckle's. Addison had been an active politician, spending time in Ireland as secretary to the viceroy Lord Thomas, Earl of Wharton between 1708 and 1710.<sup>151</sup> The Whig ministry, which Addison assiduously served, fell dramatically from power in the general election of 1710, and Addison was removed from office with them. Despite the uncertain political climate in which he operated, Addison took up writing the *Spectator*, with the help of one of the Irish diaspora Arbuckle later grieved for, the Dubliner Richard Steele. Their determination to steer clear of political controversy did not necessarily indicate their desire to eschew all future political ambition. Instead the *Spectator* could be read as sophisticated propaganda which aimed to inculcate Whiggish social values in an unsuspecting audience.

Arbuckle's venture was more successful in its attempt to elude the choppy waters of party politics. However that did not imply that the *Hibernicus letters* were without a cultural agenda.<sup>152</sup> What Arbuckle was attempting was, in its conception, broader and more radical than his idol. Where Addison endeavoured to shift the political mood, Arbuckle was attempting to change the cultural lexicon of the Irish:

I shall leave it to my brother authors to make their readers as consummate in the arts of government as they please, and content myself with endeavouring to make mine look into what passes in their own bosoms, and suppress everything there that may interrupt that inward peace and satisfaction, which the author of nature has so bountifully supplied us with the means of obtaining.<sup>153</sup>

This vision, confronted as it was by the laxity in manners and the extent to which casual violence marred the social landscape in Ireland, ensured that the *Hibernicus Letters* had to

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<sup>149</sup> HL, 102, 25 March 1727, p. 430

<sup>150</sup> HL, pp 4-5.

<sup>151</sup> For an account of Addison's time as Secretary to Wharton see P. Smithers, *The life of Joseph Addison*, (Oxford, 1968), pp 147-95.

<sup>152</sup> Anon., *Wit upon crutches: or the biter bitten - most humbly dedicated to the ingenious Mr. Arbuckle, author of the Dublin Weekly Journal*, (Dublin, 1734).

be more didactic than their English counterpart. Where the *Spectator* was intrinsically descriptive in its approach, sublimating a moral vision into the text, Arbuckle's approach was, as befits the Irish context, much more prescriptive, more forthright and didactic.

The issue published on 24 April 1725 is a case in point. Arbuckle began by noting how eminent men from Locke to Addison had disregarded the benefits to be gained from 'castle-building', or day dreaming. This was due to it being "one of those solitary exercises, the pleasure whereof cannot be communicated."<sup>154</sup> Thus the scene appeared set for an individualistic argument. Yet Arbuckle was at pains to refute any analysis which saw day-dreaming as without social purpose. Indeed Arbuckle located it at the epicentre of man's moral capability:

It is agreed on by most writers of morality that in order to have a just notion of the rights of other men, and of the duties and obligations we are under to our fellow creatures, we should suppose ourselves in their place, and gather what we owe to them, from what our selves would expect upon that supposition. This seems to be a necessary condition to our rightly comprehending the reason of that first and everlasting rule of equity, to do to others as we would have them do to us. Hence we may see the wisdom of our creator in giving us this imagining faculty, and such a facility of placing ourselves in circumstances different from those we are really in, to enforce our duty upon us, not only by reason, but by passion and powerful inclination. For in castle-building we are apt as often to lay [aside] difficulties and distresses in our way to happiness, as they are really to be met with in life; because doing so augments the pleasure of the fancy in afterwards bringing us out of them: And this must naturally soften the mind and make it susceptible of the most delicate sentiments of pity and generosity. An illustrious proof hereof we have in young people, who are always the greatest and most indefatigable castle-builders, at the same time that they are warmed with the purest affections, and have their hearts glowing with the tenderest and most disinterested friendships.<sup>155</sup>

Arbuckle was not incapable of writing in a lively and colourful manner. The third instalment dealt with the cause of beauty, locating it in colour, favour and motion, all of which emanated from a life of virtue. This analysis foreshadowed Arbuckle's ironic advertisement, directed at the fairer sex: "This medicine was entirely free from any mixture of mercury; that the virtue of it would not be in the least impaired by long keeping; and that it was found to be the only sovereign specific against the vapours; whereas all the other things prescribed were most commonly found to bring them on."<sup>156</sup>

At the kernel of Arbuckle's project therefore was a dual understanding of virtue as at once sociable and therefore useful; and beautiful and therefore aesthetically pleasing.

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<sup>153</sup> HL, pp 7-8.

<sup>154</sup> HL, pp 27-8.

<sup>155</sup> HL, pp 33-4. Note the similarities between Arbuckle's use of reflexive virtue and Hutcheson's. A further parallel exists in the acceptance by Arbuckle that virtue is inherently disinterested.

<sup>156</sup> HL, p. 25.



This was an echo of Hutcheson's theories in which beauty and virtue were analogous. Arbuckle constantly kept this vision of a beautiful and virtuous society in the mind's eye as the series progressed. At times he brought to the fore the aesthetic concerns, publishing verse under the pseudonym of Musophilus. This he justified in terms of its use in constructing a socially aware imagination, and of illustrating the potential within man for polite living. Other issues centralised the need for a lively and pro-active concept of virtue.

This agenda was not without its antagonists, and nor was the identity of beauty and virtue uncontested ground. In line with a belief in free expression and civil debate, Arbuckle accepted this as one of the characteristics of his project. Taking on the nomenclature Perdomisos, Arbuckle pretended in issue nine to be a disgruntled reader. Opening with a rebuff to the editor, Perdomisos, accused Arbuckle of writing "too much to a particular taste. Your reflections are too general and too speculative to be either of great use or entertainment to the bulk of your readers." This imaginary disputant then proceeded to offer to Arbuckle a critique of recent writing in the British Isles focusing on: "The bad taste of writing...and the vile choice of subjects that has been made by many of our writers. Wit and learning should never be employed but in such a manner as to be made subservient to virtue and good manners." Such works as *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders* had only corrupted "the more young and unwary sort of readers."<sup>157</sup>

More damaging still were those works which traded on bawdy humour. One such, which is ascribed to Jonathan Swift, *The wonderful wonder of wonders* was, Perdomisos recalled: "If I mistake not, intended as a satire on the human posteriors...I would humbly propose it to the wisdom of the nation that all the copies of this wonderful piece be secured in a *proper place* and applied to the *use* of the party offended."<sup>158</sup> The didactic purpose of this criticism revealed itself in the final passages:

How despicable must they appear in the eyes of men of sense, who can thus sit down and in cool blood compose strings of *ambiguous* phrases, to serve as vehicles for their immodest and beastly images? A man of common civility would blush to vent such discourse in well-bred company....There is no harm in mirth provided it be managed so as not to be shocking to decency and good manners.<sup>159</sup>

Whatever Arbuckle's light-hearted take on such criticism, this edition made one point very clear. Arbuckle and Hutcheson both shared an implicit faith in and optimism about the capacity for society to generate moral norms. It was this shared assumption that

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<sup>157</sup> HL, p. 69, p. 70 and p. 71. These works are mentioned in a more general condemnation of "The fabulous adventures and memoirs of pirates, whores and pickpockets." See HL, p. 70.

<sup>158</sup> HL, pp 72-3. The text of the pamphlet is reprinted in J. Swift, *Irish tracts, 1720-1723 and sermons*, (L. Landa, ed.), (Oxford, 1948), pp 281-4.

society could generate civility that made sense of Arbuckle's invitation to Hutcheson to contribute to the series and of his reciprocal enthusiasm for the idea. It fitted Hutcheson's broader vision of a moral, civil people who could generate and sustain a mode of life without the direct intervention of the *polis*. Between them, Hutcheson and Arbuckle were active participants and proponents of the value of society. The *Dublin Weekly Journal* stood for and articulated a vision of social life as at once moral, civil and free.

The dilemma arose from precisely the reflexivity of the system which both men celebrated. In asking society to civilise men, Hutcheson and Arbuckle were requesting it to in effect generate the morals to sustain society. They were trapped in a bind in which neither the concept of society nor that of civility made sense of the other. This came to the fore when one attempted to articulate why it was that one value judgement was more civil than another was. The response that it was sociable was merely to beg the question of what made it sociable if not its civility?

What was required was a theory of value which, while embedded within social relations was not prone to the equalising effect of the idea that beauty and hence worth was in the eye of the beholder. What was required was a hierarchy of the desires, and a social vision to correlate to it. What Hutcheson needed was firstly, a theory of the passions, and secondly, a figure to serve as a role model for others, expressing in action a concept of virtue which others might emulate. This could then set in motion the reflexive model of virtue that Hutcheson believed operated in the society at large. These were to be found in his *Essay on the passions*.

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<sup>159</sup> HL, pp 75-6.

## FIVE: HUTCHESON, JOHN CARTERET AND RESTRAINT

Hutcheson did not publish again until 1728, but with powers rested and rejuvenated, he published his longest work to date.<sup>1</sup> *An essay on the nature and conduct of the passions and affections with illustrations on the moral sense* was inspired by an attack by John Clarke, a schoolmaster at Hull in England.<sup>2</sup> Little is known of Clarke beyond his education at St. John's College, Cambridge, where he obtained an MA in 1710. By 1720 he was the master at a grammar school in Hull. He later moved to Gloucester, taking up a similar post, where he died in 1734. His attack on Hutcheson was entitled: *The foundation of morality in theory and practice considered* and was published in 1726.<sup>3</sup>

Despite admitting that Hutcheson was "ingenious," Clarke contended that he had misconstrued the central concept of benevolence and was inconsistent with Scripture:

The language of the New Testament, which everywhere inculcates the rewards and punishments of a future state, on purpose to excite men to such a conduct as is called virtuous, is to my apprehension, so visibly and palpably inconsistent with our author's notion that had I not met with it in his book I should scarce have thought it possible for a Christian of his parts to have got into such a way of thinking.<sup>4</sup>

To abandon the biblical concepts of otherworldly reward and divine judgement in favour of a disinterested notion of benevolence was, for Clarke, tantamount to heresy. While he accepted Hutcheson's assessment that benevolence was identical with the good of others, he questioned Hutcheson's view of disinterest. For Clarke, the love of others, which Hutcheson counterpoised to self-love, did not contradict the latter affection. It was, in right reason, grounded upon it: "Though the love of benevolence be usually distinguished from the love of desire or enjoyment yet in effect it is but a peculiar kind of it, under the disguise of a concern only for the happiness of others, whereas it is really but a concern for the happiness of others, in order to secure our own."<sup>5</sup>

Clarke sought to prove this through a dissection of the passion of self-love. He promulgated the thesis that "self love is a principle common to all mankind, and inseparable from human nature" and that "self love, as to its influence upon the mind, is

<sup>1</sup> Between early 1726 and 1728 Hutcheson's life is almost untraceable. The only indications of his activity are the letter to William Mace dealt with in chapter three and the letter to his father dealt with in chapter six.

<sup>2</sup> (1687-1734) Translator of Sallust. See also R. M. Stewart, "John Clarke and Francis Hutcheson on self-love and moral motivation," in *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 20, (1982), pp 261-77.

<sup>3</sup> J. Clarke, *The foundation of morality in theory and practice considered*, (York, n.d.), pp 1-39. Mautner gives the date of publication as 1726. See, F. Hutcheson, *Two texts on human nature*, (T. Mautner, ed.), (Cambridge, 1993), p. 181.

<sup>4</sup> J. Clarke, *The foundation of morality in theory and practice considered*, (York, n.d.), p. 50.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 55-6.

superior to all other love.”<sup>6</sup> He claimed that the Irishman had failed to grasp the difference between the identity of the good and the motives which led man to distinguish the good:

Thus too the mind is conscious of a pleasure, arising from the observed union of virtue and happiness, and of uneasiness from their separation, and this without the mixture of any selfish views; but then the disposition of the mind to actions of civility and kindness, in favour of the eminently virtuous arises from the reflection upon the said pleasure and pain.<sup>7</sup>

In Clarke’s view, motivation arose from passions. These he considered self-interested: “No man can desire, or be under any concern for the happiness of others but where it makes a part of his own, either by the pleasure and satisfaction it naturally and immediately gives him, or the hopes of future benefit and advantage to arise from it.”<sup>8</sup> Desire was self-interested since it rested upon a vision of man as pleasure seeking.<sup>9</sup> Clarke could not deny that the object of that pleasure might provide a disinterested pleasure to the observer. Instead, he concentrated on the desires driving men to seek those objects:

1. The kindness of others towards us makes us think of them with pleasure....This perception of delight, this complacency in thinking upon a benefactor and his welfare, which is called the love of complacency is disinterested, as certainly as the perception of pleasure in the smell of a rose, or the taste of a peach. But then 2. The mind finding from experience, that the welfare of its benefactor is capable of giving it a very considerable satisfaction, in order to enjoy that satisfaction becomes strongly disposed to the good offices of kindness, relief, support, in one word, to contribute in any way or kind it conveniently can, to the pleasure and enjoyment of its friend. And this disposition is the love of benevolence and very distinct from the satisfaction that gave rise to it, which is called the love of complacency.<sup>10</sup>

Clarke damned Hutcheson for conflating two kinds of love, the one disinterested, the other, that surrounding the search for pleasure, deeply self-interested: “The author, in penning this question, for want of a little attention did in his thoughts confound with that of benevolence [love of complacency] and because the former is disinterested unwarily let that thought rule upon the latter.”<sup>11</sup> Clarke thereby left Hutcheson’s system in need of amendment. To refute Clarke, Hutcheson had to separate the passions from man’s interests, and display how he could construe a moral sense theory as something other than

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52 and p. 53.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 57-8.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55. A. O. Hirschmann, *The passions and the interests: political arguments for capitalism before its triumph*, (Guildford, 1977) discusses the short and long term connotations of these phrases.

<sup>9</sup> Clarke’s thought is a blend of Christian moralism and Hobbist egoism. The latter provides the psychological framework, while Christianity enables him to escape the short-termism of Hobbes.

<sup>10</sup> J. Clarke, *The foundation of morality in theory and practice considered*, (York, n.d.), pp 79-80.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

an egoistic pursuit of self-interest. This battle revolved around a difference of emphasis in the two men's mental anatomy, as Clarke was aware:

Our author...will not allow a man to be benevolent that does not act with a desire of, or delight in the happiness, or good of others: But how a man can act with a desire of, and delight in the good of others and yet not propose to himself the enjoyment of that delight, will puzzle, I doubt, a very good philosopher to make out.<sup>12</sup>

Hutcheson needed a theory of man's moral motivation, without reducing it to a pursuit of self-interest or hedonistic pleasure. That would collapse his scheme into Hobbism.

Nor, as in the Burnet correspondence, was it sufficient for Hutcheson to state that men had many motivating forces, including self-interest and benevolence. Confronted with Clarke's reduction of the moral sense theory to Hobbist interest, he had to supply a more detailed and complex analysis of man's moral motives. As Hutcheson freely admitted:

The principal objections offered by Mr. Clarke of Hull against the second section of the second treatise [the portion entitled: "Concerning the immediate motive to virtuous actions"] occurred to the author in conversation, and had apprised him of the necessity of a farther illustration of disinterested affections, in answer to his scheme of deducing them from self-love, which seemed more ingenious [itself the word with which Clarke described Hutcheson's work] than any which the author of the *Inquiry* ever yet saw in print.<sup>13</sup>

Echoing his criticism of Shaftesbury in his *Inquiry* and foreshadowing his troubles in Glasgow in the 1730s, Hutcheson noted the charge of irreligion that Clarke had levelled, and although refuting it, was gracious enough to admit:

He [Hutcheson] takes better from Mr. Clarke, all other parts of his treatment, than the raising such an outcry against him as injurious to Christianity, for principles which some of the most zealous Christians have publicly maintained. He hopes Mr. Clarke will be satisfied upon this point, as well as about the scheme of disinterested affections by what is offered in the treatise on the passions.<sup>14</sup>

The *Essay* was therefore conceived of as a rebuttal of Clarke's pamphlet. However, Hutcheson, in a characteristic avoidance of conflict, resisted the temptation to offer a point by point refutation because of the incivility inherent in such a method, and his desire to keep the debate open to other readers. As he explained the rebuttal was

designedly placed here, rather than in any distinct reply, both to avoid the disagreeable work of answering or remarking upon books wherein it is too hard to keep off too keen and offensive

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>13</sup> T3, p. xii.

<sup>14</sup> T3, pp xii-xiii.

expressions and also that those who have had any of the former editions of the *Inquiry* might not be at a loss about any illustrations or additional proofs necessary to complete the scheme.<sup>15</sup>

Hutcheson argued that the *Essay* could be defended upon the grounds that “the main practical principles which are inculcated in this treatise have this prejudice in their favour, that they have been taught and propagated by the best men in all ages.” This lack of originality was to his didactic mind, no argument against the work, however, for “old arguments may sometimes be set in such a light by one as will convince those who were not moved by them even when better expressed by another, since for every class of writers, there are classes of readers adapted, who cannot relish anything higher.” Modestly accepting that there was within the *Essay on the passions* certain passages “too subtle for common apprehension” he reassured the reader “that the difficulty on these subjects arises chiefly from some previous notions, equally difficult at least, which have been already received.” He insisted “to discover truth on these subjects, nothing more is necessary than a little attention to what passes in our own hearts and consequently every man may come to certainty in these points without much art or knowledge of other matters.”<sup>16</sup>

This democratisation of the moral sense was accentuated by Hutcheson’s conviction “that the natural dispositions of mankind will operate regularly in those who never reflected upon them, nor formed just notions about them.”<sup>17</sup> Drawing a scientific analogy, he recalled how

there have been very different and opposite opinions in optics, contrary accounts have been given of hearing, voluntary motion, digestion and other natural actions. But the powers themselves in reality perform their several operations with sufficient constancy and uniformity in persons of good health whatever their opinions be about them.<sup>18</sup>

Justifying the role of moral speculation, and of the teaching profession to which he was committed, Hutcheson argued “true opinions however, about both, may enable us to improve our natural powers, and to rectify accidental disorders incident unto them.” Moral philosophy was analogous to the work of a physician in relation to the body. Hutcheson noted that this conception of the task of moral philosophy implied that progress would render his work redundant; a prospect he looked upon with equanimity. He wrote “the author hopes this imperfect *Essay* will be favourably received, till some person of greater

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<sup>15</sup> T3, p. xiii.

<sup>16</sup> T3, p. iii, p. iv, p. v and pp v-vi.

<sup>17</sup> T3, p. vii.

<sup>18</sup> T3, p. vii.

abilities and leisure apply himself to a more strict philosophical inquiry...from which perhaps a more exact theory of morals may be formed.”<sup>19</sup>

Noting how “we have got the number five fixed for our external senses, though seven or ten might as easily be defended,” Hutcheson projected that “we have multitudes of perceptions which have no relation to any external sensation...such as the ideas of number, duration, proportion, virtue, vice, pleasures of honour, of congratulation; the pains of remorse, shame, sympathy and many others.” This observation provided Hutcheson with the springboard into the text proper, in which he devoted the first of the six sections of the *Essay* to “a general account of our several senses and desires, selfish or public.”<sup>20</sup>

Hutcheson’s scheme employed five basic categories. First there were the five “external senses, universally known.” Secondly he identified a series of “pleasures of the imagination” which he derived from the thought of Joseph Addison. Thirdly, he isolated perceptions of “a public sense” understood as “our determination to be pleased with the happiness of others.” Fourthly, and distinct from the public sensibility was the moral sense, whereby “we perceive virtue or vice in our selves or others.”<sup>21</sup> Finally, there was a sense of honour, which Hutcheson claimed “makes the approbation or gratitude of others for any good actions we have done, the necessary occasion of pleasure.”<sup>22</sup>

Hutcheson next attended to the issue of desire. He provided a naturalistic account of the problem of motivation, stating “desires arise in our mind, from the frame of our nature,” and divided them into five categories. These corresponded to those dividing the senses. First he isolated “the desire of sensual pleasure.” Secondly the desires of the “pleasures of the imagination.” Thirdly, were the desires arising from the pleasures of public happiness. Fourthly, the “desires of virtue.”<sup>23</sup> Fifthly, was the desire for honour and for the avoidance of shame.

Hutcheson argued that as “we are capable of reflection, memory, observation and reasoning about the distant tendencies of objects and actions, and not confined to things present, there must arise, in consequence of our original desires, secondary desires” for ends which functioned to help the achieve the primary goal. These included the desire for “wealth and power” which although not ends in themselves (in any well-adjusted

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<sup>19</sup> T3, p. viii and pp xi-ii.

<sup>20</sup> T3, p. x and p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> T3, p. 5. On Addison’s influence see chapter four. He separated this from the public sense noting: “many [people] are strongly affected with the fortunes of others, who seldom reflect upon virtue or vice in themselves or others as an object.” T3, p. 5. This illustrates the separation of Hutcheson’s thought from the civic humanist paradigm of his associates. See chapter two.

<sup>22</sup> T3, p. 6.

<sup>23</sup> T3, p. 7.

Hutchesonian individual) were “the means of gratifying all other desires.”<sup>24</sup> He was anxious to disassociate himself from those “who condemn in general all pursuits of wealth or power.” For Hutcheson, steeped in the Aristotelian concept of the mean “the pursuit of them [wealth and power] is laudable when the intention is virtuous.” This was buttressed by his recognition that the customs of a country could legitimate certain practices. The association of ideas implicit in such customary norms could result in “dress, retinue, equipage, furniture, behaviour and diversions [being] made matters of considerable importance.” He defended the association of ideas on the grounds that “all our language and much of our memory depends upon it.”<sup>25</sup>

The capacity of the mind to recall ideas was limited in one vital way. As Hutcheson realised “our minds are incapable of retaining a great diversity of objects.” Therefore singular, unusual instances or objects remained in the mind when more commonplace occurrences or characteristics faded. This implied that “were virtue universal among men... ’tis probable the attention of observers would be turned chiefly toward those who distinguished themselves by some singular ability.” Hutcheson accepted that although “we should perhaps, when we considered sedately the common virtues of others, equally love and esteem them,” he was well aware that oftentimes “our attention would be generally fixed to those who thus were distinguished from the multitude.”<sup>26</sup>

Hutcheson then divided the desires on grounds of outcome, namely between those motivated by self-interest and those motivated by the public interest.<sup>27</sup> In confronting the argument that all action is self-interested, as we gain pleasure from the happiness of others, Hutcheson argued “it requires a good deal of subtlety to defend this scheme, so seemingly opposite to natural affection, friendship, love of a country or community, which many find very strong in their breasts.” He reasserted his belief in benevolent disinterested emotional attachments; citing sympathy felt for the distressed. The concept of divine sanction further separated Hutcheson from Clarke. “If a public sense be acknowledged in men, by which the happiness of one is made to depend upon that of others, independently of his choice, this is indeed a strong evidence of the goodness of the author of our nature.”<sup>28</sup>

Interdependence of mankind, as designed by God, was the key factor in the generation of Hutchesonian morality between individuals and hence it was imperative that Hutcheson defend it from Clarke’s aspersions. Thus Hutcheson offered a sequence of

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<sup>24</sup> T3, p. 8. Note that this is another implicit legitimization of commercial activity. On this see chapter four.

<sup>25</sup> T3, p. 9, p. 9, p. 10 and p. 11.

<sup>26</sup> T3, p. 11, p. 11, and pp 11-2.

<sup>27</sup> Hutcheson uses benevolent as interchangeable with motivation for the public interest. Here desire becomes synonymous with motive. T3, p. 13.

<sup>28</sup> T3, p. 14 and p. 15.



arguments to shore up the concept of disinterested benevolence which he asserted in an empirical vein “being matters of internal consciousness, everyone can best satisfy himself by attention, concerning their truth and certainty.”<sup>29</sup>

Hutcheson’s defence of this last point began with the premise “desire is generally uneasy, or attended with an uneasy sensation.” This supplied him with three conclusions. First that “the uneasy sensation accompanying and connected with the desire itself cannot be a motive to that desire which it presupposes.”<sup>30</sup> The happiness of gratifying a desire could not be the motive force behind the desire, but only a concomitant pleasure. The content of the desire was independent of any emotions surrounding it.

Secondly, “no desire of any event can arise immediately or directly from an opinion in the agent that his having such a desire will be the means of a private good.”<sup>31</sup> It was crucial to Hutcheson’s thesis that desire was independent of volition. Desire was a by-product of pre-formulated aims, and not their precursor:

For instance, suppose God revealed to us that he would confer happiness on us if our country were happy; then from self-love we should immediately have the subordinate desire of our country’s happiness as the means of our own. But were we assured that, whether our country were happy or not, it should not affect our future happiness, but that we should be rewarded, provided we desired the happiness of our country, our self-love could never make us now desire the happiness of our country, since it is not now the means of our happiness, but is perfectly indifferent to it. The means of our happiness is the having a desire of our country’s happiness; we should therefore from self-love only wish to have this desire.<sup>32</sup>

Self-love, in contrast to benevolence, made the happiness of others a functional desire, subservient to the love of self. In Hutcheson’s view, benevolence was an objective end, which “is natural to us...whenever by any opinions we are persuaded that there is no real opposition of interest.”<sup>33</sup> The key to the system was that all desire was pre-rational and hence unrelated to the power of the will. If Clarke was correct, it was necessary for the actor to calculate the consequences of their actions before desiring the end.

Thirdly, Hutcheson stated “there are in men desires of the happiness of others, when they do not conceive this happiness as the means of obtaining any sort of happiness to themselves.” Although one might have “a subordinate desire of another’s happiness from self-love” when the former served to acquire the later, he asserted that “the virtuous benevolence must be an ultimate desire,” an end in itself, were it to be accepted as morally

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<sup>29</sup> T3, p. 15.

<sup>30</sup> T3, p. 15 and p. 16.

<sup>31</sup> T3, p. 17.

<sup>32</sup> T3, p. 18.

<sup>33</sup> T3, pp 18-9.

worthy. This “clear[ed] our way to answer the chief difficulty; may not our benevolence be at least a desire of the happiness of others as the means of obtaining the pleasures of the public sense?”<sup>34</sup> Were we not, in pursuing the happiness of others, only gratifying our desire to appear worthy, as Clarke postulated? Was it not just self-interest in another guise?

Hutcheson countered this contention by asserting that the happiness of others was independent of self-interest and was unrelated to the will. It could not be generated as a desire for the good of others but only as the desire to experience that emotion. This was the difference between the interests and the passions. Moreover, benevolence was not only independent of self-interest on theoretical grounds. It was actually experienced as such by moral agents. Appealing to the reader’s experience, Hutcheson asked: “Don’t we find that we often desire the happiness of others without any such selfish intention?”<sup>35</sup>

Hutcheson thus defined desire as subsequent to aims, not precedent: a definition that allowed him to reincorporate the selfless desires into a system in danger of collapsing into selfish egoism. One had to choose an end before the desires provided motivation towards behaviour. A benevolent temper was a forerunner of the desire to act in a manner befitting such an attribute. In this sense, as a first motive, it was distinct from and in competition with self-interest. Hutcheson argued that Clarke misconstrued the definition of desires: “It is called an uneasy sensation in the absence of good. Whereas desire is as distinct from any sensation as the will is from the understanding or senses.”<sup>36</sup>

Finally, responding directly to Clarke’s insinuation of heretical thought, Hutcheson retrieved the notion of future divine reward as an example of a case whereby:

Interest of any kind may influence us indirectly to virtue and rewards particularly may over-balance all motives to vice. This may let us see that the sanctions of rewards and punishments as proposed in the Gospel are not rendered useless or unnecessary, by supposing the virtuous affection to be disinterested.<sup>37</sup>

Thus interest created the second order desire, the desire to have a desire, which would in turn “overbalance” self-interest more crudely understood, leaving the way open for genuinely moral emotions.<sup>38</sup> That was the moral purpose of education.

Having dealt at length with the relationship between the senses and the desires, Hutcheson “consider[ed] other modifications of our minds.” These were the emotional

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<sup>34</sup> T3, p. 20 and pp 20-1 and p. 21..

<sup>35</sup> T3, p. 22.

<sup>36</sup> T3, p. 24.

<sup>37</sup> T3, pp 25-6.

<sup>38</sup> T3, p. 26.

responses to the world, and included “modifications of the mind such as joy, sorrow, [and] despair.”<sup>39</sup> Differentiating these emotions from the sensations, he posited:

We call the direct immediate perception of pleasure or pain from the present object or event the sensation. But we denote by the affection or passion some other perceptions of pleasure or pain not directly raised by the presence or operation of the event or object, but by our reflection upon or apprehension of their present or certainly future existence.<sup>40</sup>

Thus Hutcheson differentiated between the “sensation of beauty,” we have “in beholding a regular building” and how “upon our apprehending ourselves possessed of it...we feel the affection of joy.” This inner reflection upon our immediate sensual responses was the cause of affections. Identifying a difference between the affections and the passions, he declared that the passions “includes, beside the desire or aversion...a confused sensation either of pleasure or pain...which keeps the mind much employed upon the present affair, to the exclusion of everything else.”<sup>41</sup>

Beginning with a study of how the affections would operate if the passions never overwhelmed them, Hutcheson distinguished “between the calm desire of good and aversion to evil...and the particular passions towards objects immediately presented to some sense.” So the desire for private good was separate from the passions of “ambition, covetousness, hunger, lust, revenge, [and] anger.” The same separation occurred with reference to public good, with desire distinguished from the “particular affections or passions of love, congratulation, compassion [and] natural affection.”<sup>42</sup>

Crucial to Hutcheson’s theory of moral education was his assertion “we obtain command over the particular passions principally by strengthening the general desires through frequent reflection and making them habitual, so as to obtain strength superior to the particular passions.” Moreover, he realised that individuals could be inspired by particular benevolence “where the latter [universal benevolence] is wanting.” Morality was therefore inculcated by example and practised by habit. Ultimately the aim of all moral actors was “to make this desire [universal benevolence] prevalent above all particular affections [as] the only sure way to obtain constant self-approbation.”<sup>43</sup>

This implied that in the case of “calm selfish desires” the agent would “desire any apprehended good which occurs apart from any evil.” In the case of “calm public desires” Hutcheson suggested that “where there are no opposite desires, the greater good of another

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<sup>39</sup> T3, p. 27.

<sup>40</sup> T3, pp 27-8.

<sup>41</sup> T3, p. 28 and pp 28-9.

<sup>42</sup> T3, p. 29, p. 29 and p. 30.

<sup>43</sup> T3, p. 30, p. 30 and p. 31.

is always preferred to the less.” Recognising that the two ends might on occasion be incompatible, he proposed “that kind prevails which is stronger or more intense.” Having laid out this rather basic scheme, he provided a series of axioms to show “the manner of acting from calm desire with analogy to the laws of motion.”<sup>44</sup>

Hutcheson restated his primary position whereby “selfish desires pursue ultimately only the private good of the agent” while “benevolent or public desires pursue the good of others.” He also restated his conviction that “the strength...of the...desire of any event, is proportioned to the imagined quantity of good which will arise.” Due to the complexity of reality “mixed objects are pursued or shunned with desire or aversion proportioned to the apprehended excess of good or evil.” This mathematical calculus resulted in the possibility that “equal mixtures of good and evil stop all desire.”<sup>45</sup>

Having reiterated his primary formula for the development of moral activity Hutcheson noted how “in computing the quantities of good or evil which we pursue or shun, either for our selves or others, when the durations are equal, the moment is as the intenseness: and when the intenseness of pleasure is the same or equal, the moment is as the duration.”<sup>46</sup> All this amounted to a restatement of his theory of moral calculation as stated in the ‘Inquiry concerning good and evil.’ He continued with the axiom “the moment of good in any object is in a compound proportion of the duration and intenseness.” Thus he concluded: “The trouble, pain or danger incurred by the agent in acquiring or retaining any good is to be subtracted from the sum of the good. So the pleasures which attend or flow from the means of propollent evil are to be subtracted, to find the absolute quality.”<sup>47</sup>

Hutcheson explained how “the ratio of the hazard of acquiring or retaining any good must be multiplied into the moment of the good” so that “the smallest certain good may raise stronger desire than the greatest [uncertain] good.” He projected this scheme onto the deity proposing that “to an immortal nature it is indifferent in what part of its duration it enjoys a good limited in duration.” So, for a mortal being “if the duration of the good be infinite, the earliness of commencement increases the moment.” Finally Hutcheson noted how “the removal of pain has always the notion of good.”<sup>48</sup>

Having provided the reader with a mechanism for determining the “quantities of good in any object or event,” Hutcheson concluded the axioms with a series of observations putting the mathematical observations to practical use. He noted “that our

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<sup>44</sup> T3, p. 31, p. 33, p. 34 and p. 34.

<sup>45</sup> T3, p. 38, p. 38, p. 39 and p. 39.

<sup>46</sup> T3, p. 39.

<sup>47</sup> T3, p. 39.

desires toward public good are, when other circumstances are equal [are] proportioned to the moment of the goods themselves.” If this failed to provide an ample guide for correct action, the actor could fall back upon the observation that “our public desires of any events are proportioned to the number of persons to whom the good event shall extend” and that when these two considerations were balanced “our desire is proportioned to the strength or nearness of the ties or attachments to the persons.” If this was unable to determine action the next discriminatory category was “the apprehended moral excellence of the persons.” Thus Hutcheson argued that “the strength of public desire is in a compound ratio of the quantity of the good itself, and the number, attachment and dignity of the persons.”<sup>49</sup>

From analysing the existence of passions within the human frame and laying out in a mathematical fashion the conclusions concerning their application, Hutcheson provided an inquiry “into what state we would incline to bring our selves...supposing that we had the choice of our own state entirely.”<sup>50</sup> Taking note of how “the simple of idea of desire is different from that of pain of any kind” he ascertained:

There is a middle state of our minds, when we are not in the pursuit of any important good, nor know of any great indigence of those we love....Some tempers seem to have as strong desires as any by the constancy and vigour of their pursuits, either of public or private good; and yet give small evidence of any uneasy sensation. This is observable in some sedate men, who seem no way inferior in strength of desire to others. Nay if we consult ourselves, and not the common systems, we shall perhaps find that the noblest desire in our nature, that of universal happiness is generally calm.<sup>51</sup>

Given the choice, human agents would prefer to be moderate in their manner, with the passions tempered and controlled. The pain and anxiety of desire had to be quenched if man was to be content.

Having assumed that desire and anxiety were separable, Hutcheson asserted that

when any object was desired, if we found it difficult or uncertain to be obtained, but worthy of all the labour it would cost, we would set about it with diligence, but [crucially] would never choose to bring upon ourselves any painful sensation accompanying our desire, nor to increase our toil by anxiety.<sup>52</sup>

The actor would endeavour to control the passions awakened by desire, and not allow them to interfere with his inner calm and disrupt his sense of overall well being.

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<sup>48</sup> T3, p. 40, p. 40, p. 40 and p. 41.

<sup>49</sup> T3, p. 41, p. 42, p. 42, p. 42 and p. 42.

<sup>50</sup> T3, p. 43.

<sup>51</sup> T3, p. 43 and p. 44.

<sup>52</sup> T3, p. 45.

Hutcheson faced a problem due to his empirical commitment. Although his ethical theory was built upon a pre-rational recognition of the good, it was an empirical truth that “the modifications or passions of our mind are very different from those which we would choose to bring upon ourselves” and often befuddled the mind, leading to moral error “we find violent motions in our bodies; and are often made unfit for serious deliberation about the means of obtaining the good desired.”<sup>53</sup> It was the task of the ethical teacher to provide a method for controlling the passions, enabling moral action to be identified and pursued.

Before this could be accomplished, Hutcheson needed to understand why the deity had given mankind passions if they regularly led the actor astray. He argued that the common answer, “that they are given to us as useful incitements or spurs to action” was incorrect, as uneasy sensations were as likely to act as a deterrent as an incentive. He modestly accepted that the question was beyond the ken of “beings of such imperfect knowledge as we are.” Giving vent to his theological optimism, he admitted “we know that our state is absolutely good, notwithstanding a considerable mixture of evil.”<sup>54</sup>

Given this proviso, Hutcheson cautiously proposed that the purpose of the passions resided in what was “necessary to such natures as we are in other respects: particularly that beings of such degrees of understanding...as we have must need these additional forces.” Thus hunger prompted men to eat, and sexual appetite, while “a mystery to their reason [was] easy to their instinct.” Moreover, the passions kept man’s desires in balance with each other. So while “the pleasures of the imagination tend much to the happiness of mankind, the desires of them therefore must have the like sensations assisting them to prevent our indulging a nasty solitary luxury.”<sup>55</sup>

Hutcheson then proclaimed his image of an ideal model of man, consisting of a “balance of public passions against the private, with our passions toward honour and virtue.” In this he identified “human nature...as really amiable in its low sphere, as superior natures endowed with a higher reason...provided we vigorously exercise the powers we have in keeping this balance of affections, and checking any passion which grows so violent as to be inconsistent with the public good.” This implied a commitment to the idea that “we have some considerable power over our desires.”<sup>56</sup>

Hutcheson stuck to the task of incorporating the dilemma of temperamental difference into his scheme. Echoing his ideas concerning the origin of beauty he postulated that “the best state of human nature possible might require a diversity of passions and

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<sup>53</sup> T3, p. 47.

<sup>54</sup> T3, p. 48, p. 50 and p. 50. Hutcheson footnotes William King’s *De origine mali*, which he recommends “above all others on this subject.” T3, p. 50n. On King, see chapter six. The EOE was only available in Latin at this stage.

<sup>55</sup> T3, p. 51, p. 52 and p. 53.

inclinations, for the different occupations necessary for the whole.” Any further differences were ascribed to the influence of “custom, education, habits and company.”<sup>57</sup>

Hutcheson then isolated a further motive to action, distinct from both sensation and desires. These were the secondary goods, the means to a further end, which included “the propensity to fame [which] may continue after one has lost all notion of good, either public or private, which could be the object of a distinct desire.”<sup>58</sup> These subsidiary goods could, through erroneous attitudes concerning their intrinsic value, become ends in themselves. They served no end for self or the public good.

Hutcheson then laid out the key categories of the passions “as they are excited by something in our frame different from self-love and tend to something else than the private pleasures of the external senses or imagination.”<sup>59</sup> He supplied five heads:

1. How our passions arise from the moral sense and sense of honour.
2. How our passions tend toward the state of others....
3. How the public passions are diversified by the moral qualities of the agents....
4. How the public passions are diversified by the relations of several agents to each other.... [and]
5. How all these passions may be complicated with the selfish.<sup>60</sup>

Hutcheson stated how “when we form the idea of a morally good action...we feel a desire arising of doing the like.”<sup>61</sup> Thus morality was partially emulatory, in that it depended on the desire of actors to mimic the models of behaviour they appreciated as virtuous within their own experience.<sup>62</sup> In a fashion which echoed a concern of James Arbuckle, Hutcheson noted how there was a form of “heroism in castle-building”, namely the manner in which almost all readers of epics are lead “into an imagined series of adventures, in which they are still acting the generous and virtuous part.”<sup>63</sup>

From the sense of honour Hutcheson derived a series of subcategories, which included the passions of modesty, ambition, pride and shame in ourselves and others. This last led him to consider his second category, the passions dependent upon concern for the public. Hutcheson included in these “all perceptive natures, when there is no real or imagined opposition of interest.” Crucial to the moral scheme was that as “our moral sense represents virtue as the greatest happiness to the person possessed of it, our public affections will naturally make us desire the virtue of others.” Thus the scheme was moved

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<sup>56</sup> T3, p. 54, p. 54 and p. 55.

<sup>57</sup> T3, p. 55 and p. 56.

<sup>58</sup> T3, pp 62-3.

<sup>59</sup> T3, p. 68.

<sup>60</sup> T3, pp 68-9.

<sup>61</sup> T3, p. 69.

<sup>62</sup> On the concept of emulation in relation to artistic practice see T. Crow, *Emulation: making artists for revolutionary France*, (London, 1995).

<sup>63</sup> T3, p. 69. On ‘castle-building’, or day-dreaming in Arbuckle’s scheme see chapter four.

beyond the empirical individual into the realm of society, enabling an emulatory scheme to operate. Independent of any other considerations, he considered it plausible that “when the opportunity of a great action occurs to any person... we wish he would attempt it and desire his good success. If he succeeds we feel joy.”<sup>64</sup>

However, consistent with this was the morality of other actors. Hutcheson suggested that the moral sense ensured “when good appears attainable by a person of moral dignity, our desire of his happiness, founded upon esteem and approbation, is much stronger than that supposed in the former class [where the observer was unaware of the morality of the actor].” Drawing a link with his aesthetics, he suggested that this explained “how unfit such representations are in tragedy as make the perfectly virtuous miserable in the highest degree. They can only lead the spectators to distrust of providence.”<sup>65</sup>

Hutcheson then investigated those passions which arose from “the same moral sense and public affections, upon observing the actions of agents some way attached to each other.” These included “strong sentiments of gratitude,” compassion and forgiveness. Moreover, they could be subdivided, “according to Malebranche’s division, as the object or event was present, or in suspense, or certainly removed.”<sup>66</sup> Equally, divisions could be made based on the strength of the emotional tie.

Finally, Hutcheson examined the nature of the passions raised by any of those above, as complicated by the selfish desires. He recognised how, in the settled state:

As the conjunction of selfish passions will very much increase the commotion of mind, so the opposition of any selfish interests, which appear of great importance, will often conquer the public desires or aversions, or those founded upon the sense of virtue or honour; and this is the case in vicious actions done against conscience.<sup>67</sup>

Concluding what he admitted was a “tedious enumeration” Hutcheson reminded his reader that the motive behind the lengthy recital of the passions was to show “how few of our passions can be any way deduced from self-love, or desire of private advantage.” He also speculated “how improbable it is, that persons in the heat of action, have any of those subtle reflections, and selfish intentions, which some philosophers invent for them.”<sup>68</sup>

In Hutcheson’s view, evil was very rarely considered and intentional. His optimistic opinion of human nature forced him to conclude that wrongdoing was the consequence of overheated passions. Selfish passions overwhelmed the generous

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<sup>64</sup> T3, p. 71, p. 71 and pp 71-2.

<sup>65</sup> T3, p. 72 and p. 73. On Hutcheson’s aesthetics see chapter one. For his notion of providence see chapter six.

<sup>66</sup> T3, p. 81, p. 81 and p. 83.

<sup>67</sup> T3, p. 84.

<sup>68</sup> T3, p. 85.



affections, and the affections were misdirected through anxiety, hurry or rage. The problem of evil was reducible to the problem of controlling and tempering the passions. The problem was how to teach humans to control and temper their passions. The question was one of moral education.<sup>69</sup>

This raised the vexed question as to “how far our several affections and passions are under our power.” Hutcheson recognised that “from what was said above it appears that our passions are not so much in our power as some seem to imagine.” Instead, the passions were raised “as soon as we form the idea of certain objects or events” without any mediation from the will. This implied that “the government of our passions must then depend much upon our opinions;” for, as in classical thought, Hutcheson argued that to know the good was to want to do the good. He also noted that this conception of the good could extend not merely to the pursuit of acts considered positively good but to the alleviation of pains: “We must here observe an obvious difference among our desires, viz. that some of them have a previous, painful or uneasy sensation, antecedently to any opinion of good in the object....These desires we may call appetites.”<sup>70</sup> Alongside such desires as hunger, thirst and sexual desire, Hutcheson included the desire for society

or the company of our fellow creatures. Our nature is so much formed for this, that although the absence of company is not immediately painful, yet if it be long, and the person be not employed in something which tends to society at last, or which is designed to fit him for society, an uneasy fretfulness, sullenness and discontent will grow upon him by degrees, which company alone can remove.<sup>71</sup>

The appetites reminded the reader of the role played by previous ideas and experiences in the formation of the agent’s ideas about the nature of the good. While they did not arise from consideration of the external world, but were “determinations of our nature” they did involve a history of affectivity.<sup>72</sup> It was in the realm of opinion-formation that Hutcheson’s moral didacticism could be put into effect.

Hutcheson dealt with two aspects of this issue. First, in line with his social theory of virtue he noted the importance and difficulty of making any “judge[ment] of the degrees of happiness or misery in others, unless he knows their opinions, their associations of ideas and the degrees of their desires and aversions.” Secondly he noted “how much consequence our associations of ideas and opinions are to our happiness or misery, and to

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<sup>69</sup> Or as Hutcheson stated: “Our present purpose leads only to consider the first general elements, from the various combinations of which the several tempers and characters are formed.” T3, pp 85-6.

<sup>70</sup> T3, p. 88, p. 88, p. 88, p. 89 and pp 89-90.

<sup>71</sup> T3, pp 90-1.

<sup>72</sup> T3, p. 91.

the command of our passions.” Even the appetites “may be strengthened or weakened and variously altered by opinion or associations of ideas.”<sup>73</sup>

Hutcheson considered that “the common effect of these associations of ideas is this; that they raise the passions into an extravagant degree, beyond the proportion of real good in the object.” Thus the association of ideas could create error, due to the exaggeration of some characteristic within the object considered. The problem was that even if reason became aware of the mistake, the passions often continued to operate. Providing a common example of this phenomenon, Hutcheson recalled how “persons, who by reasoning have laid aside all opinion of spirits being in the dark more than in the light, are still uneasy to be alone in the dark.”<sup>74</sup> Equally, in a deft criticism of Shaftesbury’s concept of aristocratic taste, Hutcheson remarked how

the connoisseur has all ideas of valuable knowledge, gentleman-like worth and ability associated with his beloved arts. The idea of property comes along with the taste, and makes his happiness impossible without possession of what he admires. A plain question might confute the opinion, but will not break the association: ‘What pleasure has the possessor more than others, to whose eyes they are exposed as well as his?’<sup>75</sup>

Hutcheson expanded this attitude to encompass the “public desires” as well as the private passions for love, money and art. In line with his thesis that benevolence began at home he suggested that “our benevolent passions in the nearer ties are as apt to be too violent as any whatsoever.” While he accepted that “the desire of virtue upon extensive impartial schemes of public happiness can scarce be too strong,” he acknowledged that passions generate erroneous assessments which “may often lead men into very pernicious actions.” Out of such false associations of ideas “some phantoms of virtue are raised, wholly opposite to its true nature, and to the sole end of it, the public good.”<sup>76</sup>

In political terms the mis-association of ideas with groups could result in unjustifiable tyranny, or the foolish error of enthusiasm. In a passage relevant to Hutcheson’s vision of a tolerant society, he posited how

when we rashly form opinions of sects or nations, as absolutely evil; or get associated ideas of impiety, cruelty, profaneness, recurring upon every mention of them: when by repeated reflection upon injuries received, we strengthen our dislike into an obdurate aversion, and conceive that the injurious are directly malicious; we may be led to act in such a manner, that spectators, who are unacquainted with our secret opinions, or confused apprehensions of others, may think we have pure

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<sup>73</sup> T3, p. 93.

<sup>74</sup> T3, p. 94 and pp 94-5.

<sup>75</sup> T3, p. 96. On Shaftesbury see chapter two.

<sup>76</sup> T3, p. 96, p. 97, p. 97 and p. 98.

disinterested malice in our nature; a very instinct toward the misery of others, when it is really only the overgrowth of a just natural affection, upon false opinions, or confused ideas, even as our appetites, upon which our natural life depends, may acquire accidental loathings at the most wholesome food.<sup>77</sup>

Moving on from the influence of the association of ideas on the passions, Hutcheson next inquired as to “how far these several desires must necessarily arise, or may be prevented by our conduct.” This was the vexed question of free will and determinism. He accepted that his theory demanded that “the pleasures and pains of the external senses must certainly be perceived by everyone who comes into the world.” However, he argued that the appetites could be trained by puritan restraint “so that the plainest food and raiment, if sufficiently nourishing and healthful, may keep us easy.”<sup>78</sup>

The same restraint could be exercised with regard to the artistic and the public sense. While Hutcheson realised man was a social creature and that the creation of close affections was unavoidable, he contended that the ties should be limited to those nearest to us. This had a cost, for while it lessened the pains caused by witnessing those we care for suffer, it implied that by constraining our affections “to a small circle of acquaintance, or to a cabal or faction, we contract our pleasures as much as we do our pains.” As this was inevitable given the precarious nature of man’s existence, he recommended that we “Enjoy a great share of the pleasures of the stronger ties, with fewer pains of them, by confining the stronger degrees of love, or our friendships to persons of corrected imaginations, to whom as few of the uncertain objects of desire are necessary to happiness as is possible.”<sup>79</sup>

Finally, Hutcheson argued in his optimistic vein that the love of virtue was “so rooted in our nature, that no education, false principles, depraved habits, or even affectation itself can entirely root it out.” Given that this was so “all we can do to secure our selves in the possession of pleasures of this kind, without pain, consists in a vigorous use of our reason to discern what actions really tend to the public good in the whole.” The heart of the dilemma remained that “men of partial views of public good, if they never obtain any better, may be easy in a very pernicious conduct.”<sup>80</sup> How then was the Hutchesonian actor to limit his potential for emotional distress while actively seeking the public good?

Hutcheson argued that the key lay in holding sound opinions “if he carefully examines the real dignity of persons and causes, he may be sure that the conduct which he now approves he shall always approve, and have delight in reflection upon it.” Using

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<sup>77</sup> T3, p. 99.

<sup>78</sup> T3, pp 100-1, p. 101 and p. 101.

<sup>79</sup> T3, p. 103 and p. 104.

<sup>80</sup> T3, p. 105, pp 105-6 and p. 106.

honour as an example, he accepted that it was “impossible to bring all men into the same opinions of particular actions, because of their different opinions of public good, and of the means of promoting it; and because of opposite interests.” However, he was certain “our natural desire of praise, to speak in the mathematical style, is in a compounded proportion of the numbers of applauders and their dignity.”<sup>81</sup> So he incorporated the social virtues into his scheme. Ultimately, Hutcheson contended that these more overweening passions were controllable through a ready act of will and a properly informed and educated mind. As he construed the matter

there is nothing in our nature leading us necessarily into the fantastic desires. They wholly arise through our ignorance and negligence, when through want of thought, we suffer foolish associations of ideas to be made and imagine certain trifling circumstances to contain something honourable and excellent in them, from their being used by persons of distinction.<sup>82</sup>

To avoid this fate, Hutcheson advised moral education; supplying by example the guidance and direction, the wisdom and foresight of the teacher for the young mind. The mind should be captured at an impressionable age, for “these fantastic desires any man might have banished at first, or entirely prevented. But if we have lost the time of substituting better in their stead, we shall only change from one sort to another, with a perpetual succession of inconstancy and dissatisfaction.” The rationale behind moral education and the controlling of desires, was to ensure that the actor was happy; for happiness consisted in “the highest and most durable gratifications of either all our desires or...those which tend to the greatest and most durable pleasures.”<sup>83</sup>

Hutcheson was aware that man confronted choices concerning the means to achieve happiness. He asserted “the very methods of obtaining the highest gratification of the several senses and desires are directly inconsistent with each other.”<sup>84</sup> Choice was an intimate and inextricable part of man’s moral life. The plurality of ends was a central component of Hutcheson’s theory of the passions. By delineating why and how the passions conflicted Hutcheson had a means of escaping the determinist theories of the egoists. Self-interest and the good of all were often incompatible ends, even if both were inherently desirable. That is what gave morality its worth.

Hutcheson acknowledged that man was unable to guarantee the achievement of ends chosen, with the exception of the happiness of knowing you are a virtuous character. Thus while virtue “consists in benevolence or desire of the public good” happiness could

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<sup>81</sup> T3, p. 106, p. 109 and p. 110.

<sup>82</sup> T3, p. 111.

<sup>83</sup> T3, p. 113.

<sup>84</sup> T3, p. 114.

be attained by pursuing that goal. That it was the desire for, and not the achievement of, the goal which was the source of the agent's contentment was crucial, for, as Hutcheson realised "the happiness of others is very uncertain."<sup>85</sup>

However, the dilemma remained that social ties opened the actor up to the pains of disappointment and the anguish of seeing loved ones suffer. Yet, against the classical Stoic tradition from which he was drawing for much of his thought on the control of the passions, Hutcheson argued "the rooting out of all senses and desires, were it practicable, would cut off all happiness as well as misery."<sup>86</sup> Desire had to be controlled, not removed. Affections and passions were in essence the same, differing only in degree. Both were "fixed for us by the author of our nature, subservient to the interest of the system, so that each individual is made, previously to his own choice, a member of a great body, and affected with the fortunes of the whole."<sup>87</sup> In this scheme man was a social animal.

Hutcheson then noted how "the sense of good can continue in its full strength when yet we shall have but weak desires." Thus, Hutcheson accepted "we are capable of enjoying all the good in any object, when we obtain it, and yet [we are] exposed to no great pain upon disappointment."<sup>88</sup> Crucially, he accepted "the violence of desire does not proportionally enliven our sensation in the enjoyment;" thus arguing for the tempering of desire without relinquishing, as did the extreme Stoic, the pursuit of any positive good. The method Hutcheson proposed to achieve such an equilibrium was the development of accurate associations of ideas about the event in question:

He who examines all opinions of good in objects, who prevents or corrects vain associations of ideas, and thereby prevents extravagant admirations or enthusiastic desires, above the real moment of good in the object...enjoys all the permanent good or happiness which any object can afford, and escapes in a great measure, both the uneasy sensations of the more violent desires, and the torments of disappointment, to which persons of irregular imaginations are exposed.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> T3, p. 115.

<sup>86</sup> T3, p. 116. Hutcheson foreshadows Alasdair MacIntyre, who tritely argues that the only happy Stoic is a dead Stoic. See A. MacIntyre, *After virtue*, (London, 1981), pp 168-70. Hutcheson criticised poor Stoic thought for confusing control over the passions for contentment: "this may show the vanity of some of the lower rate of philosophers of the stoic sect, in boasting of an undisturbed happiness and serenity, independently even of the deity, as well as of their fellow creatures, wholly inconsistent with the order of nature, as well as with the principles of some of their great leaders, for which men of wit in their own age did not fail to ridicule them." T3, p. 117. Hutcheson argued: "that must be a very fantastic scheme of virtue which represents it as a private sublimely selfish discipline to preserve our selves wholly unconcerned, not only in the changes of fortune as to our wealth or poverty, liberty or slavery, ease or pain, but even in all external events whatsoever, in the fortunes of our dearest friends or country, solacing ourselves that we are easy and undisturbed." T3, pp 117-8. He concluded: "let the philosopher regulate his own notions as he pleases about happiness or misery; whoever imagines himself unhappy, is so in reality; and who ever has kind affections or virtue, must be uneasy to see others really unhappy." T3, p. 120.

<sup>87</sup> T3, p. 117.

<sup>88</sup> T3, p. 120.

<sup>89</sup> T3, p. 121.

Hutcheson understood there was a problem within this notion of a moral education. The truth was, as Hutcheson's experience in teaching children had undoubtedly taught him, that "persons of irregular imaginations are not soon reformed." The breaking of one ill-formed set of associations implied that the student was susceptible to that process replicating itself, resulting in a fickle character not a moral one. Nonetheless, he felt that "if just reflection comes in, and though late, applies the proper cure, by correcting the opinions and the imagination, every experience will tend to our advantage."<sup>90</sup>

Having delivered his assessment of how men might alter, direct and control their passions and thereby pursue the good of others as well as of the self, Hutcheson related how the pleasures and the pains of the senses compared "as to intensesness [sic] and duration." This was an illustration of the mechanics of desire, and allowed him to posit a hierarchy of the passions. Despite the diverse nature and object of desires, he believed that a hierarchy of the passions was ascertainable "may we not...find some reasons of appealing from the judgement of certain men?"<sup>91</sup> What Hutcheson thereby developed was a theory of obligation.

Central to Hutcheson's hierarchy was that "those alone are capable of judging who have experienced all the several kinds of pleasure."<sup>92</sup> These actors all testified that above all other pleasures was the pleasure of the virtuous life. They were connoisseurs of the moral realm, and Hutcheson footnoted both Plato and Shaftesbury. But they were not alone in recognising the superior nature of virtuous pleasure. Hutcheson suggested that "there is scarce any mortal who is wholly insensible to all species of morality."<sup>93</sup>

Hutcheson recognised the existence of differing tastes and desires. Indeed it was central to his concern for a polite community, and intrinsic to his theories of aesthetics and morality. He did however suggest that these apparently irreconcilable differences were the product of divine wisdom: "'Tis in vain to allege that there is no disputing about tastes. To every nature there are certain tastes assigned by the great author of all. To the human race there are assigned a public taste, a moral one, and a taste for honour. These senses they cannot extirpate more than their external senses." To illustrate he listed the changing desires of a human through its life span. "We once knew" [Hutcheson reminded his readers] "the time when a hobby-horse, a top, a rattle was sufficient pleasure to us. We grow up, we now relish friendships, honour, good offices, marriage, offspring, serving a community or country." However, he accepted "two states may both be happy...yet the

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<sup>90</sup> T3, p. 122 and p. 123.

<sup>91</sup> T3, p. 126 and p. 128.

<sup>92</sup> T3, p. 128. This fits with Hutcheson's more general empiricism; on which see chapter one.

<sup>93</sup> T3, p. 129.

one [may be] infinitely preferable to the other.” The pleasure of virtue was therefore of a higher calibre than the pleasures of self-love. While unable to deny that on occasion “we see in many instances the external senses overcome the moral,” Hutcheson felt confident that “a constant pursuit of the pleasures of the external senses can never become agreeable, without an opinion of innocence.”<sup>94</sup>

Hutcheson posited that while “transient acts of injustice may be done, contrary to the moral sentiments of the agent... upon some violent motion of appetite; and yet even in these cases men often argue themselves into some moral notions of their innocence.” He was optimistic about man’s moral worth: “All the conquest [of self-love over the moral sense] is only this, that private external advantage surmounts our aversion to dishonour, by making us do actions which others will censure, but we esteem innocent.”<sup>95</sup>

Hutcheson then applied his theory of the association of ideas to this problem of evil. While a moral man had “the most correct imagination” and was unhampered by incorrect associations, an immoralist was different. Hutcheson averred “when the external senses seem to prevail against the moral sense, or public affections, it is continually by aid borrowed from the moral sense.” As he explained “the conquest is over a weakened moral sense upon partial views of good.” Even where the private interest far exceeded the demands of the moral sense Hutcheson was assured that “the weakest moral species” would prevail upon the actor to choose the good. Hutcheson’s confidence was grounded on his empirical observations of how men acted and judged others. He asked his readers to confirm his own empirical studies, supplying the vision of a reclusive connoisseur and the biblical character Job enquiring “which of the two would a spectator choose? Which would he admire, or count the happier, and most suitable to human nature?”<sup>96</sup>

Hutcheson was not so naïve as to think that this was all there was to the problem of the human passions. He accepted that alongside such misguided behaviour there was “a sort of pleasures opposite to those of the public sense, arising from the gratification of anger or hatred.” He asserted that “were we to compare... the pains of the public and moral sense, and of the sense of honour with other pains of the external senses... we should find the former by far the superior.” Although he admitted people often assumed the pains of the external senses were unbearable, he thought this an error caused by comparing like with unlike so that “they compare the most acute pains of the external senses with some smaller pains of the other senses.”<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> T3, p. 130, p. 131, p. 131 and p. 132.

<sup>95</sup> T3, pp 132-3 and p. 134.

<sup>96</sup> T3, p.135, p. 135, p. 136 and p. 138. He refers in a footnote to the Shaftesbury. T3, p. 137n

<sup>97</sup> T3, p. 138, pp 141-2 and p. 142.

Hutcheson admitted that he was guilty of blending, for purposes of comparative analysis, the public sense with the moral sense and the sense of honour on the one side, and the sense of external pleasure with, the pleasures of imagination and of self-love on the other. However, he accepted that “since there may be some corrupt, partial notions of virtue...there is room to compare our public sense or desires with our moral,” although he remained convinced that the two tended, if rightly understood, towards the same end. In such a complex case he was sympathetic, for he realised the circumstance to be “truly deplorable.”<sup>98</sup> Hutcheson also observed how difficult it was to find conflict between the sense of morality and that of honour. He suggested in an intriguing example that one such might involve an atheist:

In a country where his secular interest would not suffer by a character of atheism, and yet he knew that the profession of zealous devotion would tend to his honour. If such a person could have any sense of morality, particularly an aversion to dissimulation, then his profession of religion would evidence the superiority of the sense of honour; and his discovery of his sentiments, or neglect of religion would evidence the balance to be on the other side.<sup>99</sup>

Hutcheson stated: “I presume in England and Holland, we have more instances of the latter than the former.”<sup>100</sup> This allowed him to note how

the adherence to any particular religion by one in a strange country [as Hutcheson’s arguably was in Ireland] where it was dishonourable, would not be allowed a good instance of the prevalence of a moral species. It is a very common thing indeed but here are interests of another life, and regard to a future return to a country where this religion is in repute [as with Hutcheson’s return to Scotland].<sup>101</sup>

Crucial to Hutcheson’s consideration of the passions was that “the pleasures of the internal senses...are...a much superior happiness to those of the external senses.” This enabled Hutcheson to posit a theoretical hierarchy for the passions and to justify the pursuit of the ends of the moral sense over any other possible end. This notion of a hierarchy was developed further when he examined the comparative worth of the different pleasures in relation to duration rather than intensity. As Hutcheson recognised, this involved him in a consideration of the “certainty of the objects occasioning these sensations [and] the constancy of our relish or fancy.”<sup>102</sup>

This Hutcheson managed through a series of observations. Beginning with the lowest form of desire, those of the appetites, he characterised these as “short and transitory.

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<sup>98</sup> T3, pp 144-5 and p. 145.

<sup>99</sup> T3, p. 153.

<sup>100</sup> T3, p. 153.

<sup>101</sup> T3, pp 153-4.

<sup>102</sup> T3, p. 154 and p. 155.



The pleasure continues no longer than the appetite.” Concerning the second level in the scheme, the pleasures of the imagination, he observed that “these give less pleasure the more familiar they grow.” However, the public pleasures, the third in his conceptual hierarchy could give a higher form of satisfaction. Unfortunately, these were “very uncertain” and must therefore “frequently subject us to sorrow.” The best method of deferring such disappointments was to limit one’s attachments to “our friends, our dearest favourites, persons of just apprehensions of things, who are subjected only to the necessary evils of life and can enjoy all the certain and constant good.” The highest level in the system was reserved for the passions supplied by the moral sense as “the foundation of the most intense pleasure.” It was “constant” and grew “more acute by frequent gratification.” This made us “delight in our selves and relish our very nature. By these we perceive an internal dignity and worth.”<sup>103</sup>

Thus Hutcheson proposed a hierarchy of the passions which co-ordinated action, thereby providing legitimacy for his system of morality. It supplied him with a theory of obligation, dependent upon man’s capacity to recognise and hence to do the good deed. While it tended towards moderation, it remained an emotivist theory of ethics and a scheme in keeping with the inter-subjectivity of his previous ideas. Optimistic in its tone, Hutcheson validated the scheme through an appeal to a just and benevolent deity.

Hutcheson accepted that in appealing to a sovereign God, he was in danger of overstepping the limits of ethical speculation and veering into the vexed “metaphysical” field of theology. Nevertheless, he felt it incumbent upon him to argue that “other sensations are all dependent upon, or related by the constitution of our nature, to something different from ourselves; to a body which we do not call self, but something belonging to this self...the pleasures of virtue are the very perfection of this self.”<sup>104</sup> In positing this teleological end, a vision of the Aristotelian good of the soul, Hutcheson was close to divining a theocentric vision of a patterning God of process.

The final section of the *Essay on the nature and the conduct of the passions and affections* saw Hutcheson adopt his professional role as a practical teacher of morality. In it he offered a sequence of “general conclusions concerning the best management of our desires” and a number of “principals necessary to happiness.” First of these was that “the whole sum of interest lies upon the side of virtue, public spirit and honour....To forfeit these pleasures in whole or in part, for any other enjoyment, is the most foolish bargain.” From this he posited “one general observation...which appears of the greatest necessity for

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<sup>103</sup> T3, p. 155, p. 156, p. 157, pp 157-8, p. 158 and p. 159.

<sup>104</sup> T3, pp 159-60.

the just management of all our desires.” This he expressed as the axiom that “we should, as much as possible, in all affairs of importance to ourselves or others, prevent the violence of their confused sensation, and stop their propensities from breaking out into action till we have fully examined the real moment of the object.” For the passions to function correctly, they had to be tempered by judgement “the only way to affect this is a constant attention of mind, an habitual discipline over ourselves and a fixed resolution to stop all action before a calm examination of every circumstance attending it.” For him “this discipline of our passions is in general necessary.” Here he recognised his debt to the Stoics. He noted how he could add “a stoical consideration; that external pains give us a noble opportunity of moral pleasures in fortitude and submission to the order of the whole.”<sup>105</sup>

According to Hutcheson’s theory, the key to accomplishing such a temperate character and a moderate demeanour lay in breaking “the vain associations of moral ideas from the objects of external senses.” In doing so Hutcheson believed, the moral actor would come to appreciate the higher virtues of “a wise man in his oeconomy.” Echoing the attack on Mandeville, Hutcheson described how “His expenses must be some way suited to his fortune, to avoid the imputation of avarice. If indeed what is saved in private expenses be employed in generous offices, there is little danger of this charge.” In a celebration of the merchant Hutcheson identified the key to virtue as the pursuit of a middle path, of moderation and careful, prudential benevolence “such a medium may be kept as to be above censure and yet below any affectation of honour or distinction in these matters.” Hutcheson imagined that these pleasures led “us into...apprehensions of a deity.” In Hutcheson’s distinctly private account of the sources of religious conviction “grandeur, beauty, order, harmony wherever they occur, raise an opinion of a mind, of design, and wisdom.”<sup>106</sup> From this observation he argued that while

we may fall into a thousand vain reasonings, foolish, limited notions of divinity may be formed as attached to the particular places or objects which strike us in the most lively manner...but wherever a superior mind, a governing intention or design is imagined, there religion begins in its most simple form and an inward devotion arises.<sup>107</sup>

Developing this analysis of religious sentiment, Hutcheson argued that “the apprehension of an universal mind with power and knowledge is indeed an agreeable object of contemplation.” However, in line with the analogical argument that characterised much of Hutcheson’s argumentative strategy, he suggested “we must form our ideas of all

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<sup>105</sup> T3, p. 165, p. 165, p. 165, p. 166, p. 166 and p. 167.

<sup>106</sup> T3, p. 168, p. 171, p. 171, p. 171, p. 175 and p. 175.

<sup>107</sup> T3, pp 175-6.

intelligent natures, with some resemblance or analogy to ourselves.” Accordingly he believed that “we must conceive something correspondent to our affections in the divinity,” thereby allowing for the benevolent deity to whom he pledged devotion. As he contended “an...idea of the divinity as good and kind, delighting in universal happiness and ordering all events of the universe to this end...is the most delightful contemplation.” To confirm this speculative assertion he fell back upon the empirical impressions of the world; he only needed to “consult the universe, [to see] the effect of his power.”<sup>108</sup>

Evidence of the deity’s benevolence was visible in the frame of humanity “how admirably our affections are contrived for good in the whole.”<sup>109</sup> Man was conceived of as a component of a larger, greater system in which:

Each particular agent is made in a great measure, subservient to the good of the whole. Mankind are thus insensibly linked together, and make one great system, by an invisible union. He who voluntarily continues in this union, and delights in employing his power for his kind, makes himself happy.<sup>110</sup>

Evidence could also be uncovered in “the order of our external senses,” where even pain was administered to a subsequent good end. In sum “our mechanism, as far as we have ever yet discovered, is wholly contrived for good.”<sup>111</sup> In a peroration of philosophical optimism Hutcheson stated:

It is not conceivable that any being [the deity] who desires the happiness of others should not desire a greater degree of happiness to them [humanity] rather than a less. And that consequently the whole series of events is the best possible, and contains in the whole the greatest possible absolute good especially since we have no presumption of any private interest which an universal mind can have in view, in opposition to the greatest good of the whole. Nor are the particular evils occurring to our observation any just objection against the perfect goodness of the universal providence to us, who cannot know how far these evils may be necessarily connected with the means of the greatest possible absolute good.<sup>112</sup>

Leaving the private realm of religion Hutcheson considered the conduct of “our public sense” and affections. He isolated one “common mistake: viz., apprehending every person to be miserable in those circumstances which we imagine would make ourselves miserable.” Those of higher rank often patronised the poor, conceiving their state to be wholly one of depredation and misery. Hutcheson countered “we may easily find that the lower rank of mankind...enjoy as much cheerfulness, contentment, health, gaiety, in their

<sup>108</sup> T3, p. 176, p. 176, p. 176, p. 177 and p. 177.

<sup>109</sup> T3, p. 177.

<sup>110</sup> T3, p. 178.

<sup>111</sup> T3, p. 178 and p. 180.

own way as any in the highest station of life.” His commitment to a pluralist vision of virtue and pleasure was here reiterated. Echoing a passage in the puff for the *Inquiry*, he stated “they have often more correct imaginations through necessity and experience than others can acquire by philosophy.”<sup>113</sup>

In more abstract terms Hutcheson was convinced that a “great...part of human actions flow directly from humanity and kind affection.” He did recognise that “men are apt to let their imaginations run out upon all the robberies, piracies, murders, perjuries, frauds, massacres, assassinations they have ever either heard of or read in history,” so getting a perverse vision of the moral universe. Hutcheson equated this vision to using “a court of justice [as] the proper place of making an estimate of the morals of mankind, or a hospital of the healthfulness of a climate.”<sup>114</sup> He concentrated instead upon the “rarity of crimes, in comparison of innocent or good actions,” and reasserted that “the good of every kind in the universe is plainly superior to the evil.”<sup>115</sup> In order to be tranquil in the face of uncertainty it was necessary to confront the world, comforted by a belief in the wisdom of the creator, and in his providential order “this belief of a deity, a providence and a future state, are the only sure supports to a good mind.”<sup>116</sup>

Hutcheson expanded the last of these, arguing “a future state, firmly believed, makes the greatest difficulties on this subject to vanish.” Moreover, logic was not alone in propounding this thesis, for empirical evidence showed “we have no records of any nation which did not entertain this opinion.” Finally, he marshalled scripture in its favour “How agreeable...it must be...that this opinion were there even no more to be done, should be confirmed beyond question or doubt, by a well attested divine revelation.”<sup>117</sup>

Hutcheson considered finally the “conduct of the moral sense and sense of honour.” All he believed necessary to the adequate governance of the moral sense was “to study the nature and tendency of human actions and to extend our views to the whole species, or to all sensitive natures, as far as they can be affected by our conduct.” As to the quest for glory, Hutcheson ascribed to it a capacity to project into the future and imagine success. Key to both was the repeated and frequent observation “to ourselves, that great and wise and good mind which presides over the universe, sees every action and knows the true character and disposition of every heart.”<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> T3, p. 182.

<sup>113</sup> T3, p. 182, pp 182-3 and p. 183.

<sup>114</sup> T3, p. 184. In this he is attacking the Hobbist vision of society as one of endless competing interests.

<sup>115</sup> T3, p. 184 and p. 185.

<sup>116</sup> T3, p. 187. In dealing with providence, Hutcheson refers to W. King, EOE; on which see chapter six.

<sup>117</sup> T3, p. 187, p. 188 and pp 188-9.

<sup>118</sup> T3, p. 191, p. 191 and p. 192.

The value of virtue was confirmed by its capacity to defeat the one unavoidable privation - death. Hutcheson argued that a virtuous death could be accomplished not only by "heroes and martyrs, but even from love of honour in lower characters." From an accurate and just assessment of the importance of life in the order of things "it is of the greatest consequence to the enjoyment of life, to know its true value; to strip death of its borrowed ideas of terror." However motivated - by love of family, friend or country - Hutcheson asserted "if we exist, and think after death and retain our senses of good and evil, no consolation against death can be suggested to a wicked man; but for the virtuous there are the best grounds of hope and joy."<sup>119</sup>

Throughout the *Essay on the nature and conduct of the passions and affections* Hutcheson drew upon the resources offered to him by the classical writers of Greece and Rome. Although he disparaged the lesser Stoics in a lengthy attack in section four, his analysis of the passions was undoubtedly indebted to their image of the self-controlled agent.<sup>120</sup> The vision of moral education as a process tending towards the self-realisation of the individual's natural state derived, however, in large part from Aristotle. Other debts are suggested in his frequent quotations from the poets, particularly Horace.<sup>121</sup> Other Classical writers filled the footnotes of the text, with references to Livy, Lucan, Lucretius, Plato and Sophocles. Even such relatively minor lights as Persius Flaccus and Simplicius win a mention in Hutcheson's constellation of the classics. This knowledge was a product of Hutcheson's education, as Leechman recalled:

In the earlier part of his life he entered deeply into the spirit of the ancients, and was soon sensible of and admired that justness and simplicity both of thought and expression which has preserved and distinguished their writings to this day. He read the historians, poets and orators of antiquity with a kind of enthusiasm, and at the same time with a critical exactness. He had read the poets especially so often, that he retained large passages of them in his memory, which he frequently and elegantly applied to the subjects he had occasion to treat in the course of his prelections.<sup>122</sup>

What Hutcheson represented, as can be shown, was an astute product of the common classical education of his time. From his earliest education at John Hamilton's school in Saintfield, and in the town-land of Killyleagh where he attended a dissenting academy run by James McAlpin, Hutcheson was exposed to "the ordinary Scholastic philosophy which was in vogue in those days."<sup>123</sup> He became acquainted with the classical

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<sup>119</sup> T3, p. 195, p. 195 and p. 197.

<sup>120</sup> See T3, pp 116-20 and above.

<sup>121</sup> See appendix four.

<sup>122</sup> PSMP, pp xx-xxi.

<sup>123</sup> PSMP, p. iii. On McAlpin, see M. A. Stewart, "Abating bigotry and hot zeal," in *Francis Hutcheson*, (D. Smyth, ed.), in *Fortnight*, 308, Supplement, (1992), p. 4.

canon and imbibed many of their attitudes and assertions. As he recalled in his inaugural lecture of 1730, this education continued in Glasgow:

It is indeed with the greatest delight that I see again the places where I absorbed the first elements of the search for truth, where I tasted to the full the immortal sublimities of Vergil [sic.] and Homer, the delights, tasteful charm, elegant wit, the jest and humour in Xenophon, Horace, Aristophanes and Terence, and likewise the abundant elegance and scope of Cicero's writings in all branches of philosophy, as well as the copious polemical fervour in his pleadings.<sup>124</sup>

Out of this process, Hutcheson distilled a blend of ancient philosophy and literature. Within the total of 118 individual references to classical authors, Hutcheson referred to thirty individuals. The pattern reveals a portrait of a practical moralist, with a high number of references to the epic poets, Homer (eleven) and Virgil (eight). Unusual, given this predilection, is the absence in the list of either Tacitus or any of the Greek or Roman tragedians. Hutcheson's philosophical concerns also shine through, with the works of Cicero (ten) and Aristotle (eight) being his most frequent reference points. This was combined with frequent attacks upon the thought of Epicurus (eight). Alongside these the Stoics (seven) (although they come in for explicit criticism in the *Essay on the passions*), Plato (five) and the Cynics (two) were noted. The breath of Hutcheson's interest in classical thought and writing is evident in the references to such lesser-known figures as Persius Flaccus (two), Marcus Antonius (one) and Regulus (two). Of all the writers Hutcheson cited, the most frequent was Horace (twenty-five). Eschewing the *Works and days* for the *Odes and epodes*, this indicates a personal love for the Roman poet's work. Overall, while the pattern of Hutcheson's appropriation was distinct in its particular formulation, it represents the outcome of an eighteenth century university education. The literature of Greece and Rome was part of the everyday parlance of the literary elite and Hutcheson's classicism is indicative of his participation in that broad republic of letters.

This interest was also manifested in Hutcheson's active interest in the printing business of his student Robert Foulis.<sup>125</sup> As early as 1738, three years before the press was established, Hutcheson was writing to his friend, Thomas Drennan of how: "A worthy lad in this town, one Robert Foulis, out of a true public spirit, undertook to reprint, for the populace an old excellent book, *A persuasive to mutual love and charity* wrote [sic.] by White, Oliver Cromwell's chaplain, it is a divine, old fashioned thing."<sup>126</sup>

<sup>124</sup> II, p.125.

<sup>125</sup> Robert and his brother Andrew, along with James Moore (on whom see below) were to act as witnesses for Hutcheson's will. This was dated Glasgow, 30 June, 1746. See P.R.O.N.I, T/403/1/49. This is the last document we have in Hutcheson's hand. He died in Dublin on 8 August, 1746. The will was probated on 20 August, 1746.

<sup>126</sup> F. Hutcheson to T. Drennan, Glasgow, 5 March 1738/9, GUL MS Gen. 1018 f. 6 verso.

Foulis' press gained fame as the producer of fine and elegant editions of classical texts and Hutcheson was an intellectual mentor to the young Foulis. It was for the Foulis press that Hutcheson produced the finest example of his ability as a classicist. In 1742, in collaboration with the Professor of Latin in Glasgow, he took part in the translation of the *Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*. In a letter to Thomas Drennan, Hutcheson admitted:

The bearer, Mr. Hay takes over some copies of a new translation of Antonius, the greater half of which, and more, was my amusement last summer, for the sake of a singular worthy soul, one Foulis, but I don't let my name appear in it, nor indeed have I told it to any here, but the men concerned. I hope you'll like it, the rest was done by a very ingenious lad, one [James] Moore. Pray try your critical faculty, in finding what parts I did and what he did. I did not translate books in a suite, but I one or two, and he one or two. I hope if you like it, that it may sell pretty well with you about Belfast. I am sure it is doing a public good to diffuse the sentiments, and if you knew Foulis, you would think he well deserved all encouragement.<sup>127</sup>

After the death of Molesworth in late 1725, this admiration for the writings of classical antiquity may have provided Hutcheson with a line of communication with a new patron. The first hint of it was a humble inquiry by a reader to meet the author of the *Inquiry*. John Carteret had greatly enjoyed the first edition of the work upon its publication. As Leechman recorded, Carteret soon met the surprised, and doubtless interested, Mr. Hutcheson at his residence, and the two struck up what was, for Hutcheson, a productive and invaluable friendship:

The first edition came abroad without the author's name, but the merit of the performance would not suffer him to be long concealed: such was the reputation of the work, and the ideas it had raised of the author, that Lord Granville [John Carteret], who was then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whose discernment and taste as to works of genius and literature is universally acknowledged, sent his private secretary to enquire at the booksellers for the author, and when he could not learn his name, he left a letter to be conveyed to him, in consequence of which he soon became acquainted with his Excellency, and was treated by him all the time he continued in his government with the most distinguishing marks of familiarity and esteem.<sup>128</sup>

These marks of familiarity and esteem were of importance to Hutcheson, for Carteret had arrived in Ireland as the newly appointed Lord Lieutenant. This stroke of fortune enabled the dissenter to seek some political shelter in the shadow of the court. Through his affiliation with Carteret, Hutcheson shifted the centre of his activity away from the congenial, if vulnerable, site offered by Lucas' coffee-house, in nearby Cork Hill,

<sup>127</sup> F. Hutcheson to T. Drennan, Glasgow, 31 May 1742, GUL MS Gen 1018 f.11. A catalogue of Foulis press publications credited Hutcheson with translating all but the first two books. *Life*, p. 81n3.

<sup>128</sup> PSMP, pp vii-viii.

through the gates which overshadowed it and into the relative security of Dublin Castle. Hutcheson was happy to dedicate the second edition of the *Inquiry* to his new ally:

The praise bestowed by persons of real merit and discernment is allowed by all to give a noble and rational pleasure. Your Excellency first made me feel this in the most lively, and it will be a pleasure as lasting as it is your; 'twill ever be a matter of the highest joy and satisfaction to me, that I am author of a book my Lord CARTERET approves of....He who attempts to do justice to so great and good a character, ought himself to be one of uncommon merit and distinction: and yet the ablest panegyrist would find it difficult to add anything to your excellency's fame. The voices of NATIONS proclaim your worth.<sup>129</sup>

While this dedication saw Hutcheson adopting the traditional subservience of the writer to his patron, it also pointed to the bond of appreciation between the two men. Evidence of the affection in which Carteret held Hutcheson was found in Carteret's attempts to persuade the Presbyterian to convert to the Established church. So marked were the shows of public esteem from the Lord Lieutenant, that Hutcheson's father, John was concerned enough to write to Francis to enquire of his religious intentions. Hutcheson's reply assured his father of his continued loyalty to the Presbyterian faith and claimed:

The only reason of these rumours [of Hutcheson's conversion to Anglicanism] was My Lord Carteret's talking publicly of his resolving to have me brought over to the Church to a good living, and the Bishop of Elphin's [Theophilus Bolton] professing the same intention. They have both talked to me upon the subject of the scruples of the dissenters and of my sentiments of the constitution of the Church. I generally evaded the debate and spoke of the Church more charitably than they expected from whence they have concluded more than I ever intended. I had the like discourse with the Bishop of Down [Francis Hutchinson] where I was little pinched with argument. He however, I know spoke more positively than he had any ground for. If it were proper to tell you a jest upon such a subject it would perhaps make you laugh to hear his opinion of all these debates with dissenters summed up thus – we (says he) would not sweep the house clean and you stumbled at straws.<sup>130</sup>

Indeed according to Robert Wodrow, John Hutcheson's fears were well founded, for Carteret was not sympathetic to the Presbyterian plight. He was opposed to any alleviation of the legislation that hindered the dissenters. As Wodrow reported:

When Mr. [Robert] Craghead went over about the *Regium Donum*...he had free access to Sir Robert Walpole, and fair promises [that] if Carteret did not do his business, he should; but decency required his [Carteret's] being applied to. He did apply, and he wearied him with delays, and would never do

<sup>129</sup> F. Hutcheson, *An inquiry concerning the original of our ideas of beauty and virtue*, (London, 1726), p. iv and p. viii.

<sup>130</sup> F. Hutcheson to J. Hutcheson, 4 August 1726, PRONI, D/971/34/G/1/1C.



anything for him. When Dorset was named Lieutenant this year, [1731] and the instructions a-forming for him, great pains were taken to get in one to take off the Sacramental Test, which has been so heavy to the dissenters in Ireland, and...was the occasion of the vast run of many thousands to America two years ago. It was given out that he had this instruction from the King. The dissenters waited on him, and expected that they should have a peculiar reception from him, as they would, had he been to take away that burden; but nothing passed but as usual. The Archbishop of Armagh, Primate [Hugh Boulter] who is for removing the Test, and very friendly, came to the ministers, and told them he believed they were disappointed, and so was he himself; but he had not seen the Lieutenant's instructions and he was only empowered to take off the Test after the King's business was over in Parliament; and that appeared to be a perfect uncertainty to him and them. However, this, at present, keeps matters among subs[cribers] and nons[ubscribers] quiet and at a hush.<sup>131</sup>

However, Carteret's appeal for Hutcheson was not founded on political sympathies. Instead the relationship was founded in a shared admiration for the classical heritage of Greece and Rome. The court Carteret constructed was notable for its intellectual vigour.<sup>132</sup> Socially Carteret's influence was immense. The social calendar for the country's elite began and ended with the biennial session of Parliament and revolved around the events in Dublin Castle.<sup>133</sup> As Swift eulogised, Carteret's wife was a fine hostess. In a poem dated 1726 Swift recalled how he had inadvertently missed an engagement, for which Lady Carteret demanded an apology in verse. Swift responded with a vision of the court as modish and overwhelming for a "grave divine:"

Learn hence t'excuse and pity me.  
 Consider what it is to bear  
 The power'd Courtier's witty sneer  
 To see th' important men of dress  
 Scoffing my college Aukwardness  
 To be the strutting Cornet's sport  
 To run the gauntlet of the court  
 Winning my way by slow approaches  
 Thro' crowds of coxcombs and of coaches  
 From the first fierce cockaded sentry  
 Quite thro' the tribe of waiting gentry  
 To pass to many crowded stages

<sup>131</sup> R. Wodrow, *Analecta*, (Edinburgh, 1843), volume four, pp 298-9.

<sup>132</sup> Carteret's biographer notes how: "In the society of Swift and Swift's intimates Carteret spent many hours of scholarly relaxation....When the last meeting of the day was over he would slink out of Dublin Castle in a hackney coach to spend the evening in a society to which the passport was either wit or learning. Then Carteret, no longer the Lord Lieutenant, became Carteret the finished scholar in the company of equals. Besides Swift there was [Patrick] Delany....Hutcheson the philosopher, and the elder [Thomas] Sheridan, a classicist of the highest order and the headmaster of a Dublin school." W. Baring-Pemberton, *Carteret: the brilliant failure of the eighteenth century*, (London, 1936), p. 109.

And stand the staring of your pages  
And after all, to crown my spleen  
Be told – you are not to be seen.<sup>134</sup>

Carteret was famed for his learning in English political circles. Even in the days subsequent to his recall from Ireland he was noted for his ability as a scholar. In a diary entry a contemporary remarked: “I find him [Carteret] a man of more universal reading than I had imagined, which joined with a happy memory, a great skill in Greek and Latin and a fine elocution, makes him shine beyond any gentleman or nobleman perhaps now living.”<sup>135</sup> The Lord Lieutenant’s store of reading was certainly attractive to Hutcheson:

In the conversation with which your Excellency has been pleased to honour me, I could not, I own without the utmost surprise, observe so intimate an acquaintance with the most valuable writings of contemplative men, ancient and modern; so just a taste of what is excellent in the ingenious arts, in so young a man, amidst the hurry of an active life.<sup>136</sup>

This was not just the judgement of Carteret’s acolytes. Swift, who had many political differences with him, found the Lieutenant’s company most congenial, remarking of his education that: “With a singularity scarce to be justified...[he] carried away more Greek, Latin, and Philosophy, than properly became a person at his rank, indeed much more of each than most of those who are forced to live by their learning will be at the unnecessary pains to load their heads with.”<sup>137</sup>

Even when political events intruded the Dean and the Lord Lieutenant shared a love of learning that enabled them to remain congenial companions. On the day after Carteret had pressurised the Privy Council to issue a proclamation rewarding any informant who might provide them with the identity of the author of the *Drapier’s letters*, Swift appeared at a levee at Dublin Castle. Once there, he made his presence known to the Lord Lieutenant, addressing him on the events just past:

So my Lord Lieutenant, this is a glorious exploit that you performed yesterday, in issuing a proclamation against a poor shopkeeper, whose only crime is an honest endeavour to save his country from ruin. You have given a noble specimen of what this devoted nation is to hope for from your government. I suppose you expect a statue of copper will be erected to you for this service done to Wood.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> See, T. Mooney and F. White, “The gentry’s winter season,” in *The gorgeous mask: Dublin, 1700-1850*, (D. Dickson, ed.), (Dublin, 1987), pp 1-16.

<sup>134</sup> J. Swift, “An apology to the Lady Carteret,” in *The complete poems*, (P. Rogers, ed.), (London, 1983), p. 298.

<sup>135</sup> Diary of Egmont, 6 October 1730, HMC, p. 118.

<sup>136</sup> T1, (second ed.), (London, 1726), pp vi-vii.

<sup>137</sup> Cited in A. Ballantyne, *Lord Carteret: a political biography, 1690-1763*, (London, 1887), p. 16.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

Carteret, in front of a number of astonished courtiers, rebutted the irate Dean with an remark drawn from the writings of Virgil: "*Res dura et regni novitas me talia cogunt moliri.*"<sup>139</sup> Carteret was evidently a trained classicist and a competent political debater.

But who was the new occupant of the castle? On hearing of his appointment to the post Swift described him as

a young nobleman of great accomplishments, excellent learning, regular in his life, and of much spirit and vivacity. He hath since, as I have heard, been employed abroad, was principal secretary of state, and is now about the thirty-seventh year of his age appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. From such a governor this kingdom may reasonably hope for as much prosperity as, under so many discouragements, it can be capable of receiving.<sup>140</sup>

The travels abroad to which Swift referred occurred when Carteret was the King's envoy in the Baltic. Britain had been drawn into the Great Northern War of 1700-21 through the Elector of Hanover's succession to the British throne. The war began with an anti-Swedish alliance, between Denmark, Russia and Saxony-Poland. Although the Swedes, under Charles XII were initially successful, the war swung against them. By the 1710s Russia threatened to overrun Sweden and make the Baltic into a Russian lake.

With the outbreak of conflict over Hanover's occupation of the Swedish bishopric of Verden and their purchase of the other Swedish loss, the bishopric of Bremen, from the conquering Danes, the Swedish-English commercial alliance came under strain. Although a treaty between the two countries had been signed in 1700, the Swedes tore it up in outrage at the English duplicity and English trading ships became legitimate targets for Swedish privateers. The situation worsened with Swedish attempts to ally themselves with the Russians, for English policy depended on isolating the Russians at the diplomatic table. When Swedish attempts to ally with Russia collapsed, England tried to bolster the Swedish resistance to the imperial ambitions of the Russians. Carteret was appointed Envoy-Extraordinary to the Court of Sweden in January 1719.

The purpose of Carteret's mission was to create a military alliance between the English and the Swedes against the Russians and to renew the lapsed treaty of 1700 concerning commercial interests. This would have been comparatively simple were it not for the complication provided by the English alliance with Prussia. Carteret had to ensure that the Prussians were appeased, so as to ensure the safety of Hanover. However the Swedes were demanding recompense for the loss, or return of the Stettin region the

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<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121. This is translated by H. R. Fairclough as "Stern necessity and the new estate of my kingdom force me to do such hard deeds." See Virgil, "Aeneid," in *Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid*, (Harvard, 1978), p. 281, book 1, line 564. I would like to thank Mr. Stephen Harrison and Dr. Joseph Richardson for help in locating this quotation.

Prussians had conquered. Thus, the problem lay in keeping the Prussians happy, and in gaining Swedish recognition of the Hanoverian bishoprics, while engaging the Swedes.

Through a judicious blend of bribery and diplomacy, and the promise of an English naval force to aid Sweden in fighting the Russians, Carteret accomplished this delicate task. The bishoprics remained in Hanoverian hands, the Prussians gained recognition for the Stettin region and an Anglo-Swedish convention was signed on 29 August 1719. A Swedish-Danish treaty was signed on 14 June 1720. Carteret returned home in triumph.<sup>141</sup>

While this work prepared him for the intricacies of Irish politics, that Carteret was in Ireland at all was largely due to his meddling in the murky depths of Irish politics. Walpole appointed Carteret Lord Lieutenant of Ireland on 3 April 1724 as a half-hearted expression of regard towards an old adversary. Carteret's long competition with Walpole had begun as early as the late 1710s when Carteret had aligned with the faction surrounding the Earl of Sunderland. Walpole, in contrast had given his allegiance to the rival faction, headed by his brother-in-law Charles, Viscount Townshend. The discrediting of the political nation that resulted from the bursting of the South Sea Bubble hit Sunderland's faction particularly hard. Although Walpole had also suffered, he utilised this disaster to stabilise his position in the government. He shielded ministers from the repercussions of the scandal. For this, he gained the lifelong trust of King George I, and the enmity of the young Carteret.

Despite the collapse of the market, and the dramatic decline of his faction, Carteret's position remained secure, thanks to a peculiar ability. Alone among high-ranking English politicians, he was fluent in the mother tongue of his sovereign. George I had difficulty with, and little enthusiasm for, speaking English and appreciated Carteret's knowledge of German. So while Walpole was unable to rid himself of his rival completely; it was Carteret who was to head up an administration after Walpole's political demise in 1742, he was unable to dissuade Carteret from campaigning against him in Ireland.

The actual particulars of Carteret's involvement are difficult to untangle, although Walpole certainly blamed his adversary for stirring up the popular agitation that engulfed Dublin throughout 1724 and 1725.<sup>142</sup> Though Carteret does appear to have been involved with the leader of the Irish opposition, Lord Midleton, his support was far from critical to the Irish political nation, who were willing and able to mount opposition of their own.

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<sup>140</sup> J. Swift, "A letter to the whole people of Ireland," in *The drapier's letters*, (London, 1903), p. 109.

<sup>141</sup> See W. Baring-Pemberton, *Carteret: the brilliant failure of the eighteenth century*, (London, 1936), pp 24-58.

<sup>142</sup> D. Hayton, "Walpole and Ireland," in *Britain in the age of Walpole*, (J. Black, ed.), (London, 1984), p. 106.

The crisis that rocked Walpole's government in the summer of 1724 was actually inherited from Sunderland's administration.<sup>143</sup> In 1719, Lord Sunderland, then first lord of the treasury, had granted to the Duchess of Kendal a patent for the coining of copper half and quarter pennies to be used in Ireland. The lack of coinage in Ireland had been the source of complaint for some time, with foreign coinage being used as a substitute. The patent intended to remove that necessity and to remove a cause of Irish grievance. The Duchess of Kendal sold the patent for £10,000 to the Wolverhampton ironmonger, William Wood. This enabled him to provide for the Irish economy the total of 360 tons of copper coined into farthings and halfpence, some £100,800 over the following fourteen years. The plans provoked immediate discontent in Ireland. Walpole insisted on honouring the patent. He believed the King's prerogative was being under threat, and this was unacceptable. He stood firm although he realised that Grafton's administration was under severe strain.

Grafton for his part took every opportunity to remind the London administration about the stress that the affair caused him. He wrote repeatedly to Lord Townshend, to complain of his ill usage and of the calamitous effect of the tide of opposition the patent aroused in Ireland. By late August 1724, Walpole had had enough. The affair in Ireland was threatening the stability of his government and he was appalled at the impotence of his Lord Lieutenant in dealing with the opposition. Certain that Carteret was in large part responsible for the swell of public opinion, he recalled Grafton from his post and installed this truculent opponent in his place. The intention was that the troublemaker would sort out the trouble or destroy himself trying. As Walpole wrote to Newcastle, he would "not be for sending him over now, if I did not think it would end in totally recalling him."<sup>144</sup>

Upon his arrival on 23 October 1724, Carteret attempted to follow Grafton's eminently sensible, if evidently ineffective policy, of playing the Irish factions against each other. Whereas Grafton had done so by doing nothing at all, Carteret realised that the system of political management, with its dependency on the good will of an Irish 'Undertaker' for the successful implementation of policy, had failed. He decided to create a structure of government patronage, so as to develop a court interest centred on civil servants that owed their position to the King's pleasure. They would be the centre of a broader faction which might take in the Tories and loyal MPs.<sup>145</sup>

<sup>143</sup> This account draws on R. E. Burns, *Irish parliamentary politics in the eighteenth century*, (Washington, 1989), volume one, pp 134-216; P. McNally, "Wood's halfpence, Carteret, and the government of Ireland," in *Irish Historical Studies*, 30, (1997), pp 354-76; and A. Goodwin, "Wood's halfpence," in *Essays in eighteenth-century history*, (R. Mitchison ed.), (London, 1966), pp 117-44.

<sup>144</sup> Walpole to Newcastle, 1 September 1724. Quoted in P. McNally, "Wood's halfpence, Carteret, and the government of Ireland," in *Irish Historical Studies*, 30, (1997), p. 361.

<sup>145</sup> For Carteret's attempts to construct a King's party in Ireland see P. McNally, "Wood's halfpence, Carteret and the government of Ireland," in *Irish Historical Studies*, 30, (1997), pp 354-76.

The other problem Carteret faced was opposition outside Parliament. A number of trade associations were founded to resist the introduction of the coinage, and a ship carrying England goods was scuttled in Cork harbour. A paper campaign expressing popular discontent with the patent included Swift's *Drapier's letters*. The fourth of these, addressed to "the whole people of Ireland" so incensed Carteret's administration that a legal case was brought against the printer, John Harding of Molesworth Court in Fishamble Street. He was accused of publishing a libel and of protecting the identity of the author.

Published on the day, 23 October 1724, that Carteret arrived in Dublin, Swift apologised for detaining the public again having "thought I had sufficiently shown to all who could want instruction, by what methods they might safely proceed whenever this coin should be offered to them."<sup>146</sup> Wood had incensed public opinion further by rumouring that Carteret had express instructions to defend the patent. He also claimed that the issue at stake was not, as the Irish opposition argued, the economic value of the halfpence, but the constitutional matter of the King's prerogative in Ireland.<sup>147</sup> Swift decried Wood as an "impostor" and debated the merits of the King's prerogative as it applied in this contentious case.<sup>148</sup> As Swift explained:

The kings of these realms enjoy several powers, wherein the laws have not imposed: So they can make war and peace without the consent of parliament; and this is a very great prerogative. But if the parliament doth not approve of the war, the King must bear the charge of it out of his own purse, and this is as great a check on the crown. So the King hath a prerogative to coin money without consent of Parliament. But he cannot compel the subject to take that money except it be sterling, gold or silver, because herein he is limited by law.<sup>149</sup>

Thus Swift contended, "the vile accusation of Wood and his accomplices, charging us with disputing the King's prerogative by refusing his brass can have no place."<sup>150</sup>

It was Swift's further contention that although Wood and his envoys were endeavouring to convince the Irish otherwise "the best of them are only our fellow subjects and not our masters:"

One great merit I am sure we have, which those of English birth can have no pretence to, that our ancestors reduced this kingdom to the obedience of England, for which we have been rewarded with a worse climate, the privilege of being governed by laws to which we do not consent, a ruined trade,

<sup>146</sup> J. Swift, "A letter to the whole people of Ireland," in *The drapier's letters*, (London, 1903), p. 101.

<sup>147</sup> This was in fact how Walpole appears to have understood the issue. On the difference between English and Irish perspectives on the crisis see A. Goodwin, "Wood's halfpence," in *Essays in eighteenth-century history*, (R. Mitchison ed.), (London, 1966), pp 117-44.

<sup>148</sup> J. Swift, "A letter to the whole people of Ireland," in *The drapier's letters*, (London, 1903), p. 102.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

a House of Peers without jurisdiction, almost an incapacity for all employments; and the dread of Wood's halfpence.<sup>151</sup>

Of Wood's second slur, concerning the role of Carteret in the affair, Swift was equally dismissive. He remarked how "it can never enter into my head that so little a creature as Wood could find credit enough with the King and his ministers to have the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland sent hither in a hurry upon his errand." Even were this the case, and Carteret had been dispatched to ensure the imposition of the coinage in Ireland, Swift was sure that the plan was doomed to fail: "By what arguments could a Lord Lieutenant prevail on the same parliament which addressed with so much zeal and earnestness against this evil, to pass it into a law?"<sup>152</sup>

This led Swift to reflect on the manner in which patronage was dispensed. The Lord Lieutenant's leverage was limited for the offices of state were already "possessed by those to whom the reversions were granted, and these have been generally followers of the chief governors, or persons who had interest in the Court of England." Ironically, as Swift recognised, the "one comfortable circumstance in this universal opposition to Mr. Wood [is] that the people sent over hither from England to fill up our vacancies ecclesiastical, civil and military are all on our side."<sup>153</sup>

Turning to a third, and potentially the most damaging slander put out by Wood and his men, Swift noted how they had asserted that "by opposing him [Wood] we discover an inclination to shake off our dependence upon the crown of England."<sup>154</sup> This led Swift into the choppy waters of Ireland's constitutional dependence on England, and put him in trouble with the law courts. Dealing with the concept of a depending kingdom, he asserted

those who come over hither to us from England, and some weak people among ourselves...tell us, that Ireland is a depending kingdom as if they would seem by this phrase to intend that the people of Ireland is in some state of slavery or dependence different from those of England; whereas a depending kingdom is a modern term of art...by this expression...there is no more understood than that by a statute made here in the thirty third year of Henry 8<sup>th</sup>, 'the King and his successors are to be kings imperial of this realm as united and knit to the imperial crown of England.'<sup>155</sup>

Ignoring the recent passage of the Dependency Act of 1720, Swift attested that: "I have looked over all the English and Irish statutes without finding any law that makes Ireland

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<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 103-4.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105 and p. 106.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106 and p. 111. For Archbishop King's campaign against the 'English interest' see chapter six.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

depend upon England, any more than England does upon Ireland.”<sup>156</sup> What followed placed him under threat of prosecution for sedition. He continued his diatribe:

I declare, next under God, I depend only on the King my sovereign, and on the laws of my own country and I am so far from depending upon the people of England, that if they should ever rebel against my sovereign (which God forbid) I would be ready at the first command from His Majesty to take arms against them, as some of my countrymen did against theirs at Preston.<sup>157</sup>

In another vigorous riposte Swift asserted that “in reason, all government without the consent of the governed is the very definition of slavery.” That England had on occasion exercised sovereignty over Ireland was not an argument for the legitimacy of those actions but simply a recognition that in actuality “eleven men well armed will certainly subdue one single man in his shirt.”<sup>158</sup>

A Privy Council meeting on 27 October 1724 confirmed Carteret’s private assessment; the pamphlet was seditious and libellous. Although Archbishop King was a proponent of many of the theories espoused within the text, even he admitted the work was foolish given the political circumstances.<sup>159</sup> The Privy Council offered a reward of £300 for discovery of the author’s identity and issued a proclamation against several of the passages in the text.

Charged on 7 November 1724, John Harding and his wife were jailed pending trial for the publication of the *Letter*. By 11 November Swift had come to their aid, in the form of: *Seasonable advice to the grand jury concerning the bill preparing against the printer of the Drapier’s fourth letter*. Noting that charges had been brought by the administration against the unfortunate Harding, Swift asked the jury to consider a series of six points.

First he asked them to realise that: “the author of the said pamphlet did write three other discourses on the same subject, which instead of being censured were universally approved by the whole nation.” He then requested that the jury bear in mind how the author “appears...to be a loyal subject to his Majesty and devoted to the House of Hanover and declares himself in a manner peculiarly zealous against the Pretender.” Third he asked that it be considered “whether any one expression...be really liable to just exception.”<sup>160</sup> Of this clause Swift made the defence that:

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<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113. For the dependency act see chapter six.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>159</sup> On King’s relationship with the fourth *Drapier letter* see R. E. Burns, *Irish parliamentary politics in the eighteenth century*, (Washington, 1989), volume one, pp 176-7.

<sup>160</sup> J. Swift, “Seasonable advice to the grand jury,” in *The drapier’s letters*, (London, 1903), p. 125, p. 125 and p. 126.



The two points in that pamphlet [the fourth Drapier letter] which it is said the prosecutors intend chiefly to fix on, are, first where the author mentions the 'penner of the King's answer.' First it is well known His Majesty is not master of the English tongue, and therefore it is necessary that some other person should be employed to pen what he hath to say, or write in that language. Secondly, His Majesty's answer is not in the first person but the third. It is not said 'WE are concerned' or 'OUR royal predecessors,' but 'HIS MAJESTY is concerned' and 'HIS royal predecessors.' By which it is plain these are properly not the words of his majesty; but supposed to be taken from him, and transmitted hither by one of his ministers.<sup>161</sup>

Even more polemical was Swift defence of the second possible moment of sedition:

[The author] explains all the dependency [of Ireland upon England] he knows of it, which is a law made in Ireland, whereby it is enacted that 'whoever is King of England shall be King of Ireland.' Before this explanation be condemned, and the bill found upon it, it would be proper that some lawyers should fully inform the jury what other law there is, either statute or common for this dependency.<sup>162</sup>

The fourth area of consideration was the "influence their finding the bill may have upon the kingdom." Fifth was how "the members of the grand jury being merchants and principal shopkeepers, can have no suitable temptation offered them as a recompense for the mischief they will suffer by letting in this coin." For this reason alone, Swift felt confident enough to assert that "his grace the Lord Archbishop of Dublin [William King] so renowned for his piety and wisdom and love of his country, absolutely refused to condemn the book or the author." Finally, Swift appealed to the jury to consider the human consequences of their actions, namely how it would affect "a poor man perfectly innocent, I mean the printer."<sup>163</sup>

Shown the *Seasonable advice* on 14 November, Carteret presented the pamphlet to the grand jury as a seditious libel even before the Hardings' case came to court. A week later the grand jury met to consider the case of the *Seasonable advice*. Three judges advised the jurors that the text was in contravention of the law and ought to be condemned. However the grand jury informed the court that they were unable to come to a decision on the matter and although they were asked to reconsider they remained unable to reach a consensus. Individually questioned about their views by Judge Whitshed, the jurors held firm in their obstinate refusal to comply with the court's desire for a presentment. Twelve of the twenty-three jurors were against the idea, with only three in favour of the court's preferred option of presenting the whole of the work. The remaining eight admitted some of the text was libellous but favoured identifying those elements and leaving the rest

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<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126, p. 127, pp 127-8 and p. 128.

alone.<sup>164</sup> In frustration at their recalcitrance, Whitshed discharged the grand jury and ordered that another be summoned to consider the matter on Monday 23 November. The actions of Whitshed in individually questioning the jurors came in for criticism but although Swift circulated a document showing that the dismissal of a grand jury before its term had run out was illegal, another jury was summoned.<sup>165</sup>

Whitshed did change tactics, arguing that all pamphlets in favour of independence were seditious as they harboured ill will between the peoples of the islands. Asking the jury to present recent works of this sort, Whitshed hoped to force the jury to comply with his desire to see the *Seasonable advice* censured. The new jury was no more compliant than the previous incumbents however, finding such seditious works hard to identify. Finally, on the last day of the court session, 28 November 1724, the jury forwarded a text attacking the Wood halfpence and condemning those who acted in its favour.

Carteret's hand was forced by this act of defiance. Harding was released without facing trial and the actions against Swift's work halted. The legal strength of the state had been tried and found wanting in the face of such broad popular dissent. As Primate Hugh Boulter informed the Duke of Newcastle in December 1724:

We are at present in a very bad state, and the people so poisoned with apprehensions of Wood's halfpence that I do not see there can be any hopes of justice against any person for seditious writings if he does but mix somewhat about Wood in them. I must do the better sort of people here the justice to say they speak with great concern of the imprudence of the grand juries, and the ill stop to justice. But those who would hinder it now are unable. But all sorts here are determinately set against Wood's halfpence and look upon their estates as half sunk in their value whenever they shall pass upon the nation.<sup>166</sup>

The failure of the court case was unfortunately coupled with the failure of Carteret's parliamentary policy; due to the limited availability of offices directly connected to the Crown. In another of the ironies that characterised the entire affair, the collapse came about due to the very policy Carteret had inaugurated to divert the attention of the political nation from the Wood's halfpence affair. Following a report commissioned by Carteret the Irish public finances were found to be in a catastrophic state, with some £80,000 in the treasury unaccounted for. This led Carteret into a campaign to rectify the

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<sup>164</sup> R. E. Burns, *Irish parliamentary politics in the eighteenth century*, (Washington, 1989), volume one, p. 182. The element in question was the fifth paragraph where Swift expressed doubts about Ireland's legal dependence on England. See above.

<sup>165</sup> J. Swift, "Extract from a book," in *The drapier's letters*, (London, 1903), p. 129.

<sup>166</sup> H. Boulter to Newcastle, Dublin, 3 December 1724, in *Letters*, (Dublin, 1770), volume one, p. 3.

accounts; a campaign which ensured he had little money to spend in the development of a court party in the Parliament.<sup>167</sup>

In the actual abandonment of Wood's patent, another of Walpole's recent appointments dealt the final blow. The newly arrived Primate of All Ireland, Hugh Boulter acted as a source of political information for the secretary of state, the Duke of Newcastle. An ally of Walpole, Newcastle was swayed by Boulter's frank description of the political atmosphere he encountered in January 1724:

It is now some weeks since I had the honour of writing to your grace as I was desirous to learn as much as I could from all hands before I gave your grace the trouble of another letter. I have in the meantime made it my business to talk with several of the most leading men in parliament, and have employed others to pick up what they could learn from a variety of people and I find by my own and others enquiries that the people of every religion, country and party here are alike set against Wood's halfpence, and that their agreement in this has had a very unhappy influence on the state of this nation, by bringing on intimacies between Papists and Jacobites, and the Whigs.<sup>168</sup>

This led Boulter to conclude that for English authority to be reasserted in Ireland the patent had to be relinquished. In a proposal that consciously mimicked that Carteret offered to Walpole, Boulter told Newcastle of how:

What those of sense and interest in parliament and that are well affected all agree in is, that, while the fear of these halfpence hangs over this nation, it is impossible to have things easy here, but that they dare not offer any expedient, nor make any such proposals to those on the other side of the water for fear of being fallen on as undertaking for the parliament. But that if the ministry will please to make a computation of what it may be reasonable to give Mr. Wood for resigning his patent and for his past losses and to send an order from his Majesty to pay any body (really in trust for Mr. Wood but without mentioning his name in the order) such a sum *per annum* for such a term of years as they judge a reasonable equivalent, they do not doubt being able in parliament, to provide for such payment (if his patent has been first resigned) whatever suspicions there may be, that the payment is to Mr. Wood, or whatever opposition is made to it in the House. And if the nation is gratified in this, they do not question but by degrees public justice will again flourish and the former zeal for his Majesty and his family revive.<sup>169</sup>

The harmony of advice emanating from the mistrusted Carteret and the trusted Boulter forced Walpole to abandon his ill-judged defence of the patent. In the speech from the throne at the opening of the parliamentary session of 1725, Carteret announced that: "I have his Majesty's commands...to acquaint you that an entire end is put to the patent."<sup>170</sup>

<sup>167</sup> See P. McNally, "Wood's halfpence, Carteret and the government of Ireland," in *Irish Historical Studies*, 30, (1997), pp 354-76.

<sup>168</sup> H. Boulter to Newcastle, Dublin, 19 January 1724/5, in *Letters*, (Dublin, 1770), volume one, p. 7.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 10-1.

<sup>170</sup> W. Baring-Pemberton, *Carteret: the brilliant failure of the eighteenth century*, (London, 1936), p. 101.

News of the policy's defeat was met with joy in the chambers of the Parliament in Dublin. The House of Commons immediately determined "that a humble address be presented to his Majesty acknowledging his great goodness and condescension in obtaining a full and effectual surrender of the patent formerly granted to Mr. Wood for the coining of the halfpence and farthing for the kingdom."<sup>171</sup> Carteret was also expressly thanked for his part in relinquishing the English claim over Irish coinage.

The House of Lords also offered thanks to the King for abandoning Wood. They drafted and passed an address:

We your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled do beg leave to return our unfeigned thanks to your Majesty for putting an end to the patent formerly granted to Mr. Wood for coining copper halfpence and farthings for this kingdom by a full and effectual surrender of the same to your Majesty. We esteem it a remarkable instance of your Majesty's royal favour and condescension, and have the highest sense of duty and gratitude that can fill the hearts of the most loyal and obedient subjects.<sup>172</sup>

Despite this address not all the opposition was content. The *Journal of the House of Lords* recounts how: "A debate [arose] on the words 'great wisdom' contained in the first paragraph of the said address after the word 'majesty's' and before the word 'royal' .... The question was put whether [great wisdom] stand part of the said address. It was resolved in the negative." Under this a note was taken of a solitary dissenting voice, that of "Will[iam King, Archbishop of] Dublin."<sup>173</sup>

Subsequent sessions of parliament ran smoothly and Carteret's Lord Lieutenancy, which had begun so inauspiciously, became more settled.<sup>174</sup> By the time of his withdrawal from Irish affairs, in 1730, his political enemies, Whig and Tory alike, deemed him to have been a man of exceptional political acumen and a success in the office. Upon news of his removal from the post reaching Ireland in June 1730 the Primate of All Ireland, Hugh Boulter wrote to Carteret expressing how, although:

I am to set out tomorrow on my visitation, [and therefore] I shall miss of the opportunity of joining with my brethren in those just acknowledgements they will no doubt make of the many services you have done this kingdom during your administration...it is with great pleasure I find the zeal any of us have under your Lordship's conduct, shown for His Majesty's service, is approved by your Lordship, and that we have had the happiness to satisfy you that we had a sincere regard for your

<sup>171</sup> JHOC, 21 September 1725, volume three, part one, p. 399.

<sup>172</sup> JHOL, 23 September 1725, volume two, p. 812.

<sup>173</sup> JHOL, 23 September 1725, volume two, p. 812. On King see chapter six.

<sup>174</sup> Pemberton remarked that the latter phase of Carteret's stay in the office showed: "Carteret the scholar polished beyond his years, Carteret the non-party patron of letters, Carteret the successful administrator." W. Baring-Pemberton, *Carteret: the brilliant failure of the eighteenth century*, (London, 1936), p. 103.

Lordship. I thank your Lordship for retaining so great a concern for Ireland and am glad this kingdom has a friend who will on all occasions be able to serve it.<sup>175</sup>

Carteret was well aware of his unlikely success at the head of the British administration in Ireland. Writing to the Duke of Bedford, he recommended as a tactic that the Lord Lieutenant: "Sit calmly and coolly within Dublin Castle and let the Irish dash their loggerheads together and to communicate whatever nonsense they made to be quietly pigeon-holed in England."<sup>176</sup>

Crucial to this success was Carteret's capacity to trace a dignified retreat in the face of heartfelt opposition. The same skills that enabled him to move dextrously in the Baltic served his administration well in Ireland. In both environments Carteret showed himself skilled at the politics of retreating from untenable policy positions. He knew the limits of the power of the state and was capable of acting accordingly. In his dealings in the Wood's halfpence affair he displayed both his own limitations and the abilities that made such a highly prized member of the King's administration. In his failure to capsize Walpole's cabinet, and in raising in his opponent the suspicion of malpractice, Carteret displayed a lack of political acumen. Yet in his ability to extricate himself and the government from a crisis and know how to sell a defeat to the victors without causing long term damage to the executive's reputation, Carteret proved an able political actor. He understood the limits to which the state's power could be profitably exerted, and was a master at convincing the vested interests of the administration that their influence must be relinquished. He was capable of making political capital out of a tactical retreat.

Accordingly, although Hutcheson needed protection after the death of Molesworth, in the summer in 1725, it appears to have been for positive as well as negative reasons that he responded to the letter Carteret sent. He may have recognised in Carteret an educated man who appeared to understand the limited nature of the Leviathan's strength. In realms like the economy, the state could not expect to hold sway against the force of antipathetic public opinion. The public sphere was too complex a beast to be tamed by an administrator's will. The Wood's halfpence affair revealed the impotence of the Irish state when the people decided to rebel.<sup>177</sup> Carteret's recognition of the limitations of state power was a vital component in defusing the crisis. It may also have been a characteristic that allowed the friendship with Hutcheson to develop. As a Presbyterian, Hutcheson was

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<sup>175</sup> H. Boulter to J. Carteret, Dublin, 28 June 1730, in *Letters*, (Dublin, 1770), volume two, pp 21-2.

<sup>176</sup> Cited in W. Baring-Pemberton, *Carteret: the brilliant failure of the eighteenth century*, (London, 1936), p. 105.

<sup>177</sup> This conclusion is shared by P. McNally, *Parties, patriots and undertakers: parliamentary politics in early Hanoverian Ireland*, (Dublin, 1997), pp 146-7.

technically beyond the limits of the state. Carteret was exceptional in overlooking the implications of confessional difference and hunting out a Presbyterian writer.

For Hutcheson Carteret would have been a figure who went beyond the limits of a shared Whig political outlook and so could be trusted and emulated. The limited vision of the claims of the state Carteret embodied could have enabled Hutcheson to approach the magnetic pole of the court without fear of relinquishing his identity as a loyal Presbyterian. The kind of personal relationship that developed between the two men could act as a model in Hutcheson's mind for the smooth workings of hierarchical relations and political affiliations. It was analogous to Hutcheson's model of the hierarchy of the passions with base interest being controlled by the desire for the common good.

Hutcheson and Carteret both realised that the key to successful and virtuous living was in the exercise of restraint, one in the ethical the other in the political realm. Hutcheson's *Essay* might thus be read in the light of Carteret's friendship, as a study of government, albeit in the private realm of the emotions. Where Carteret exercised restraint in the affairs of state, accepting the legitimacy of opposition to the halfpence, Hutcheson offered a hierarchy of the passions that restrained the base instincts of self-interest.

For Hutcheson, one question remained. If his system of a hierarchy of the passions was correct, and this was applicable to the realm of action, Hutcheson was left with the puzzle of evil. Why did men choose to pursue self-interest over benevolence? Why did a system apparently underwritten by an omnipotent deity so fragile as to be unable to counter evil intentions in man? Commensurate to these issues was the problem of political authority. Why, if the hierarchy was so clearly discernible, did men reside beyond the political limits of the state? Why did some choose to actively oppose the state and its orders? To Hutcheson's eye, this cluster of questions was reducible into one, potentially explosive, issue - free will. Hutcheson, a committed Presbyterian, used his last Dublin treatise to explore whether man was free to choose his destiny despite the injunctions of political and religious authority.

## SIX: HUTCHESON, WILLIAM KING AND HISTORY

Hutcheson's final Irish treatise, the *Illustrations on the moral sense*, was also his most eclectic work to date. The structure of the treatise was somewhat ramshackle, with Hutcheson taking the opportunity to defend his earlier work from critics that had rounded on him since 1725. The work also included a restatement of his original emotivist position and of his criticisms, by now familiar, of the common systems of morality. The work was divided into six illustrations, each illuminating one aspect of his primary thesis concerning the existence of an internal, pre-rational, moral sense in the frame of mankind.

The primary concern of the text was clarified in the introduction, with Hutcheson pondering the conundrum of evil:

The differences of actions from which some are constituted morally good and others morally evil have always been accounted a very important subject of inquiry and therefore, every attempt to free this subject from the usual causes of error and dispute, the confusion of ambiguous words, must be excusable.<sup>1</sup>

To overcome this cause of confusion Hutcheson laid out a series of definitions. As he explained "happiness denotes pleasant sensation of any kind...and misery denotes the contrary sensations." From this he derived two subsidiary definitions, namely "such actions as tend to procure happiness to the agent are called for shortness privately useful....[and] actions procuring happiness to others may be called publicly useful." In this he was still within the psychological realm of his earlier work. Evil resided in man's judgement, and not in the action itself. Yet despite this, Hutcheson believed that "these different natural tendencies of actions are universally acknowledged."<sup>2</sup>

While in Hutcheson's system the moral sense differentiated the good act from the bad, one serious puzzle remained to be solved. Man did not always choose the good over the bad, even when he was fully aware of which was which. This issue of motivation towards evil doing was a sore point in Hutcheson's optimistic assessment of human nature and one he now addressed head on:

When these natural differences are known, it remains to be inquired into, first, what quality in any action determines our election of it rather than the contrary? Or, if the mind determines itself, what motives or desires excite to an action, rather than the contrary, or rather than to the omission? Second, what quality determines our approbation of one action rather than of the contrary action?<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> T4, p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> T4, p. 115.

<sup>3</sup> T4, p. 115.

To answer these questions, Hutcheson separated two concerns, arguing that “the qualities moving to election or exciting to action are different from those moving to approbation.” As he discerned, approbation involved “the actions of others where there is no room for our election.”<sup>4</sup> What remained was the issue of election. He was producing a theory of moral motivation, an analysis of choice, a study of free will.

Hutcheson began, as was his fashion, by summarising traditional approaches to the question. He identified two schools of thought and placed one under serious scrutiny before rejecting it. This school he identified with “the old Epicureans as it is beautifully explained in the first book of Cicero, *De finibus*, which is revived by Hobbes, and followed by many better writers.” These thinkers understood “all the desires of the human mind, nay of all thinking natures, are reducible to self-love, or desire of private happiness [and] that from this desire all actions of any agent do flow.” Hutcheson acknowledged that this system of ethical interpretation had entered the work of many “Christian moralists” who placed the weight of moral compunction on the pursuit of private happiness. Yet “this scheme can never account for the principal actions of human life, such as the offices of friendship, gratitude, natural affection, generosity, public spirit, compassion.”<sup>5</sup>

Aside from contradicting the empirical evidence of the hearts of men, the Hobbist scheme was incapable of accounting for “the sudden approbation and violent sense of something amiable in actions done in distant ages and nations while the approver has perhaps never thought of these distant tendencies to his happiness.”<sup>6</sup> Hutcheson then elaborated on the drawing of morals from history, postulating

were our approbation of actions done in distant ages and nations occasioned by this thought, that such an action done toward ourselves would be useful to us, why do not we approve and love in like manner any man who finds a treasure or indulges himself in any exquisite sensation, since these advantages or pleasures might have been conferred on ourselves?<sup>7</sup>

The capacity of man to approve of historical acts of virtue which held no intrinsic benefit for the observer, led Hutcheson to address the second school of thought:

We have not only self-love, but benevolent affections also towards others, in various degrees, making us desire their happiness as an ultimate end, without any view to private happiness; that we have a moral sense or determination of our mind to approve every kind affection, either in our selves or others and all publicly useful actions which we imagine flow from such affection.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> T4, p. 116.

<sup>5</sup> T4, pp 116-7, p. 117, p. 117 and pp 117-8.

<sup>6</sup> T4, p. 118.

<sup>7</sup> T4, p. 118.

<sup>8</sup> T4, pp 118-9.



Crucial in this was the assertion that man possessed both self-love and a tendency towards universal benevolence. Equally, Hutcheson's summary limited its concern to the issue of approbation and did not indulge in an analysis of election. To supply this analysis was "the design of the following sections."<sup>9</sup>

Hutcheson then repeated his by now familiar refutation of rationalist schools of morality. He noted how since "reason is understood to denote our power of finding out true propositions, reasonableness [by extension] must denote the same thing with conformity to true propositions or to truth." This led to a conflation of two separate ideas, for as Hutcheson realised "upon inquiry, it will appear very confused whether we suppose it [reasonableness] the motive to election or the quality determining approbation." Even more confusing was the fact that there was a third and morally neutral concept of truth, "that conformity which is between every true proposition and its object," which could never motivate either approbation or action in a moral agent.<sup>10</sup> Hutcheson was convinced the rationalists had committed the error of thinking this last notion of truth was commensurate with the previous two.

For Hutcheson the problem arose, since it was fully possible for "any man [to] make as many truths about villainy as about heroism by ascribing to it contrary attributes."<sup>11</sup> Such a thesis allowed him to deny the efficacy of rationalism through a Socratic rhetoric of providing illogical conclusions from rationalist premises. Thus he illustrated the problem by listing the truths relating to property:

It tends to the happiness of human society. It encourages industry. It shall be rewarded by God. These are also truths concerning robbery. It disturbs society. It discourages industry. It shall be punished by God....the moral difference cannot therefore depend upon this conformity [of statements to their objects], which is common to both.<sup>12</sup>

If, as Hutcheson suggested, the conformity of truth to its objects did not provide a moral end to action, and reason, understood as the faculty that enabled men to recognise such agreements, was equally incapacitated, the question remained "what is this conformity of actions to reason?" He lamented the inability of his rationalist adversaries to provide anything more than a tawdry defence of their original stance. What he offered in their stead was that "we must have some standard antecedently to all sense or

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<sup>9</sup> T4, p. 119.

<sup>10</sup> T4, p. 120.

<sup>11</sup> T4, p. 120.

<sup>12</sup> T4, p. 120.

affections...all exciting reasons presuppose instincts and affections and the justifying [reasons] presuppose a moral sense.”<sup>13</sup>

Examining the nature of exciting reasons first, Hutcheson reminded the reader how “in every calm, rational action, some end is desired and intended.” He averred “no end can be intended...previously to some one of these classes of affections, self-love, self-hatred or desire of private misery...benevolence toward others or malice.”<sup>14</sup> These were the limits of the psychology of motivation. Reason could not provide motives for purposeful activity.

This classification of the motive forces raised the issue of choice. How was the agent to determine which of these motives ought to inform his actions in any given circumstance? As Hutcheson realised, there might be “exciting reasons, even previous to any end, moving us to propose one end rather than another.” And as he further accepted: “Aristotle long ago answered that there are ultimate ends desired without a view to anything else and subordinate ends or objects desired with a view to something else.” Only these subordinate ends could be designated as reasonable in any meaningful sense of the term, the reason of achieving an ultimate end. This resulted in Hutcheson reiterating his basic premise “there is an instinct or desire fixed in his nature determining him to pursue his happiness;” a truth pointedly identified as being equivalent to the truth that “rhubarb strengthens the stomach, but it is not a proposition which strengthens the stomach but the quality in that medicine.” Hutcheson then took another swipe at those he considered had “in their philosophical inquiries...learned to form very abstract ideas.” Suffering from *hubris* induced by “some conception of an infinite good” they had believed there to be “some one great ultimate end with a view to which every particular pleasure is desired without farther view as an ultimate end in the selfish desires.” What Hutcheson offered was a system wherein “in the benevolent affections the happiness of any one person is an ultimate end,” even if it was occasionally overwhelmed by the love of a great number of agents. Integral to the thesis was that although “we have formed these conceptions we do not serve the individual only from love to the species....These conceptions only serve to suggest greater ends than would occur to us without reflection...to stop the desire toward the smaller good when it appears inconsistent with the greater.”<sup>15</sup> In effect, he was

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<sup>13</sup> T4, p. 121. In dividing reasons into exciting and justifying, Hutcheson noted his debt to the thought of Hugo Grotius. He illustrated the difference using the practical and commercial example of a man in pursuit of wealth: “Why does a luxurious man pursue wealth? The reason is given by this truth, wealth is useful to purchase pleasures. Sometimes for a reason of actions we show the truth expressing a quality engaging our approbation. Thus the reason of hazarding life in just war is that it tends to preserve our honest countrymen....the former sort of reasons we will call exciting and the latter justifying.” T4, p. 121.

<sup>14</sup> T4, p. 121 and pp 121-2.

<sup>15</sup> T4, p. 123, p. 123, p. 123, p. 124n, p. 124, p. 124 and pp 124-5.

reiterating his individualism and the democratic inclusiveness of his scheme. He was also clarifying his pluralist conception of moral endeavour.

This led Hutcheson to consider the nature of public good, and the political allegiances it demanded. Completing yet another Socratic argument he reduced all love of the public good to a pre-rational instinct. The political loyalties he included in this analysis included those granted to the deity, who commanded our moral life as the politician did our civic life. Twisting the argument around, he concluded “all the possible reasons [to love and obey the deity] must either presuppose some affection if they are exciting or some moral sense if they are justifying.”<sup>16</sup>

Hutcheson also considered the claims of the utilitarian stance, that the “reason exciting us to pursue public good” was found in “the happiness of a system, a thousand or a million, is a greater quantity of happiness than that of one person.”<sup>17</sup> This was apparently consistent with his injunction in the ‘Inquiry concerning moral good and evil’ to pursue the “greatest happiness for the greatest number.”<sup>18</sup> However, Hutcheson noted how this was not grounded on any rationalist understanding of the good for “this reason still supposes an instinct toward happiness as previous to it.” More pointed still was his inquiry as “to whom is the happiness of a system a greater happiness?” The answer implied either self-love or public, disinterested, pre-rational benevolence. Indeed the only satisfactory way to explain the existence of exciting reasons was to “suppose affection, instincts or desires previously implanted in our nature.”<sup>19</sup> It was not that reason did not have a role to play, only that its role was limited to the isolation of means and not the choice of ends:

He acts reasonably who considers the various actions in his power and forms true opinions of their tendencies and then chooses to do that which will obtain the highest degree of that to which the instincts of his nature incline him with the smallest degree of those things from which the affections in his nature make him adverse.<sup>20</sup>

This provided Hutcheson with a means to envisage how men came to choose one possible mode of action over another “when any event may affect both the agent and others, if the agent have both self love and public affections, he acts according to that affection which is strongest, when there is any opposition of interest.” Given that Hutcheson set the ethical actor in a series of social networks and conceded that the actor had self-love and benevolence, this was an everyday conundrum. However, he posited how “if he discovers

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<sup>16</sup> T4, p. 125.

<sup>17</sup> T4, p. 126.

<sup>18</sup> T2, p. 164. See chapter two.

<sup>19</sup> T4, p. 126.

<sup>20</sup> T4, pp 126-7.

this truth, 'that his constant pursuit of public good is the most probable way of promoting his own happiness' then his pursuit is truly reasonable and constant."<sup>21</sup> Although he might act from the prompting of the moral sense in a manner consistent with this formula, unless the actor recognised the conjunction between private and public good, he remained uneasy.

Considering "approbation of actions" Hutcheson queried "whether it be for conformity to any truth, or reasonableness that actions are ultimately approved?" Following his Socratic argumentation, he noted "If conformity to truth...denote nothing else but that an action is the object of a true proposition, it is plain that all actions should be approved equally since as many truths may be made about the worst as can be made about the best." He also noted how "a truth showing an action to be fit to attain an end" did not suffice as a basis for morality as it "does not justify" the choice of that end over any other possible end.<sup>22</sup> It was means-oriented and not as a sufficient theory would be, end-oriented.

This led Hutcheson to inquire whether "a conformity to any truth [could] make us approve an ultimate end previously to any moral sense?" Choosing the issue of obedience to the wishes of the deity, Hutcheson produced a sequence of questions aimed at resolving the issue down to its dependency on a prior, assumed moral sense. The same tactic also disposed of the claim that the truth required for morality was that "it is best all be happy." Similarly reduced were the claims of obligation, either to the public good or to the whims of the deity, for Hutcheson asked his imagined protagonist to resolve the meaning of "these words, duty, obligation, owing and the meaning of that gerund, is to be preferred."<sup>23</sup>

Consequently Hutcheson considered the nature of moral obligation: "When we say one is obliged to an action we either mean (1) that the action is necessary to obtain happiness to the agent, or to avoid misery or (2) that every spectator, or he himself upon reflection must approve his action and disapprove his omitting it, if he considers fully all its circumstances."<sup>24</sup> This division mirrored his division of motivation into self-interest and the good of others. It was the later sense of obligation under which Hutcheson subsumed the activities of the moral sense.

Having produced his definition of obligation, Hutcheson considered "the arguments brought to prove that there must be some standard of moral good antecedent to any sense." His imaginary protagonists assailed him with the observation that: "perceptions of sense are deceitful." From this they drew the conclusion: "we must have some perception or idea of virtue more stable and certain;" a certainty they found in reason. However, Hutcheson

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<sup>21</sup> T4, p. 127.

<sup>22</sup> T4, p. 128.

<sup>23</sup> T4, p. 129, p. 129 and p. 130.

<sup>24</sup> T4, p. 130.

drew an analogy with the sense of beauty to contend: “In like manner our sight and sense of beauty is deceitful and does not always represent the true forms of objects.” If the rationalists were right, and “our taste may be vitiated, [w]e must not say that savour is perceived by taste but must place the original idea of grateful savours in conformity to reason.”<sup>25</sup> The absurdity of this position was, he hoped, clear to his readers.

Returning to his initial rhetorical argument against the rationalists, Hutcheson argued against the thesis that agreement to truth in virtue made it pleasant for “as much truth is known about vice as virtue.”<sup>26</sup> Hutcheson located the source of all these errors in a slipshod use of language. It was the conflation of means and ends in the description of virtuous activity that led thinkers to identify virtue with rationality:

though we have instincts determining us to desire ends without supposing any previous reasoning, yet it is by use of our reason that we find out the means of obtaining our ends....we therefore call those actions which are effectual to their ends reasonable....hence some have been led to imagine some reasons either exciting or justifying previously to all affections or a moral sense.<sup>27</sup>

Ultimately Hutcheson reduced the rationalist argument to the simple, and to his mind wholly acceptable, claim that “an action then is called...reasonable when it is benevolent and unreasonable when malicious.” This was acceptable as it “is plainly making the word reasonable denote whatever is approved by our moral sense, without relation to true propositions.”<sup>28</sup> Hutcheson was arguing that the rationalists’ position was only coherent if they agreed with his own suppositions.

Having defended the moral sense and benevolence from the aspersions of the rationalists, Hutcheson came “next to examine some other explications of morality which have been much insisted on of late.”<sup>29</sup> As he characterised the current thesis

there are eternal and immutable differences of things, absolutely and antecedently; that there are also eternal and unalterable relations in the natures of the things themselves from which arise agreements and disagreements, congruities and incongruities, fitness and unfitness of the application of circumstances to the qualifications of persons; that actions agreeable to these relations are morally good, and that the contrary actions are morally evil.<sup>30</sup>

Hutcheson may have had some sympathy for this argument. It drew from the Lockean theory of the qualities of objects and projected the notion of a primary quality out into the relationships these objects held towards each other. Thus a social network, or an institution

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<sup>25</sup> T4, p. 131.

<sup>26</sup> T4, p. 132.

<sup>27</sup> T4, pp 132-3.

<sup>28</sup> T4, p. 139.

<sup>29</sup> T4, p. 141.

could be seen as a given, a morally acceptable relationship grounded in the nature of things. The argument also extended to the thesis that “it is...God who knows all these relations etc. does guide his actions by them...and that in like manner these relations ought...to determine the choice of all rationals, abstracting from any views of interest.”<sup>31</sup>

However, Hutcheson asserted “[that] things are now different is certain.” It was his belief that “relations are not real qualities inherent in external natures but only ideas necessarily accompanying our perception of two objects at once and comparing them.”<sup>32</sup> He extended his argument to see how far in his view “morality can be concerned in relations.” He considered three types of relationships: “the relations of inanimate objects...as explained by Mr. Locke; the relations of inanimate objects to rational agents...the relations of rational agents among themselves founded on their powers or actions past or continued.” What followed was “not intended to oppose his [Samuel Clarke’s] scheme, but rather to suggest what seems a necessary explication of it.”<sup>33</sup>

Hutcheson swiftly disposed of the false attribution of morality in the relations of inanimate objects to each other. He noted how rational agents had it within their power to alter these relationships, and how “nobody apprehends any virtue or vice in such actions where no relation is apprehended to a rational or sensitive being’s happiness or misery.” Thus no moral quality could be attributed to their relationships. He wryly noted, were the opposite the case “we should have got into the class of virtues all the practical mathematics and the operations of chemistry.”<sup>34</sup>

Turning to the second class of relationships, Hutcheson ascribed to the view that “without presupposing affections this knowledge will not excite to one action rather than another.”<sup>35</sup> Thus

a sword, an halter, a musket, bear the same relation to the body of an hero which they do to a robber. The killing of either is equally agreeable to these relations, but not equally good. The knowledge of these relations neither excites to actions nor justifies them without presupposing either affections or a moral sense.<sup>36</sup>

This brought Hutcheson to his last category; the relationship between rational agents. Of these relationships he contended that there was indeed a form of moral fitness in

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<sup>30</sup> T4, p. 141.

<sup>31</sup> T4, p. 141.

<sup>32</sup> T4, p. 141, p. 142 and p. 142. If this line of thinking is extended to include Hutcheson’s position that ethics is generated by interaction between two autonomous agents, it further sites his ethics in moral emotivism rather than moral realism. On this see chapter two.

<sup>33</sup> T4, p. 142.

<sup>34</sup> T4, p. 142.

<sup>35</sup> T4, p. 143.

them, but that this fitness was limited to those cases in which the means befitted the end pursued. Thus “compassion is fit to make others happy and unfit to make others miserable. Violation of property is fit to make men miserable, and unfit to make them happy.”<sup>37</sup>

In the case of ends, Hutcheson was unable to find anything that suited the characteristic of fitness. He asked rhetorically “what means the fitness of an ultimate end?...What means that word fit?” Unable to supply an adequate definition, Hutcheson resorted to the moral sense to ground morality. The only satisfactory notion of the concept of fitness to which Hutcheson deferred included his concept of a moral sense. This suggested that the generation of morality occurred between at least two autonomous agents “certain affections or actions of an agent...are approved by every observer or raise in him a grateful perception, or move the observer to love the agent. This meaning is the same with the notion of pleasing a moral sense.”<sup>38</sup>

The English cleric William Wollaston proposed another variation on this thesis.<sup>39</sup> Wollaston was born in 1659 and had devoted himself to philosophical contemplation in London. Although dead by the time of Hutcheson’s critique, his major work, the *Religion of nature delineated* offered a systematic analysis of the concept of sin, contending that immorality was based in lying. Lying denied the evidence of actual existence.<sup>40</sup>

Hutcheson recognised that Wollaston had “introduced a new explication of moral virtue, viz. significancy of truth in actions.”<sup>41</sup> This Hutcheson understood involved a great degree of “ambiguity” for in the concept of signification was found

(1) An association of an idea with a sound, so that when any idea is formed by the speaker the idea of a sound accompanies it. (2) The sound perceived by the hearer excites the idea to which it is connected. (3) In like manner a judgement in the speaker’s mind is accompanied with the idea of a combination of sounds. (4) This combination of sounds heard raises the apprehension of that judgement in the mind of the hearer.<sup>42</sup>

Hutcheson apprehended that while “hearing a proposition does not of itself produce either assent or dissent” the listener acts upon the impression words make on his mind and makes a series of judgements upon them “without reasoning.” These judgements ranged from “that a sound is perceived and a judgement apprehended,” through the intention of the

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<sup>36</sup> T4, p. 143. For a rhetorically potent deconstruction of Clarke’s argument in this vein see D. Hume, “On suicide,” in D. Hume, *Essays, moral political and literary*, (Indianapolis, 1985), pp 577-89.

<sup>37</sup> T4, p. 143.

<sup>38</sup> T4, p. 144 and p. 145.

<sup>39</sup> Throughout the text Hutcheson mistakenly referred to him as Woolaston.

<sup>40</sup> For an account of Wollaston see L. Stephen, *History of English thought in the eighteenth century*, (London, 1872), volume one, pp 109-13 where he is associated with Samuel Clarke.

<sup>41</sup> T4, p. 146.

<sup>42</sup> T4, p. 146.

speaker to be heard and gain assent, to the determination of whether the speaker had in fact represented things as they are and whether it is “logically true...or it is logically false.”<sup>43</sup>

The issue of virtue in this analysis of speech performance was limited to the intentions of the speaker, and not to the actual mechanics of speech or as Hutcheson realised “to the opinions formed by the hearer, they are all his own action as much as any other conclusion or judgement formed from appearances of any sort whatsoever. They are true or false according to the sagacity of the observer or his caution.”<sup>44</sup> Having dismissed the notion that the truth of the statements provided their morality, Hutcheson examined the issue of the speaker’s intentions. These he divided schematically into four categories:

(1) To lead the hearer into a true or false opinion about the sentiments of the speaker (2) to make the hearer assent to the proposition spoken or (3) both to make the hearer assent to the proposition and judge that the speaker also assents to it or (4) to accomplish some end by means of the hearer’s assent to the proposition spoken. This end may be known to the speaker to be either publicly useful or publicly hurtful.<sup>45</sup>

Rejecting Pufendorf for placing all the weight of virtue in this last category, Hutcheson denied the validity of the position that speaking any logical falsehood was inherently damaging. He accepted that the efficacy of speech acts required “a tacit convention of sincerity.” However, the actual moral value of the statements lay “either in some direct malicious intention or a tendency to the public detriment of society.” It was the motive behind the speech act and not the action that was to be considered in passing judgement over its virtue or vice. Hutcheson was quite explicit “the virtue is not the signifying of truth nor the vice the signifying falsehood.”<sup>46</sup>

In Hutcheson’s opinion “the most important distinction of signs” lay between those statements in which no judgement was intended to be inferred by the listener; those statements in which the intention is to express one’s own judgement; and those statements in which information is passed on so as to direct the listener to some particular judgement.<sup>47</sup> From this he inferred that immorality resided in those speech acts where the intention was to misinform the listener and misdirect their judgement.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> T4, p. 146 and pp 146-7. Hutcheson divides the judgements into ten sections. T4, pp 146-7.

<sup>44</sup> T4, p. 147.

<sup>45</sup> T4, p. 148.

<sup>46</sup> T4, p. 148, p. 149 and p. 149.

<sup>47</sup> T4, pp 149-50.

<sup>48</sup> In dealing with the third category Hutcheson again drew on the arts to effect his argument: “the third sort of significancy of falsehood is never apprehended as morally evil. If it were, then every dramatic writer drawing evil characters, every history-painter, every writer of allegories or epics, every philosopher teaching the nature of contradictory propositions, would be thought criminal.” T4, p. 151. This last example is interesting for it was the defence offered by Hutcheson’s divinity teacher in Glasgow, John Simson, during his trial for teaching heresy. On this see chapter three.



Hutcheson highlighted the issue of trust in defending this assessment “raising false opinions designedly by the second sort of signs which reasonably lead the observer to conclude a profession of communicating sentiments...is generally evil, when the agent knows the falsehood; since it tends to diminish mutual confidence.” However, his optimism led him to argue “this...occurs in a very few human actions.” Nor was virtue and vice limited to the veracity of statements. It was the thrust of his argument that the motive of the actor determined the morality of the speech act. Telling the truth to effect a vicious end was immoral, just as many truths were without moral content, such as “at Christmas...the mornings are sharp.”<sup>49</sup>

Hutcheson accepted that Wollaston had not in fact left the argument there. He wrote of how “Mr. Wollaston acknowledges that there may be very little evil in some actions signifying falsehood,” but in doing so Hutcheson suggested that “he...really unawares gives up his whole cause.” The extremism of Wollaston’s stance left him open to the charge that “if significancy of falsehood be the very same with moral evil, all crimes must be equal.” Hutcheson then used Wollaston’s admission - “that crimes increase according to the importance of the truth denied” - to prise open the system enough to allow the theory of a moral sense to enter. He neatly performed the trick through a syllogism: “Virtue and vice increase as the importance of propositions is affirmed or denied. But the signification of truth and falsehood does not so increase. Therefore virtue and vice are not the same with signification of truth or falsehood.”<sup>50</sup>

Hutcheson had thus dispensed with the three counter-schemes of morality that challenged the moral sense thesis: those that found the origin of moral distinctions in man’s reason, in the fitness of action to the world as it is, and in the accurate expression of the agent’s perceptions of the world. He now began a more positive task - to incorporate some of his antagonists’ insights into his own scheme, so as to illuminate the nature of moral choice grounded in the moral sense. He began with “the use of reason concerning virtue and vice, upon supposition that we receive these ideas by a moral sense.”<sup>51</sup>

Hutcheson queried “what truths concerning actions men could desire to know, or prove by reason.” These he offered under four heads. First, Hutcheson stated men could wish to know “whether there are not some actions or affections which obtain the approbation of any spectator or observer and others move his dislike and condemnation.” This Hutcheson answered affirmatively, citing “universal experience and history” in defence of his moral sense. Secondly, Hutcheson inquired as to “whether there be any

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<sup>49</sup> T4, p. 150, p. 150 and p. 151.

<sup>50</sup> T4, p. 155.

particular quality, which, wherever it is apprehended, gains approbation?" Again he answered positively, defending his thesis concerning the prevalence of benevolence in actions considered virtuous. Of these questions, Hutcheson observed "there is little reasoning; we know how to answer them from reflecting on our own sentiments, or by consulting others," thus reaffirming his pre-rational emotivism. However this rejection of rationalism was not so complete when Hutcheson confronted the third category of desirable knowledge. This involved recognising "what actions do really evidence kind affections or do really tend to the greatest public good." Realising that this question raised issues of practice rather than merely of judgement, Hutcheson accepted this to be "the largest field, and the most useful subject of reasoning." It held within its scope "all the special reasoning of those who treat of the particular laws of nature or even of civil laws." In this field he accepted reason had a role to play but only in the limited sense of recognising the means required to attain virtuous ends. Finally, Hutcheson demarcated a fourth field of inquiry, discerning "the motives which, even from self-love, would excite each individual to do those actions which are publicly useful."<sup>52</sup> He was unconvinced that self-interest was sufficient to the task of proposing and justifying moral action.

While defending his primary thesis that virtue was disinterested, Hutcheson accepted "all men have naturally self-love as well as kind affections" and that these on occasion conflicted. When this occurred, self-love "may often counteract the latter [kind affections] or the latter the former. In each case the agent is uneasy and in some degree unhappy" Hutcheson thereby identified "the ordinary cause of vice" as residing in the power of self-love to overwhelm considerations of benevolence. The task of the moralist was "to engage men to publicly useful actions;" a conception in line with his own public persona as a teacher and carer of young minds.<sup>53</sup>

Hutcheson then asked of his scheme whether there may "not be a right or wrong state of our moral sense, as there is in our other senses, according as they represent their objects to be as they really are, or represent them otherwise?"<sup>54</sup> Hutcheson recalled how:

Of the sensible ideas, some are allowed to be only perceptions in our minds, and not images of any like external quality, as colours, sounds, tastes, smells, pleasure, pain. Other ideas are images of something external, as duration, number, extension, motion, rest. These latter, for distinction, we may call concomitant ideas of sensation, and the former purely sensible.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> T4, p. 159.

<sup>52</sup> T4, p. 159.

<sup>53</sup> T4, p. 160.

<sup>54</sup> T4, p. 162.

<sup>55</sup> T4, p. 163.

In both cases external factors could disorder the perception of these characteristics, but Hutcheson pointed out how “we denominate objects from the appearances they make to us in a uniform medium, when our organs are in no disorder.”<sup>56</sup>

Moving from the external senses to the moral sense, Hutcheson identified three elements in our ideas of actions. First, “the idea of the external motion...and its tendency to the happiness or misery of some sensitive nature.” Second, the “apprehension or opinion of the affections in the agent concluded by our reason.” Third “the perception of approbation or disapprobation arising in the observer.” This was the moral judgement and was removed from the external universe and located in the observer “this approbation cannot be supposed an image of anything external....But let none imagine that calling the ideas of virtue and vice perceptions of a sense upon apprehending the actions and affections of another, does diminish their reality.”<sup>57</sup> Reason protected the agent from hasty, mistaken judgements, but morality emanated from the sensory perceptions of the observer and their emotional responses.

Having identified the relationship of reason to judgements of virtue and vice, Hutcheson was confronted with the need to account for action. The thrust of his critique was to refute the claim that moral judgement was derived from reason and that the right activity could be rationally identified. The counter-thrust demanded that he explain how practical reason was in fact guided by the moral sense.

Hutcheson fell back once more on his Socratic method to tackle his unnamed antagonists. Recalling to the reader’s attention his contention “that no reason can excite to action previously to some end, and that no end can be proposed without some instinct or affection” Hutcheson enquired whether “determining ourselves freely...[implied] acting without any motive or exciting reason?”<sup>58</sup> This seemed wholly implausible. Desire and affections were necessary precursors to and motivators of all actions. Choice was not simply a matter of election, but was tempered with the balancing of desires and affections; of interest and benevolence. Hutcheson suggested to the reader that he “consult his own breast” and consider how he would judge:

Upon seeing a person not more disposed by affection, compassion, or love or desire, to make his country happy than miserable, yet choosing the one rather than the other, from no desire of public happiness, nor aversion to the torments of others, but by such an unaffectionate determination, as that by which one moves his first finger rather than the second.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> T4, p. 163.

<sup>57</sup> T4, p. 163, p. 163, p. 163 and p. 164.

<sup>58</sup> T4, pp 165-6 and p. 166.

<sup>59</sup> T4, p. 167.

Hutcheson then questioned whether the merit in such unaffectionate choices came from “the quality in actions which gains approbation from the observer” or from the fact that when “any observer does approve, all other observers approve him for his approbation of it [the action].” He argued that if “merit denotes the quality moving the spectator to approve then there may be unaffectionate election of the greatest villainy.” Realising this, he suggested that “perhaps it is not the mere freedom of choice which is approved but the free choice of public good without any affection.” In this case, “actions are approved for public usefulness and not for freedom,” and hence they presupposed a sense of universal benevolence. It was Hutcheson’s view that “free election alone is not merit.”<sup>60</sup>

Turning to the socially constructed version of merit, Hutcheson observed how “we condemn any person who does not approve that which we ourselves approve.” Moreover, he pointed out how “we presume the sense of others to be constituted like our own.” Hence we had grounds for concluding “when we find that another does not approve what we approve...that he has not had kind affections toward the agent...and on this account condemn him.” One such quality moving a superior blessed with a moral sense to approbation was “kind affection.”<sup>61</sup> Hutcheson then observed how “If this superior be benevolent, and observes that inferior natures can by their mutual actions promote their mutual happiness, then he must incline to excite them to publicly useful actions by prospects of private interest if it be needful.”<sup>62</sup> This opened up the possibility of a Mandevillian universe in which private vices begot public benefits.<sup>63</sup> Of this vision Hutcheson was immediately dismissive “he [the superior] will engage them to such actions by prospects of rewards, whatever be the internal principle of their actions.”<sup>64</sup> For Hutcheson only kind affections and not public usefulness were deserving of reward.

Of the second possible rendering of the concept of rewardable, in which “a spectator would approve the superior mind for conferring rewards on such actions” Hutcheson observed this depended upon “the moral sense of the spectator.” As he restated “men approve rewarding all kind affections. And if it will promote public good to promise rewards to publicly useful actions from whatsoever affections they proceed, it will evidence benevolence in the superior to do so.”<sup>65</sup>

Returning to the claims of his imagined antagonists Hutcheson recounted how “some strongly assert...that to make an action rewardable the agent should have had

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<sup>60</sup> T4, p. 165, p. 167, p. 167, p. 167, and p. 167.

<sup>61</sup> T4, p. 169. Throughout T4 Hutcheson uses kind affection to denote the emotions that bind individuals together which he termed benevolence in T2.

<sup>62</sup> T4, p. 170.

<sup>63</sup> See chapter four.

<sup>64</sup> T4, p. 170.

inclinations to evil as well as to good.” Hutcheson was puzzled as to what could be meant by such an assertion. He accepted it to be indeed true “that men judge of the strength of kind affections generally by the contrary motives of self-love which they surmount.” However, this was an inadequate gauge as it did not account for the benevolence and love of the deity towards its creations. Hutcheson condemned the holders of this stance for their “poor idea of rewardableness” which he believed they had “taken from the poverty and impotence of human governors.”<sup>66</sup> In a vision of the practical mechanics of government Hutcheson illustrated how as

Their [the governors'] funds are soon exhausted; they cannot make happy all those whose happiness they desire. Their little stores must be frugally managed. None must be rewarded for what good they will do without reward, or for abstaining from evils to which they are not inclined. Rewards must be kept for the insolent minister who without reward would fly in the face of his prince; for the turbulent demagogue, who will raise factions if he is not bribed; for the covetous, mean-spirited but artful citizen who will serve his country no farther than it is for his private interest.<sup>67</sup>

Abandoning this avenue of debate to consider whether actions were rewardable, the rewarding of which the observer actually approved, Hutcheson noted that this was to say little beyond that we approved of the action, whether it was actually rewarded or not. The moral sense therefore provided a sufficient guide to our considerations. Moreover such a definition included the rewarding of all actions inspired by “pure unmixed benevolence, prepollent good affections, such weak benevolence as will not without reward overcome apparently contrary motives of self-love, unmixed self-love which by prospect of reward may serve the public [and] self-love which by assistance of rewards may overbalance some malicious affections.”<sup>68</sup> Finally, Hutcheson averred

if men's affections are naturally good, and if there be in their fellows no quality which would necessarily raise malice in the observer, but on the contrary all qualities requisite to excite at least benevolence or compassion, it may be justly said to be in the power of everyone, by due attention, to prevent any malicious affections and to excite in himself kind affections toward all.<sup>69</sup>

Thus, Hutcheson clarified his belief in the power of the individual to organise and direct moral life; “the intricate debates about human liberty do not affect what is here alleged concerning our moral sense of affections and actions.”<sup>70</sup> Man was free to co-ordinate and control his emotional life, but was not free of it. Man was an emotional and moral animal,

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<sup>65</sup> T4, p. 170.

<sup>66</sup> T4, p. 170, p. 170 and p. 171.

<sup>67</sup> T4, pp 171-2.

<sup>68</sup> T4, p. 172.

<sup>69</sup> T4, p. 173.

generating values through interaction and the operation of divinely given capacities. He now considered the extent to which knowledge of and regard for a deity and its desires was a prerequisite of moral activity.

As Hutcheson realised “some imagine that to make an action virtuous it is necessary that the agent should have previously known his action to be acceptable to the deity and have undertaken it chiefly with design to please or obey him.” However, it was his considered opinion that “if this reasoning be just, the best of men are infinitely evil.” Most virtuous acts were inspired by habit and not by immediate consideration of the desires of the deity “an habitual intention is not a present act of love to the deity influencing our actions more than actual love to creatures, which this argument requires, but a prior general resolution not at present repeated.”<sup>71</sup>

Hutcheson posited a series of propositions of which he admitted “men must convince themselves by reflection” but he deemed necessary to any attempt “to find what is just on this subject.”<sup>72</sup> These included the assertion that “there is in mankind such a disposition naturally that they desire the happiness of any known sensitive nature.” Equally Hutcheson assumed that “our understanding and power are limited.” This implied “we cannot know many other natures, nor is our utmost power capable of promoting the happiness of many.” Therefore, we are confronted with choosing how to direct our actions to benefit those closest to us, followed by the general good. Hutcheson recognised human emotions dictated that “certain qualities...excite stronger degrees of good will and determine our attention to their interests while that of others is neglected.” Thus “the ties of blood, benefits conferred upon us, and the observation of virtue in others, raise much more vigorous affections than that general benevolence which we may have toward all.”<sup>73</sup>

It was this last category, the observation of virtue in others, which enabled Hutcheson to apply his scheme to the deity

it follows, that if there were any nature incomparably more excellent than any of our fellow creatures, from whom also we ourselves, and all others, had received the greatest benefits...not loving such a being...must evidence a much greater defect in virtue than a like want of love toward our fellow creatures....our affections toward him arise in the same manner as toward our fellows, in proportion to our attention to the causes of love in him and the goodness of our temper.<sup>74</sup>

However, he admitted that, “upon this scheme of the divine happiness it is not easy to account how our love to him could excite us to promote the happiness of our fellows,”

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<sup>70</sup> T4, p. 173.

<sup>71</sup> T4, p. 175.

<sup>72</sup> T4, p. 176 and p. 175.

<sup>73</sup> T4, p. 176.

although our desire to imitate the deity acted as an incentive. Required to make the system work was the further assumption “that the deity has such perceptions of approbation or dislike toward actions as we have ourselves.” This would induce us to follow his prescriptions since “we can scarce avoid imagining that the frequent recurring of events disapproved must be uneasy to any nature” so constituted. By placing the deity within the great chain of being, linked to human kind through emotions of benevolence and love “our love to the deity will directly excite us to all manner of beneficent actions.”<sup>75</sup>

Hutcheson then examined “what degrees or kinds of affections are necessary to obtain the simple approbation of innocence.” He accepted “it is not every small degree of kind affections which we approve.” He continued “there must be some proportion of kind affections to the other faculties in any nature...to obtain approbation.”<sup>76</sup> The mixture of self-love with benevolence ensured that some measure of their relative power be ascertained before an observer deem the actor intrinsically good or bad. Although “it is not easy to fix precisely that degree which we approve as innocent by our moral sense,” he proposed that as

mankind are capable of large extensive ideas of great societies...[so] it is expected of them, that their general benevolence should continually direct and limit, not only their selfish affections, but even their nearer attachments to others, that their desire of public good, and aversion to public misery, should overcome at least their desire of positive private advantages, either to themselves or their particular favourites; so as to make them abstain from any action which would be positively pernicious or hurtful to mankind, however beneficial it might be to themselves or their favourites.<sup>77</sup>

Hutcheson was convinced that “the desire of positive private good is weaker than aversion to private evil, or pain.” Equally he believed “our desire of the positive good of others is weaker than our aversion to their misery.” Thus he concluded “it seems at least requisite to [the judging of an act as grounded in] innocence that the stronger public affection...should surmount the weaker private affection.” Hutcheson then articulated his vision of moral philosophy as the attempt “not to find out at how cheap a rate we can purchase innocence, but to know what is most noble, generous and virtuous in life.”<sup>78</sup> In a summation of his positive thesis Hutcheson suggested that this

consists in sacrificing all positive interests and bearing all private evils for the public good and in submitting also the interests of all smaller systems to the interests of the whole without any other

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<sup>74</sup> T4, pp 177-8.

<sup>75</sup> T4, p. 178, p. 179, p. 179 and p. 179.

<sup>76</sup> T4, p. 180, p. 180 and pp 180-1.

<sup>77</sup> T4, p. 181.

<sup>78</sup> T4, p. 182.

exception or reserve, than this, that every man may look upon himself as a part of this system and consequently not sacrifice an important private interest to a less important interest of others.<sup>79</sup>

The role of the deity in this holistic vision of social virtue was “very difficult to fix.” Hutcheson realised that “positive virtue toward the deity must go farther than a resolute abstaining from offence.” So too was it “scarce conceivable that any good temper can want such affections toward the deity...as were above supposed necessary to innocence.” This was related, not to revelation, but to facts determined by the moral sense. These were the natural laws of deference to the deity; rules Hutcheson generalised so that “every one’s heart may inform him” of their content.<sup>80</sup>

Hutcheson continued his disquisition by considering “how far want of attention to the deity can argue want of good affections.”<sup>81</sup> He opined that

attention to a deity apprehended as good and governing the universe, will increase the moment of beneficence in any good agent various ways, such as, by prospects of reward, either present or future; by improving his temper through observation of so amiable a pattern, or by raising sentiments of gratitude toward the deity a part of whose happiness the agent may imagine depends upon the happiness of the universe.<sup>82</sup>

However, Hutcheson was adamant that “we must not hence imagine that in order to produce greater virtue in ourselves we should regard the deity no farther than merely to abstain from offences.” Only the disinterested pursuit of the common good constituted virtuous action. He claimed that “universal experience” proved “we approve...actions which are not thus intended toward the deity.” Citing empirical evidence observed in daily life, he recalled the image of “a generous compassionate heart which, at first view of the distress of another, flies impatiently to his relief, or spares no expense to accomplish it, [and] meets with strong approbation from every observer who has not perverted his sense of life by school-divinity or philosophy.”<sup>83</sup>

Ultimately, Hutcheson conceded that although love of the deity was indeed natural and moral, as “no finite mind can retain at once a multiplicity of objects, so it cannot always retain any one object.”<sup>84</sup> The human being had a series of desires, of which love of the deity was but a particular case of the love of others that inspired all virtue. Love of the deity was a category within, not the definition of virtue

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<sup>79</sup> T4, pp 182-3.

<sup>80</sup> T4, p. 183.

<sup>81</sup> T4, p. 187.

<sup>82</sup> T4, p. 188.

<sup>83</sup> T4, p. 189, p. 190 and pp 190-1.

<sup>84</sup> T4, p. 191.



it seems probable that however we must look upon that temper as exceedingly imperfect, inconstant and partial, in which gratitude toward the universal benefactor, admiration and love of the supreme original beauty, perfection and goodness, are not the strongest and most prevalent affections; yet particular actions may be innocent, nay virtuous, where there is no actual intention of pleasing the deity influencing the agent.<sup>85</sup>

In sum, Hutcheson's commitment to a vision of a democratic and emotional morality, generated through social bonds and communicative ties, forced him to exclude the absolute necessity of obedience to the deity acting as a definition of virtue. Obedience was given freely to those we admired and not imposed upon us from a higher authority. The tension between free will and obedience was resolved through an appeal to man's sense of morality, thus completing the circle of individual desires and social norms. Man ascribed to those norms he found agreeable and lived by the rules of the society to which he pledged his allegiance. The radicalism of this vision of social virtue came to the fore with Hutcheson's acceptance that neither knowledge nor love of the deity was a prerequisite for living a moral life. That position alone sufficed to generate controversy when he removed to Glasgow.<sup>86</sup>

Nor was Hutcheson alone in Ireland in addressing the paradox of free will and authority. Even within his circle of friends the issue was under scrutiny. As early as the second of the *Hibernicus letters*, published on Saturday, 10 April 1725, James Arbuckle had turned his mind to this most puzzling of matters: "Among all the questions that have ever been handled in the Schools, [he remarked] or exercised the thoughts of curious and speculative minds, there is none has raised more dust, made greater noise, or been argued with such length and solemnity of disputation, as the inquiry into the origin of evil."<sup>87</sup>

Arbuckle ascribed the vast bulk of actual wrongdoing to "a perverted sense of life and its enjoyments." As he explained "we settle our affections on objects that have no relation to our happiness; and neglecting the real goods of life repine at providence." He separated indolence and ingratitude from the "real misery in the world" and asserted "It is a melancholy reflection, and not very honourable to mankind, but yet it is a truth that most of the sorrowful countenances we behold, owe their discomposure to causes infinitely less important than those which the dexterity of a tooth drawer or corn cutter can remove."<sup>88</sup>

All of this pettiness in the sentiments of man, which in his small-minded manner man ascribed to the evils of the world, Arbuckle attributed to "the want of a due balance to

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<sup>85</sup> T4, p. 194.

<sup>86</sup> See chapter three and the conclusion.

<sup>87</sup> HL, 2, 10 April 1725, p. 9.

<sup>88</sup> HL, p. 10, p. 10 and pp 10-1

our affections.” The habit of attributing “a false estimate of the worth of things” left us open to unhappiness and discontent, pain and misery.<sup>89</sup> The thrust of his thesis was that

When we overlook the necessaries, and easy accommodations of life we are in possession of, and suffer the imagination to run in chase of foreign objects, it is scarce possible but we must meet with endless disappointments. If our desires exceed the limits of nature how can we propose to gratify them? And are not all those desires unnatural and excessive, whose objects are either fictitious or at least of such a kind that rational joy and delight may be obtained without them?<sup>90</sup>

Having asserted this principle, Arbuckle provided some examples. He turned his gaze upon the figures of the town, utilising caricatures easily recognised by the readers of the *Dublin Weekly Journal*:

The *beau monde* are set upon dress and show, and have their affections as full of embroidery and tinsel as their clothes. Among the fair sex, a tea equipage is very frequently the highest of their wishes; and an involuntary fracture committed there more grievously resented than a wilful and premeditated one upon their honour.<sup>91</sup>

Nor was Arbuckle’s attention just drawn to the fashionable urban dwellers of the coffee-shops and taverns of the town. His reflection’s included such lesser lights as men who “carrying the mien and garb of philosophers, run riot on the rubbish and refuse of nature, providing it only bore the character of something strange and exotic.”<sup>92</sup> The truth was that “pursuits of this sort, however successful, can never procure us true and durable felicity.” Man was a creature of desire, and if his wants were to be sated, they had to be controlled. The world was unable to satisfy such sensuous and wanton creatures. Thus, echoing both the Stoic theory of self-control and Hutcheson’s theory of the passions, the necessity lay upon men to co-ordinate, contain and control the urge for excess.

As Arbuckle explained “the pursuits of avarice and ambition, which are the governing passions of the busy world...defeat their own ends, by engaging men’s attention too much, and over long to the means.” This misdirection of men’s energies, towards the pursuit of means rather than towards those of ends, only resulted in greater dissatisfaction for the actor. What made matters worse was “it seems to be here as it is in hunting, the pleasure of the chase is more valued than the purchase of the prey, though the latter is the only reason that can justify the toil of the former.” The only answer was for the agent to reflect on what is attainable rather than chase after phantoms: “To follow nature is the true way to both peace and pleasure.” He did not believe this limitation on man’s desires was a

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<sup>89</sup> HL, p. 11.

<sup>90</sup> HL, pp 11-2.

<sup>91</sup> HL, p. 12.

hardship, for not only did it restrict the likelihood that man would confront disappointment, it enabled him to accomplish his goals. As Arbuckle expressed it: “For my own part, I am surprised that any man who has health and liberty, can repine at his condition.”<sup>93</sup> People ought to be content enough with those.

Therefore the key to health and happiness lay, in the careful pursuit of moderate ambitions. The essence of the good life was, as Aristotle believed, to find the middle path. As Arbuckle admitted:

A moderate fortune, it is true, will not allow us a stately house, elegant gardens, fine equipage, and numerous attendants; but then, it is free from that multitude of cares to which a greater affluence is exposed. And the great pleasures of life continue much the same in both states. The window of a cottage may afford as many beautiful objects, as the gallery of a prince. And why should we languish for the copies, when we can enjoy the originals, or at least originals of the same kind, and equally lovely, without employing the hand of a Titian or Caraccio? The meanest habitation may still be considered as an apartment of the great universe: and we need but go into the open air to see how magnificently and commodiously we are lodged.<sup>94</sup>

The origin of evil was also the subject of an extended disquisition published in 1702 by the Anglican Archbishop of Dublin, William King. Moreover, Hutcheson met the author of the *Essay*, which he read in its Latin edition.<sup>95</sup> In sending him a copy of the *Inquiry into the origin of beauty and virtue*, Hutcheson included a short letter:

May it please your Grace,

The author of the book which you will receive along with this letter, thought it proper not to be known as the author till he found out how it would be received. His diffidence of its success hindered him from presenting a copy of it to your grace sooner, but since he has found that it has pleased some persons of distinction, he begins to presume that it will not be disagreeable to your grace, and would willingly hope that he shall make some small return in kind for the great pleasure he has very lately received, upon a subject that had long employed his thoughts, from the author *De origine mali*.

I am, may it please your grace,

Your grace's most obedient humble servant

Francis Hutcheson<sup>96</sup>

This letter, which suggested the precarious nature of Hutcheson's position in the city and his awareness of the risks of publication, served him well. It acted as an

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<sup>92</sup> HL, p. 13.

<sup>93</sup> HL, p. 13, p. 14, p. 14 and p. 14.

<sup>94</sup> HL, p. 15.

<sup>95</sup> The EOE was not translated until the edition by Edmund Law of 1731. Law was the Bishop of Carlisle.

<sup>96</sup> F. Hutcheson to W. King, in *HMC*, Report II, Appendix 28, (London, 1874), p. 255. This is a transcript of TCD Ms 1995-2008/2125.

introduction to the Archbishop and opened up an unusual avenue of dialogue and debate. For the two men evidently found each other to be congenial company and developed a bond of real use to Hutcheson. As Leechman recounted:

Archbishop King, the author of the book, *De origine mali*, held Dr. Hutcheson in great esteem and his friendship was of great use to him in an affair which might otherwise have been very troublesome to him and perhaps ended in putting an entire stop to his usefulness in that place. There were two several attempts made to prosecute Mr. Hutcheson, in the Archbishop's court, for daring to take upon him the education of youth, without having qualified himself by subscribing the ecclesiastical canons, and obtaining a licence from the Bishop. Both these attempts were effectually discouraged by his Grace, with expressions of hearty displeasure against the persons who were so forward as to commence them. And at the same time he assured him that he needed be under no apprehension of disturbance from that quarter, as long as it continued in his power to prevent it.<sup>97</sup>

It should be noted that Leechman's anecdote is problematic for two reasons. First, the anecdote is not consistent with the legislative environment that pertained in the 1720s. The legislation disqualifying dissenters from founding or running an educational institution had been rescinded as part of the 1719 Toleration Act.<sup>98</sup> Indeed it may have been the remission of the penal legislation in this regard that inspired the Wood Street congregation to invest their financial muscle in the academy. This implies that the rationale for King ignoring any attempts to prosecute Hutcheson was not simple good will on the bishop's part, but that Hutcheson's antagonists (if indeed there were any) were ill-informed as to the legal status of Hutcheson's institution.

The second problem concerns the personality of Archbishop King. William King was born on 1 May 1650 in Antrim, of Scottish Presbyterian parents. He was educated in Trinity College Dublin attaining a degree in 1667. While there he converted to Anglicanism and entered the church, being posted to the diocese of Tuam in 1674. He moved to St. Werburgh's in Dublin in 1679, before gaining elevation to the Bishopric of Derry on 25 January 1690/1. He deputised for the fleeing Archbishop of Dublin [Francis Marsh] in the Glorious Revolution, and was imprisoned by James II. On 11 March 1702/3 he was translated to the bishopric of the capital city, where he died on 8 May 1729.

Despite his Presbyterian origins, King was by temperament and intellectual conviction a high churchman.<sup>99</sup> In a prayer attributed to King's hand the basic foundations and role of the Episcopal church were made explicit:

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<sup>97</sup> PSMP, pp viii-ix.

<sup>98</sup> For the Toleration Act see chapter two.

<sup>99</sup> Sean Connolly for example describes King as a "Tory and High Church[man]." See S. Connolly, *Religion, law and power: the making of Protestant Ireland, 1660-1760*, (Oxford, 1992), p. 301. For a discussion of King's

O merciful God, who hast founded thy Church, and for the preservation of order and discipline, hast committed the Keys of Heaven to the Ministers thereof, charging them to reprove, rebuke, and admonish thy people with all authority, and to cut off from the Communion of the faithful, such as continue obstinate and disobedient: Grant, we beseech thee, that they who shall exercise this power in the Assemblies of thy Saints, which are to be held in this place [newly consecrated Churches] may always faithfully discharge that most sacred trust, and so use the severity of discipline, that it may tend to the good of the whole, reform the wicked, and encourage the obedient, and even bring those, who are cut off thereby from the society of Christians, to a sense of their guilt, that their souls may be saved in the Day of the Lord.<sup>100</sup>

As well as being a doctrinaire upholder of the Church of Ireland's claim to authority, King was an able administrator. He made his reputation as Bishop of Derry where he was an effective, innovative leader; working hard to restore the Anglican Church to a position of strength following the Glorious Revolution.<sup>101</sup> In doing this, he confronted the Presbyterian community that dominated the demography of the diocese. As Lord Galway recognised, writing to the secretary of state, James Vernon: "The Bishop of Derry torments them [the Presbyterians within the diocese] about marriages, the Bishop of Raphoe [Robert Huntington] with prayers at funerals. The Presbyterians are really in the wrong, and the greater the pressure put upon them the more obstinate they become."<sup>102</sup> Indeed King's notoriety as an intransigent churchman was gained through his polemics against the Presbyterian creed.<sup>103</sup>

King's instinctive and reasoned opposition to the Presbyterian community continued throughout his life. Although he was a realist as to the limits of his power when confronted with governmental determination, he did not balk at opposing any efforts to dilute the penal legislation against dissenters. When the Toleration Act of 1719 was first mooted by the English administration, King averred that "as to the Presbyterians, I persuade myself that his majesty is too well apprised of his true interest to give them any other countenance, than the fair benefit of the laws, and I think no man ought to grudge

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ecclesiology see J. Richardson, *William King: man of faith and reason*, Ph.D. NUI Maynooth, 1998, particularly chapter three.

<sup>100</sup> Bolton credits King with devising this prayer and cites the prayer in full. See F. R. Bolton, *The Caroline tradition of the Church of Ireland*, (London, 1958), p. 44.

<sup>101</sup> See J. C. Beckett, "William King's administration of the diocese of Derry, 1691-1703," in *Irish Historical Studies*, 4, (1944-5), pp 164-80.

<sup>102</sup> Lord Galway to J. Vernon, 24 July 1699, *CSPd*, 1699-1700, p. 241.

<sup>103</sup> For a summary of King's polemical assault on the Presbyterians and on his debate with Joseph Boyse in particular see P. Kilroy, *Protestant dissent and controversy in Ireland, 1660-1714*, (Cork, 1994), pp 171-93.

that, I am sure I never did and never shall.”<sup>104</sup> When confronted with the terms of the Act, King was appalled by the leniency of the legislation telling a correspondent of how

We had a very bustling and struggling session of parliament, all were resolute against the meddling with it [the Test] and more strongly inculcated in his Majesty's answers to the several addresses of the Lords and Commons each signed with his own hand, notwithstanding which, they continued resolute as to the Test. But there was a difference between the bill the Commons brought in and the act that passed in England for exempting Presbyterians from several penalties and which the generality of the House did not observe, and which consisted in leaving out the subscription to several articles to which the Presbyterians in England are to subscribe and the profession of faith which the Quakers are obliged to make....As it stands Jews, Turks, Deists, Pagans &c., may all set up for teachers if they take the state oaths.<sup>105</sup>

By November 1719, King was reporting to the Archbishop of Canterbury his displeasure at the passage of the bill. As he wrote, in a manner touching on the last of his great campaigns, the desire to keep the Church of Ireland stocked by Irish men:

Our toleration bill passed after long and warm debates. I will not trouble Your Grace with a detail of them. His Majesty in answer to our address was pleased to press with extraordinary warmth our gratifying the Presbyterians and in truth we have granted them such a wide toleration, as I think it not precedent in the whole earth. The bill could not have passed if our brethren [the bishops] that come to us from your side of the water had not deserted us and gone over to the adverse party.<sup>106</sup>

What King hoped to achieve was a unity of church and state centred on the recognition of the legitimacy of the Anglican creed. The Presbyterian denial of this excluded them from the political nation as much as from the ecclesiastical establishment. In arguing against state toleration in disputes with the Presbyterians, King understood himself to be following a policy of persuasion:

I exhorted the clergy...especially that they should hold conferences with dissenters, and strive to lead them to conformity with the church, they endeavoured to persuade me it would be in vain, for hitherto their prejudices and dislikes had been inveterate, so that it could not be hoped that without force, or a miracle, they could be brought over; but I led the way in giving the thing a trial, and in parish visitations, where very often those frequenting them, either from curiosity or business, were mostly dissenters, I made addresses to them which seem to flow from the occasion, rather than by design, in which we argued concerning some point between them and the church, and not unprofitably, some being persuaded, others driven to doubt, but all acknowledged that they heard for

<sup>104</sup> W. King to Molineux, Mount Merrion, 28 September 1714, TCD Ms 2536/778. Cited in J. Richardson, *Archbishop William King: Man of faith and reason*, Ph. D. Maynooth, 1998, p. 106. See also pp 106-9 for a discussion of King's attitude to the Toleration Act.

<sup>105</sup> W. King to Dr. Charlett, Dublin, 7 January 1719, TCD Ms 750/5/240-2.

<sup>106</sup> W. King to Archbishop of Canterbury, Dublin, 10 November 1719, TCD Ms 750/5/206-7

themselves some new thing in favour of the church by law established, and stronger arguments than they thought could be pleaded.<sup>107</sup>

Faced with the failure of this means of achieving his ends, King was not adverse to the use of state power to coerce recalcitrant dissenters into conformity.

Yet despite the political tensions embedded in the heart of their relationship, Hutcheson and King had a number of common interests that ensured a philosophic meeting of minds. It was less that they could agree on conclusions, than that they struggled with similar issues. This commonality of philosophical problems ensured the two men communicated despite their overt differences of station, confession and political persuasion. Both Hutcheson and King tussled with the problem of free will and the existence of evil. This was the central intellectual concern of King's *Essay on the origin of evil* and Hutcheson's *Illustrations*.

King could not accept any understanding of creation which did not explicitly refer to the divine force he believed had constituted that totality. Hence he refused to permit the existence of a pre-determined, mechanistic universe, shorn of emotional value or ethical component. Equally the predestinarian thinking of the Presbyterians was uncongenial for a man of Hutcheson's temperament. It also contradicted his philosophical optimism concerning human good nature. Both men were also at pains to separate themselves from free-thinkers like John Toland and Thomas Emlyn.

The notion of free will King promulgated was a radical vision of liberty. Designed by a divine prime mover, man was invested with an ability to exercise choice, free from the drives of the passions and desires. As King explained "we choose objects which are contrary to all the appetites, contrary to reason, and destitute of all appearance of good, perhaps for this only reason, that we may assert our liberty of election."<sup>108</sup> This invested the object chosen with a good in relation to the agent that was wholly dependent on the fact of its being freely chosen:

Nothing in the creation is either good or bad to him [God] before his election, he has no appetite to gratify with the enjoyment of things without him. He is therefore absolutely indifferent to all external things, and can neither receive benefit nor harm from any of them. What then should determine his will to act? Certainly nothing without him; therefore he determines himself, and creates to himself a kind of appetite by choosing. For when the choice is made, he will have as great attention and regard to the effectual procuring of that which he has chosen, as if he was excited to

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<sup>107</sup> W. King, *Autobiography*, p. 35. Cited in J. C. Beckett, "William King's administration of the diocese of Derry, 1691-1703," in *Irish Historical Studies*, 4, (1944-5), p. 172.

<sup>108</sup> EOE, p. 212.

this endeavour by a natural and necessary appetite. And he will esteem such things as tend to accomplish these elections, good, such as obstruct them, evil.<sup>109</sup>

The ability to choose not only infused the external universe with a moral code but provided the human agent with a means of becoming happy. As King argued:

Happiness consists in elections...[as it is] granted to arise from a due use of those faculties and powers which every one enjoys; and since this power of determining ourselves to actions, and pleasing ourselves in them, is the most perfect of all, whereby we are the most conscious of our existence, and our approach towards God, our chief happiness will consist in the proper use of it, nor can anything be absolutely agreeable to us but what is chosen.<sup>110</sup>

This thesis had a serious implication. King was arguing that man was morally virtuous, and thus happiest when following the will of his creator through his own free will. Yet while the two ought to coincide, in practice this often did not occur. The individual could choose to behave in a manner that ignored God's precepts and desires. He might choose evil over good. That was the agent's free will and was inherent in man's existence as a moral being.

Therefore one could not, in King's view, be virtuous without having the potential to be vicious.<sup>111</sup> These vicious determinations, King contended, might originate from five separate sources within our nature and circumstance:

This may proceed, first from error or ignorance, secondly from inadvertency or negligence. Thirdly from levity. Fourthly from a contracted habit. Fifthly from other appetites implanted in us by nature. Not that the will can be determined by these or any thing else which is external; but that from hence it takes a handle and occasion of determining itself, which it would not have had otherwise.<sup>112</sup>

King proposed a thesis of negative liberty. Freedom rested on the ability of man to overcome the demands of his desires. That this involved the election of evil as much as of good was the responsibility that God had given to his creations through an act of generosity and virtue. The existence of free will legitimated the concept of morality. Without freedom agents could not be responsible for their actions.

It is in this sense that King's theory of liberty and explanation of evil is an inherently political vision of the moral universe. Freedom is intrinsic to the exercise of virtue and the role of the state is thus downplayed. It is the state's role, as it is that of God, to underpin the exercise of choice by the citizens of the polis. It is not, and cannot be, the task of the state to rule absolutely; to determine the rights and wrongs of all actions and to

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<sup>109</sup> EOE, p. 185.

<sup>110</sup> EOE, pp 215-6.

<sup>111</sup> EOE, p. 235.

<sup>112</sup> EOE, p. 222.



infringe upon the choices made by its citizenry. Instead the state ought to set the basic rules of polite and virtuous living and leave the citizens to flourish unhampered by legislative encumbrances. The main task of the state therefore is to determine who is and who is not a citizen and to legislate for their inclusion or exclusion from the liberties of the citizenry.

Alongside a shared concern with the puzzle of evil and free will, King and Hutcheson legitimised their respective confessional communities by interpreting the empirical evidence offered to them by history. In 1691 King published the *State of the Protestants of Ireland*, justifying the Anglican community's political hegemony by an appeal to providence. King revealed special providence to be at work in the Glorious Revolution in Ireland, where the Anglicans had been tested and rewarded for their loyalty.

As King interpreted the events of 1688-90, the ambition of James II to install himself as a Catholic absolutist had been undone by a series of providential events. It opened with a denial of the theory of passive obedience. In the face of a monarch who intends to destroy the community over which he reigns, King argued that the community was entitled to save itself through active resistance. This could only be justified in very limited circumstances however, when the community faced the threat of enslavement by a monarch bent on absolutism. The empirical evidence told the observer that "we shall find every nation happy and thriving at home, and easy to their neighbours abroad, according as they have preserved themselves from slavery, whereas all countries under unlimited monarchies, decay in their strength and improvements."<sup>113</sup>

In this very particular case King thought it evident that James had lost his legitimacy through repeated acts of tyranny. To King's mind it was worse if one submitted to the shackles which the despot employed, than if one rose up against the constituted authority. This being so in theory, the practical defence of the Protestant community in Ireland from 1688 to 1690 was justified and William was right to intervene when the political project of James II was evidently aimed at the ruin of the Protestant religion. That this project was underway ensured that foreign assistance and internal resistance was the only route left open to the beleaguered community.<sup>114</sup>

The book was then structured to address these concerns. William's need to maintain his security against Catholics wherever they might strike a blow for their plan for universal monarchy only confirmed the providential nature of his actions. King outlined this plot in his sermon of November 1690. Through a range of duplicitous measures, the King of France had attempted to overthrow the Protestant elite of England and Ireland, as

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<sup>113</sup> SPI, p. 4.

<sup>114</sup> For these provisions see SPI, p.5

part of his greater designs for universal monarchy and the enslavement of Europe.<sup>115</sup> These measures varied from attempted murder to the signing of a secret treaty with James to the attempt to pass off the pretender as James' legitimate offspring. The enemies of Protestantism sowed discord among the faithful: "The common conspirators against our peace, liberty and religion, blew the coals and kindled a flame amongst us that was like to devour us all, and 'tis God's great mercy that we have escaped it."<sup>116</sup>

That James was complicit in the destruction of the laws and freedoms of the Protestant community in Ireland was illustrated in the opening of the *State of the Protestants*. There King described the opening years of the reign. The initial confraternity between Catholics and Protestants, which existed upon James' accession to the throne, was removed through the influence of ill-advised counsellors, who led him to emphasise his religiosity and to favour Catholics over his loyal Protestant friends. That this was so was illustrated by King's admission that some close to James had told of impending disaster:

After his late majesty came to the crown, they [the Roman Catholics] openly declared that they liked no government but that of France: that they would make the king as absolute here as that king was there; they affirmed both publicly and privately with many oaths, that they would in a short time have our estates and churches; that if they suffered us to live, they would make us hewers of wood and drawers of water: that Ireland must be a Catholic country whatever it cost, and as for the English, they would make them as poor devils as when they came first into Ireland: and they assured us that this was no rash surmise of their own, but that it was premeditated and resolved, and that we should quickly find it by the effects; of which they were so confident (though we could not believe them) that some of the more serious amongst them advised their Protestant friends in private, with all earnestness to change their religion.<sup>117</sup>

The bulk of the text documented the accuracy of this assessment. King marshalled evidence of James' malicious intent and listed the sufferings of the Anglicans of Ireland at the hands of their monarch. Divided into twenty sections the complaints ranged over the political and ecclesiastic spectrum from the removal of men from state offices to the imprisonment of Protestants in breach of *habeas corpus*.

Finally, King addressed the options for preserving liberty which the Protestants might have pursued:

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<sup>115</sup> King described how the Pope, The King of France and the Turkish emperor were in collusion in their attempts to subdue and enslave Europe. See EDFs, p. 9. He then offered some empirical evidence: "In short, by this conspiracy, the Protestants of France are already destroyed: those of Savoy turned out of their country: those of Holland have been invaded, and forced to cover themselves with their waters. And as for us in Ireland, I need not tell you how we have been used." EDFs, p. 10. For other examples of the fear among English Protestants concerning the historical pattern of European confessional history at this time see S. Pincus, "The English debate on the universal monarchy," in *A union for empire: political thought and the union of 1707*, (J. Robertson ed.), (Cambridge, 1995), pp 37-62.

<sup>116</sup> EDFs, p. 8.

We had nothing left us to oppose to the invasions made on our liberties, properties, lives and religion; that neither the laws, nor the king's protections and articles, or declarations in our favour. That neither particular services and merits towards the royal interest, nor King James' natural compassion and merciful disposition, nor lately his own interest in protecting and preserving us, could secure us; but that notwithstanding all these, we were brought to the very brink of destruction.<sup>118</sup>

It was then that King revealed the divine hand shaping the community's history. The intervention by the Stadtholder of Holland in the affairs of first England, and subsequently of Ireland was "a providence of which we so little dreamt, and which was so strange, so unexpected, and so effectual, that we cannot but believe something extraordinary in it."<sup>119</sup> It was the direct intervention of God in the history of men, and an example of special providence in favour of His chosen people. To reject such an opportunity would have been sinful, as well as merely imprudent.

Nor did the Anglicans act hastily, for they "did not make the least step to right ourselves by force, till God's providence appeared signally for these kingdoms."<sup>120</sup> By restraining themselves, and bearing the sufferings imposed without complaint, they earned the mercy and vindication the Stadtholder's intervention brought. God looked upon his chosen people and saved them from the dominion of their enemies at the very moment when the Catholic project of absolutism seemed certain of success.

King expanded on this narrative of divine providence in a sermon delivered before the Lords Justices of Ireland in St. Patrick's Cathedral on 16 November 1690. He took as his text Psalm cvii, 2-3: "Let them give thanks whom the Lord hath redeemed, and delivered from the hand of the enemy. And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north and from the south." This, King explained, was "designed as a solemn return of praise to God for redeeming the Israelites from captivity" going on to draw a parallel with the condition of the Protestants of Ireland.<sup>121</sup> Just as in the biblical tale, the chosen people were delivered through a series of remarkable events only explicable as special providence.

In the case of Ireland, King listed some eighteen occurrences that verified the Anglican claim to enjoy divine favour. The personality of the William of Orange and his timely intervention had to be considered as matters of consequence. So too did the incompetence of William's enemies in their handling of the Prince of Wales' birth, and in

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<sup>117</sup> SPI, p. 18

<sup>118</sup> SPI, p. 225

<sup>119</sup> SPI, p. 225

<sup>120</sup> SPI, p. 226

the incompetence of James himself, who stubbornly failed to listen to the wise counsel he was offered, doing things: “irresolutely and by halves.” The trust of the states of Holland in the wise governance of their leader equally stood as a proof of divine providence at work, as was the blindness of James and his ministers to William’s intentions. Once William had landed, providence acted in the shape of James’ desertion of his army for had he stood by them, “there were enough to make a vigorous opposition....It was this opened the way to one of the greatest revolutions that ever happened in that kingdom, almost without a drop of blood; which must be owned as a singular providence”<sup>122</sup> While James’ desertion allowed a political settlement to be achieved in England, it was the existence of a rump Jacobitism among English Protestants that ensured that James could not afford to decimate the Irish Protestant community when he invaded. Ireland acted as a diversion and drew James away from England. William secured his title without overt opposition. Once accomplished William left England and participated in the re-conquest of Ireland. Providence further ensured that the Jacobite troops proved incompetent on the battlefield; panic sweeping through their ranks at the critical time.

All this occurred at a critical juncture in the history of Europe, for as King believed: “Had it but been delayed one week, no body knows what would have been the consequence.”<sup>123</sup> The saving of William in battle, and the delivery of Dublin from siege confirmed his belief that God had intervened decisively in the affairs of men, so as preserve his chosen people from the impending tyranny of the French:

In short, we had not, neither have we yet in our utmost view another chance to save us, our liberties, estates or religion, but this one, of His Majesty’s coming to the rescue of these kingdoms: and his undertaking it has been carried on by such a miraculous chain of providences, that we must acknowledge that it is by the grace of God, that William and Mary are now our King and Queen.<sup>124</sup>

King’s text validated the Anglican sense of a godly mission and justified their dominance of political life in Ireland.

Nor was this interpretation of the place of the Irish Anglicans in God’s plan just a theoretical construct. The belief that Anglicans had undergone a series of tests shored up a practical understanding of the nature of politics on the island. The Anglicans were a

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<sup>121</sup> EDFs, p. 2.

<sup>122</sup> EDFs, p. 15 and p. 17.

<sup>123</sup> EDFs, p. 20.

<sup>124</sup> EDFs, p. 21.

chosen, if threatened, people. It was their task to halt the popish Antichrist and his cohort of political absolutists in Ireland.<sup>125</sup>

In one light, King can be understood as representing the opposite of Hutcheson's latitudinarian Presbyterianism. The hard-line opponent of the dissenters, the believer in the historic purpose of Anglicanism, the proponent of the penal laws and the protagonist in a series of public assaults on the Presbyterian community, King was an unlikely man for Hutcheson to have befriended. Deeply committed to the Church of Ireland and the Anglican interest within Ireland, King represented the thought keeping the Presbyterians in dependence in their dealing with the state. But despite this, Hutcheson's relationship with King operated on two grounds; their historicism, and their desire to free themselves of any taint of political dependency.

Hutcheson understood King's polemical use of history to buttress his confessional community's claims to legitimacy, for he used this rhetorical ploy when challenged by his doctrinaire father to explain his association with King and Carteret. His father had become so concerned about tales of his son in the capital, that he had written to him expressing concern. In a reply, dated 4 August 1726, Francis explained: "I knew there was such a rumour, but reports of that kind are so common and so industriously spread by those who are fond of Converts upon any dissenters meeting with any civility from persons of distinction that I did not imagine they would make any impressions upon my friends." He was distressed at "giving you so much uneasiness;" assuring his father he "would sooner have wrote [to] you on this subject had I apprehended you uneasy about it."<sup>126</sup>

The reassurance John Hutcheson may have derived from Hutcheson's promise to reveal "what I scarce ever owned to anybody else" was short lived. Hutcheson was explicit in his sentiment that "to have singular principles on some points is incident I believe to the best of men – though the publishing them without necessity is too often a sign of vanity." This allowed Hutcheson to draw a crucial distinction between the private understanding of the individual, his conscience, and his public duty in avoiding heterodox exposition. As Hutcheson perceived it "this latter I have always endeavoured to avoid – the former is either innocent in many cases – or a pardonable weakness."<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> For providentialism in the Anglican community in Ireland see J. Q. Hill, "Biblical language and providential destiny in mid-eighteenth-century Irish Protestant patriotism," in *Religion and rebellion*, (J. Devlin and R. Fanning, eds.), (Dublin, 1997), pp 71-83. For an English comparison see J. Spurr, "'Virtue, religion and government': the Anglican uses of providence," in *The politics of religion in restoration England*, (T. Harris, ed.), (London, 1990), pp 29-47.

<sup>126</sup> F. Hutcheson to J. Hutcheson, PRONI, D/971/84/G/1/1A.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.* Hutcheson concluded the letter by reiterating this distinction. "If in these points I am mistaken, [he wrote] I am sure I do no harm to others, since I have kept my mind pretty much to myself in these matters and resolve to do so." F. Hutcheson to J. Hutcheson, PRONI, D/971/84/G/1/1C.

Hutcheson expounded on the nature and content of his disagreements with the Presbyterian orthodoxy in some detail. He explained to his traditionalist father how he believed “the separation of church and state.... seems to me wholly a point of prudence.” He revealed he did “not imagine that either the government or the externals of worship are so determined in the Gospel as to oblige men to one particular way in either.”<sup>128</sup>

Hutcheson resisted assenting to a vision of a godly community determined by Scripture. Instead his stance was historicist, drawing on Locke’s concept of popular rule. “All societies may according to their own prudence choose a form of government in the church and agree upon such external order of worship as they think will do most good to promote the true end of all, real piety and virtue.”<sup>129</sup>

Hutcheson was quick to assure his father that he knew this was no guarantee against conformity. However, as in the *Illustrations*, Hutcheson accepted that man was prone to error. This was crucial to his acceptance of the dissenting practice: “Men may err and act incautiously in rashly choosing an inconvenient form – such as I really look upon the established one to be.”<sup>130</sup> In being confronted with such an occurrence, he established how the individual ought to respond:

When this is done by the majority and yet neither argument nor request will procure any alteration, provided the essentials of religion be preserved entire, it seems then, as to every particular person a question of prudence, whether he will comply or not. That is to say if in his circumstances he can propose to do more good by separation than by conformity the former is his duty, if not the latter.<sup>131</sup>

In raising the vexed issue of the essentials of religion, and in placing moral responsibility on the individual to judge the exact nature of his circumstances, Hutcheson was revealing his debt to and sympathy for the position of his non-subscribing friends. He was also worrying his father, who had drafted a pamphlet in opposition to Abernethy’s stance.<sup>132</sup>

Hutcheson then turned to “apply this closer to the present case.”<sup>133</sup> Rather than accept the claim of legitimacy by the Anglican church, he argued:

The Scotch Church had always a right to insist upon their old way and resist Episcopacy – since it was never regularly introduced, but in a tyrannical manner, contrary to the consent of the people and illegally and cruelly enforced by the most unjustifiable methods and was a less prudent institution or form than their own.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> F. Hutcheson to J. Hutcheson, PRONI, D/971/84/G/1/1A.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> See chapter three.

<sup>133</sup> F. Hutcheson to J. Hutcheson, PRONI, D/971/84/G/1/1A.

<sup>134</sup> F. Hutcheson to J. Hutcheson, PRONI, D/971/84/G/1/1A-B.

The Anglican Church failed three critical tests. First, it was empirically flawed. The empirical evidence he had in mind was the corrupt and tyrannical usage employed by England in dealing with its northern neighbour. In the 1630s the Anglican Church had tried unsuccessfully to introduce Anglican ceremonial practice into Scotland. The attempt to impose a Book of Common Prayer in 1637 had resulted in the Bishop's War. With the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660, matters had not improved. Again Scotland had suffered under the demands of London for religious uniformity, and the massacre of Glencoe was still fresh in the mind. Its history had demonstrated that it was less adequately equipped to uphold what Hutcheson termed "the true end of all [religion], real piety and virtue." Hutcheson also believed the Anglican Church failed on theoretical grounds. It had never received the sanction of "the people" it was endeavouring to serve.<sup>135</sup>

Faced with this abject record, the choice was between an ungodly, tyrannical and unpopular creed and a doctrine in line with older rituals of practice. However, Hutcheson accepted that: "In King Charles the First's reign in England, had I lived then, I would only have enquired whether an actual separation would probably have done more good than the contrary and practised accordingly."<sup>136</sup> The historical foundations of Hutcheson's adherence was further illuminated when he announced:

Before there was any considerable body of dissenters, and while the power of the opposite party was high it would not seem to me to have been any person's duty to have openly separated or to have encouraged others to it to their ruin. I cannot say that in such a case there was any sin in conformity to all parts of the worship Established, at least for laymen.<sup>137</sup>

The relativism of this thesis was emphasised by Hutcheson's observations concerning the historical development of the Presbyterian creed in England. Legitimacy was granted to the new denomination "after the separation was made and great numbers agreed in different forms from what was established;" changes Hutcheson accepted in parentheses were "prudent ones." Once the shift occurred the moral weight fell upon the old orthodoxy to be tolerant of those who had removed themselves. To impose uniformity upon a diverse religious populace smacked of tyranny: "Upon the Restoration the episcopal form turned into a law and most unjustly enforced upon those who thought it absolutely sinful, with the most cruel treatment of many of the best subjects in the nation."<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> F. Hutcheson to J. Hutcheson, PRONI, D/971/84/G/1/1A.

<sup>136</sup> F. Hutcheson to J. Hutcheson, PRONI, D/971/84/G/1/1B.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.* This does problematise Caroline Robbins emphasis on Hutcheson's theory of justified rebellion. See C. Robbins, "'When it is that colonies might turn independent': an analysis of the environment and politics of Francis Hutcheson," in *William and Mary Quarterly*, 11, (1954), pp 214-51.

<sup>138</sup> F. Hutcheson to J. Hutcheson, PRONI, D/971/84/G/1/1B.

In the face of arbitrary mistreatment Hutcheson confirmed “the duty of every man who was convinced of the goodness of the cause to continue their dissent and not to submit to those religious penal laws which it seems to me no magistrate can ever have a right to make.” As he affirmed “the same reasons justify dissent which would justify refusing ship money or any thing commanded by the King in points not belonging to his prerogative.”<sup>139</sup>

This rather conventional Presbyterian separation of church power from state authority was then used by Hutcheson to buttress his own affiliation to the dissenters’:

The dissenters have a right to continue as they are, and as I firmly believe their cause in most of the disputed points with the church is the better, and their method more expedient and conducive to the ends of religion than that which is established, I should look upon it as my duty continually as far as my influence could go to promote the interest of that cause.<sup>140</sup>

This nice calculation on Hutcheson’s part of the net effect of continued adherence to the Presbyterian creed was tempered by the introduction of one provision. Using a rather loaded political analogy, he outlined how

as one who liked a republic or limited monarch better than an absolute monarchy might justify swear[ing] allegiance to an absolute monarchy when there was no hopes of altering the constitution, so I think much more might one receive from such a monarch the largest powers with a view to prevent worse coming into the place as to be more capable of recovering the liberties of his country from a tyrant. So I would not blame any man of my own principles who for very important purposes did conform if the ends proposed were such as would overbalance the damage which the more just cause would sustain by his leaving it.<sup>141</sup>

This complex justification of conversion was central to Hutcheson’s identity as a teacher, a dissenter and a writer. On rare and particular occasions the end, carefully calculated, might legitimate unusual and ostensibly dubious actions. However, as he assured his anxious father “this prospect I see not the least probability of and assure you as little purpose have I of ever acting with other intentions.” Although unable to produce a definitive statement of allegiance, given his sensitivity to the changing nature of historical circumstance, he was arguing for the primacy of local, particular and emotional ties, over more abstract concerns. Only unusual circumstances, similar to those experienced during the 1650s might lead him to reconsider. As Hutcheson assured his father: “I know not any worldly consideration which I could propose or expect by conformity that I would not reject rather than give you the uneasiness I should apprehend from it.”<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*



Hutcheson then offered further grounds for rejecting the established church pointing out how he was “sensible of great corruption, not so much in the constitution of the established church (though it is not free of it) but in the general practice of its members.” This corruption was not universal however, for as Hutcheson demanded that his father accept “they have some of the most valuable men in this age among them.” Hutcheson believed that “it is not every corruption in a church which makes communion with it sinful.” Echoing the thought of Synge, he argued strongly “that were it not for the offence which would be given on all sides by any person who had not obtained already a most undisputed character, it would be advisable to hold communion with all Protestants frequently.” This would illustrate the goodwill binding the two communities despite their divergence in what, following Abernethy, Hutcheson perceived as “trifles – such things as are not determined by any command of God.”<sup>143</sup>

Hutcheson outlined to his father why he left so much in religious matters “to human prudence.” He explained “that I see no such particular distinct orders about the government or worship of the Christian Church in the New Testament as some do allege.”<sup>144</sup> As in his comparison between political and confessional loyalty, he drew a secular analogy

I am sure any of the founders or lawgivers of human societies are much more particular in all the orders of their commonwealths and the several powers of their magistrates and the manner of proceeding in their several offices. From this I imagine no imperfection of the Holy Scriptures – but that much of these external things were left to human prudence.<sup>145</sup>

In contrast to Abernethy, and in line with Boyse, the judge was not the conscience of the believer guided by reason, but the consensus of the community writ large

when the whole body of a people agree in any of these forms which are undetermined in Scripture – unless the corruption be very great, opposition or separation is needless. When a body is already separated upon a more convenient form, if they behave charitably towards others their separation is no sin but rather laudable and they are under no obligation to return.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.* Hutcheson here recommended to his father “Sir James Harrington’s treatise against ordination, against Hammond’s Episcopal form. He seems to me to prove the same as the Presbyterian – that both models were in different places practiced by the Apostles and consequently neither necessary nor lawful.” *Ibid.* This appears to be a reference to James Harrington, “Part two: Concerning ordination against Dr. Henry Hammond,” in *The prerogative of popular government*, (London, 1658), reprinted in J. G. A. Pocock (ed.), *The political works of James Harrington*, (Cambridge, 1977), pp 499-566. Hammond’s work is H. Hammond, *A letter of resolution to six quaeres of present use in the Church of England*, (London, 1653). The issue at stake was whether the clergy were divinely ordained or whether “the choice of clergy is a civil choice, carried out by the civil sovereign.” J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian moment*, (Princeton, 1975), p. 397.

<sup>146</sup> F. Hutcheson to J. Hutcheson, PRONI, D/971/84/G/1/1C.

Hutcheson concluded “things may be left to human prudence to guide;” a restatement of his optimism in human nature and in its manifestation in the historical process.<sup>147</sup>

This shared belief in the working of providence and of the historical legitimacy of their respective communities goes some way towards explaining the nature of Hutcheson’s relationship with the Archbishop of Dublin. Equally it indicates why these men were interested in the problem of evil. If, as they both asserted, the historical process could legitimise their own community, by offering empirical proof of God’s sanction, why then did other illegitimate communities thrive? If the historical process tended towards progress, how did people come to regress, act erroneously, or choose to pursue evil? Why indeed, in a world in which God was ever present, did evil exist? Why did God sanction and enable the exercise of free will in man?

What the shared concern with the historical process conceals is the difference between the two men in answering these questions. While Hutcheson was sympathetic to King’s refutation of deism, he did not agree with the bishop’s conclusions:

If it [free will] means this, ‘that merit is found only in actions done without motive or affection, by mere election, without prepollent desire of one action or end rather than its opposite, or without desire of that pleasure which some suppose follows upon any election by a natural connection’ then let any man consider whether he ever acts in this manner by mere election, without any previous desire.<sup>148</sup>

In a footnote to this passage, Hutcheson made clear the source of this view:

This is the notion of liberty given by the Archbishop of Dublin in his most ingenious book *De origine mali*. This opinion does not represent freedom of election as opposite to all instinct or desire, but rather as arising from the desire of that pleasure supposed to be connected with every election. Upon his scheme there is a motive and end proposed in every election and a natural instinct toward happiness presupposed, though it is such a motive and end as leaves us in perfect liberty since it is a pleasure or happiness not connected with one thing more than another, but following upon the determination itself.<sup>149</sup>

But the emphasis on the historical legitimacy claimed for the confessional communities does provide a clue to why the two men differed in their analysis of the nature of free will. The two men operated in distinctly different historical contexts shaped by their confessional identities. King, as an Irish Anglican possessed a series of what were termed ‘English liberties.’ As he possessed them, it was in his interest to hold on to what he believed to be his rights. This resulted in a vision of liberty as negative. He understood

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<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>148</sup> T4, p. 166.

liberty to be a characteristic of human activity *per se* and as such a legal and ethical right upon which the government should not intrude. In contrast, Hutcheson's confessional loyalty to Presbyterianism left him outside of the remit of the state and of the liberties that King defended. What Hutcheson required was the extension of those rights to those who shared the Protestant root of the matter. He could not defend that which he had not got.

This led to a difference in the interpretation of liberty or freedom to that offered by King in the *Origin of evil*. Where King's primary motivation was to provide a defence of liberties already gained, Hutcheson understood the need to have those liberties underwritten by the wider society. Therefore, rather than providing an analysis of liberty as intrinsic to human nature, Hutcheson believed that freedom was a social construct, a privilege granted by the authorities and not a right which could be granted or withheld. In the *Illustrations* Hutcheson gave an analysis of liberty which saw it as positive, not negative - the freedom to, rather than the freedom from.<sup>150</sup> That this philosophical difference and the social context that inspired it did not result in the two men falling out is a testimony to their capacity to set aside confessional differences and build a friendship in spite of the politics which hampered it.

Still a believer in the value of penal legislation and a defender of the Clarendon code that had disqualified dissenters from running educational institutions, From his diocese of Derry in 1698, King had remarked that of "the local schoolmasters that keep Latin schools they may be cited and I will put them on trial according to the laws &c.. And they will find that I will not let them act against the established laws."<sup>151</sup> But Presbyterian teachers had to be prevented from holding schools not because they were dissenters but because they were uncontrollable. The authorities could not maintain a standard of education or control the content of the schooling.<sup>152</sup>

The key to King's friendship with Hutcheson lies in the second of the concerns isolated here - the problem of dependency. King's interest in political and philosophic dependency may have had its origins in the Glorious Revolution. There the Irish state became militarily dependent on the England although Ireland was the battleground. This interest was heightened by the failure of the Archbishop's political campaigns of the 1700s. King's success in administering the bishopric of Derry raised his profile to the extent that, subsequent to Narcissus Marsh's elevation to the post of Primate of Armagh,

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<sup>149</sup> T4, p. 166n.

<sup>150</sup> For an analysis of this distinction see I. Berlin, "Two concepts of liberty," in *Four essays on liberty*, (Oxford, 1969), pp 118-72.

<sup>151</sup> W. King to Dr. Jenkins, 23 April 1698. Cited in J. C. Beckett, "William King's administration of the diocese of Derry, 1691-1703," in *Irish Historical Studies*, 4, (1944-5), p. 178.

<sup>152</sup> W. King to S. Foley of Down, Jan 1694-5. Cited in *ibid*, p. 178.

he was translated to the Archbishopric of Dublin.<sup>153</sup> From 1703 until his death in 1729, King was a key figure in both the church and state in Ireland. Less than four months after his removal to the capital King was nominated to join the Privy Council of Ireland.<sup>154</sup>

By October of 1703 King had joined forces with the MP for Swords, Robert Molesworth, to back the idea of a legislative union with the English Houses of Parliament. The Journal of the Irish House of Commons reported how on 11 October Molesworth notified the Commons that a committee of the whole House, appointed to consider the state of the nation, had resolved: "That her Majesty be most humbly moved, that through her princely goodness and wisdom and favourable interposition, her subjects of this kingdom may be relieved of the calamities they now lie under, by a full enjoyment of their constitution or a more firm and strict Union with England."<sup>155</sup> Although nothing came of this resolution, the passage of the union of Scotland, completed in 1707, led to a reappraisal of Irish circumstances. In 1706, as the measure was being debated in Scotland, Francis Annesley wrote to King explaining that

As to the intended union it is most certain that Scotland is to have, according to the present terms agreed on, forty-five commoners and sixteen lords, which as so many dead votes one way will be a great stroke in the legislature. It is much to me that no one step is taken by the people of Ireland, to be admitted into the union, where are all your mighty patriots? Sleeping, when they should or at least offer at doing good for your poor nation; those who would have served them must not stir, they are so much under their displeasure and those who ought to be active are only so for their private interest, not for any good to their kingdom.<sup>156</sup>

King subsequently led a campaign to reverse the rise of Irish dependency upon England, which engaged him in a series of political affairs. The actions which he took in support of Dean Swift in the Wood's Halfpence affair have already been documented, but the principle that motivated King's actions there was evident in other areas.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> The translating of Marsh to the Primacy of Armagh is recorded in *CSPd, 1703-4*, p. 280. On 16 February 1703, a note remarks the need to "pass letters &c. appointing &c. William [King] of Derry to the Archbishopric of Dublin and Bishopric of Glendalough, vacant by the translation of Archbishop Marsh to Armagh." *CSPd, 1703-4*, p. 282.

<sup>154</sup> Hampton Court, "To cause William [King] Archbishop of Dublin to be sworn to the Privy Council of Ireland," 10 June 1703, *CSPd, 1703-4*, p. 286.

<sup>155</sup> Report By Molesworth on Act of Union, 11 October 1703, *JHOC*, volume 2, part 1, 1696-1713, p. 333. For a full transcription, see appendix five. This speech was reported back to Nottingham by Southwell on 15 October, writing that: "On Monday 11, Mr. Molesworth made the report from the Committee of the State of the Nation; the substance of which was that the constitution had been mightily shaken by the late method of proceedings in the Trustee Act, and by exercising martial law upon the English Act. Some other things are there enumerated and it concluded with desiring to be restored to their ancient privileges or else to be united to England. Further consideration was postponed." E. Southwell to Nottingham, Dublin, 15 October 1703, *CSPd, 1703-4*, p. 156.

<sup>156</sup> F. Annesley to W. King, 1706, *HMC, Report 2*, Appendix, p. 244.

<sup>157</sup> See chapter five.

Despite coolness caused by their disagreement over the electoral spoils in Swords, King, and Molesworth, co-operated on a committee in the House of Lords in relation to the Sherlock-Annesley case.<sup>158</sup> This legal battle ran from 1716 until 1720 and was centred on the thorny issue of land. Maurice Annesley had purchased some of the Sherlock holdings while acting as a guardian to the Sherlock children. They subsequently disputed the legality of this transaction. Although the Irish court of the exchequer found in favour of Annesley, the Irish Lords chose to reverse the judgement when it came before them in June 1716. This led to Annesley bringing the case before the British House of Lords, thus forcing the issue of the British Parliament's jurisdiction over Irish legal concerns.<sup>159</sup>

The committee investigating the affair, on which King and Molesworth sat, queried the rationale for the barons of exchequer to follow the orders of the British and not the Irish Lords and concluded that they had broken their oaths of office. The committee drafted a representation to the monarch in an attempt to reassure His Majesty that in deciding in this fashion the Irish Lords had not contravened the royal prerogative. Again King and Molesworth were central figures in the discussion.

Agreed to by the House of Lords on 17 October 1719, the representation drew on precedent to argue its case. Following the thinking of William Molyneux in his *Case of Ireland truly stated*, the Lords suggested

that the kings [of Ireland] with all the princes and men of value of the land, did of their own good wills and without any war or chivalry, submit themselves to your majesty's royal ancestor King Henry II, took oaths of fidelity to him and became his liege subjects who (as is asserted by Lord Chief Justice Coke and others) did ordain and command, at the instance of the Irish, that such laws as he had in England, should be of force and observed in Ireland.<sup>160</sup>

This theory of the ancient constitution enabled the Lords to argue that "by this agreement, the people of Ireland obtained the benefit of the English laws, and many privileges, particularly that of having a distinct parliament here, as in England and of having weighty and momentous matters relating to this kingdom treated of, discussed and determined in the said parliament." This being the case, the Lords suggested to the king that it was "an

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<sup>158</sup> See R. Molesworth to W. King, Edlington, 7 October 1713, HMC, Report 2, 1874, appendix XVI, p. 246. That they quickly resolved the issue can be seen in Molesworth's letter of 2 September 1714, where he described the Archbishop as an "honorable friend." R. Molesworth to W. King, London, 2 September 1714, HMC, report 2, 1874, appendix XVI, p. 246. The other members of the committee were Edward Synge of Tuam and the chair, John Stearne, Bishop of Clogher.

<sup>159</sup> For a detailed narration of the legal wrangles which followed see I. Victory, "The making of the Declaratory Act of 1720," in *Parliament, politics and people: essays in eighteenth century Irish history*, (G. O'Brien ed.), (Dublin, 1989) pp 14-6.

<sup>160</sup> JHOL, volume two, p. 655.

invasion of your prerogative, and a grievance to your loyal subjects in this kingdom” that an English court should determine an Irish case.<sup>161</sup>

As Bishop William Nicholson, Bishop of Derry, reported, in the debate following the representation’s presentation to the Lords:

Tuam [Synge the elder]...maintained the charge of the [Exchequer’s] endeavours to blow up all the foundations of Irish rights, liberties and properties. Dublin [King] was more brave. He stood to his old doctrine of independency; and strenuously avowed that no acts made by Parliament of Great Britain signified more than by-laws...unless confirmed by our own two Houses.<sup>162</sup>

In a draft of a speech in the debate, Molesworth declared that:

If I saw that anything worse could actually happen to us than the actual exercise of that power which they claim over us [the act of dependency] and which our pretended friends threaten us with, I should be of their mind. But as long as I see that is the worst, and to me it is no difference to be in the power of any man to lash me illegally and to be lashed: I shall beg leave to have discretion and to be thought a fool or a rash man by those wise gentlemen, who recommend a fit of an apoplexy as a state of sound health.<sup>163</sup>

Following the transmission of the representation to England, King made it his business to follow the document’s progress and to support the arguments in it by petitioning his contacts in the English administration. To Edward Southwell he explained that “we think it [the representation] law and reason, nor have I yet met with any of another opinion and therefore know not what is objected to it.” Drawing a parallel from the history of the islands, King remarked: “I do not remember any Lords who lost their jurisdiction by a vote except in the 1640s when the Lords of England were laid aside and voted useless by the Commons. It will not be much in their honour or advantage to follow such a precedent.”<sup>164</sup>

Less than a month later, King was again writing to Southwell about the representation. Having received notification of the English Lordships’ revocation of the Irish Lords decision to censure the barons of the Irish exchequer, King wondered why the Irish claim to legal jurisdiction had gone unmentioned:

It seems the Lords there [in England] found their votes were not of force to destroy our parliament and therefore they fly to the king and Commons to help them by an act of parliament [the

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<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 655.

<sup>162</sup> W. Nicholson to Archbishop Wake, cited in I. Victory, “The making of the Declaratory Act of 1720,” in *Parliament, politics and people: essays in eighteenth-century Irish history*, (G. O’Brien, ed.), (Dublin, 1989), p. 20.

<sup>163</sup> R. Molesworth, “Notes for a speech in the Irish House of Lords, probably in connection with the Sixth of George I,” in *HMC, VC*, volume eight, pp 284-5.

dependency act], but I hope his majesty will be better advised than to lend his assistance to oppress some of his best subjects and the Commons than to give theirs to enlarge a power against laws and reason which is already too hard for them.<sup>165</sup>

Developing an analysis of the mechanics of the balance of powers and the imperial structure of Great Britain and Ireland and the effect of the declaratory act upon such a structure, King continued:

Those near the centre of power have always been hard on the remote provinces and those in return finding no defence but in the power of the prince have helped to enlarge that power so as to make their oppressors their fellow slaves since they would not suffer them to enjoy the liberty of fellow subjects. I pray this prove not the consequence in time. If they take away our parliament, as such a bill if it pass will certainly do, we shall heartily give all our assistance to take away the British one also, and ours will be a very good precedent.... If we be forced without our consent why may not others also? A good standing army may be a sufficient parliament to [govern] the people and a serjeant and his men a very good [parliament]. This I remember to have seen in Cromwell's time when a child and a Major General in England was every whit as effectual an officer as a sheriff.<sup>166</sup>

King and Molesworth considered it offensive that the London government might conceive of the Dublin parliament dependent upon the chambers at Westminster and fought vigorously to ensure a continuance of parliamentary liberty. But, despite the opposition mustered by King and Molesworth, the independence of the Irish Parliament was severely limited by the passage of the Declaratory Act in the spring of 1720.<sup>167</sup> This Act finally confirmed the dependent status of the Irish political nation on that of its larger neighbour. Formally entitled "An act for the better securing of the dependency of the Kingdom of Ireland upon the Crown of Westminster" it declared the relationship between the two kingdoms to be one in which Ireland was "subordinate unto and dependent upon" the Parliament of England.<sup>168</sup>

This placed the Irish polity in the peculiar condition of 'established outsider' status. At once one of the three kingdoms that composed the monarchical holdings of the Hanoverian electorate, it was far from a full member of the club. The Irish Anglicans were outside the Westminster Parliament, left to squabble in the Dublin chambers and legally and politically dependent on the whims of the British legislative structure. Not fully

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<sup>164</sup> W. King to Mr. Southwell, Dublin, 10 January 1719, NLI MS 2056.

<sup>165</sup> W. King to Mr. Southwell, Dublin, 6 February 1719, NLI MS 2056.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>167</sup> See also Toland's pamphlet *Reasons offered to the House of Commons why the Bill sent down to them from the House of Lords entitled an Act for the better securing the dependency of the Kingdom of Ireland upon the crown of Great Britain should not pass into a law*, (London, 1720).

<sup>168</sup> Cited in I. Victory, "The making of the 1720 declaratory act," in *Parliament, politics and people*, (G. O'Brien ed.), (Dublin, 1989), p. 9.

accepted by either community, the Irish Anglicans were intimately connected to Great Britain but not of it, and in Ireland but not of it.

By the 1710s William King was the leader of an explicit Irish interest in the Anglican Church.<sup>169</sup> The intention was to defend the Irish church from becoming a sinecure for English clerics and to ensure that Irish Anglicans perceived the viability of the church as a career choice. More pertinent to King's concerns was that an Irish population operating the church helped in the efficient running of the institution. Absenteeism would be reduced and the dioceses better led. However, King was fighting against a trend of using Englishmen in Irish positions. The English administration considered Englishmen more likely to follow the governmental line than those who had local connections and a regional power-base from which to launch opposition to policies they disliked.

In 1712 King was writing to Edward Southwell, the secretary of state, suggesting that the bishopric of Raphoe, recently vacated through the death of John Pooley, be given to the Irishman John Stearne for King would "fain have at least one useful bishop some lately made not answering expectation."<sup>170</sup> Upon hearing unofficial reports of the placement of Thomas Lindsay into the see, King told Southwell how he had been

told that all this will come to nothing in as much as no bishopric of Ireland will hereafter be given to any educated [here. It is] a notion I am very unwilling to believe and which if it take place I am afraid may prove fatal to the church, especially if we consider how some of those that we lately had from your side [England] have attended the clergy.<sup>171</sup>

Southwell must have expressed surprise or disbelief at King's pessimistic assessment of an Irishman's chances of promotion in the established Church for just over a month later King wrote again, defending his interpretation of events:

You seem at a loss whence I had the notion that none of the clergy of Ireland would succeed in promotions. I assure you I had it from several in Ireland and England who told me that we must not expect that either bishops or judges would for the future be made of the educated of Ireland and I think the facts do seem to speak it.<sup>172</sup>

In a pragmatic approach to policy King asserted: "My answer was that if they would send us better men than we had we would thank them." Yet failing this, the principle of

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<sup>169</sup> Bolton judged the impact of this shift in the geo-politics of appointments as follows: "The promotion of Englishmen to Irish bishoprics not only represented a growing ascendancy of the English interest over the Irish, but the impact of the growing Erastianism of the Church of England upon the free national Church of Ireland, whose Caroline tradition had been little disturbed by any non-juring schism, and which had to some extent retained diocesan, and in Dublin provincial, synods, public ecclesiastic discipline, and a non-Erastian view of Church policy." F. R. Bolton, *The Caroline tradition of the Church of Ireland*, (London, 1958), p. 50.

<sup>170</sup> W. King to Mr. Southwell, Dublin, 17 October 1712, NLI MS 2055.

<sup>171</sup> W. King to Mr. Southwell, Dublin, 6 November 1712, NLI MS 2055.



Irishmen for the Irish church was to be followed, for “if they sent us over the refuse of the university clergy and bar I thought we had reason to complain. The reply was that we must take whom they send....I do not see how there can be any place for merit in Ireland.”<sup>173</sup>

This political fault-line within the ecclesiastical establishment was exacerbated by the appointment of the English prelate Hugh Boulter to the Primacy of Armagh in 1724. King had a claim to the primacy as the longest serving Irish bishop, and he took the slight to heart. Throughout the last five years of his life, King confronted Boulter over the origin of prospective officers of the Irish church. King believed there to be a conscious policy of placing trusted Englishmen into positions of power within the Irish establishment. Given his proven commitment to the correct administering of the church, King resented what he thought to be a highly insulting and detrimental policy. As early as 29 December 1725 he complained to Edward Southwell of Boulter’s policy of favouritism. In a diatribe, King reminded Southwell of how he had “told you in my last that since my Lord Lieutenant [John Carteret] was named to the government about ten thousand pounds annual rents have been given in benefices and places to strangers and not five hundred pounds to any in Ireland.”<sup>174</sup> This led to his main complaint, the forwarding by the bishops of this policy:

The bishops sent us from England follow the same traits in many instances. The Bishop of Derry [William Nicolson] since his translation to that see has given about two thousand pounds in benefits to his English friends and relations. [The] Lord Primate [Boulter] hath had two livings void since his translation. One he has given of two hundred per annum to one of the Wilson block and the other to a Mr. Blenner whom they commonly call a Hottentot....The Bishop of Waterford [Thomas Milles] has not only given all livings of value in his gift to his brothers and relations but likewise his vicar-generalship and registry though none of them reside in the kingdom.<sup>175</sup>

The issue was of even greater importance than this suggested, for King believed “the case is in effect the same as to the army, revenue and civil employments.”<sup>176</sup> This policy, extending beyond the bounds of the church had, King feared, dangerous consequences. As he warned Southwell:

The disposal of those [secular places] affect the lawyers and gentlemen and though the resentment of the clergy may not be valued, yet it seems not politic to provoke those that make up the House of Commons. Though it is a little shocking to see so many worthy clergymen of learning, of probity and who have served fourteen, fifteen, nay twenty years with care, with sureness and approbation altogether neglected and boys and other persons who never did any service in the church (perhaps

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<sup>172</sup> W. King to Mr. Southwell, Dublin, 10 December 1712, NLI MS 2055.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>174</sup> W. King to Mr. Southwell, Dublin, 29 December 1725, NLI MS 2056.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*

never intend to do any except pro forma) or are capable of doing any put over their heads into the best benefits and greatest cures and dignities.<sup>177</sup>

Boulter, the main target of King's ire, had been translated from Bristol in 1724 and was a friend of the latitudinarian theologian Benjamin Hoadley, editor of the *London Journal*. Friendly with the Whig administration and a close associate of the Duke of Newcastle, Boulter felt that King's opposition to his fellow countrymen was ill intentioned. Not that he was deficient in operating the discriminatory policy King highlighted. From the very moment he arrived in Ireland, Boulter was writing to Newcastle to suggest Englishmen to fill vacancies in the Irish church. Admitting that his first impressions of the country were favourable he noted: "I have little to complain of but that too many of our own original esteem us Englishmen as intruders."<sup>178</sup> Nonetheless he thought it acceptable to suggest that the "Hottentot," Mr. Blenner be moved into the Irish church structure.

It would appear that this was part of an explicit policy in the wake of the Irish political nation's truculence in the Wood Halfpence affair, to ensure the future smooth running of the Irish state. As Boulter reminded Newcastle in the following year: "I must request of your grace, as I have of his Lordship [Townshend, secretary of state] that you would both use your interest to have none but Englishmen put into the great places here for the future, that by degrees, things may be put into such a way, as may be most for his majesty's service and the ease of his ministry."<sup>179</sup>

The passage of time provided Boulter with his victory. In King's last days Boulter manoeuvred into position to influence the succession. On 8 May 1729, the day King died, Boulter wrote to both Lord Lieutenant Carteret and the Duke of Newcastle to inform them of how "as the Archbishop of Dublin has been out of order for four or five days, and is now apprehended to be in very great danger, I think it proper to acquaint your grace with it, that there may be no surprise in disposing of a place of so great consequence."<sup>180</sup> The following day he wrote to Carteret to request that the vacancy now open be filled either "from England [in which case] I would desire your Lordship to use your influence for the Bishop of St. David's...but if from hence, I think the bishop of Ferns the most proper person."<sup>181</sup> More open with his intentions in a letter of the same date addressed to Lord

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<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>178</sup> H. Boulter to Archbishop of Canterbury, Dublin 28 November 1724, in H. Boulter, *Letters*, volume one, (Dublin, 1770), p. 1.

<sup>179</sup> H. Boulter to the Duke of Newcastle, Dublin, 29 April 1725, in H. Boulter, *Letters*, volume one, (Dublin, 1770), p. 19. For a discussion of the policy of the English interest in Ireland see P. McNally, *Parties, patriots and Undertakers: Party politics in early Hanoverian Ireland*, (Dublin, 1997), pp 148-73.

<sup>180</sup> H. Boulter to the Duke of Newcastle, Dublin, 8 May 1729, in H. Boulter, *Letters*, volume one, (Dublin, 1770), p. 241.

<sup>181</sup> H. Boulter to J. Carteret, Dublin, 9 May 1729, in *ibid.*, p. 242.

Townshend, Boulter declared it as “my opinion that for the support of the English interest here, it was absolutely necessary that it should be bestowed on a native of England” and again forwarded the claims of the Bishop of St. David’s.<sup>182</sup>

In fact the bishopric was granted to a member of the Irish episcopal bench, Boulter’s second choice the Bishop of Ferns and Leighlin, John Hoadley. An English-born prelate, he was the brother of Benjamin Hoadley, whose tenets King had long opposed. John Hoadley was the first in a long line of English born archbishops of Dublin, serving from 1729 until 1742 when he was translated to the Primacy as the successor of Boulter serving until his death in 1746.<sup>183</sup> Boulter’s victory was complete.

The status of established outsider enjoyed by Irish Anglicans within the British polity was a macrocosm of the situation of the Irish dissenting community. Recognised by the state through the passage of the Toleration Bill in 1719, the continued existence of the Test Act of 1704 ensured that Presbyterian participation within the polity was closely regulated. Unable to break away (to do so would be to remove themselves from the security the Irish state offered and to place them under threat of Roman Catholic supremacy as personified by the Jacobite pretender) the Presbyterians were at once both loyal to and not intrinsically of the Irish state. In the invasion scare of 1715, they huddled around the flag, founding militias and declaring their loyalty to King George, but despite their loyalty, the Anglican state never fully trusted or included the dissenters. The Latitudinarian vision of a Protestant state unhampered by the confessional divides within that umbrella, was never actualised.

The Anglicans were in a similar circumstance in relation to the centralised power of the London government. Although, as the Wood’s halfpence had dramatically shown, the concerted efforts of the Irish polity could ensure that certain policies might fail, this was at the cost of any government operating while the deadlock was maintained.<sup>184</sup> More important was the sense of impotence that pervaded the daily affairs of the Irish elite. William King was peculiarly sensitive to such a condition of legal inferiority. The problem of dependency was mirrored in King’s philosophical work by his interest in free will. Only the independent agent could make moral choices that were untainted by the authority to which he was subservient. Moral choices had to be an act of radical free will. So too did political choices. Political independence and philosophic free will were intimately related.

Hutcheson was also concerned with the problematic of evil and the issue of free

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<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 242. He also wrote to Newcastle: “for the support of the English interest here it is necessary it [the next Bishop of Dublin] should be an Englishman.” *Ibid.*, p. 243.

<sup>183</sup> Hugh Boulter died on 27 September 1742.

<sup>184</sup> See chapter five.

will. However the conclusion he came to was integral to his social circumstance as a Presbyterian. Just as King was theorising the problem of the Anglican elite, so Hutcheson's moral philosophy was the product of his political circumstance. King had a set of legal rights he desired to defend and thus had to provide a philosophic justification for the exercise of rights against the encroachment of central authority. Hutcheson had to supply a legitimate reason for those rights to be extended to a Presbyterian community hampered by the penal laws. Where King was telling the English state to stay out of the Irish Anglican community's affairs, Hutcheson was addressing the Irish Anglican elite and petitioning them for an extension of the same liberties to the Presbyterian community. The first resulted in a belief in radical free will, the second in the concept of positive liberty.

The sequence of dependencies has one other parallel. While the Anglicans found that the lack of a parliamentary union resulted in their dependency upon the English polity, the position of the Scottish political nation was in fact little better. The provisions of the union enabled forty-five commoners and sixteen Scottish peers to remove themselves to London.<sup>185</sup> This left the majority of the Scottish parliamentarians languishing in the north, unable to engage in the political life of the polity. In effect, their post-union status mimicked that experienced by the Irish Protestant communities. While fully integrated into the nation in a way that the Irish Protestants were not, many educated Scots found themselves loyal to but not active within the polity. They were dependent upon the state for protection against the Jacobite threat, a threat more manifest in Scotland than in Ireland, as 1715 made clear. Their civic life was underwritten by the Hanoverian state, but they found themselves hard put to involve themselves in affecting its actions.

That the structural pressures experienced by the Scots in the post-union period were in ways commensurate with those under which the Irish Presbyterian community operated makes the success of Francis Hutcheson in Glasgow University more explicable. The circumstances under which Hutcheson had formulated his philosophy in Dublin in the 1720s ensured his readiness for the task he set himself in removing to Glasgow in 1730. The men of the Scottish enlightenment, who celebrated his achievement, were established outsiders, as Hutcheson had been. They built upon Hutcheson directions for living a life in the liminal landscape of civil society.

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<sup>185</sup> Article twenty-two. See G. S. Pryde (ed.), *The treaty of union of Scotland and England, 1707*, (Edinburgh, 1950), p. 98.

## LOCATING HUTCHESON'S CONTRIBUTION

The posthumous portrait of Francis Hutcheson, painted by Allan Ramsay from a sketch, shows a man at ease with himself and his public position in the University of Glasgow.<sup>1</sup> Dressed in the black robes of his profession, Hutcheson appears relaxed, his eyes taking in the viewer without suspicion. He holds a copy of Cicero's *De finibus*, a standard text in the European curriculum, of which he wrote: "'Tis manifest to any who read the books *De finibus* and the *Tusculan questions*, that the fundamental doctrine of morals is copiously delivered in them."<sup>2</sup> It is the image of a man at the height of his considerable powers, confident of his intellectual prowess. Described by Leechman, he was

a stature above middle size, a gesture and manner negligent and easy, but decent and manly, gave a dignity to his appearance. His complexion was fair and sanguine, and his features regular. His countenance and look bespoke sense, spirit, kindness and joy of heart. His whole person and manner raised a strong prejudice in his favour at first sight<sup>3</sup>

The man Ramsay depicted in his large oil canvas was clearly an academic - professional, competent, at times even inspiring. He gives an air of relaxed, understated confidence and his eyes reveal tranquillity born of assurance as to his stature, and success.

If, in his maturity, he required any reassurance on his academic reputation, the rival institution, the University of Edinburgh, surely provided it. In the spring of 1745, following the resignation of John Pringle, who had taken up the post of Physician-General to His Majesty's Forces in Flanders, the electors offered Hutcheson the post of Professor of Ethics and Pneumatical Philosophy. Hutcheson diplomatically refused to transfer his allegiance to the eastern city, despite the promise of higher standing and greater remuneration, reporting:

It is with sincere regret that I find it impossible for me to answer their expectations. But, as I heard of their design some time agoe, and thus had full time to consider it, I could not keep the Councill any time in suspense by any expectation of my acceptance of a charge which, in my present stage of life, I cannot undertake.<sup>4</sup>

To soften the blow, he drafted a letter to Lord Minto indicating who else might be a suitable candidate. Dated 4 July 1744, Hutcheson acknowledged: "I am very sensible of my obligations to your Lordship, & how far this friendly design toward me is owing to your influence." Citing old age and the talent of the younger generation, Hutcheson withdrew his candidature in favour of a younger aspirant: "Indeed my only views, in my

<sup>1</sup> It hangs in the gallery of his University.

<sup>2</sup> SIMP, p. vii, n1.

<sup>3</sup> PSMP, p. xliii.

castle building, are returning to Ireland some few years hence, if once my son were in any way of subsistence.”<sup>5</sup> He offered seven names for Lord Minto to consider:

As I am sensible, both of your kind intentions to me & of your zeal for promoting virtue and literature I cannot omit naming to you Thom Craigy, Professor of Hebrew at St. Andrews; Robt Trail who was lately in Lord Kilherrens family; Robt Pollock, minister of Duddiston, James Moore, now with Mr. Hamilton of Balddon, William Rowat, lately returned from his travels with Sir John Maxwell’s son; Mr. Cleghorn who was lately employed this way; or George Muirhead....Craigy & Moore are the two in my acquaintance for whose success I could best venture to promise: of the rest I have very good impressions according to my acquaintance with them.<sup>6</sup>

Despite Hutcheson’s assurance that he offered this litany of names as “sometimes very worthy men are overlooked, who had they occurred to people’s thoughts might have pleased them well upon enquiry,” one omission, that of David Hume, is noteworthy.<sup>7</sup> Hutcheson told Hume directly of his concern that he “lacked warmth in the cause of virtue” and may well have been unsure as to Hume’s ability to meet a job description which stated that the candidate had to lecture every Monday “upon the truth of the Christian religion.”<sup>8</sup> Despite his admiration for Hume’s “great acuteness of thought and reasoning,” Hutcheson remarked to a mutual friend, Lord Kames, that he could not “pretend to assent to his tenets yet.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> F. Hutcheson to Baily Gavin Hamilton, Glasgow, 8 April 1745. Cited in *Life*, p. 129.

<sup>5</sup> F. Hutcheson to Gilbert Elliott, Lord Minto, Lough Lomond, 4 July 1744, NLS Ms. 11004 f. 57, recto.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, recto and verso. “All seven were bright young men who would eventually secure positions in Scottish Universities. Two of them (Cleghorn and Muirhead) had experience teaching moral philosophy as Pringle’s substitutes, and another (Craigy) would perform competently as the holder of the Glasgow chair for a short period after Hutcheson’s death. Two (Muirhead and Moor) had signed their names to the...*Vindication* produced by Hutcheson’s ‘scholars’ in 1738....If Hutcheson’s list of suitable candidates reveals a common pattern, beyond the fact that most of them came from the Glasgow region with which he was most familiar, it was the possession of sound Whig-Presbyterian credentials. Five of the seven whom Hutcheson recommended were either probationers or ministers in the Church of Scotland and a sixth (Rouet) was a son and grandson of Presbyterian ministers.” R. B. Sher, “Professors of virtue: the social history of the Edinburgh moral philosophy chair in the eighteenth century,” in *Studies in the philosophy of the Scottish enlightenment*, (M. A. Stewart, ed.), (Oxford, 1990), pp 103-4 and n.

<sup>7</sup> F. Hutcheson to G. Elliott, Lord Minto, Lough Lomond, 4 July 1744, NLS Ms. 11004 f. 57, verso. Hutcheson may have been the author of a negative notice of Hume’s *Treatise* which appeared in the *Bibliothèque raisonnée* in 1741. For the evidence supporting this suggestion see J. Moore and M. A. Stewart, “William Smith (1698-1741) and the dissenters’ book trade,” in *Bulletin of the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland*, 22, (1993), pp 24-6.

<sup>8</sup> D. Hume to F. Hutcheson, 17 September 1739, in D. Hume, *The letters of David Hume*, (J. Y. T. Greig, ed.), (Oxford, 1932), p. 32; D. Hume, *A letter from a gentleman to his friend in Edinburgh*, (E. C. Mossner and J. V. Price, eds.), (Edinburgh, 1967), p. x.

<sup>9</sup> F. Hutcheson to Lord Kames, [? April 1739], tentatively dated in I. Ross, “Hutcheson on Hume’s *Treatise*: an unnoticed letter,” in *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 4, (1966), pp 69-72. For quotations, see p. 71. Despite these uncertainties, Hutcheson corresponded with Hume over the first two books of the *Treatise*, recommending his own publisher, Longman, for the third book. He also repaid Hume’s compliment of requesting his comments on the *Treatise* by sending him a copy of the *Philosophiae moralis institutio compendiaria* upon its publication in 1743. D. Hume to F. Hutcheson, 4 March 1740, in *The letters of David Hume*, (J. Y. T. Greig, ed.), (Oxford, 1932), volume one, p. 38; D. Hume to F. Hutcheson, 10 January 1743, in *The letters of David Hume*, (J. Y. T. Greig, ed.), (Oxford, 1932), volume one, p. 45. Hume understood his reputation stood in the way of his replacing Dr. John Pringle: “I come now to the last charge, which, according to the prevalent opinion of philosophers in this

Despite the attractions of the Edinburgh post, Hutcheson remained loyal to the institution which, in the autumn of 1730, had plucked him from Dublin to give him the responsibility of providing its students with moral guidance. He was content with his lot, happy with his job, at ease in his circle of friends and gratified to have the love of his wife and child. In the late summer of 1734 William Bruce wrote to his cousin, Francis Hutcheson telling him of the latest “tittle-tattle” of his friends in Dublin. Contained within the epistle was a fancy, in which Bruce pondered the possible repercussions of Hutcheson’s intended visit to London the following year:

I am glad to hear that you purpose to see London next summer....it has all along been as evident to me as anything of such a contingent nature could well be that a short while’s conformity [will] necessarily enlarge your capacity of usefulness vastly beyond your present situation or any other that you can rationally lay your account for....Your conversation would in all likelihood come to lie principally among the men of high stations and active life & by the few trials you have already made, you have an abundant reason to expect that though your influence may not be equal to the supernatural operation of forming their minds to a regular course of sobriety & virtue yet it would notwithstanding be sufficient in a variety of instances to animate them to actions of beneficence & patriotism & often to restrain them from doing hurt, a situation which of all others a man of wisdom & virtue should in the present state of the world desire to be placed in....I know I shall be laughed at for this as altogether chimerical & visionary, but the good old aphorism ‘that what has been, may be’ will for ever stand in my own way from thinking it so. You cannot you say descend to the modern arts of growing great, & I say God forbid you could, it would break my heart to see you become a B[isho]p at such expense, but modern arts are only necessary to modern minds....all that I would desire of you amounts only to a partial obedience of our Saviour’s express command, not to conceal the light that is within you & not to suffer any peculiarity of taste to prevail against that most important moral obligation of doing good in proportion to the abilities you have received from the liberal hand and providence of God - but I have good expectations from next summer’s jaunt.<sup>10</sup>

While it was a merry fantasy, Bruce knew it was chimerical in the face of Hutcheson’s known tendency to turn down any offers of preferment, excepting that of Glasgow University.

Why had Hutcheson accepted his *alma mater*’s offer? By the middle of 1729 Hutcheson’s Dublin diplomacy appeared finally to have run its course. Archbishop King had

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age, will certainly be regarded as the severest, viz. the author’s destroying all the foundations of morality.” D. Hume, *A letter from a gentleman to his friend in Edinburgh*, (E. C. Mossner and J. V. Price, eds.), (Edinburgh, 1967), p. 30. Hume accepted his work undermined the moral codes of Samuel Clarke and William Wollaston. He countered this by placing himself in a tradition of moral thought that had received institutional recognition, of which Francis Hutcheson was a part: “In this opinion he concurs with all the ancient moralists, as well as with Mr. *Hutchison* [sic.] Professor of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow, who, with others, has revived the antient philosophy in this particular.” D. Hume, *A letter from a gentleman to his friend in Edinburgh*, (E. C. Mossner and J. V. Price, eds.), (Edinburgh, 1967), p. 30. Ultimately, the power politics surrounding the post, coupled with the doubts about Hume’s suitability, destroyed his candidature. The provost, John Couetts campaigned for a number of candidates, but was defeated in the town council by the followers of the Marquis of Tweeddale. The council elected William Cleghorn on 5 May 1745. See M. A. Stewart, *The Kirk and the infidel*, (Lancaster, 1994).

succumbed to old age and chronic gout, passing away on 8 May 1729. A year later, in April 1730, six years after Carteret first received the seals of office, his term of duty in Dublin drew to a close. Despite Edward Synge's elevation to the bishopric of Clonfert, it appeared that Hutcheson's protectors had deserted him. Bereft of advocates, he had gratefully accepted Glasgow's unsolicited approach.

The question remains as to why the electorate in Glasgow had not looked inwards, at a time when some 42% of the college's appointments had relatives on the staff?<sup>11</sup> While Glasgow had a notably free hand in decision making in contrast to Edinburgh, where the local presbytery influenced appointments, the political dominance which the Duke of Argyll held over political life in Scotland ensured appointments were never a matter of merit alone.<sup>12</sup> The success of his brother, Lord Islay, described by Wodrow as the "*primum mobile*," in exercising political brokerage in the universities was astonishing.<sup>13</sup> At Glasgow University alone, between 1728 and 1761, Islay sanctioned twenty appointments. Only four were made in the face of opposition from his camp.<sup>14</sup>

Hutcheson's candidature divided the College faculty and the highest echelons of the University actively opposed him. The support of Islay therefore proved critical. Wodrow, a conservative friend of Hutcheson, recounted the tale in his pointed prose: "They say there was a great struggle before this invitation. The Principall was not for Mr. Hutcheson, both because he will strengthen Mr. A[lexander] D[unlop]'s side in the Colledge, which is too hard for him already, and because he was for Mr. D. Warner to succeed Mr. Carmichael."<sup>15</sup> As it was, Hutcheson received the nomination by a single vote.<sup>16</sup> Hutcheson's appointment was an early victory for political patronage over the older rules of nepotism.<sup>17</sup> But, were his supporters correct in viewing him as a worthy candidate?

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<sup>10</sup> W. Bruce to F. Hutcheson, Dublin, 24 August 1734, NLS Ms 9252, f. 89 verso-90 recto.

<sup>11</sup> R. L. Emerson, "Politics and the Glasgow professors," in *The Glasgow enlightenment*, (A. Hook and R. Sher, eds.), (East Linton, 1995), p. 27. This figure was, however, low in comparison with its institutional rivals. King's, notably high in comparison, saw 78% of its staff so linked.

<sup>12</sup> E. Cregeen, "The changing role of the house of Argyll in the Scottish highlands"; R. Mitchison, "The Government and the Highlands, 1707-1745"; and J. M. Simpson, "Who steered the gravy train, 1707-1766?," in *Scotland in the age of improvement: essays in Scottish history in the eighteenth century*, (N. Phillipson and R. Mitchison, eds.), (Edinburgh, 1970), pp 5-23, pp 24-46, and pp 47-72.

<sup>13</sup> R. Wodrow, *Analecta*, (Edinburgh, 1843), volume four, p. 99.

<sup>14</sup> R. L. Emerson, "Politics and the Glasgow professors," in *The Glasgow enlightenment*, (A. Hook and R. Sher, eds.), (East Linton, 1995), pp 38-9. The appointments which successfully overcame the Earl's displeasure were Michael Potter in Divinity in 1740, Robert Hamilton in Botany in 1742, William Leechman in Divinity in 1743, and John Anderson in Natural Philosophy in 1757.

<sup>15</sup> R. Wodrow, *Analecta*, (Edinburgh, 1843), volume four, p. 99.

<sup>16</sup> This paragraph is drawn from *Life*, p. 55.

<sup>17</sup> R. L. Emerson, "Politics and the Glasgow professors," in *The Glasgow enlightenment*, (A. Hook and R. Sher, eds.), (East Linton, 1995), p. 29. W. R. Scott does suggest that Alexander Dunlop's support was certain as he had recently married Hutcheson's cousin. *Life*, p. 55.



Evidence suggests that Hutcheson did indeed augment his reputation after moving to Glasgow.<sup>18</sup> Following his death, his work was translated into German with the philosopher Gotthold Ephraim Lessing named as the translator of the posthumous *System* that appeared in 1756. The *Essay on the Passions* followed in 1760 and a translation of the *Inquiry* emerged two years later from the same city of Leipzig.<sup>19</sup>

Reviews of Hutcheson's *Inquiry* had already appeared in a number of European periodicals.<sup>20</sup> The Leipzig-based *Acta Eruditorum*, the foremost German scholarly periodical, noted the arrival of the text in 1727 without comment, while in France Michel de la Roche reviewed the work positively in the first issue of *New Memoires on Literature*.<sup>21</sup> Less positive were the notices the *Inquiry* received in the *Bibliothèque ancienne et moderne* of Jean le Clerc and the *Bibliothèque Angloise* edited by Armand de la Chapelle.<sup>22</sup>

Both reviews noticed a distinct similarity between Hutcheson's treatment of beauty and that in the *Traité du beau* by Jean-Pierre de Crousaz, a Swiss-born philosopher. Hutcheson was evidently made aware of this slur upon his character, for the next issue of the *Bibliothèque Angloise* carried a refutation of the charge, penned to a correspondent by the irate Irishman. Therein he proclaimed his innocence of any plagiarism and declared the review to be "as ridiculous as it is false."<sup>23</sup> Ascribing the review to Jean LeClerc, Hutcheson admitted that he had once perused the *Traité*, but

I had only a distant recollection of his general idea of beauty as unity amidst variety in which he is as little original as I am, and of the distinction that he makes between *beauté d'idée* and *beauté de sentiment*, which I have never relished and which I have even expressly attacked in my book, although he dwells upon it at length in his.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> I shall deal here with the eighteenth-century response to Hutcheson's thought and the manner in which it was understood within the philosophical debates of that period. In Thinking about Francis Hutcheson above I dealt solely with Hutcheson as he was appropriated by nineteenth and twentieth-century historians.

<sup>19</sup> Details of Hutcheson's German imprints are drawn from N. Waszek, *The Scottish enlightenment and Hegel's account of 'civil society'*, (London, 1988), pp 262-3. The publication details are as follows: The *System: Sittenlehre der Vernunft*, two volumes, (Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim), (Leipzig, Fritsch, Hahn and Wendler, 1756); The *Essay: Bhandlung über die Natur und Beherrschung der Leidenschaften und Neigungen und über das moralische Gefühl inbesonderheit*, (Gellius, Johann Gottfried), (Leipzig and Liegnitz, Siegert, 1760); The *Inquiry: Untersuchung unserer Begriffe von Schönheit und Tugend*, (Merck, Johann Heinrich), (Frankfurt and Leipzig, Fleisher, 1762).

<sup>20</sup> See also A. O. Aldridge, "A French critic of Hutcheson's aesthetics," in *Modern Philology*, 45, (1948), pp 169-84 for a late response to T1.

<sup>21</sup> Dated 1725.

<sup>22</sup> On the context in which these reviews appeared, see J. Moore and M. A. Stewart, "William Smith (1698-1741) and the dissenters' book trade," in *Bulletin of the Presbyterian Historical Society*, 22, (1993), pp 20-7.

<sup>23</sup> F. Hutcheson to the *Bibliothèque Angloise*, 1726, in D. R. Raynor, "Hutcheson's defense against a charge of plagiarism," in *Eighteenth-century Ireland*, 2, (1987), p. 178.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.

Hutcheson recalled how “about a year ago, I read M. de Crousaz’s book and was surprised to find that, on the contrary, our books had so few things in common.” Admitting he was in general agreement with Crousaz in his “account of his generous and charitable views about religions different from his own,” Hutcheson stated that “the first four sections are in several respects actually opposed to M. de Crousaz’s general system, not to mention the endless differences which there are in almost every illustration.” Worst of all was that the imputation of plagiarism took away from Hutcheson’s generosity in indicating the source of his ideas. Repeatedly he noted how he had “expressly stated that I had drawn my principal ideas from the ancients and only provided some new illustrations of them.” Ending with a typical appeal to the common sense and experience of the reader, Hutcheson declared himself certain that “any man of the world whose view of life has extended beyond the walls of a college will agree with me.”<sup>25</sup>

Alongside such robust responses as those of Burnet and Clarke, Hutcheson elicited a range of both positive and negative notices in England. Most famously, in the late eighteenth century, Jeremy Bentham made much polemical use of Hutcheson’s formula of the “greatest good for the greatest number” in his exposition of a utilitarian philosophical outlook.<sup>26</sup> In large part due to this rhetorical identification, Hutcheson was co-opted by subsequent philosophers as one of the ancestors of utilitarian ethics.<sup>27</sup>

One of the most obvious indications of Hutcheson’s success is the virulence with which philosophical opponents attacked his work.<sup>28</sup> In his lifetime, Hutcheson’s philosophic system provoked, as we saw, a hostile response from the rationalist school. Two of the longest responses to Hutcheson’s work published in England emerged from this school. The first is among the most intriguing responses that Hutcheson’s work elicited.<sup>29</sup> It appeared in an edition of the masterpiece of an old Dublin acquaintance when, in 1731, Edmund Law translated William King’s *De origine mali* into English.<sup>30</sup>

A convinced Lockean and Whig, Law had attended St. John’s College, Cambridge before becoming a fellow of Christ’s College, in the same city. The edition of the *Origin of evil* introduced Law to the literary arena - a standing he consolidated with the publication of an *Enquiry into the ideas of space and time* four years later. His career took him through the master’s and vice-chancellor’s office in Peterhouse, Cambridge to Knightsbridge, where he became Professor of Moral Philosophy in 1764. He was raised to the episcopacy

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178, p. 179, p. 179 and p. 179.

<sup>26</sup> T2, p. 164.

<sup>27</sup> See Thinking about Francis Hutcheson.

<sup>28</sup> See *Life*, pp 104-12 for a discussion of the context in which Hutcheson’s thought was received.

<sup>29</sup> I would like to thank Professor James Moore for discussion of this issue.

<sup>30</sup> Edmund Law (1703-1787).

in 1768, remaining Bishop of Carlisle until his death in 1787. Ten years before, in 1777, Law published an edition of John Locke's collected works, remaining true to his early principles until the last.

The same consistency was not found in his views on Hutcheson. The footnotes Law added to King's *Essay* repeatedly directed the reader to the thoughts of Francis Hutcheson, most frequently to Hutcheson's *Essay on the passions and illustrations on the moral sense*. However, despite these positive recommendations of Hutcheson's work, the editor clearly had a change of heart concerning Hutcheson's thought. Prefixed to the edition of King was a "Preliminary dissertation concerning the fundamental principle of virtue or morality," written by the vicar of Wilshampstead in Bedfordshire, John Gay.<sup>31</sup>

Gay's dissertation was described on the title page as "concerning the fundamental principle and immediate criterion of virtue as also the obligation to, and approbation of it, with some account of the origin of the passions and affections."<sup>32</sup> This last clause hinted at the actual content of the work, which involved a sustained attack on the "excellent author," Hutcheson. Gay admitted Hutcheson's system was a convincing refutation of naïve rationalist philosophy and of the reductively egoist theories of Hobbes. Whereas rationalism failed to account for motive towards virtue that the actor was incapable of articulating, the Hobbist thesis failed when evidence of altruism was presented. Gay accepted that it was to overcome these deficiencies that Hutcheson had postulated the existence of an internal, pre-rational, moral sense. However, Gay argued that "this account seems still insufficient, rather cutting the knot than untying it." His problem, as a convinced Lockean was that "if it is not akin to the doctrine of innate ideas, yet I think it relishes too much of that occult qualities."<sup>33</sup> Overall:

This ingenious author, is certainly right in his observations upon the insufficiency of the common methods of accounting for both our election and approbation of moral actions, and rightly infers the necessity of supposing a moral sense...and public affections, to account for the principal actions of human life. But then by calling these instincts, I think he stops too soon, imagining himself at the fountainhead, when he might have traced them much higher, even to the true principal of all our actions, our own happiness.<sup>34</sup>

Gay asserted this motivating principal was recognised by right reason. The remainder of the dissertation was then taken up in developing Lockean epistemology and defending Gay's rationalist credo. Virtue was defined as "the conformity to a rule of life,

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<sup>31</sup> John Gay, (1699-1745), educated Sidney Sussex college, Cambridge University. Fellow 1724-1732. Vicar of Wilshampstead 1732-1745.

<sup>32</sup> EOE, title page

<sup>33</sup> J. Gay, "Preliminary Dissertation," in EOE, p. xiii, p. xiv and p. xiv.

directing the actions of all rational creatures with respect to each other's happiness," a muted echo of Hutcheson's theory of benevolence. Obligation was "evidently founded upon the prospect of happiness" and was found in four distinct forms. These emerged "from perceiving the natural consequences of things...from merit or demerit, as producing the esteem and favour of our fellow creatures...that arising from the authority of the civil magistrate [and]...that from the authority of God." Only the last of these created total obligation "the immediate rule or criterion of it [virtue] is the will of God."<sup>35</sup>

In debating the content of the will of God, Gay identified a benevolent disposition in the deity "he could have no other design in creating mankind than their happiness." The content of this happiness could be determined by man's reason. It could identify whether an act was fit to promote the happiness of men. What this ascertained was: "That the dispute between moralists about the criterion of virtue, is more in words than meaning; and that this difference between them has been occasioned by their dropping the immediate criterion, and choosing some a more remote, some a less remote one."<sup>36</sup>

The other angle of assault Gay used to assail Hutcheson was how people actually acted. As Gay acknowledged, "man is not only a sensible creature, not only capable of pleasure and pain but capable also of foreseeing the pleasure and pain" and thereby able to orient himself towards one and away from the other. That he was not merely a pleasure machine was due to his social affiliations. Gay argued against those, like Hutcheson, who erroneously believed that "merit is inconsistent with acting upon private happiness, as an ultimate end....They have not carefully enough distinguished between an inferior and ultimate end."<sup>37</sup> As Gay explained this implied that although

private happiness, is the proper or ultimate end of all our actions whatever, yet that particular means of happiness which any particular action is chiefly adapted to procure, or the thing chiefly aimed at by that action; the thing which, if possessed, we would not undertake that action, may and generally is called the end of that action. As therefore happiness is the general end of all actions, so each particular action may be said to have its proper and peculiar end.<sup>38</sup>

Finally, Gay considered an objection to his system from within Hutcheson's critique of other theories. Empirical evidence suggested that "the generality of mankind love and hate, approve and disapprove, immediately, as soon as any moral character either occurs in life, or is proposed to them." This occurred without their having considered "whether their private happiness is affected with it or no;" suggesting the existence of a

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xvii, p. xviii and p. xix.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xix and pp xx-xxi.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxii and p. xxv.

pre-rational instinct “(i.e. In Mr. Hutcheson’s language, a moral sense).”<sup>39</sup> Gay rebuffed this objection through the concept of a particular end. This was easily recognised and ensured that men did not have to pursue their investigation of the moral character of an action to its ultimate end. Moreover:

Every man, both in his pursuit after truth, and in his conduct, has settled and fixed a great many of these [prejudices] in his mind, which he always acts upon, as upon principles, without examining. And this is occasioned by the narrowness of our understandings. We can consider but a few things at once, and therefore to run everything to the fountainhead would be tedious, through a long series of consequences. To avoid this we choose out certain truths and means of happiness, which we look upon as resting places, which we may safely acquiesce in, in the conduct both of our understanding and practice, relation to the one, regarding them as axioms, in the other, as ends. And we are more easily inclined to this by imagining that we may safely rely upon what we call habitual knowledge, thinking it needless to examine what we are already satisfied in. And hence it is that prejudices, both speculative and practical, are difficult to be rooted out.<sup>40</sup>

Gay marshalled this to accuse Hutcheson of confusing habits of belief and practice for evidence of a moral sense. Gay was not wholly dismissive of Hutcheson’s efforts. He praised Hutcheson for noticing defects in previous accounts of virtue and for centring empirical evidence in his investigation. Hutcheson’s debt to Locke was also admirable, and he had persuaded Gay “That it is necessary in order to solve the principal actions of human life to suppose a moral sense...and also public affections, but I deny that this moral sense, or these public affections, are innate, or implanted in us: they are acquired either from our own observation or the imitation of others.”<sup>41</sup>

The other lengthy rationalist consideration of Hutcheson’s system came from John Taylor. Taylor was a dissenting minister, who officiated in the Octagon chapel in Norwich from 1733 until 1754. Having attained a doctorate of divinity from Glasgow, he taught at Warrington Academy from 1757 until his death in 1761. He was the author of a series of scholarly investigations into Scripture, including *The scripture doctrine of absolute sin* of 1740 and *The scripture account of prayer* of 1761.<sup>42</sup>

In *An examination of the scheme of morality advanced by Dr. Hutcheson*, published in 1759, Taylor laid out his stringent opposition to moral sense theory. The scheme he commented upon was not the recently published *System of moral philosophy*, but that of the *Inquiry* and the *Essay*. Taylor summarised Hutcheson’s positive theory, placing great

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxv.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxviii and pp xxviii-xxix.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxx.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxxiii.

<sup>42</sup> DNB, volume XIX, pp 439-40.

emphasis upon the concepts of benevolence and the moral sense. He separated them off into what he termed “two principles, senses, instincts or affections in our nature, upon which virtue stands, and which being taken away there can be no virtue.” Taylor believed that: “To this principle, of studying the good of others, or public good, Dr. Hutcheson labours to reduce all religion, as well as all virtue, even the most fantastic rites of religion.” This implied that without the two essential components of the scheme “we should have had no perception of morality” and that “the principles and essence of virtue...do consist in instincts, natural determinations, propensities or affections, which are arbitrarily infused into our constitution.” Finally, Taylor asserted that “according to his [Hutcheson’s] scheme, the exercise of reason, or understanding, enters not into the notion of virtue.”<sup>43</sup> In Hutcheson’s scheme, reason was limited to correcting errors of pre-rational judgements. It was at this that Taylor took umbrage.

Taylor articulated his opposition to Hutcheson’s ethical philosophy in six observations. First, Hutcheson’s system was at once “vain and impracticable.”<sup>44</sup> To reduce human morality to either calculations of self-love or of benevolence was too reductionist to be credible. Man had both of these instincts. Highlighting the social component of Hutcheson’s notion of benevolence, Taylor used a Socratic exaggeration:

according to his scheme, a man living alone in a desert island, where he could not exercise his benevolence or good will to others, would be under no obligation to improve, or use his rational powers in any instance of right action, self-guidance, or government; or in any devotion towards God, or trust and hope in him, which had respect only to himself, but might live without virtue and religion, like the brute creatures, the only companions of his solitude.<sup>45</sup>

Secondly, Taylor suggested that the existence of the moral sense might be put under question. It seemed to be replicating many of the tasks that might more easily be ascribed to reason:

That our reason is capable of showing us the different nature of actions is evident because we can give clear and true definitions of every virtue and vice; or we can explain, why some actions are right and others wrong; which can be done only by our reason, or understanding, reflecting upon their true natures, principles and properties.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> J. Taylor, *An examination of the scheme of morality advanced by Dr. Hutcheson*, (London, 1759), p. 7, p. 8, p. 8 and p. 9.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Colourfully, Taylor declared the concept of a moral sense to be comparatively “ill-qualified for judging and approving in concerns of a moral nature; and looks very much like a stupid idiot presiding in a court of judicature.”<sup>47</sup>

Taylor then utilised his understanding of Locke’s sensory theory as intrinsically passive, rather than Hutcheson’s interactive model, to discredit the moral system of the Irishman. Taylor bluntly asserted that “the ideas of virtue and vice cannot possibly be raised in our minds in this manner [through empirical data] as Dr. Hutcheson pretends they may.” The ideas of “chastity, friendship, fidelity, goodness, gratitude, truth, falsehood, temperance, justice, injustice, murder, adultery, honesty, fraud [and] stealing” were all “complex, abstract, general ideas, which may, and to the ignorant, must be described, or defined,” so as to be comprehended by the “understanding of a moral agent.” From this Taylor declared Hutcheson’s “moral sense is an inconsistency, a non-entity, the mere fiction of his own brain.”<sup>48</sup>

Despite this confidence, Taylor deemed it necessary to add a third objection “instincts, separate from reason, as in his [Hutcheson’s] scheme, cannot be the only principles and springs of virtue in our minds.”<sup>49</sup> What Taylor offered was

reason [which] is a faculty, by which we are enabled to reflect upon objects, to examine the natures and qualities of things and actions; to distinguish and compare them together, to consider which is best and preferable, what is right or wrong, and freely to choose and determine our conduct accordingly.<sup>50</sup>

Taylor asserted that only reason permitted man to make free choices; thereby raising him above animals. Only the act of choice rendered an act moral. Moreover, instincts were distributed unevenly, and by Hutcheson’s admission, indiscriminately among the populace, thereby making his system arbitrary and uncertain. In contrast, Taylor thought that virtue stood “upon a quite different, even upon an eternal and immutable basis, a principle which can be affected or altered by no time or place, no taste, temper, power or will.”<sup>51</sup>

Of Hutcheson’s contention that reason could only supply the means and not an end to action, Taylor replied “[this] this author hath affirmed, or suggested but hath not proved.”<sup>52</sup> It remained Taylor’s conviction that:

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17, pp 17-8 and p. 18.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

Reason, which alone can judge of, and reason about, the natures and relations of things, is the only faculty that can distinguish between actions morally good and evil; that can prefer the one and reject the other; and therefore is the only faculty that can supply justifying reasons of our actions.<sup>53</sup>

The result of Hutcheson's reduction of virtue to instinct was, as Taylor perceived it, "very pernicious." He accepted however, that Hutcheson was not intending any such result:

I [Taylor] must declare, that I don't believe the worthy author [Hutcheson] had any design to establish any one of them [pernicious views], how justly soever they may be deduced from his principles; or how much soever young persons, especially, should be cautioned against embracing those principles. For whatever may be said in favour of the author, the impressions upon the unwary mind may be very pernicious.<sup>54</sup>

The only insight Taylor admitted in Hutcheson's work was that he had noticed how instincts acted "as crutches...to feeble limbs" and in portraying how God in his wisdom had supplied us with such a support. For this, Taylor judged: "Dr. Hutcheson's treatise upon the passions, is... a valuable performance and may be read to good advantage."<sup>55</sup>

This minimally positive assessment did not deter Taylor from proclaiming that Hutcheson had deceived his readers in suggesting that benevolence was the prime principal of virtue. In his fourth objection to Hutcheson's scheme, Taylor insisted "according to this author's own account, neither benevolence, nor his supposed moral sense are true springs, standards, judges or guides of virtuous actions, as he would have us believe." Benevolence was disqualified from this lofty perch as it had a tendency to err, being overwhelmed by considerations of self-love and interest. As for the moral sense, "As Dr. Hutcheson informs us, it depends wholly upon the opinions and judgements we form of persons or things; is guided itself" and cannot therefore be a guide to action.<sup>56</sup>

From this Taylor derived his fifth objection "that neither benevolence nor the moral sense can constitute an action virtuous, but as they are grounded upon and directed by reason." The need to direct action towards proper ends opened Hutcheson to a rationalist reading. Only reason could identify the proper ends Hutcheson inserted silently into his scheme. This was further illustrated by Hutcheson's admission that the moral sense could be cultivated, thereby enabling Taylor to suggest that this was in fact a moral education directed at our reason "irrational instincts cannot cultivate, increase and strengthen themselves."<sup>57</sup> Thus Taylor's intent became clear. In a fashion similar to Hutcheson's

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 28-9.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33 and p. 35.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35 and p. 36.



rhetorical victory over Mandeville, Taylor intended to use Hutcheson's words to strip his system of its cogency and coherence.

Taylor's final objection was the culmination of this attack. He alleged Hutcheson was guilty of a fundamental philosophic inconsistency in his argument:

This author, in his scheme, doth not consider reason as a principle of virtue; but only as a principle of sagacity, subservient to his two instincts of benevolence and moral sense; which he contends are the only principles of virtue in the human constitution. But in giving rules, relative to the practice of virtue, he takes in the use of reason, considering the true natures and circumstances of objects and actions, in such manner that he has really made reason the proper and only principle of virtue in our minds.<sup>58</sup>

Hutcheson had in fact responded to the rationalist critique as early as 1725 in his correspondence with Gilbert Burnet. By reworking his debate with Burnet into the *Illustrations on the moral sense* he invoked the wrath of Burnet's supporters. He may also have become involved in debate in the *London Journal*, initiated by a review on the *Essay on the passions* shortly after its release.<sup>59</sup>

The notice appeared in the *London Journal* on Saturday, 24 February 1727/8. Addressed to the editor, it was signed by Zeno, (employing the name of a classical Stoic). Zeno declared that the publication of the *Essay* was a publishing event "which I think well deserve[s] the consideration of the learned world." Noting that the *Journal* had been the location of the correspondence with Burnet debate, Zeno supplied the reader with a survey of the author's latest production. Zeno asserted that Hutcheson's essay intended "to give us a more amiable idea of human nature than what our common writers of morality give us; and to show, from a comparison of the several pleasures and pains of which our nature is capable, that it is the highest interest of every person in all circumstances to be virtuous." Approval of this scheme was heightened by the discovery that Hutcheson had returned "again to the old channel between the Epicureans and Stoics, and in such a manner as

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 39-40.

<sup>59</sup> The attribution of the last of these articles dealing with Hutcheson's work is doubtful. The evidence against his being the author lies in an explicit denial within the text that Philocalus is Hutcheson. The text reads: "I hoped my answer might be seen by the author of the *Essay* before he set about writing any himself, and might possibly prevent his misapplying any of his time that way, which I presume is better employed." "Letters from the *London Journal*," 20 July 1728, appended to F. Hutcheson, *Collected works*, (B. Fabian ed.), (Hildesheim, 1971), volume two, p. 360. While Hutcheson used a pen-name in his debate with Gilbert Burnet in 1725, he subsequently admitted his role in the engagement, in the preface to the *Essay*. The evidence in favour is equally circumstantial. Hutcheson misdated the correspondence with Burnet in the 1742 edition of the *Essay on the passions and illustrations on the moral sense*, placing their date of composition as 1728. Fabian used this confusion to suggest that "he was aware of a correspondence in 1728 and thought of himself as a participant in it." *Ibid.*, p. viii. There is also the confidence of Philocalus that he can speak for Hutcheson. It is possible that the correspondent was one of his Dublin acquaintances. This possibility is heightened by the concluding remark that: "I beg Mr. Hutcheson's pardon, if I have too officiously drawn my pen in a piece of service to him, which possibly he may incline should be done by his own. I am fond of serving him in deeds and not in compliments." *Ibid.*, p. 363.

would not displease an academic.” Furthermore, Zeno acknowledged that Hutcheson had shown himself to be “a true Christian.”<sup>60</sup>

Despite this recommendation Zeno declared himself to be “not so much prejudiced in favour of this author as to overlook some considerable inadvertencies and obscurities in some of the underparts of his work, how well soever I approve the general execution of his excellent design.” This however was a minor quibble in a positive notice, for it proved on subsequent examination, to have been due to misinterpretation. He raised it “as a caution against sudden cavils to any who may remark on this treatise.” In parting, Zeno declared his intention to provoke “A good-natured correspondence begun on these subjects in your papers, or elsewhere....I should be glad to see Philanthropus [Hutcheson] again in your Journal....I want to raise up another Philaretus [Burnet] to provoke him to it.”<sup>61</sup>

Zeno did not have long to wait. Despite his warning as to the danger of picking holes in Hutcheson’s thesis, the *London Journal* of 16 March 1727/8 carried an article from Philaretus. He told Zeno: “Your desire of raising up a new Philaretus, has induced me to assume a name honoured with his choice; though I do not pretend strictly to enter into all his notions.” Where Burnet and Hutcheson had disputed the emphasis on reason and inclination, the new Philaretus stated “the proper method of bringing this controversy to an issue, will be by showing that the principles advanced on each side, are so intimately united, and have their force and influence so inseparably blended together, and mutually depending on each other, that it is needless to distinguish them.”<sup>62</sup>

Philaretus achieved this by concentrating on the issue of beauty. He conceived of virtue as a form of intellectual beauty. Of the moral sense, he wrote:

If this sense be supposed to consist in a mere instinct, or in a determination of the mind, not proceeding from reason, nor to be accounted for otherwise than by a blind impulse, it seems justly suspected to be an uncertain and insufficient foundation of virtue. If on the contrary, it be immediately seated in the understanding, so as to result necessarily from thence, and to be an inseparable attendant of our knowledge or perception of moral ideas, it may perhaps be safely admitted by moralists....such of them as are advocates for the reasonableness of virtue, may, without scruple, associate with it that sister-principle, amiableness.<sup>63</sup>

This rather half-hearted attempt to find a median point between Hutcheson and the rationalists only prompted a more vigorous critique of Hutcheson’s *Essay*.

<sup>60</sup> Zeno, *London Journal*, 24 February 1727/8,” in F. Hutcheson, *Collected works*, (B. Fabian ed.), (Hildesheim, 1971), volume two, p. 342.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 344, p. 344 and p. 345.

<sup>62</sup> Philaretus, *London Journal*, 16 March 1727/8,” in F. Hutcheson, *Collected works*, (B. Fabian ed.), (Hildesheim, 1971), volume two, p. 348.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 351-2.

Under the pen-name of Aletheiophilus, the leading article in the *London Journal* for 15 June 1728 was concerned explicitly with Hutcheson. The writer had taken objection to Hutcheson's refutation of the argument that truth was the foundation of morality, and was determined to defend just such a principal:

Your argument, against truth being the foundation of morality, turns chiefly upon this, that truth [being the accuracy of our perceptions] is common both to virtue and vice. Now if this be a good reason, it must also hold in the case I have put [that they are not]: truth being common in the same sense both to true and false propositions, and likewise to the general idea of truth and falsehood. And as this way of reasoning must necessarily confound all our notions of truth and falsehood, I cannot admit it for just.<sup>64</sup>

Aletheiophilus concluded by impugning Hutcheson for lack of "benevolence to mankind or any design of serving the public." These could not have motivated Hutcheson's work since "truth and falsehood having, in your [Hutcheson's] opinion, the same, or an equal relation to morality, false speculations on the subject might just prove equally beneficial to mankind as the true ones."<sup>65</sup>

A riposte arrived just over a month later. On Saturday 20 July 1728, a leading article under the name of Philocalus appeared, intending to refute "your letter in the *London Journal* of June 15." The author asserted: "Mr. Hutcheson has nowhere said, that I remember, that truth has nothing to do with morals." All he had done was to show that conformity to truth was not a sufficient foundation for virtue and called "upon those who place the idea of virtue in conformity to truth to show another sort of conformity" than that contained in accurate factual descriptions of objects and actions.<sup>66</sup> A judgement of moral worth was called for the character of which had to be explained.

Instead, Philocalus countered with the assertion that Hutcheson succeeded in supplying the justifying reasons his assailant accused him of disregarding:

Suppose any man had told your cook, that his whole art presupposed in men a desire of food, and a taste for it [as Hutcheson's system of morality did of benevolence derived from a moral sense], as 'tis obviously true. Would you think him thereby exempted from all care to acquire skill in discerning good meat from bad, or art in dressing it to please the palate?<sup>67</sup>

Charging Aletheiophilus with a lack of justice in his treatment of Hutcheson's work, Philocalus treated his question about the motive for publication with disdain: "I

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<sup>64</sup> Aletheiophilus, *London Journal*, 15 June 1728," in F. Hutcheson, *Collected works*, (B. Fabian ed.), (Hildesheim, 1971), volume two, p. 356.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 357.

<sup>66</sup> Philocalus, *London Journal*, 20 July 1728," in F. Hutcheson, *Collected works*, (B. Fabian ed.), (Hildesheim, 1971), volume two, p. 360.

would have answered for Mr. Hutcheson, your questions, had I imagined any man of reflection would be at a loss about an answer to them.”<sup>68</sup> This tone was apologised for, with Philocalus distancing himself from Hutcheson:

I don't doubt but you may find some archness in this letter of a yet lower kind than Mr. Hutcheson's; but whoever publicly attacks so good a writer as Mr. Hutcheson in such a confused manner, is not indeed using the proper liberty of philosophising [that Alcetheiophilus had claimed as a defence] but a liberty deserving another kind of archness than I incline to use.<sup>69</sup>

If Hutcheson was in fact the author of the last of these contributions to the debate in the *London Journal* it was likely that he subsequently remained aloof from it for just such a reason. Its ill-tempered tone and disdainful manner did not fit the public image of an affable, congenial thinker that Hutcheson had developed while in Ireland. Ironically, if Hutcheson did pen this ill-mannered piece, it stands as his last publication from Irish soil. No texts exist from the fifteen-month period between the article from Philocalus and his inaugural lecture in Glasgow University. However, it was not the last intellectual encounter that Hutcheson had with Irish thought. Alongside a lengthy domestic correspondence throughout his time in Glasgow with William Bruce and Thomas Drennan, and the comments he received in 1738 on his *System* from Synge, Rundle, Abernethy and others, Hutcheson had an indirect, if arguably formative, encounter with his greatest Irish philosophic contemporary, George Berkeley.

The connection with Berkeley remains, despite much hopeful research, wholly at the level of an intellectual encounter in the republic of letters. For most of the time Hutcheson was in Dublin, and for all the period that the dissenter was known for his literary exploits, Berkeley was abroad. This accident of geography did not prevent Berkeley from engaging in the debate about the existence of a moral sense. In 1732 he published a sustained satire on free-thought entitled *Alciphron: or the minute philosopher*. In seven dialogues, Berkeley refuted Anthony Collins, Mandeville and Shaftesbury. Hutcheson was not a direct target of Berkeley's ire, so far as internal evidence can show. Nowhere was the Irish moral sense theorist directly quoted and nowhere was he mentioned as a proponent of the idea. Yet the vigour with which Berkeley refuted Shaftesbury, and the reading of the Earl's work, which was closer to Hutcheson's thought than the Earl's actual stance, ensured that Hutcheson felt stung upon reading the work.

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 362.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 362.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 363.

The core dialogue was the third, where Berkeley turned his fire on Shaftesbury, who Berkeley thought of as a modern Epicurean. Crito, who represented Berkeley's views, questioned Shaftesbury's account of beauty. In a series of questions and answers Berkeley reduced this to a bland utilitarianism:

Alciphron, after a short pause, said that beauty consisted in a certain symmetry or proportion pleasing to the eye.

Euphranor. Is this proportion one and the same in all things, or is it different in different kinds of things?

Alc. Different, doubtless. The proportions of an ox would not be beautiful in a horse. And we may observe also in things inanimate, that the beauty of a table, a chair, a door, consists in different proportions.

Euph. Doth not this proportion imply the relation of one thing to another?

Alc. It doth.

Euph. Are not these relations founded in size and shape?

Alc. They are.

Euph. And, to make the proportions just, must not those mutual relations of size and shape in the parts be such as shall make the whole complete and perfect in its kind?

Alc. I grant they must.

Euph. Is not a thing said to be perfect in its kind when it answers the end for which it was made?

Alc. It is.<sup>70</sup>

Hutcheson's response came in the fourth edition of the *Inquiry*, published in Glasgow by the Foulis brothers in 1738. In a passage added to the 'Inquiry concerning beauty,' he denied that the Bishop of Cloyne had successfully refuted him:

'Tis surprising to see the ingenious author of *Aliciphron* alleging, that all beauty observed is solely some use perceived or imagined; for no other reason than this, that the apprehension of the use intended, occurs continually, when we are judging of the forms of chairs, doors, tables, and some other things of obvious use; and that we like those forms most, which are fittest for the use. Whereas we see, that in these very things similitude of parts is regarded, where unlike parts would be equally useful: thus the feet of a chair would be of the same use, though unlike, were they equally long; though one were straight and the other bended; or one bending outwards, and the other inwards: a coffin shape for a door would bear a more manifest aptitude to the human shape, than that which artists require. And then what is the use of these imitations of nature or of its works in architecture? Why should a pillar please which has some of the human proportions? Is the end or use of a pillar the same as of a man? Why the imitation of other natural or well-proportioned things in the entablature? Is there then a sense of imitation, relishing it where there is no other use than this, that it naturally pleases? Again; is no man pleased with the shapes of any animals, but those which he

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<sup>70</sup> G. Berkeley, "Third dialogue," in D. Berman (ed.), *George Berkeley's Alciphron in focus*, (London, 1993), p. 66.

expects use from? The shapes of the horse or the ox may promise use to the owner; but is he the only person who relishes the beauty? And is there no beauty discerned in plants, in flowers, in animals, whose use is to us unknown?<sup>71</sup>

Hutcheson's response to Berkeley's gauntlet may have also taken a more sustained, more creative form. James Moore has posited the possibility, based on the timing of the events, that Hutcheson took up the challenge of providing moral sense theory with a world-view to match. The result was the failed *System*.<sup>72</sup>

However, David Raynor suggests that the reason behind the collapse of the *System* was not to do with any internal incoherence Hutcheson was unable to iron out. Instead it was caused by the realisation that David Hume, had beaten him to the publishers. Hume's *Treatise of human nature* was more complete than Hutcheson could hope to accomplish, and so radical as to alter the terms of any subsequent philosophic debate. The pique this achievement caused in Hutcheson's mind, Raynor also asserts, may be the cause of his opposition to Hume's appointment to any academic post in Scotland.<sup>73</sup>

Whatever the reason, Hutcheson did not publish his intended masterpiece. However, its posthumous appearance in the bookshops did ensure that it became an eloquent illustration of his reputation and the esteem in which his contemporaries held him. Finally prepared for the public eye by his son, the musician and physician known to posterity as Francis Ireland, Hutcheson's abandoned synthesis appeared ten years after his death. The brothers Foulis, who had received support and guidance from their teacher Hutcheson in the early years of their press, handled the work with care, as the fine folio edition of two volumes makes clear.<sup>74</sup>

The publication of *A system of moral philosophy* in 1755 was managed through subscription, a common practice in the volatile world of eighteenth-century publishing. The length of the list of subscribers, numbering three hundred and ninety-nine names spread over six folio pages, provides ample insight into the breath and depth of the Irishman's audience. Foremost among the notables are twenty-six professors. Almost half of these, twelve, are members of the faculty at Hutcheson's old institution, Glasgow University. Alongside Adam Smith who ordered two copies and Leechman and Moor are John Anderson, James Clow and William Cullen. James Moor may well have been

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<sup>71</sup>F. Hutcheson, T1, 1738 edition, p. 54. Reprinted in D. Berman (ed.), *George Berkeley's Alciphron in focus*, (London, 1993), pp 169-70. In disputing this interpretation of his own work, Hutcheson also differentiated his ideas from those of Shaftesbury.

<sup>72</sup>I would like to thank Professor James Moore for discussion of this matter and for a copy of his forthcoming article: "Hutcheson's Theodicy: the argument and contexts of *A system of moral philosophy*."

<sup>73</sup>I would like to thank Dr. David Raynor for discussion of the events surrounding the publication of Hume's *Treatise of human nature*. D. Hume, *A treatise of human nature*, (L. A. Selby-Bigge ed.), (Oxford, 1968).

<sup>74</sup>On this see chapter five.

instrumental in bringing a copy to the library of the University's Greek class, enhancing the institutional backing already provided by the central library of the University.

Beyond Glasgow University, the project attracted nine members of the faculty of Trinity College, Dublin, with six of the names attaching the title of Fellow of the College to their entry in the list. The other three were Professors at that institution. The remaining academics were drawn from Cambridge University, where three men subscribed, Edinburgh, where Mr. Robert Dick, the Professor of Civil Law, who was connected by blood-ties to his namesake, the Professor of Philosophy at Glasgow, subscribed, and one, John Young, the Professor of Philosophy at St. Andrew's. Neither Aberdeen nor Oxford evinced any interest in the scheme. Also noticeable is the presence of six of the Irish Anglican hierarchy among the names. Besides the Bishop of Elphin, Hutcheson's old friend Edward Synge, the list also notes the interest of George Stone, the Primate of All Ireland, and Charles Cobbe the Archbishop of Dublin.<sup>75</sup> Synge's brother Nicholas appears as the Bishop of Killaloe and Kilfenora.<sup>76</sup> The other Prelates are the Bishop of Killala, Achonry, and that of Leighlin and Ferns.<sup>77</sup>

The geographic reach of Hutcheson's ideas can also be seen in the inclusion of two Dutch-based subscribers - the Reverend Archibald M'Lean, "minister of the English Church at the Hague," and the Honourable Henry Fagel, the "Principal Secretary to their High Mightinesses the States General of the United Provinces." Also intriguing is the high number of subscribers based in Liverpool. Six names describe themselves as from that city, besides two from the competitor city of Manchester. The English appreciation of Hutcheson is also noticeable in Mr. William Thurlburn, a bookseller in Cambridge and from a number of London readers.

Finally, the Scottish Enlightenment can be discerned through the presence on the list, of three resonant names. Foremost of these is the Adam Smith, Professor of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow University. Also suggestive are the names of Reverend Adam Ferguson and Mr. Thomas Reid. That enlightened figures in Scotland were interested and provoked by Hutcheson's work is shown by the response the *System* drew from the Reverend Hugh Blair. In the year of the *System*'s publication, members of the Scottish

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<sup>75</sup> George Stone, D. D. b. England, educated Oxford. Bishop of Ferns, then Kildare, then Derry. Translated to Armagh 13 March 1747. Not enthroned until 1752, the same year he became Vice-Chancellor to the University of Dublin. Died in London 19 December 1764. Charles Cobbe b. England, educated Oxford, Bishop of Killala, Dromore and Kildare. Translated to Dublin 4 March 1742/3. Died in this office on 14 April 1765.

<sup>76</sup> Nicholas Synge D.D. advanced to the see of Killaloe in 1745/6. This see was united with the bishopric of Kilfenora in 1753. Synge died in January 1771.

<sup>77</sup> Richard Robinson D.D. (afterwards Baron Rokeby) born in England, educated Oxford, once chaplain to the Duke of Dorset when he was Lord Lieutenant, consecrated 19 January 1752. Translated to Ferns in 1759, to Kildare in 1761, and in 1765 to the Primacy. John Garnett educated. Cambridge, Appointed Bishop 28 October 1752. Translated to Clogher in 1758.

intellectual establishment launched a periodical to display Scottish talent in literature and polite letters. Despite the short print run of this edition of the *Edinburgh Review* (it folded after its second issue in 1756) Blair contributed an extensive review of Hutcheson's overview to the first instalment.

Blair began with a reminder of Hutcheson's empirical stance. Hutcheson treated morals "as a matter of fact, and not as founded on the abstract relations of things." He was opposed to any deductivist system that treated morals as *a priori* truths: "H[utcheson] was convinced that... a true scheme of morals could not be the product of genius and invention, or of the greatest precision in metaphysical reasoning; but must be drawn from proper observations on the several powers and principles which we are conscious of in our bosoms."<sup>78</sup> These natural powers included internal senses of beauty and morality.

Blair questioned Hutcheson's scheme on this point, enquiring as to "whether all these be original instincts or determinations of the minds, as our author seems to think, or whether some of them can be traced from more general principles in our nature." What was indisputable was that Hutcheson saw the moral sense as "the supreme regulating principle of conduct." It judged "all [actions] as tend to the happiness of others, and to the moral perfection of our own minds: from which he draws this great consequence; that universal benevolence is the law of our nature."<sup>79</sup> Blair then described how he dealt with ethical disagreement:

This diversity of sentiment with regard to morals is owing... chiefly to these three causes. First, different notions of happiness and of the means of promoting it which obtain among mankind. Secondly, larger or more confined systems, which men regard in considering the tendency of actions. Thirdly, different opinions about what God has commanded.<sup>80</sup>

As Blair noted "that capital point of the benevolence of the deity is in particular laboured with care; and much good reasoning produced in support of it." This reasoning Hutcheson derived "from analogy to other minds; from the all sufficient nature of the deity; from the obvious tendency to general happiness which prevails throughout the universe; from the necessity of general laws being established."<sup>81</sup>

Blair asserted Hutcheson's system equated morality with benevolence. This enabled Blair to provide a note of caution for the uncritical reader in danger of adopting Hutcheson's scheme wholesale. "We cannot help observing", he wrote, "that Mr.

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<sup>78</sup> H. Blair, "A system of moral philosophy: or Hutcheson's moral philosophy," in *Edinburgh Review*, 1, (1755), p. 13.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14, p. 15 and p. 15.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 16-7.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17 and pp 17-8.



Hutcheson's scheme would have been more complete if he had distinguished in a more explicit manner betwixt a sense of duty and a simple approbation of the moral sense."<sup>82</sup> This was an echo of the classical assumption that to know the good is to do the good; an assumption embedded in many of the problems Hutcheson had in producing a formal philosophy of action.<sup>83</sup> This was furthered by Blair's assertion that Hutcheson was guilty of representing virtue "rather in the light of a beautiful and noble object recommended by the inward approbation of our minds than as a law dictated by conscience." This difference resulted in the system being better formed for "making virtuous men better than for teaching the bulk of mankind the first principles of duty."<sup>84</sup>

Then Blair's account arrived at the middle of the second book of Hutcheson's *System*. The remainder of that book was, as Blair pointed out "employed on the jurisprudential part of the system;" a section of Hutcheson's *magnum opus* through which Blair admitted he found "it were tedious to follow him." The only redeeming feature of this passage, he judged, came "towards the end of the second book [where] we meet with a curious chapter on the extraordinary rights arising from necessity." These, as Blair explained were "one of the most nice and delicate questions in morality...whether there be any particular cases in which we may be justified in departing from the ordinary rules of virtue?"<sup>85</sup> To this question, as Blair noticed approvingly, Hutcheson argued that there were indeed such exceptional circumstances.

The third book of the *System* dealt with what Blair described as "those rights and duties that arise from what moralists call the adventitious states, that is, the relations which mankind have formed among themselves." Dividing them into domestic and civil relations, Hutcheson was to be applauded for "a vein of great humanity, as well as good sense" that Blair recognised running throughout the passages concerning domestic affairs. When matters political were placed under Hutcheson's inspection Blair found him to be "a warm friend to the cause of liberty and discovers a just abhorrence of all slavish principles." Noting his defence of the right to rebellion, Blair identified Hutcheson as an advocate of "the advantages of regular subjection and due regard to laws, even under a faulty administration;" a position Blair took up as a leading exponent of the Moderate party in the Church of Scotland in later life.<sup>86</sup>

In concluding, Blair made an appreciative judgement of the *System* as a whole, highlighting Hutcheson's philosophical optimism and his open style. The comments on

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>83</sup> On this see chapters five and six

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19 and pp 19-20.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

Hutcheson's skill as a writer were fair, judicious and worthy of attention coming from a scholar who was to become an influential student of rhetoric and *belles lettres*:

On the whole, whatever objections may be made to some very few particulars of Mr. Hutcheson's scheme, yet as a system of morals, his work deserves, in our judgement, considerable praise. He shows a thorough acquaintance with the subject of which he treats. His philosophy tends to inspire generous sentiments and amiable views of human nature. It is particularly calculated to promote the social and friendly affections; and we cannot but agree with the author of the preface [Leechman] that it has the air of being dictated by the heart, no less than the head. As to the style and manner; no systems can be expected to be very entertaining, and allowances are always due to a posthumous work, which may be supposed not to have received the author's last hand. Elegance has not been studied in the composition; but the style, though careless and neglected, cannot justly be taxed as either mean or obscure.<sup>87</sup>

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Although the electorate in Glasgow was thus apparently right in judging that Hutcheson would be a worthy addition to their staff, the question of what Hutcheson brought to his job in Glasgow is more complex. In endeavouring to answer it, this thesis has examined a series of Irish loyalties and pressures that may have shaped Hutcheson's thought during his time in Dublin. While there, Hutcheson produced a series of works that articulated a moral vision of the world accommodating many of the arguments of his friends and associates. His Dublin writings reflect his experience at the centre of an eclectic social nexus which included a radical politician, a latitudinarian churchman, a Presbyterian propagandist, a literary critic, a Lord Lieutenant and an Anglican Bishop.

Chapter one saw how Hutcheson and Molesworth shared an interest in the philosophy of aesthetics, derived from Lockean empiricism, which contained a conception of the individual as an autonomous agent. The individual gained knowledge through direct personal experience of the world. The aesthetic theory that the two men espoused, Hutcheson in his treatise and Molesworth through the practical example of his garden in Breckdenstown isolated beauty in the blend of uniformity amidst variety. It may have been this philosophical agreement, and not in their political compatibility, that engaged Hutcheson to Molesworth.

The extension, by analogy, of Hutcheson's ideas concerning beauty into the moral sphere generated an interest in toleration that fed into Hutcheson's relationship with Edward Synge. It also illuminates how Hutcheson set the individuals of his theory in social relationships. The concept of trust was centralised, by generalising the moral sense to all individuals and to the social networks and institutions with which they came into contact.

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

In a system of reflexive relationships in which the spectator observed and judged other individuals who observed and judged in turn, Hutcheson based the social network in the recognition of other agents with similar moral norms. Despite the variety inherent in his democratic expansion of virtue to all actors, Hutcheson's moral sense theory generated the uniformity required for moral prescription.

The second chapter also examines how Hutcheson and Synge shared a vision of religious institutions as interest groups, and a rhetoric that incorporated a theory of pluralism. The key lay in the belief that the Presbyterian and Anglican faiths were communicative communities which, separately and from different perspectives, owed their loyalty to the state. Neither community was so retrograde as to renounce their loyalty in favour of either a restored Jacobitism, as the Roman Catholics were understood to do, or a utopian scheme of some undefined character.<sup>88</sup> Both denominations were free to compete for converts within the confines of political acquiescence. A form of pluralist free-market could exist, in which the state acted as an arbiter of conflict. Loyalty to the state was the entry-fee and the prerequisite of toleration. In sum, the state underwrote the society flourishing under its protective wing, and resisted hampering it unless its legitimacy was called into question. This was why Hutcheson was able to be a dissenter and a loyal subject, and why he conceived of a contractual, limited state that supported but did not control the communicative communities in its domain.

However, the Presbyterianism to which Hutcheson was affiliated was not unanimous in its adoption of this self-understanding. The non-subscription controversy examined in chapter three exposed a cleavage within the dissenting church over precisely this concern. On the one side were the subscribers, who believed that the church represented the one true faith, as revealed in Scripture. As such Presbyterianism stood apart from the other churches in a profound sense. It represented a "transcendental other," which those outside could not access.<sup>89</sup> Any dilution of the distinctive theological identity of the church was a fall into sinfulness. To be a Presbyterian was, for the subscribers, to stand against the moral vision of the Anglican and Roman Catholic faiths. In a battle for salvation there could be no compromise.

The vision of the non-subscribers, in contrast, placed primacy upon the need for political and social accommodation between the faiths, and therefore emphasised, not the theological orthodoxy articulated in the Westminster Confession of Faith but, the social virtues of tolerance and open-mindedness. Their vision of the church was not of a chosen

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<sup>88</sup> See A. T. Q. Stewart, *A deeper silence: the hidden origins of the United Irishmen*, (London, 1993), who links the Hutchesonian discourse with the political radicalism of 1798.

people, set apart from the society through which it had to venture. It was of a social network, an association of equals and an interest group.

This temperamental difference between those who emphasised the church as a source of doctrine and those who saw it as a body politic was grounded in a more deep-seated difference. Paradoxically, the subscribers understood the church as primarily a social body, a communion of believers, who submitted to the stated orthodoxy of the Confession. To do so was to become a member of the faith. The non-subscribers instead emphasised the capacity of each individual to determine orthodoxy for himself in a rational manner, through an individual struggle with biblical text. The church was a moral guide - a companion in the individual's ethical voyage. However, the weight of expectation was on the individual. This engendered a creative tension between the individual's understanding of the Bible and the desire to set up a Godly community on earth. This was exacerbated where, as in Ireland, the political loyalties were tested by the state's ambivalent attitude towards dissenting subjects. The *Regium Donum* and the Test Act lay side by side on the statute book, both including and excluding the Presbyterians from the benefits of legal recognition.

It was his belief in the inter-subjective nature of values grounded on trust between the actors that enabled Hutcheson to legitimate the voluntary institution of the Presbyterian Church. The debate between those, like Abernethy, who believed in the moral capacity of the individual, and those like John Hutcheson, who placed their hopes in the wider community, only highlighted the need for a centre-ground.

In chapter three Hutcheson's letters to Burnet are read in this light. In his letter to his father, Hutcheson supplied a defence of a loosely defined community of believers, bound together, not by the rationalism of Gilbert Burnet, but by the moral sense and emotional ties. The rationalism of Burnet and the non-subscribers was as antithetical to Hutcheson as the scripturalism of his father and the subscribers. Instead Hutcheson emphasised the emotional ties that bound him to the community of dissenters, and, in stance similar to Joseph Boyse, implicitly argued for toleration of tender consciences within the fold of Irish Presbyterianism.

At stake in the non-subscription controversy was the question of how the society of dissenters ought to protect their identity and forward their ambitions as a community. Thus, it was about justifying the community's existence, and prescribing of what the good life of that community was to consist. For Hutcheson, Presbyterianism was an affiliated church and a moral vision of social relations.

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<sup>89</sup> The phrase is from A. Seligman, *The idea of civil society*, (New Jersey, 1992), p. 63.

How Hutcheson conceived of morality in society was the subject of chapter four. Both Hutcheson and Arbuckle were committed to the civilising of the Irish community. This task involved introducing urban and urbane manners, associated with the English essayist Joseph Addison. Through the instrument of the *Dublin Weekly Journal* Arbuckle illustrated and inculcated a polite mode of living for a populous urban environment. In his responses to Thomas Hobbes and Bernard Mandeville, Hutcheson argued for the possibility of developing moral social relationships, despite the threat to that vision posed by self-interest and luxury. Hutcheson was arguing for the capacity of society to generate morality although, he recognised in the *Essay on the passions*, that order had to regulate the variety of passions and desires in the individual actor. Self-control was vital to Hutcheson's ethical scheme. Hutcheson dealt with these concerns in the *Dublin Weekly Journal* by highlighting the need to control emotions if one is to be a good consumer and a subtle political actor. This control can only be nurtured through practice. That implies involvement with others. It also implies that the rules of civility become second nature.

The creation of intersubjective values was the aim and result of social interaction. Hutcheson suggested how to accomplish this in the *Essay on the passions*. The need for participants in the economy, society and polity to contain their drives, restrain their wants and control their emotions - to act civilly towards others - was central to the concern of that treatise. Hutcheson drew on the Stoic tradition of self-mastery to supply a theory for his new social actor. Hutcheson was not delineating, as Cicero had done, the virtue of the active politician. Instead, he was offering a model for a participant in civil society.

This distinction is crucial, for it also explains the relationship Hutcheson forged with his patron at that time, the Lord Lieutenant, John Carteret. Carteret was imbued with a classical education and may have recognised the terms of Hutcheson's argument. However, Carteret was also deeply sensitive to the limitations of the state when confronted with a recalcitrant civil society. The Wood's halfpence affair illustrates just such a conflict between the state's intentions and the outcome determined by the populace's responses. It shows the extent of market autonomy in the face of mass state intervention. With skills honed in the diplomatic quagmire of the Baltic, Carteret mediated the polity's change of heart over the Wood's halfpence. Carteret was, in this sense, a successful exponent of the politics of civility. He recognised the limits of state action and the validity of extra-parliamentary opposition. He acted on these insights, ensuring that the conflict of interests, which the Wood's halfpence affair revealed, did not develop into a full crisis of legitimacy, that might have overturned the state and the society.

The confrontation with William King appears at first view to represent the limits of Hutcheson's theory. King was the arch-opponent of any form of toleration for dissenters. He campaigned vigorously against any let-up in the civil disabilities of the penal legislation. He articulated a providential justification for Anglican supremacy and was an active antagonist of Presbyterian tenets. King represented the confessional limits that Hutcheson confronted in his dealings with Anglican polite society.

Yet Hutcheson respected King, and valued his estimation of his work. He attempted to cross the divide King had established to engage constructively in a dialogue over philosophical matters. What bound Hutcheson and King together was an understanding that tradition was not antithetical to liberty.

King accomplished this balancing act by use of the concept of ordinary and special providence. For man's actions to be considered moral they had to be freely chosen. This insight resulted in his adoption of radical free will. The individual was free to choose courses of action through an act of generosity, a privilege granted to humanity by an omnipotent God. It was within the remit of special providence. It was therefore compatible with the ordinary providence of the mundane, inanimate universe. It also enabled King to understand the actions of men as the working out of divine providence. History became the evidence of man's free will and of a divine scheme. Liberty was of a piece with the traditions inscribed in history.

Hutcheson could not use providential history to legitimate the success of the Presbyterian creed, only to defend its existence as a legitimate component of society. The state ought not to legislate against Presbyterianism but leave it free to contribute to the intellectual and cultural life of the society. In turn, the Presbyterian community had to accept the fundamental rules of co-operation.<sup>90</sup> Presbyterians had to remain loyal to the monarch and free of the taint of Jacobitism, Popery or republican discontent. Thus Hutcheson had to use history and tradition to underwrite Presbyterian liberties, rather than explain them away. This polemical difference involved Hutcheson in a positive conception of liberty as the culmination of, rather than opposed to, social practices.

Hutcheson therefore utilised an ambiguity in the concept of liberty between the freedom from interference by coercive power and the capacity to self-realise.<sup>91</sup> The first sets limits on behaviour and is understood best as *freedom from*. This is the stance of Archbishop King, and the '*from*' he inveighed against was despotism, emanating from either Popery or Jacobitism, from Roman Catholicism or intrusive Whig ministers in

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<sup>90</sup> P. Kilroy, *Protestant dissent and controversy in Ireland, 1660-1714*, (Cork, 1994), pp 198-203.

<sup>91</sup> See I. Berlin, "Two concepts of liberty," in *Four essays on liberty*, (Oxford, 1969), pp 118-72.

England. *Freedom to* is the power of self-expression. This was the freedom Hutcheson petitioned for, as it would, if granted, have ensured that the state underwrote the dissenters' full participation in civil society. Both men required an appeal to a tradition of liberty to explain their political and social stances, and, as highly intelligent men, probably understood that the other was arguing in the same discursive paradigm. Hutcheson and King, in spite of the confessional differences, were arguing about the same problem.

The dependence of the Irish state on the English state, inscribed in the legislation of the polity by the Declaratory Act, left King with a deep rhetorical need to justify the freedoms and liberties of the 'English in Ireland.' These were under threat from the intrusive, meddling of Whiggish ministers in London. To his mind they were complicit with an absolutising project which, if left unchallenged, would erode the civil and political freedoms of the Irish Anglicans. The crucial questions for King therefore concerned issues of freedom and the limitations of the state. The same was true of Hutcheson but from a different perspective. His community had fewer liberties to lose. The issue was not the maintenance of political liberty, but whether the state enabled civil society to flourish. Did the Irish polity underwrite civil society, and the dissenters' role within it, or was it a threat? Was the nascent civil society in Ireland in danger of being overrun by Anglican absolutism as much as by Roman Catholic despotism? Whether one sided with King or Hutcheson as to the relationship the Irish state bore to this issue of civility depended on whether one was included or excluded by its legislation.

In total, what Hutcheson generated in Dublin was a creative response to specific, if generalisable, tensions. He petitioned the polite society of his day for tolerance, inclusion and the freedom to dissent. He wanted to civilise Irish society and to bring the Presbyterians under the protective cloak of the state without compromising their confessional beliefs. His loyalties were first to his faith and then to his community, his state and to humanity. His work constitutes a mode of discourse appropriating a range of political, theological and ethical languages amounting to a language of civil society.

Civil society in its modern formulation was first defined in eighteenth-century Scotland.<sup>92</sup> Adam Ferguson's *History of civil society* stands at the fountainhead of two centuries of philosophical speculation and political theory concerning its identity and utility.<sup>93</sup> In this text Ferguson grappled with the issue of how commercial society might produce and maintain a virtuous population. He accepted the analysis of luxury whereby commercial activity, based on self-interest, was incompatible with the demands of a social

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<sup>92</sup> For the etymology of the term 'civil society' see D. Colas, *Civil society and fanaticism: conjoined histories*, (Stanford, 1997), pp 20-41.

life, based on benevolent sentiments.<sup>94</sup> In opposition to the portrait painted by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose image of the noble savage Ferguson explicitly repudiated, natural man had a capacity for benevolence and baseness. He exploded the notion that the construction of social systems was less than painful. The key concept was struggle.

The *Essay* tracked the dialectical tension between man's sentimental and rational traits through the history of the species. That journey fell into three distinct periods, identifiable through the different socio-psychological systems at work. Beginning in a state of savagery, man moved through barbarism, before reaching the polite, commercial world identifiable with England. This stadial theory of history was implicitly a theory of progress.<sup>95</sup> Man in commercial society was more civilised than his savage predecessor.

Yet, the civil society celebrated by Ferguson recognised both the benefits of civility and the demands of man's barbarism. Neither impulse was inferior to the other. Hostility and fellow-feeling were necessary to each other, both in man, and in society:

It is vain to expect that we can give to the multitude of a people a sense of union among themselves, without admitting hostility to those who oppose them. Could we at once, in the case of any nation, extinguish the emulation which is excited from abroad, we should probably break or weaken the bands of society at home, and close the busiest scenes of national occupations and virtues.<sup>96</sup>

Fusing this tension with an internal division of labour ensured the internalisation of competition and emulation by the society.<sup>97</sup> Thus there existed a curious tension, analogous to Hutcheson's "uniformity amidst variety" in which communities maintained a modicum of their regional identity while enjoying the benefits of centralised, commercial integration.

Despite the indisputable paternity, the historical causes that resulted in Ferguson's construction of the concept are as indeterminate and unstable as the concept itself. Ernest Gellner suggested that the birth of civil society was "an absurdity" that actually happened.<sup>98</sup> The work that has been done on the historical origins of the term has centred on the grand historical processes underpinning its emergence. Max Weber depicted it as part of the transition from feudalism to capitalism.<sup>99</sup> Juergen Habermas argued that civil

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<sup>93</sup> A. Ferguson, *An essay on the history of civil society*, (Cambridge, 1995).

<sup>94</sup> For the civic humanist critique of luxury see J. G. A. Pocock, "Machiavelli, Harrington and English political ideologies in the eighteenth century," in *Politics, language and time*, (London, 1971), pp 104-47. On Ferguson as a civic humanist see J. Robertson, "The Scottish enlightenment at the limits of the civic tradition," in *Wealth and virtue: the shaping of political economy in the Scottish enlightenment*, (I. Hont and M. Ignatieff, ed.), (Cambridge, 1987), pp 137-78.

<sup>95</sup> On stadialism see R. L. Meek, *Social science and the ignoble savage*, (Cambridge, 1976).

<sup>96</sup> A. Ferguson, *An essay on the history of civil society*, (Cambridge, 1995), p. 29.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>98</sup> E. Gellner, *Conditions of liberty: civil society and its rivals*, (London, 1994), p. 193.

<sup>99</sup> M. Weber, *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*, (London, 1992).



society was the outcome of the reification of market forces in the eighteenth century.<sup>100</sup> John Keane has located the origin of the concept in the development of democratic theory, while Gellner claimed civil society for an ill-defined liberty.<sup>101</sup>

More historically specific accounts place civil society in the process of desacralisation and the 'disenchantment of the world' implicit in the enlightenment. Dominique Colas and Adam Seligman link its emergence to a Protestant ethic; although Colas centres Luther's celebration of the City of Man over the City of God while Seligman follows Weber in centring the Calvinist system of rationality grounded on economic calculation.<sup>102</sup> According to Seligman, it was a Protestant ethos which provoked the kind of commercial expansion which the British state experienced at the end of the seventeenth century, and in the first quarter of the eighteenth.

All this provides clues as to how Hutcheson might be understood. Gellner is correct to identify the first full articulation of the theory to the work of Adam Ferguson. But in so much as Ferguson was the intellectual descendant of the Irishman, his thought can be used to throw some light on how the young men in the lecture halls of Glasgow understood their mentor's words. Answering their need for a theory of virtue, which could accommodate and interpret the loss of the Scottish parliament in 1707, Hutcheson's vision of a civil society proved fertile ground for intellects to till. The late Scottish Enlightenment, dominated by Ferguson's circle of Moderate churchmen, produced a sophisticated analysis of social behaviour in line with this thesis.<sup>103</sup> Blair's sermons and lectures on *belle lettres* dedicated themselves to the production of a polite clergy to act as social regulators in the British province.<sup>104</sup> Men in the legal profession, in teaching and in the Kirk all rallied to the cause, founding clubs and societies to investigate and assess, justify and defend the communicative values produced by a properly functioning civil society.<sup>105</sup> The social sciences, such as economics and sociology, emerged in this burst of intellectual activity.

In his initial statement, the *Inquiry concerning the original of our ideas of beauty and virtue* Hutcheson granted the individual the status of the core unit of analysis and had placed that individual in a sequence of affective communities. In doing so Hutcheson laid

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<sup>100</sup> J. Habermas, *The structural transformation of the public sphere: an inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*, (Cambridge, 1992).

<sup>101</sup> J. Keane, *Civil society: old images, new visions*, (Cambridge, 1998) and E. Gellner, *Conditions of liberty: civil society and its rivals*, (London, 1994).

<sup>102</sup> See D. Colas, *Civil society and fanaticism: conjoined histories*, (Stanford, 1997); A. Seligman, *The idea of civil society*, (New Jersey, 1992).

<sup>103</sup> On the Moderate movement in the Church of Scotland, see R. B. Sher, *Church and university in the Scottish enlightenment: the Moderate literati of Edinburgh*, (Edinburgh, 1985).

<sup>104</sup> See R. Crawford, *Devolving English literature*, (Oxford, 1992) and R. Crawford (ed.), *The Scottish invention of English literature*, (Cambridge, 1998).

out the key tension with which civil society attempts to tussle. The determination he displayed to justify voluntary institutions like the Presbyterian Church also shows sensitivity for an issue of central concern to subsequent civil society theorists. He understood that the problem of civilising was not open to easy resolution, and tried in his contributions to the *Dublin Weekly Journal* to aid the civilising process in Ireland. His later associations with Carteret and King confronted Hutcheson with two debating points within the civil society canon - control of self interest and the issue of freedom.

Why was Dublin the site of Hutcheson's creative output? Presbyterianism suggests one possible answer. Hutcheson was born into the Calvinist creed and he trained to espouse it. Through the academy, it also brought him to Dublin. Hutcheson was, to that extent, a Presbyterian thinker. His thought was a creative and original response to the peculiar status granted to the dissenting community in Dublin in the 1720s; at once too loyal to be subjugated like the Roman Catholics and too different to be wholly accepted. Presbyterians were, to use a paradox, established outsiders.

Hutcheson emerged from this curious halfway house. He faced discrimination, while sitting at the table of the Lord Lieutenant. Irish Anglican society effectively granted Hutcheson observer status in the corridors of power. It was this unease over the nature of politics and about his role in it that made him friendly with Molesworth, albeit they had more productive shared concerns which enabled them to remain so.

In this, Hutcheson appears as a descriptive critic of the condition of the Irish state in the post-Revolution era. The Irish state provoked Hutcheson into thoughts which can be read as idealised versions of his peculiar political status. But at the heart of Hutcheson's thought was ethics. He was anxious to provide a vision of the good life for his readers to aspire to. His was not a cold, analytical system. He provided a vision of man as he ought to be, and opposed any system satisfied with depicting 'man as he is'. That he passed this desire onto his Scottish students while giving them with an understanding of virtue that could be accommodated to their post-Union condition adds to his credibility as the creative father of the Scottish enlightenment.

One tension in that movement, which set in motion many syntheses, including the civil society of Ferguson was, as Knud Haakonssen has identified, that:

Natural law obliges to duty; history, tradition, and one's own choices detail the content of one's duty. But if history is merely informative, the future is prescriptive, and the science of morals can inform us of it. Moral guidance is in the future, in the ideal moral order and harmony of roles that

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<sup>105</sup> On the Scottish clubs of the eighteenth century see D. D. McElroy, *Scotland's age of improvement: a survey of eighteenth-century literary clubs and societies*, (Washington, 1969).

are providentially appointed as our goals and described by moral science. Therein lies the great moral and political ambiguity of this line of thought. On the one hand it relies on a conservative notion of the historically given offices of life; on the other hand, it needs a teleological and providentialist norm, that invites utopian scheming.<sup>106</sup>

Such a tension is also embedded in the concept of civil society. As Charles Taylor noted:

In a minimal sense, civil society exists where there are free associations that are not under tutelage of state power. In a stronger sense, civil society exists where society as a whole can structure itself and co-ordinate its actions through such free associations. As an alternative or supplement to the second sense, we can speak of civil society wherever the ensemble of associations can significantly determine or inflect the course of state policy.<sup>107</sup>

The problem with this multi-faceted description is that it encompasses descriptive and normative elements. It describes where to find civil society and the values such places embody. Hutcheson had a sense of that contradiction from the start. Terry Eagleton, in a public lecture, given in Trinity College, Dublin, to mark the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hutcheson's birth, offered two possible understandings:

Francis Hutcheson, unknown to himself, is in this sense a utopian thinker, discerning at the very root of our nature, a set of values which could only in fact be realised in some transfigured future....To project utopia upon the present [as Hutcheson did] is to cherish its creative potential, redeeming those values which cut against the grain of its dominant ethos. It is also to risk cutting off a future, and so selling those values short.<sup>108</sup>

In truth, Hutcheson was both of his time and a utopian dreamer. His creative response to his situation in Dublin constitutes a vital moment in the genealogy of the Scottish enlightenment and one of its most important outcomes, the concept of civil society.

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<sup>106</sup> K. Haakonssen, *Natural law and moral philosophy: from Grotius to the Scottish enlightenment*, (Cambridge, 1996), p. 7.

<sup>107</sup> C. Taylor, "Invoking civil society," in *Philosophical arguments*, (London, 1995), p. 208.

<sup>108</sup> T. Eagleton, "Homage to Francis Hutcheson," in *Heathcliff and the great hunger* (London, 1995), pp 115-6.

APPENDIX ONE

DEATH NOTICE OF ROBERT MOLESWORTH

DWJ—MAY 29, 1725, NO. IX PAGE 36

On Saturday the 22<sup>nd</sup> instant, betwixt eleven and twelve at night, departed this Life, the Right Honourable *Robert*, Lord Viscount *Molesworth*, at his seat of Breckdenscon, near Swords, in the 69<sup>th</sup> Year of his age.

This great man's character is too well known in the world, to need being enlarged on in a paper of this kind, where it would almost profane to attempt it. His Lordship distinguished himself by a very early and zealous appearance for the late *Happy Revolution*, and enjoy'd no small share in the esteem of his Royal Majesty, King *William*, by whom he was sent Envoy Extraordinary to *Denmark*, in which station he resided at that court for several years; and soon after his return, obliged the Publick with an account of that Country, which is generally esteemed one of the best Books of the kind, that has appeared in English, from whence it has been translated into several Foreign languages. He frequently served his Country in the House of Commons both here and in England, and always behaved himself in Parliament with that *Firmness* and *Intrepidity* in the Cause of LIBERTY; and our *Ancient Constitution*; which though sometimes disagreeable to particular Persons and Parties, when his Maxims happened to clash with their private Interest; yet has been applauded by all parties in their turns, as soon as the warm fit was over, and the Humours of the Nation had settled. He was raised to the peerage by His present Majesty in the Beginning of his Reign, and continued to serve his Country with Indefatigable Industry and *uncorrupted Integrity*, till the two last years of his Life, when finding himself worn out with constant Application to PUBLICK AFFAIRS, and a long and painful Indisposition, he was obliged to retire from Business, and pass the Remainder of his Days in that *Learned Leisure*, so highly celebrated by the Great Men of Antiquity, whom his Lordship set up for his Models, and so exactly resembled in all Parts of his Character.

Besides the Account of *Denmark*, his Lordship is reputed the Author of several other Pieces, with great force of Reason, and Masculine Eloquence, all in Defence of LIBERTY, the CONSTITUTION of his Country, and the Common RIGHT of Mankind. Certain it is, that few Men of his Fortune and Quality have either been more Learned, or more highly esteemed by Men of Learning, as is evident from the writings of Mr. *Locke*, Mr. *Molyneux*, and the late Extraordinary, Earl of *Shaftesbury*.

His Lordship was married to the Honourable Mrs. Laetitia Coote, Daughter to the Lord Coloony, who survives him. He is succeeded in Honour and Estate by his Excellency

*John*, now Lord *Molesworth*, Envoy Extraordinary from his Britannick Majesty to the King of *Sardinia*; besides whom he has left six sons, and two daughters, viz. The Honourable Richard Molesworth; William Molesworth Esq., Surveyor general of the Lands of this Kingdom; Captain Edward Molesworth; Captain Walter Molesworth; Coote Molesworth Esq. a Student in the Temple: and Bysse Molesworth Esq. Now with his brother in Italy; Mrs. Titchburne, married to the honourable Capt. William Titchburne, son to the Lord Ferrard; and Mrs. Letitia, married to Edward Bolton of Brasile Esq. His Lordship had also an Elder Daughter, married to George Monck Esq. Who was a lady of extraordinary Merit, and dying about ten years ago, left behind her a Collection of excellent Poems, which his Lordship published after her death, and dedicated to her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales.

## APPENDIX TWO

### Matriculation Records for the Class of Francis Hutcheson

#### Fourth Year: Ethics Professor

Source: W. Innes Addison, *The matriculation albums of the University of Glasgow from 1728 to 1858*, (Glasgow, 1913)

Year	Total	Scot	S-H	Hib	Angl	A-H	Other	Un-id	Mat.	%
1730	4	1	2	-	1	-	-	-	94	4.3
1731	5	1	-	-	4	-	-	-	67	7.5
1732	6	1	3	-	-	1	1a	-	69	8.7
1733	5	1	-	-	2	1	-	1b	58	8.6
1734	10	2	-	3	4	-	1c	-	71	14.1
1735	20	1	-	12	7	-	-	-	58	34.5
1736	5	2	-	3	-	-	-	-	68	7.4
1737	11	-	-	6	4	-	-	1d	67	16.4
1738	10	-	-	7	3	-	-	-	57	17.5
1739	15	-	-	9	5	-	-	1e	81	18.5
1740	8	-	-	5	3	-	-	-	58	13.8
1741	7	-	-	5	1	-	-	1f	70	10.0
1742	13	-	-	10	3	-	-	-	67	19.4
1743	3	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	51	5.9
1744	9	1	-	6	2	-	-	-	55	16.4
1745	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	32	6.3
Total	133	11	5	69	40	2	2	4	1023	13%
APA	8.3	8.3	3.8	51.9	30	1.5	1.5	3	63.9	

#### % of Total Attendance of Francis Hutcheson's Class

Scot = Scottish	a) Richard Aprichard (Cambrige-Hiberno) (273)
S-H = Scot-Hiberno (Scots-Irish)	b) Johannes Morfitt (341)
Hib = Hiberno (Irish)	c) Johannes Kenrick (Comitat Merioneth) (Welsh) (407)
Angl = Anglo (English)	d) Fran Upton (596)
A-H = Anglo-Hibernian (Anglo-Irish)	e) Andreas Murray (728)
Un-id = Unidentified	f) John Carre (859)
Mat = Total Matriculated in the College	

APPENDIX THREE  
THE PUBLICATIONS OF JAMES CARSON (1700-1765)  
MASTER PRINTER/BOOKSELLER OF DUBLIN

1. Gilbert Burnet (the elder), A sermon preach'd at St Bridget's Church on Monday in Easter week March 29, 1714, before the Right Hon the Lord Mayor, (1714)
2. Richard Steele, The Englishman: being a sequel of the Guardian, (1714)
3. Judah Abrahams, A short familiar address to the unconverted Jews, (1714)
4. A catechism, or the articles of faith of the people call'd Jacobites, (1715)
5. George Berkeley, Adv[ic]e to the Tories who have taken the oaths, (1715)
6. Daniel Defoe, Hanover or Rome: shewing the absolute necessity of assisting his Majesty with a sufficient force (1715)
7. William Hawkins, The whole ceremony of the coronation of his most sacred majesty King George, on Wednesday 20 October 1714, (1715)
8. The speech of the Provost of TCD to George, Prince of Wales, (1716)
9. An exact abridgement of all the public printed statutes of Queen Anne and King George, in force and use to the end of the first session of this present Parliament, AD 1716 (1717)
10. An abridgement of all the publick printed Irish statutes of the second session of this present Parliament, 1717, (1718)
11. Joseph Boyse, Popery prov'd a different gospel from that of our blessed saviour, (1718)
12. Thomas Gordon, A dedication to a great man, concerning dedications. Discovering what will be the present posture of affairs a thousand years hence. (1719)
13. Thomas Dogget, [The country wake] Hob or the country wake, A farce, (1719) (Adopted by Colley Cibber from Doggert's the country wake)
14. Nicholas Rowe, [Pharsalia. English] Lucan's Pharsalia. (1719)
15. Murrough O'Connor, A pastoral in imitation of the first eclogue of Virgil, inscribed to the Provost, Fellows and scholars of TCD, (1719)
16. John Tillotson, [Selections] Maxims and discourses moral and divine, (1719)
17. Edward Young, Busiris, King of Egypt. A Tragedy, 1719)
18. Edward Synge, A sermon preach'd at St. Andrew's Dublin before the Hon House of Commons, on Saturday, August the 1<sup>st</sup>, 1719, (1719)
19. Peter Heylyn, Cyprianus Anglicus, or the history of the life and death of William, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury ...to Charles I, (1719)
20. John Weaver, The loves of Mars and Venus, a dramatic entertainment of dancing, (1720)
21. A list of the Lords spiritual and temporal as they are to sit in Parliament; the session begun on Tuesday the 12<sup>th</sup> day of September 1721, (1721)
22. Thomas Bisse, The beauty of holiness in the common prayer, (1721)
23. James Sterling, The rival generals: a tragedy, (1722)

24. George I, his Majesty's most gracious speech to both Houses of Parliament on Thursday October 11, 1722, (1722)
25. A poem occasioned by the funeral of the glorious and invincible John Duke of Marlborough, (1722)
26. A new ballad occasion'd by the Pretender's declaration, (1722)
27. John Abernethy, Seasonable advice to the Protestant dissenters in the north of Ireland, (1722)
28. A list of the lords spiritual and temporal as they sit in Parliament anno 1723 (1723)
29. Geoffrey Keating, The general history of Ireland (1723) (1<sup>st</sup> ed.)
30. Edward Synge, The constitution of our established church 1722, (1723)
31. Thomas Skinner, The life of General Monk, Late duke of Albemarle, (1724)
32. A list of the Lords spiritual and temporal of Ireland as they sit in Parliament on Tuesday the 7<sup>th</sup> of September 1725 (1725)
33. To his excellency John, Lord Carteret. An imitation of Horace Ode IX. Lib IV, (1729)
34. William Broone, The oak and the dunghill: a fable, (1729)
35. Colley Cibber, The comical lovers: a comedy, (1730)
36. John Brickell, The natural history of North Carolina, with an account of the trade, manners and customs of the Christian and Indian inhabitants, (1737)
37. An excellent new ballad on the modesty of the bankers of Dublin, (1737)
38. The traveller benighted or remarks on a pamphlet address'd to May Drummond, by a lover of truth, (1738)
39. The north country ordinary opened: an account of a great event, (1738/9)
40. Henry Spelman, De Sepultura, (1742)
41. James Row, [Red shankes sermon] The wous o' the Kirk of Scotlan. In a sermon preech'd...in 1738, (1743)
42. A chronology of some memorable accidents from the creation of the world to the year 1742, (1743)
43. Jeremy Carson's collections, (1744; another ed. 1759)
44. Henry Fielding, An old man taught wisdom, a farce, (1747)
45. Advertisement, The freeholders, merchants and traders of the city, (To lobby against a proposed new bridge over the Liffey), (1750)
46. A chronology of some memorable accidents from the creation of the world to the year 1754, (1754)
47. The Dublin Intelligencer, July 9 1720-March 31, 1724
48. The Dublin Weekly Journal, 1725-174-

EXTRACT FROM THE JOURNAL OF THE IRISH HOUSE OF LORDS:

29 Oct, 1719, JHOL: p. 674: "a complaint being made to the House by his Grace the Archbishop of Dublin, that his made is made use of as a subscriber to a book, without his Grace's knowledge. Ordered that James Carson, printer and Joseph Leathley, stationer so attend at the bar of this House tomorrow morning.

30 Oct, 1719, p. 675: "James Carson and Joseph Leathley attending according to order, being called in, were at the Bar reprimanded for their misbehaviour to his Grace the Lord Archbishop of Dublin."



APPENDIX FOUR

Classical citations in Hutcheson's prose

REFERENCES AUTHOR BY AUTHOR

- Aesop**  
OFB, p. 107
- Marcus Aurelius**  
T3, p. 44
- Marcus Antonious**  
T3, p. 108n
- Aristotle**  
T1, p. 52  
T1, p. 54  
GBL, p. 227  
TOL, p. 2  
T3, p. 59  
T3, p. 79  
T4, p. 123  
T4, p. 184n
- Cato**  
T3, p. 118
- Cicero**  
T1, Title page  
T1, p. 28  
T2, p. 120  
T2, p. 218  
T2, pp 225-6  
OFB, p. 107  
T3, p. 13n  
T3, p. 58  
T4, p. 116  
T4, p. 184
- Cynics**  
OFB, p. 84  
OFB, p. 94
- Democritus**  
TOL, p. 14
- Diogenes**  
TOL, p. 25
- Epicurus**  
T1, p. 69  
OFB, p. 77  
OFB, p. 93  
(Epicure)  
OFB, p. 106  
T3, p. 13  
T3, p. 20  
T3, p. 188  
T4, p. 116
- Hesiod**  
TOL, p. 55  
[Philomeides]
- Homer**  
T1, p. 55  
T1, p. 56  
T2, p. 231  
T2, p. 244  
TOL, p. 6  
TOL, p. 25  
TOL, pp 33-4  
TOL, p39  
OFB, p. 107  
T3, p. 80  
T3, p. 81
- Horace**  
T1, p. 28  
T1, p. 43  
T1, pp 76-7  
T1, p. 88  
T2, p. 121  
T2, p. 190  
T2, p. 224  
T2, p. 241  
T2, pp 241-2  
T2, p. 243  
TOL, p. 1  
TOL, p. 19  
TOL, p. 35  
TOL, p. 50  
OFB, p. 79  
OFB, p. 108  
T3, epigram  
T3, p. 9  
T3, p. 12  
T3, p. 95  
T3, p. 113  
T3, p. 164  
T3, p. 169  
T3, p. 172  
T3, p. 196
- Juvenal**  
TOL, p. 18  
OFB, p. 58  
OFB, p. 106  
T3, p. 96  
T3, 194
- Laertius**  
TOL, p. 25
- Livy**  
T3, p. 152
- Longinus**  
TOL, p. 35
- Lucan**  
T3, p. 98  
T3, p. 175
- Lucretius**  
TOL, p. 17  
T3, p. 95  
T3, p. 105
- Ovid**  
T2, p. 120  
OFB, p. 106
- Persius Flaccus**  
T3, p. xviii  
T3, p. 193
- Plato**  
OFB, p. 64  
(Socrates)  
T3, p. 6  
T3, p. 129  
T3, p. 189n  
T3, p. 190n
- Plutarch**  
T2, p. 114  
T2, p. 115  
T2, p. 185  
OFB, p. 108
- Pythagoras**  
OFB, p. 107
- Regulus**  
T2, p. 120,  
T2, pp 225-6
- Senaca**  
OFB, p. 106
- Sophocles**  
T3, p. 78
- Stoicism**  
T2, p. 172  
OFB, p. 84  
OFB, p. 106  
T3, p. 61  
T3, p. 117  
T3, p. 167  
T4, p. 157
- Virgil**  
T1, p. 56  
T2, p. 112  
T2, p. 231  
TOL, p. 6  
TOL, p. 38-9  
T3, p. 80  
T3, p. 80  
T3, p. 84
- Zeno**  
T3, p. 69

## REFERENCES TEXT BY TEXT

### **T1 (Beauty)**

Aristotle, p. 52, p. 54  
Cicero, Title page, p. 28  
Epicurius, p. 69  
Horace, p. 28, p. 43, pp 76-7, p. 88  
Homer, p. 55, p. 56  
Virgil, p. 57

### **T2 (Virtue)**

Cicero, p. 120, pp 225-6, p. 218  
Homer, p. 231, p. 242  
Horace, p. 121, p. 190, p. 224, p. 241, pp 241-2, p. 243  
Ovid, p. 133  
Plutarch, p. 114  
Plutarch, p. 115,  
Plutarch, p. 185  
Stoics: p. 172  
Virgil, p. 112, p. 231

Orestes killing Aegysthus, T2, p. 114:  
Aeschylus: The Orestia  
Nero and Paetus, T2, p. 157

### **GBL (Burnet Letters)**

Aristotle, p. 227

### **TOL (Thoughts on Laughter)**

Aristotle p. 2  
Democritus p.14  
Diogenes p. 25  
Homer p. 6, p. 25 pp 33-4, p 39.  
Horace, p. 1, p. 19, p. 35, p. 50  
Juvenal, p. 18  
Laertius, p. 25  
Longinus, p. 35  
Lucretius, p. 17  
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### **OFB (Observations on the *Fable*)**

Aesop, p. 107  
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Cynics, p. 84, p. 94  
Epicurus, p. 77, 93, 106  
Homer, p. 107  
Horace, p. 79, p. 107  
Juvenal, p. 58, p. 106  
Ovid, p. 106,  
Plato, p. 64  
Plutarch, p. 108  
Pythagoras, p. 107  
Seneca, p. 106  
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### **T3 (Passions)**

Aristotle, p.59, p. 79  
Marcus Aurelius, p. 44  
Marcus Antonious, p. 108  
Cato, p. 118  
Cicero, p. 13n, p. 58  
Epicurus, p. 13, p. 20, p. 188  
Homer, p. 80, p. 81  
Horace, epigram, p. 9, p. 12, p. 95, p. 113, p. 164, p. 169, p. 172, p. 196  
Juvenal, p. 96, p. 194  
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Lucretius, p. 95, p. 105  
Persius Flaccus, p. xviii, p. 193  
Plato, p. 6, p. 129, p. 189n, p. 190n  
Simplicius, p. 50  
Sophocles, p. 78  
Stoics, p. 61, p. 117, p. 167  
Virgil, p. 80, p. 81, p. 84  
Zeno, p. 69

### Unidentified

Insani leonis  
Vim stomacho apposuisse nostro, p. 54  
Pallas, Camilla, Nisus and Euryalus, p. 81

### **T4 (Illustrations)**

Aristotle, p. 123, p. 184n  
Cicero, p. 116, p. 184  
Epicurus, p. 116  
Stoicism, p. 154

## APPENDIX FIVE

### The 1703 Irish petition for Union

Report By Molesworth, 11 October 1703, JHOC, volume 2, part 1, 1696-1713, p. 333.

Resolved:

That there be set forth the steady loyalty and firm adherence of the Protestants of this Kingdom to the Crown of England.

The services and the sufferings of the Protestants upon that account

The great supplies given by her Majesty's subjects of this kingdom for the support of the Government since the revolution, and their great inclination to do so for the future, according to their abilities.

The very great loss and decay of our trade, and the Kingdom's being almost exhausted of its coin; whereby great numbers of Protestant families have been necessitated to remove out of this kingdom, as well as into Scotland, as into the Dominions of foreign princes and states.

That the constitution of this kingdom hath been of late greatly shaken; the lives liberties and estates of the subjects thereof being tried and called into question, in a manner wholly unknown to our ancestors.

That the above mentioned mischiefs have in a great measure been occasioned through false and malicious reports and misrepresentations made of the Protestants of this Kingdom, by designing and ill-meaning men, in order to create misunderstandings between England and Ireland, and to get beneficial employments to themselves.

That the charges which the subjects of this Kingdom have been unnecessarily put unto by the late trustees, in defending their just rights and titles (which titles have after many and expensive delays been allowed by the said trustees) has exceeded the present current coin of this kingdom.

That the want of holding frequent Parliaments have been one principal occasion of the miseries attending this kingdom.

That her Majesty be most humbly moved, that through her princely goodness and wisdom and favourable interposition, her subjects of this kingdom may be relieved of the calamities they now lie under, by a full enjoyment of their constitution or a more firm and strict Union with England.

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