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Passioni, interessi, convenzioni  
 Discussioni settecentesche su virtù e civiltà

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HUTCHESON IN HUME'S *TREATISE*  
*OF HUMAN NATURE*, BOOK 3.

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*When a philosopher contemplates characters and manners in his closet, the general abstract view of the objects leaves the mind so cold and unmoved, that the sentiments of nature have no room to play, and he scarce feels the difference between vice and virtue. (Of the study of History, 1741)*

The theme of my paper does not concern the ethics of Hutcheson nor the ethics of Hume. The subject is much more limited: it is a proposal to read the book on morals that solves some problems of interpretation.

The question can be expressed through the following dilemma: If Hutcheson is Hume's mentor, why do their moral doctrines present such a radical contrast? If, on the other hand, Hutcheson is not Hume's mentor, why is he so present in the pages of the third book of the *Treatise*?

As we can pass between the horns of the dilemma or take the dilemma for each of his horns, I will divide my exposure into three parts.

1. Passing between the horns of the dilemma means in this case arguing that the problem is invented: Hutcheson has had a profound influence on the young Scotsman, although Hume has in many respects corrected his own theory of moral sense. It seems to me that a large part of the, more or less recent, Humean literature with greater or lesser heat or conviction, has adopted this solution, above all on the basis of the *argumentum epistulare*. We know from the remnant letters that Hutcheson immediately appreciates the philosophical acumen of Hume and willingly lends himself to recommending the publication of the third book of the *Treatise*. Hume, on the other hand, uses his advice of prudence not to offend religious people. In short, a gentlemanly relationship, founded on mutual respect if not on friendship, which do not hide disagreement - when it arises - but live under the same roof of the morality of sentiment. The only important difference is, if anything, on the religious plane<sup>1</sup>.

The other topics are more or less suggested by these letters. The best known is the reproach for want of 'Warmth in the Cause of Virtue' and Hume's prompt response on the differences between anatomist and painter, taken literally in the conclusion of the *Treatise*. In short, at least a question of style that Hume will solve with great satisfaction in the subsequent *Enquiry*. At most, the criticism insists on the scientific neutrality of the *Treatise*, which should be linked to the experimental project of the Introduction<sup>2</sup>. As for the differences in qualities and types of virtue, on the one hand the letters tell us that it is a verbal dispute, on the other, since it claims to have drawn the catalogue of virtues from Cicero's *De Officiis*, rather than from Calvinist books of pity, Hume's main novelty is recognized in his humanism or neo-humanism<sup>3</sup>.

A final argument concerns the relationship between natural and artificial virtues. On the one hand he hastens to say that artificial for him does not at all mean unnatural, but only excludes from moral consideration religious questions, on the other he replies that he follows the lesson of natural law jurists, only made coherent with themselves, and this is the most recent criticism<sup>4</sup>. In short, many fruitful ways of interpretation, but Hume remains truly the disciple of Hutcheson. In the best case scenario it deepens the lesson, in the worst case it makes it more confusing<sup>5</sup>.

2. Regarding the first horn of the dilemma, I deny the premise (Hutcheson mentor of Hume) and affirm the consequence: on balance the book on morality is a correction of Mandeville, an effort to make his hypothesis credible, rather than that the development of Hutcheson's system.

In the book on passions, speaking of the relationship between vice and virtue and the rise of pride and humility, Hume had clearly put forward the problem: 'whether these moral distinctions be founded on natural and original principles, or arise from interest and education'. Here, on one hand he placed Mandeville's position and considered it a complete confirmation of his theory. He described the opposite perspective as that 'of those who maintain that morality is something real, essential, and founded on nature'. On this side he pointed to Hutcheson's hypothesis as 'the most probable'. He then envisioned the possibility that the hypothesis could be false, but in any case compatible with his theory, and postponed the problem to the next book<sup>6</sup>. If in this book one measures the space left to spontaneity and nature, and that accorded to artifice and history, there is no doubt about

the disproportion. Justice, the legitimacy of the government or the consent that is due to it, the subordination of women, international law and, finally, those 'good manners' that allow us to hide our extraordinary partiality for ourselves are human artifice and historical product. If we then connect the discourse on the rules of friendship, hospitality and conversation with what he says about natural abilities and, in particular, about the virtues of competition and professional success, we see the whole fabric of associated daily life not only founded on the rational criterion of utility, but also entrusted to the repression of instinct. Buried under the number of artificial virtues and natural abilities, benevolence, which in Hutcheson represented the whole of virtue and the Newtonian cement of society, is reduced to that set of virtues of role that make a man 'an easy friend, a gentle master, an agreeable husband, or an indulgent father'<sup>7</sup>.

3. The other horn of the dilemma remains to be faced. Why then is Hutcheson so present in the book on morality? To answer, I get three reasons from as many letters from Hume. The first is the discovery that moral philosophy is founded upon 'Schemes of Virtue & of Happiness, without regarding human Nature' and the belief that 'little more is requir'd to make a man succeed in this Study than to throw off all Prejudices either for his own Opinions or for this of others'<sup>8</sup>. (That is I appeal to Hume's spirit of contradiction, to his idiosyncrasies for the most fashionable philosophical theses). The second is the observation that the dependence of justice on utility can be derived from the texts of natural law authors, in a much more convincing way as opposed to their own principles<sup>9</sup>. The third, finally, is the bitter consideration, after the fiasco of the first two books, according to which 'Tis so rare to meet with one that will take pain on a book, that does not come recommended by some great name or authority'<sup>10</sup>.

Hutcheson in the book on morality has this triple role: he is the authority that is used to be taken seriously, the one who suggests ideas, principles and perspectives that are turned on their head, and finally the main opponent. In short, the mentor and the victim of Hume. It is a complex strategy that should be followed step by step through the pages of the book on morality. Here I will confine myself to a concise illustration.

In the first section of the first part, Hume extensively uses the arguments produced by Hutcheson against Clarke and Wollaston - including the reference to the is-ought question. The sceptical and anti-religious use of Hutcheson's sentimentalism is so well-known that when the famous

passage on the analogy between virtue and vice and secondary quality I resumed, Hume feels obliged to ask for the author's permission<sup>11</sup>. But Hume's attitude is even more subtle. While refuting rationalism, he underlines two requirements that a rational theory of morality should present. It should indicate a relationship that connects an internal arrangement of the mind and a quality of the external world, and its judgments should be characterized by inflexibility. Now the first request had already been advanced by Hutcheson against the rationalists. There remains an outstanding question in the first part, but in the second part Hume shows how the necessity of justice is imposed by the relationship between a condition of the external world, the scarcity of resources, and a fundamental disposition of the mind. The latter is not, mind you, the selfishness of Mandeville, but the benevolence of Hutcheson. Benevolence as an instinctive disposition (what Hume calls limited generosity) is the primary source of social conflict. If then there were universal benevolence or Christian charity or love of one's neighbour, justice would be superfluous<sup>12</sup>.

As for the second request, that is, the rigidity of the moral distinctions produced by reason, it is sufficient to recall the section on the chastity and modesty of women. Here Hume rejects, one after the other, the divine law, the civil law and the law of reputation, mentioned by Locke, as a remedy to sexual appetite and recurs to the rigours of Mandeville education. But we must not forget that the premise of this elaborate construction - having to assure the husband the certainty of the offspring so that he provides care and affection for it - was the thesis put forward by Hutcheson<sup>13</sup>.

In the other section of the first part, Hutcheson is used primarily to credit his enquiry. Hume marries - or rather seems to marry - the instinctive and unreflecting immediacy of moral sense and seems to insist even more on the peculiar and unique quality of moral sentiment, to the great satisfaction of those critics who are eternally hunting for the naturalistic fallacy<sup>14</sup>.

In the third and last part of the book Hutcheson figures above all as Hume's main adversary. Some clarity must be made on the principle of sympathy. Apart from the role played in the systems of Hobbes and Mandeville, in recent controversies it had been advanced by John Clark of Hull as an antidote to moral sense. Hutcheson had responded by contenting himself with welcoming it into his system of passions as the Shaftesburian '*sense of publick*' or '*sensus communis*' - by coordination we would say so -

alongside the other internal senses<sup>15</sup>. On the contrary, Hume restores the meaning of a competitive hypothesis.

I focus only on the two objections that Hume raises against his own hypothesis of sympathy. To the first, whereby the sentiment varies without changing the moral evaluation, the immediate answer is that if the objection is valid, it is valid for any other moral system, where it is clear that Hume has Hutcheson's moral sense in mind<sup>16</sup>. The next answer has only some slight analogy with Hutcheson's reasoning. In fact, it is one thing to support - as Hutcheson does - the idea that we are endowed with a moral sense for the purposes of coexistence, just as we are with external senses for the health of our body; then say that we correct one and the other through reason and perhaps we pervert them through the association of ideas. Another is to support - as Hume does - the idea that the principle of sympathy is the circumstance rather than the organ or criterion of moral evaluations, the occasional and variable means that triggers our emotional participation, but that a moral standard is reached, for the needs of communication and conversation, with the use of the rules of imagination and the fixity of language. In the first case the moral sense is original, and constitutes the guide of moral evaluation. In the second case, moral sentiment is a result and is certainly not private, but collective<sup>17</sup>. The second objection to 'virtue in rags' is the attempt to show that the sympathetic hypothesis solves just as well those problems Hutcheson explained through his moral arithmetic.

The subsequent detailed examination of the virtues allows us to show that the useful or pleasant (*dulce*), for oneself or for others, are necessary characters and ultimate principles of all the virtues. But it is not just a matter of scientific generalisations, according to the Newtonian criterion of the simplicity of nature, it is a matter of making obvious what seemed mysterious; as he explains in the conclusion, that the system of sympathy approves not only virtue, but also the sense of virtue and the principles on which it is based; a gap that Hutcheson could not fill without resorting to providence and unfathomable divine will. This showdown also has its harshness. The distinction between moral virtues and natural abilities is introduced as a verbal dispute. But Hutcheson had done the same to mean disqualify them. Whereas Hume goes further and tells us that they are interested distinctions made by 'legislators, and divines, and moralists.', and that the ancient moralists 'not perverted by a strict adherence to a system' would converge with him and with the common people<sup>18</sup>.

The contrast between the first and third parts of the *Treatise* grows in the final sections. While in the second section he had insisted, as has been said, on the specificity of moral sentiments, in the penultimate he treats the difference between feelings aroused by beauty and goodness as well as an inexplicable strangeness<sup>19</sup>. While there he had emphasised the instinctive immediacy of the moral sense, in the antepenultimate the long list of natural skills ends with the examination of wit, eloquence, personal hygiene and - lastly – ‘a certain *je-nai-scai-quoi* of agreeable and handsome’ that makes people seem nice to us (*simpatiche* in the current sense of the Italian term):

In this case, as well as in that of wit and eloquence, we must have recourse to a certain sense, that acts without reflexion, and regards not the tendencies of qualities and characters. Some moralists account for all the sentiments of virtue by this sense. Their hypothesis is very plausible. Nothing but a particular enquiry can give preference to any other hypothesis<sup>20</sup>.

I have often reflected on this passage and I can not see it anything but an ironic and confutative intention. First, because the investigation is now finished; second, because the reference to that certain I do not know what seems to renew that accusation of hidden quality with which the doctrine of the moral sense had been censured.

Finally I want to recall that Hume often speaks of *sentiments of morals*, rarely of *sense* or *taste of morals*. He uses the term *moral sense* only twice: the second time, after having proposed the system or hypothesis of sympathy, he speaks of ‘the foregoing explication of the *moral sense*’<sup>21</sup>; the first time he uses the term no less than in the title of the II section of the first part. I therefore allow myself to conclude by contrasting with the *argumentum epistulare*, the impression of fair play that leave Hume's letters to Hutcheson, an *argumentum calculatorium*, or *accountant's argument*. The *Treatise* includes 3 books, 10 parts, 80 sections, for a total of 103 titles and subtitles. To these we could add the forty of the *moral and political essays*, the thirty of the *Enquiries* and perhaps the hundreds of the *History of England*. Well, Hume's titles are always names or at most dubious propositions. Only in the first part of *Of Morals* he is categorical: ‘*Moral Distinctions not deriv'd from Reason*’; ‘*Moral Distinctions deriv'd from a Moral Sense*’<sup>22</sup>. In the face of such a conspicuous anomaly, I can not help thinking that Hume wanted to use Hutcheson's moral sense much like we use business cards or credit cards.

The main thesis I propose is unusual but clear: *moral sense* and

sympathy are incompatible principles<sup>23</sup>. Taking on both means betraying the simplicity of nature and the same intention of his anatomist. If it contrasts with the letter of the text, it is necessary to insist on the elevated ironic and strategic component contained in it. Irony is not a subterfuge of the interpreter; instead it requires a patient research on the context. The strategy, on the other hand, which is typical of all ancient and modern scepticism, prohibits the reader from providing the same credit and treating every *Of Morals* statement as equivalent.

If Hume repeats himself in the *Inquiry* or modifies his position it is not a question to be addressed here, but he certainly reverses the expositive order of the *Treatise*: when he deals with the controversy on the foundation of morality in the first section, he temporarily supports in the slightly Salomonic manner of Butler<sup>24</sup>, the contribution of reason and sentiment to moral decisions, the probable dependence of the ‘final sentence’ on ‘some internal sense or feeling’, warning however that ‘in many orders of beauty’, as in the moral one, it is requisite to employ much reasoning, in order to feel the proper sentiment’<sup>25</sup>. When the search is over, the solution is proposed in a simple and clear way in the brief round of two paragraphs of the first Appendix.

The long subsequent argument, which broadens the arguments of the first part of the third book of the *Treatise*, has as its essential premise that his system is false, an eventuality that Hume - for whom scepticism is at the same time an inclination of the character and a duty - has proposed in the conclusion of the *Inquiry*, since ‘an hypothesis, so obvious, had it been a true one, would, long ere now, have been received by the unanimous suffrage and consent of mankind’<sup>26</sup>:

Here therefore *reason* instructs us in the several tendencies of actions, and *humanity* makes a distinction in favour of those which are useful and beneficial.

This partition between the faculties of understanding and sentiment, in all moral decisions, seems clear from the preceding hypothesis. *But I shall suppose that hypothesis false: it will then be requisite to look out for some other theory that may be satisfactory*; and I dare venture to affirm that none such will ever be found, so long as we suppose reason to be the sole source of morals. To prove this, it will be proper to weigh the five following considerations<sup>27</sup>.

Now the interpreter is reduced to this alternative: either the five reflections contrast Hume's arguments with the rationalist, but then one must admit that these appeals to sentiment coincide with the system of sympathy, with the added difficulty of explaining why he has placed as a

premise of the whole argument the falsity of his own hypothesis. Or, taking Hume's scepticism seriously, it means that in this case he opposes to the rationalist the more shared and effective motivations of Hutcheson, precisely because they are more superficial, with the final advantage of putting all the responsibility on Hutcheson's side to confine the moral good and evil to the narrow circle of 'the eternal frame and constitution of animals'<sup>28</sup>, as he had already done in the *Treatise* with more open irony.

In any case, what the real alternative is appears evident in the first section of the third part of *Of morals* where having immediately discarded the rationalistic ethics, all the ancient and modern systems are reduced to the only two that matter: the causes of our moral feelings are the 'mere species or appearance of characters and passions', or the 'reflexions on their tendency to the happiness of mankind, and of particular persons'. However mixed in our moral judgments, the latter 'have by far the greatest influence, and determine all the great lines of our duty. There are, however, instances, in cases of less moment, where this immediate taste or sentiment produces our approbation', such as the wit or the ease of the man of the world, on the basis of original and inexplicable principles of human nature<sup>29</sup>. When Hume will have reviewed the entire catalogue of virtues, he can conclude with the passage mentioned in my communication, which deserves to be mentioned together with his historical referent:

Besides all those qualities, which render a person lovely or valuable, *'there is also a certain je-ne-sçais-quoi of agreeable and handsome, that concurs to the same effect. In this case, as well as in that of wit and eloquence, we must have recourse to a certain sense, which acts without reflexion, and regards not the tendencies of qualities and . Some moralists account for all the sentiments of virtue by this sense: Their hypothesis is very plausible. Nothing but a particular enquiry can give the preference to any other hypothesis. When we find, that almost all the virtues have such particular tendencies; and also find, that these tendencies are sufficient alone to give a strong sentiment of approbation: We cannot doubt, after this, that qualities are approv'd of, in proportion to the advantage, which results from them.*

On voit dans une compagnie une personne dont l'air & les manières ont de secrettes alliances avec la disposition présente de nos corps; sa vûë nous touche & nous pénètre. *Nous sommes portez, sans réflexion, à l'aimer & à lui vouloir du bien. C'est le je ne sçai quoi qui nous agite, car la raison n'y a point de part.* Il arrive le contraire à l'égard de ceux dont l'air & le manières, répandent, pour ainsi dire, le dégoût & l'horreur. Ils ont je ne sçais quoi, de fade qui repousse & qui effraye; *mais*

*l'esprit n'y connoît rien, car il n'y a que les sens qui jugent bien de la beauté & de la laideur sensible, lesquelles sont l'object de ces sortes de passions*<sup>30</sup>.

Malebranche is probably Hume's main source of inspiration: he made the science of man the most important of the sciences, the difference between feeling and thinking the basis of his theory of imagination and the association between traces, between ideas, and between the traces and ideas the criterion of the same; he had finally suggested that association and sympathy constituted the foundation of society and of the state<sup>31</sup>. But he was also Hume's main opponent. The whole philosophy of human nature of the first two books is a sort of reversed *Malebranchism*, in which the role and value of intellect and imagination, of inclination and passion are reversed. To limit ourselves to the second book of the *Treatise*, the system of fundamental passions, heir to the natural inclinations of the Oratorian, condensed the analysis of the passion of Malebranche according to the criterion of the double association of ideas and impressions, in which instead the evaluation judgment of the self was explicit; on the contrary, the theory of sympathy was responsible for the anatomy of the adversary's contagious sympathy<sup>32</sup>. Later, in the *Enquiry concerning the human Understanding*, Malebranche is responsible for the Baxterian climate that spreads in Scotland, denying efficacy to the secondary causes, against the authority of Locke, Newton and Clarke; In the *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, it is again Malebranche who inaugurates the error of rationalist ethics, then embraced by Cudworth, Clarke and even by Montesquieu in the metaphysical premise of his masterpiece. No wonder, then, if Hume here suggests that Hutcheson's *moral sense* theory is nothing but the erroneous generalization of those aspects of Malebranche's sympathy that resist the scientist's analysis<sup>33</sup>.

Sympathy in the *Treatise* is a process of imagination that allows us to participate in the feelings of others; the apparatus of indirect passions is sufficient to allow us to feel those forms of 'a fainter and more imperceptible love or hatred' that are the moral sentiments<sup>34</sup>. Really the *moral sense* would be too much and would make Hume's human nature resemble the rather messy 'complexe machine' Kames was talking about, who however understood that Hume 'endeavours to resolve the moral sense into pure sympathy'<sup>35</sup>.

To discover the true origin of morality, that love and hatred that derives from the qualities of the mind, we must proceed 'pretty deep': Hutcheson's moral sense and sympathy are placed at different theoretical

levels. It does not take much, Hume argues in concluding the *Treatise*, arguing with Hutcheson, to recognise that 'a sense of morals is a principle inherent in the soul', as it is really a 'very small' merit 'delivering true general precepts in ethics', he will say elsewhere<sup>36</sup>.

Hume's *sense of morals* is therefore a metaphor or a problem. The fabric of human nature is probably always the same, heart valves that open more and less, more and less thin nerve fibres, more and less large and volatile animal spirits, as Cartesian physiology wants. If the too devout women of Malebranche, who have delicate and subtle fibres, generate monsters that resemble the effigies of the saints in the churches, Seneca's reading for Hume can produce spots on the fingers and flatulence and ruin health. The fact remains that for Hume the delicacy of passions can change into a delicacy of sentiments and civil coexistence transform our moral sentiments<sup>37</sup>. For the coarse and ignorant savage, he will say in the *Enquiry*, an enemy is an enemy forever. Those who are accustomed to civil society and capable of wider reflections learn to correct to some extent their cruder and narrower passions<sup>38</sup>.

If sympathy is restored to that solidarity of the species that was in Malebranche's book on the passion and the 'extensive sympathy with mankind' has been transformed from a sympathetic process of imagination into a feeling of humanity, it is because Hume sought a substitute for the ambition of Mandeville. Now, 'One man's ambition is not another's ambition, nor will the same event or object satisfy both; but the humanity of one man is the humanity of every one and, the same object touches this passion in all human creatures'<sup>39</sup>. In this way he can unequivocally clarify that utility is not so much an ultimate principle of the scientist of human nature, as a value<sup>40</sup>.

The deist for Hume, as it is known, transfers the monotheism of a cultured man into a mythical primitive age; the moralist transfers into the wild the polite sentiment of a civilised man, when, like Hutcheson, he solves our sense of morality in an instinctive principle of our mind.

Finally<sup>41</sup>, if I have said that the primary source of social conflict the primary source of social conflict is not the selfishness of Mandeville, but the benevolence of Hutcheson, while Hume speaks of selfishness and limited generosity, thus betraying the letter of the Humean text, I do not think I have betrayed his spirit, for the following reasons:

1. Not even Hutcheson denies human egoism. What is denied by both is Mandeville's 'narrow selfishness';

2. Hume argues that limited generosity 'instead of fitting men for large societies is almost as contrary to them, as the most narrow selfishness', hence more than natural and real egoism;

3. he further argues that, however selfish a man may be and although it is true that he loves himself more and better than anyone else singly taken, the whole of his benevolent passions surpasses the egoistic one;

4. reasoning in strictly quantitative terms, affirms that the strongest love for us in conjunction with love for relatives and friends necessarily produces an opposition of passions and therefore of actions, which could not be no dangerous for the newly established society<sup>42</sup>;

5. he adds that our 'natural uncultivated idea of morality', instead of providing a remedy for the partiality of our affections, conforms to it, giving it a further force.

#### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> See J.Y.T. Greig (ed.), *The Letters of David Hume*, Oxford U. P., Oxford, 1932, vol. I, nos. 13, 15, 16, 19. Exemplary in the indicated sense is the interpretation of D. Raynor, 'On Hume's Corrections to Treatise III', *Philosophical Quarterly*, 1978, pp. 265-88, but above all that of E.C. Mossner, *The Life of David Hume*, Oxford U. P., Oxford, 1980 (2), pp. 75-78, 134-138, 149, 157-158.

<sup>2</sup> In the first direction we obviously remember the numerous indications of N. Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, MacMillan, London, 1941 (but in particular pp. 42-43). Of this famous text it could be said that a critical study never did much to modify the interpretation of a philosopher and was never so misleading at the same time. Ironically, Reid had inherited the interpretation of Hume that Kemp Smith attributes to him and was instead the father of what Kemp Smith believes to inaugurate, at least as regards the dependence of the doctrine of belief on the moral sense doctrine. See my 'Vicende del *Moral Sense* nel Settecento scozzese' in *Eredità dell'Illuminismo*, ed. by A. Santucci, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1979, pp. 13-45, (p.41). In the second direction is the interpretation of E. Lecaldano, 'Dal Senso Pubblico in Hutcheson alla *Simpatia* in Hume', in *Scienza e filosofia scozzese nell'età di Hume*, ed. by A. Santucci, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1976, pp. 37-73, which however questions 'la sostanziale continuità tra l'etica di Hutcheson e quella di Hume', the prevailing thesis before and after N. Kemp Smith (p.40), emphasizing the points of contrast (pp.41-49).

<sup>3</sup> Among the most important texts in this direction are P. Jones, *Hume's Sentiments, Their Ciceronian and French Context*, Edinburgh UP, Edinburgh 1982, which reduces the debt to Hutcheson (page 9) and emphasizes not only the French influence, but above all the classical one on the thought of Hume (in particular, pp. 29-43 and 149-161).

<sup>4</sup> I refer to studies on Hume's relationship with the natural law tradition, from D. Forbes, *Hume's Philosophical Politics*, Cambridge UP, Cambridge, 1975 to K. Haakonssen, *The Science of a Legislator, The Natural Jurisprudence of David Hume and Adam Smith*, Cambridge UP, Cambridge, 1981.

<sup>5</sup> Example for the worst case V.M. Hope, *Virtue by Consensus, The Moral Philosophy of Hutcheson, Hume, and Adam Smith*, Oxford U. P., Oxford, 1989: he doubts that Hume's theory represents progress compared to Hutcheson (p.52) and thinks that he has added little or nothing to Hutcheson (p.82).

<sup>6</sup> See *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. by L.A: Selby-Bigge, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1888-, lib. II, pt. I, section 7, pp. 295-297. From now on the third book of the *Treatise* will be indicated with the initials T, followed by the indication of part., sect. and p. The *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, also in the edition by Selby-Bigge of the 1902-, will be indicated by the initial E.

<sup>7</sup> T, III, 3, p. 606.

<sup>8</sup> See *Letters*, cit., p. 16. It is the well-known letter to the Scottish physician of spring 1734, for whose interpretation I refer to my *Lo scetticismo morale di David Hume*, Clueb, Bologna 1984, pp. 12-36, 66-73, 88-93.

<sup>9</sup> This is read in the letter to Hutcheson of 17 March 1739 (*Letters*, cit., p.33). He will repeat it in E, p.195.

<sup>10</sup> He confides it to Henry Home on February 13, 1739 and repeats it on the 22nd to Michael Ramsey (*Letters*, cit., pp. 27 and 28).

<sup>11</sup> For these observations I refer to my *Lo scetticismo*, cit., pp. 167-68.

<sup>12</sup> See *ibid.* pp. 167, 181.

<sup>13</sup> See *ibid.* p. 184. A reference to the problem is found in the text of S. Pufendorf, which I read in the French translation by J. Barbeyrac, *Le droit de la nature et des gens*, Basle, 1732 (reprint of the Center of Philosophie politique et juridique, Université de Caen, 1987), vol. II, pp. 157 and 164, but cf. F. Hutcheson, *An Inquiry concerning Moral Good and Evil*, London 1725, which I have in *Collected Works*, facsim. ed. of B. Fabian, Olms, Hildesheim, 1969-1971, vol. I, pp. 265, but also 209-12.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Lo Scetticismo*, cit., pp. 168-170.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Hutcheson, in the *Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense*, London, 1728 (*Works*, cit., Vol. II, pp. 5, 14-15).

<sup>16</sup> T, III, 1, p. 581.

<sup>17</sup> See *Illustrations*, in *Works*, cit., II, pp. 280-82 and T, III, 1 pp. 581-87. In drafting these notes I find a great verbal affinity with what D.D. Raphael says: there would be 'two senses of ethical terms, one private and the other public'. *The Moral Sense*, Oxford Classical & Philosophical Monographs, London, 1947, p.81: But cf. infra nt. 23.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, in *Works*, cit., Vol. I, pp. 126-27 and 167-72 and T, III, 1, 584-587p.609. With his formulas Hutcheson showed that moral evaluation concerns the intention of the person beyond the effectiveness of his action and his abilities and resources. Hume, on the one hand, replied that the evaluation concerned character rather than individual actions, but he also resorted to sympathy based on the vivacity of ideas rather than of impressions and general rules. Regarding the contrast on *natural abilities*, all commentators recall Hume's proud response, according to which his catalogue of virtues derives from Cicero *De Officiis* and not from *The Whole Duty of Man*. But how many remember that with that catalogue began the *reductio ad unum* of the virtues of Hutcheson?

Even John Clarke of Hull in his 1726 *Remarks* lamented and tried, like Hume, to solve the problem by resorting to sympathy. How many remember him, even among those who mention Hume's possible debt to John Gay's associations? Hutcheson led his *reductio* for as many as five of the seven sections of *Inquiry*, based on the criterion of public utility. Hume accepted the suggestion. On the basis above all of this criterion and through the sympathy it made of the III part. of *Of Morals* a systematic restitution to virtues their traditional merit. On natural abilities see T, III, 4, p. 609.

<sup>19</sup> T, III, 5, p. 617.

<sup>20</sup> T, III, 4, p. 612.

<sup>21</sup> T, III, 1, p. 588. It was noted by R.W. Connon, in *The Textual and Philosophical Significance of Hume's MS Alterations to Treatise III* (in *David Hume, Bicentenary Papers*, ed. by G.P. Morice, Edinburgh UP, Edinburgh, 1977, pp. 186-204), refuted by Raynor in *On Hume corrections*, cit. A calculation, still approximate I think, on the terminology of the *Treatise* leads me to the following provisional conclusions: the neutral phrase with respect to the problem (moral distinctions, duty, morality and similar) is used at least forty times; at least 18 times the phrase sentiment/s of moral/of approbation and the like; three times *peculiar sentiment/s*; three times *sense of duty and/or of morality* (all referred to the acquired sense of justice); four times *sense of morals/of virtue* on page 619, once *moral taste* (581) and *immediate taste or sentiment* (590), all places where he argues with Hutcheson, referring to his theory.

<sup>22</sup> While he says to Hutcheson in the letter of 16 March. 1740 '...Morality, according to your Opinion as well as mine, is determin'd merely by Sentiment ...'. (*Letters*, cit., p.40). In the I Appendix of the E, p.289 will write: 'The hypothesis wich we embrace is plain. It maintains that morality is determined by sentiment'. M.S. Kuypers (*Studies in the Eighteenth Century Background of Hume's Empiricism*, 1930, Anast., Russell & Russell, New York, 1966, p. 102) is the first to notice that the *moral sense* has disappeared in E, but in a text that has other aims, he treats, a bit precipitously, moral sense, sympathy and benevolence as interchangeable names of moral evaluation.

<sup>23</sup> The only novelty of the text that precedes with respect to what is said in the book on Hume's moral scepticism is the effort of conciseness and clarity that forces a communication. If I present it unchanged, I am grateful, however, to the Department of History of the University of Turin, which allows me the additions and clarifications of the following text.

More convincing than my thesis will perhaps be a review, albeit incomplete, of the perplexities that led to the first part of *Of Morals* and the first appendix of the *Enquiry*. Already J. Laird (*Hume's Philosophy of Human Nature*, Methuen, London, 1932, p.24) claimed that 'Hume tended to assume a moral sense, conceived broadly on Hutcheson lines rather uncritically, and indeed as a datum'. But one should begin with Mr. Carritt who in 'Moral Positivism and Moral Aestheticism' (*Philosophy*, 1938) purported to refute Ayer through Hume and Hume through Ayer. D.D. Raphael, in *The Moral Sense*, cit., reports that, and recognizes the contradiction of the two analyses of moral terms (one of which entirely deals with the indicated parts), but maintains that Hume was aware of this and intended to provide, as I have already said, the public and private meanings of moral propositions. If P.S. Árdal links with such subtlety indirect passions and moral sentiments, he shows the same

discomfort in the concluding chapter of the famous *Passion and value in Hume's Treatise*, Edinburgh U. P., Edinburgh, 1966 (especially on pages 197 and 207). O. Brunet wonders if only by "deference" and a "tendency to exaggerate" Hume proposes himself as a philosopher of moral sense (*Philosophie et esthétique chez David Hume*, Nizet, Paris, 1965, pp. 224-25). Among the analysts of ethical language, we note J. Harrison, who distinguishes five possible general interpretations of Hume's ethics, (*Hume's Moral Epistemology*, Oxford U.P., Oxford 1976, pp.110-125) and J.L. Mackie, who distinguishes five possible variants of sentimentalism (*Hume's Moral Theory*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1980, pp. 64-75); however, Hume would be a bit confused, and it would be a bit anachronistic to ask him to be able to make distinctions that are not even clear today, as they should be, to all the insiders; this is their justification, accepted by E. Lecaldano in *Hume e la nascita dell'etica contemporanea*, Laterza, Bari, 1991 (pp. 152-53). Many statements by D. Miller, (*Hume's Political Thought*, Oxford U.P., Oxford, 1981, pp. 40, 50-51, 53, 55) seem to suggest, instead, that Hume would have done better not to say what he said, that does not express "his true opinion". For other interpretations see nt. 28.

<sup>24</sup> On this strategy, but also on the circularity of the *Treatise*, I refer again to my *Lo scetticismo*, cit., pp. 94-99 and 162. As for Butler, notoriously in the onset of the *Dissertation upon the Nature of Virtue* (published in appendix to the *Analogy of Religion*, London, 1736) he notoriously traced the 'moral approving and disapproving faculty' to the Epictetus and called it 'conscience, moral reason, moral sense, or divine reason, whether considered as a sentiment of understanding, or as a perception of the earth; or, which seems the truth, as including both'. I refer back to my *Vicende*, cit., p.24, on this *captatio benevolentiae* of Hume. On the passage from painting to anatomy W. Kruse intervened in 1939, as Lecaldano notes, dissenting (*From the "Public Sense"*, cit., p.42 nt. 26). In reality, Hume within the *Enquiry* goes from painting to anatomy and the operation is so complex that I find it difficult to evaluate the results. The only reliable rule would be never to comment on the *Treatise* through the *Enquiry*. Among those who have noticed the difficulties of the passage, I remember A. Santucci, who defines the *Enquiry on morals* 'il libro più sfuggente di Hume' (*Sistema e ricercar in David Hume*, Laterza, Bari, 1969, pp. 182-186) and M.A. Box, *The Suasive Art of David Hume*, Princeton U. P., Princeton (N.J.), 1990; he presents himself as a man of Letters, but his text is full of excellent philosophical suggestions, which are a challenge for the interpreter; convinced that the Pyrrhonian alternative was wholly true to Hume (page 107), he claims that the first *Enquiry* is 'satirically ironic', while the second 'prosaically earnest' (page 228); in general, Hume would have passed from a Scriblerian humanism to a Ciceronian humanism.

<sup>25</sup> E, p. 173.

<sup>26</sup> E, pp. 268-269, 278.

<sup>27</sup> E, pp. 286-287.

<sup>28</sup> D.F. Norton (*David Hume, Common-Sense Moralist, Sceptical Metaphysician*, Princeton U.P., Princeton (NJ), 1982, p. 126, n.31) complains that he lacks the 'intuitive grasp of irony', so common in some commentators, and that Hume makes clear here the important difference between the perspective of the rationalists, who refer to the immutable and eternal nature of things, and the sentimentalists who, like Hutcheson, emphasise the freedom and contingency of creation, thus deriving the structure and internal constitution

of the animals from divine will. But, in the first place, he should be warned by that reference to animals rather than to men - note that Hume also speaks of a good and evil, evidently moral, of animals in the next appendix, pp. 295-96. In the *Treatise* he spoke only of men. 'Addo dum minuo'? - Secondly, everything can be accepted, except that the two criteria are both true. Thirdly, it would not be difficult to show that Hume, if he lends his arguments to the rationalists, even in the new capacity of the *Enquiry on the Understanding*, renews those of Hutcheson, so as to facilitate identification. However Norton is not the only one without the 'sense of what's ridiculous'. Miller, while commenting on the entire final piece, claims that Hume is here the worst interpreter of himself (*Hume's Political*, cit., p. 59). Hope states that Hume contradicts the copy principle and its own philosophical practice (*Virtue by Consensus*, cit., p. 80). Acute scholars, but beyond suspicion because they are absolutely impervious to 'antiquarian' researches 'hear Hutcheson talking', (Hope, *Virtue by Consensus*, cit. p.54), or they realise that Hume's sentences are 'very similar' to those of Hutcheson, as B. Stroud says, swearing immediately after on the chronologies of the masterpiece proposed by Kemp Smith. (*Hume*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1977, pp. 264, note 13, X-XI, 186). In Italian historiographical tradition, G. Della Volpe, to grasp the good of Hume and reject Hutcheson's 'gratuito istinto o senso morale', skips with a good intuition from the commentary on the I section of the third book to a note of the *Enquiry* in which it is inferred that sympathy is a sentiment of the imagination, but then traces in the *Treatise* a passage that corresponds to it and yet concludes with a somewhat abstruse formula: 'coscienza morale come senso morale in quanto coscienza simpatetica o credenza affettiva' (*La filosofia dell'esperienza di Davide Hume*) 1933 in *Opere*, Editori Riuniti, Rome, 1972, Volume II, pp. 287-93, 325). The 'sentiment of imagination' returns with M. Dal Pra, who prudently follows the Humean vicissitudes, suggesting that these are analytical insights (*Hume e la scienza della natura umana*, Laterza, Bari, 1973 - 1949<sup>1</sup> -, pp.244-280, but in detail pp. 253-54). G. Preti claims that Hume 'postula ad ogni costo un moral sense originario e irriducibile', but then is forced to recognise that 'la stessa teoria di Hume parla contro una specificità originaria del sentimento morale' (*Alle origini dell'etica contemporanea*, La Nuova Italia, Firenze, 1957, pp. 73 and 75). Santucci treasures these difficulties, as well as the arguments of Árdal, in his problematic exposition of the question (*Sistema*, cit., pp. 167-176).

<sup>29</sup> T, III, 1, pp. 589-90.

<sup>30</sup> T, III, 5, pp. 611-12. The quotation by Malebranche concludes the fifth book, on the passions, of the *Recherche de la vérité*, (*Oeuvres complètes*, II, ed. by G. Rodis-Lewis, Vrin, Paris, 1974, page 242). My italics. The source of Malebranche (ibid., p. 547, nt. 133) is represented in turn by the famous *Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène* (1671) of the Jesuit father D. Bouhours, implacable master of the French grammar in his day, Racine's protector (and corrector). The twelve pages of the fifth of his dialogues are dedicated to *the je ne sçai quoi*, to its Italian and Spanish correspondents, and to the reference contexts, form the affinity of the spirit and the amorous sympathies - physical, sudden and capricious - to the secret causes of the nature, to the inexplicable charme of paintings and statues, up to the mysterious work of divine grace. For Eugene 'ces impressions, ces penchants, ces instincts, ces sentiments, ces parentez sont de beaux mot que les Sçavants ont inventés pour flatter leur ignorance & pour tromper les autres...' (D. Bouhours, *Les entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugene*, Colin, Paris, 1962, p.140). In this sense the term is used by Hume. In the sense instead of

Ariste, whereby it is what must be admired without being understood, Hume has already used the expression to refer to the oblique theory of belief, which arises from the vivacity of the present idea, and to the vivacity of certain memories, in the conclusion of the section viii (pt. III) of the book on the understanding. On the aesthetic use of expression, in connection with the theories of Bouhours, and on the similar rejection by Hume of the 'valutazione estetica "al primo colpo"', I refer to the essay by G. Carabelli, *Hume e la botte di Sancho*. (second version, gift of A. The first one reads in *Tra antichi e moderni. Antropologia e Stato tra disciplinamento e morale privata*. Atti del Convegno di studi, Salerno, 20-21 ottobre 1987, ed. by I. Cappiello, Esi, Napoli, 1989, pp. 39-72). Of course, both this and Carabelli's previous texts on Humean writing strategies seem to comfort my interpretation.

<sup>31</sup> See *Recherche*, cit., Vol. I, pp. 20, 191-192, 212-224, 274-275, 321; vol. II, pp. 223, 236; vol. III, pp. 6-7.

<sup>32</sup> On these statements, I reserve the right to intervene elsewhere.

<sup>33</sup> See *Enquiry concerning Understanding*, cit., p. 73 nt. (79 nt.) And my 'Lord Kames, John Stewart e le leggi del moto' in *Scienza e filosofia scozzese nell'età di Hume*, cit.; besides E, 197 nt.

<sup>34</sup> T, III, 5, p. 614.

<sup>35</sup> H. Home, *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion*, Edinburgh, 1751, pp. 140-41.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *Of the Standard of Taste*, in T.H. Green and T.H. Grose (eds), *The Philosophical Works*, London, 1882 (2), anast. reprint, Scientia Verlag Aalen, Darmstadt, 1964, vol. III, pp. 266-68, *The sceptic* (*ibid.*, pp. 224-228') but also the criticism of the alleged virtue of the Athenian people, in T, lib.2, III, 5, pp 425-26, and finally the dialogue of Palamede that has always accompanied the publication of the *Enquiry* (D. Forbes, *Hume's Philosophical*, cit., pp. 102-121) is among the few to deal with it seriously). The hatred of moral maxims and antipathy for Seneca (a common point with Malebranche) has been a constant of Hume since 1730.

<sup>37</sup> I refer to *Of the Delicacy of Taste and Passion* which opens the *Essays* of 1741. But we must not forget that the state generates property, differences in rank and that the latter influence 'the whole fabric, external and internal', 'skin, pores, muscles, and nerves' as 'sentiments, actions and manners' 'of a day-labourer'. - T, 2, III, 1, p. 402. I remember that the book on the imagination of Malebranche is also a manifesto of cultural politics: a Cartesian and Augustinian Catholicism that has as its enemies the historical and philosophical erudition of scholastics and libertines or sceptics and ends with the condemnation of Montaigne.

<sup>38</sup> E, p. 274 nt.

<sup>39</sup> E, p. 273. On sympathy as 'solidarity of the species', cf. Malebranche, *Recherche*, cit., Vol. II, pp. 113 ff., 191-192, but also vol. I, p. 321.

<sup>40</sup> E, p. 179.

<sup>41</sup> I reply here to the criticism of Dario Castiglione. The pieces are read in T, II, 2, pp. 486-489. It is a pity, however, to have to replace irony with pedantry.

<sup>42</sup> In fact, on p. 477 Hume speaks of family budgets and of the 'smallest portion' which the head of the family reserves for himself. But on p. 478 Hume goes further, because here-proposes between the lines the gravitational model that Hutcheson had used for

benevolence (Cf. *Inquiry*, cit., In *Works* cit., Vol. I pp. 197-199), which decreases moving away from ourselves. I think he does it because Hutcheson, in founding justice on moral sense or at least on some of his 'little reflection upon the tendency of Actions', realising that benevolence is not strong enough to induce us 'to industry, to bear labour and toil', resorts to self-love and Newtonian forces of cohesion: 'Self-love is really as necessary to the *Good* of the *Whole* as *Benevolence*; as that Attraction which causes the Cohesion of the Parts, is as necessary to the *regular State* of the *Whole*, as *Gravitation*. In reality it changes its model, because in self-love it now includes 'the strongest Attractions of *Blood*, of *Friendship*, of *Gratitude*' (*ibid.* P.263). For Hume who, like Home, is certainly not on the side of the 'honest farmer', this is too much. He is willing to accept only the 'gentle force' of gravitation and, as he has already applied it to the associative laws of the imagination with which he intended to pass as an inventor, he reiterates, again between the lines, that gravity is worth as much for benevolence as it is for our ideas of vice and virtue, which are therefore equally partial or limited. It can therefore end with that 'additional force and influence' of which I speak in point 5.