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Moral Philosophy and the Origins of Modern Aesthetic Theory  
in Scotland and Germany

by

Simon William Grote

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requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

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Professor Martin Jay

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## ABSTRACT

### Moral Philosophy and the Origins of Modern Aesthetic Theory in Scotland and Germany

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in History

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The aim of this dissertation is to rewrite the early history of modern aesthetic theory.

The early eighteenth century is widely recognized as having been marked by innovations in thinking about art, beauty, and sense perception by a large group of well-known and lesser-known authors in many parts of Europe, among the most important of whom were Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713) in England, Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746) in Ireland and Scotland, and Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714-62) in Brandenburg-Prussia. But no significant, historically-informed, comparative study of the emergence of aesthetic theory as a pan-European phenomenon has ever been undertaken. Rather, historians of aesthetic theory have long tended to summarize the eighteenth century as a series of preludes to the achievements of Immanuel Kant in his 1790 *Critique of Judgment*. Narratives of this type are not necessarily false, but they almost invariably obscure the contemporary significance of the treatises they regard as “aesthetic” and the purposes of those treatises’ authors. Nor have they tended to take account of the theological and philosophical contexts crucial to explaining why aesthetic theories arose.

As an alternative, I present the early history of aesthetic theory as part of the histories of moral philosophy, natural law, and theology, by analyzing discussions and controversies surrounding the work of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Baumgarten, and the little-known William Cleghorn (1719-54), a Scottish follower of Shaftesbury. I argue that their aesthetic theories should be seen as a multi-generational effort to solve a problem about what they called the “foundation of morality.” They developed their aesthetic theories as challenges to the idea, espoused by their critics among contemporary natural law theorists and Lutheran and Presbyterian theologians, that the human will is naturally radically corrupt, and that moral behavior must therefore be understood as merely an expression of educated selfishness. They sought to explain how cultivating the powers of the human soul associated with sensation, through the contemplation of beauty, including in well-made works of art and literature, is an essential part of moral education and allows naturally self-interested human beings to transcend their own self-interest. From an historical perspective, in other words, the origins of modern aesthetic theory should be sought in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century challenges to the Augustinian legacy of early modern Protestantism, in the long history of reactions to the natural law theories of Thomas Hobbes and Samuel Pufendorf (among others), and in the characteristically eighteenth-century search for a morally sound basis of a cohesive, flourishing society.

To my father  
and  
in memory of my mother

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This dissertation bears witness to an education, both intellectual and sentimental, whose effects on me have been so deep and so welcome that I would happily fill page after page with names and reminiscences, showering gratitude on everyone who has had even the remotest connection with it. What restrains me is a sense of the impropriety of self-indulgence, the inadequacy of words to convey my true feelings, and a fear that my faulty memory would turn any pretense of all-inclusiveness into a source of disappointment for everyone whose name I had unfairly and unwittingly omitted. So I confine myself to mentioning, with regrettable but unavoidable brevity and blandness, and with apologies to everyone I have overlooked, some of the people and institutions who have helped me in particularly direct ways.

The initial phase of my research began ten years ago, when I spent a summer in Scotland laying the foundation for an undergraduate thesis in history at Harvard University. Of all the people on whose help I relied, and whom I thanked in the pages of that thesis and thank again now, the one who has left the clearest fingerprints on this dissertation is Istvan Hont. Together with Clare Jackson, he supervised a year of research at Cambridge University, generously funded by the Gates-Cambridge Trust in 2004-5, essential to my dissertation's second chapter. His advice and support have continued during my time in Berkeley. Ten years of guidance, challenging criticism, and flattering encouragement have earned him my gratitude. I also thank him and Isaac Nakhimovsky for inviting me back to Cambridge in 2009 to present my work.

I have based the greater part of my dissertation on research I conducted in Germany over the course of two extended visits to Halle/Saale in 2007 and 2008, at the invitation of the Francke Foundations and the Interdisciplinary Center for European Enlightenment Research, funded by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation, the German Academic Exchange Service, and the Max Kade Foundation. With help from my hosts in Halle and from many new acquaintances and friends, I became aware of an academic culture and a set of scholarly conversations about Pietism and Enlightenment that have substantially shaped how I understand the significance of my work. These new friends' and colleagues' enthusiasm about me and my project buoyed my confidence and made every departure from Halle bittersweet. The



archivists, librarians, and other members of the staff of the Study Center of the Francke Foundations, led so ably by Britta Klosterberg, taught me paleography and, together with their colleagues at the Halle University Archive and the University Library, helped me find almost all the materials I needed. For useful consultations about the substance of my research, I thank in particular Ulrich Barth, Frank Grunert, Hans-Joachim Kertscher, Christian Soboth, Udo Sträter, and Alexander Aichele, to whom I am especially grateful for giving me the means of sharing some fruits of my research with a larger public. For important advice on drafts of dissertation chapters and other written work, and for countless hours of invigorating conversation, I owe special thanks to Dirk Effertz, and to two dear friends: Ulrich Diehl and Kelly Whitmer.

In Berkeley, many friends have given me both a welcome sense of intellectual community and concrete assistance. These include fellow members of the History Department's intellectual history reading group; Jim Spohrer, who bought reproductions of rare sources for the University Library to support my research when time in Germany had run out; and above all Johan van der Zande, whose expert critique and open-handed praise of my work, over the course of eight years of intellectual camaraderie and friendship, have given me a sense of my worth as a scholar.

The many others whom I thank for reading parts of my dissertation and offering valuable advice and other forms of support, in Berkeley and elsewhere, include Thomas Ahnert, Susanna Elm, Ellie Johnson, Tony La Vopa, Tony Long, Rebecca Lyman, Marcus Meier, Jim Moore, Martin Mulsow, Christopher Ocker, David Pugh, Jonathan Sheehan, and the members of the 2008 Transatlantic Doctoral Seminar on early modern Germany, organized by the German Historical Institute.

I am particularly grateful to my dissertation committee – Tom Brady, David Lieberman, Niklaus Largier, and Martin Jay – for reading my work attentively, for guiding it with a light but judicious touch, for opening my eyes to aspects of it that I might otherwise never have noticed, and for making a strong case – not only to me but also to others – for its value. For the unflagging care with which Tom and Kathy Brady have looked after me *in loco parentium*, I offer fond appreciation.

Words do no justice to my gratitude toward my parents. I wish my mother could see the fruits her indefatigable aspirations for my education have borne. To her and to my father I dedicate this dissertation with overflowing love.

## ABBREVIATIONS

AFSt	Archive of the Franckesche Stiftungen. Halle/Saale, Germany.
BL	British Library. London, England.
DBA	<i>Deutsches Biographisches Archiv</i> . New York: K. G. Saur, 1982.
DNB	<i>The Dictionary of National Biography</i> . 61 vols. Edited by H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
EUL	Edinburgh University Library. Edinburgh, Scotland.
HL	<i>The Letters of David Hume</i> . Edited by J. Y. T. Grieg. Vol. 1 of 2, 1727-1765. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932.
NLS	National Library of Scotland. Edinburgh, Scotland.
StAndUL	St. Andrews University Library. St. Andrews, Scotland.
TCM	City of Edinburgh. Minutes of the Town Council. Edinburgh City Chambers. Edinburgh, Scotland.

## MANUSCRIPT TRANSCRIPTION AND CITATION

1. All abbreviations using superscript letters (e.g. “y<sup>e</sup>” for “the”) have been written out in full. Most ampersands have been replaced with “and”.
2. In the case of William Cleghorn’s lecture dictates, all abbreviations have been written out in full, and punctuation has occasionally been changed to increase readability (e.g. commas inserted between elements of a list). The original orthography has been altered in the case of obvious errors that impair the readability of the text. All changes with a significant bearing on the

interpretation of the text have been enclosed in brackets. The original capitalization has been retained as much as possible, but the difficulty of distinguishing lower-case and capital letters in the original text has made errors inevitable.

3. William Dalglish's four-volume set of dictates of William Cleghorn's lectures (EUL MS Dc 3.3-6) is cited according to the pagination of the volumes. The first three volumes (Dc 3.3-5), which are continuously paginated (i.e. 1 to 707, with Dc 3.3 containing pages 1-199, Dc 3.4 pages 201-423, and Dc 3.5 pages 425-707), are accordingly cited as Book I; and the fourth volume (Dc 3.6), which is independently paginated (i.e. 1 to 367) is cited as Book II. For example, the citation, "W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.413-5" refers to EUL MS Dc 3.4, fols. 413-5.
4. Corrections in original manuscripts have been reproduced as precisely as possible. Struck-through printed text (like ~~this~~) indicates text that is crossed out in the original manuscript. Underlined printed text following a caret (like ~~that~~ ^this) reproduces the text of a handwritten correction.

## Introduction

Most histories of aesthetic theory in the western world begin in earnest with the first decades of the eighteenth century. Conventional wisdom takes this to be the moment when medieval speculative philosophizing about beauty, whose presumption that beauty exists outside the mind of the beholder had roots extending at least back to Plato, finally began to give way in much of Europe to a recognizably modern enterprise: the systematic and empirically oriented analysis of the perception of beauty as a mental phenomenon.<sup>1</sup> The list of theorists whose work marks this transition is almost as conventional as the transition's date. Many historians of aesthetics mention Joseph Addison (1672-1719) in England; David Hume (1711-76), Alexander Gerard (1728-95) and Archibald Alison (1757-1839) in Scotland; Jean-Pierre de Crousaz (1663-1750) in Lausanne; and Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux (1636-1711), Jean-Baptiste Du Bos (1670-1742), and Charles Batteux (1713-80) in France. Some add Johann Jacob Bodmer (1698-1783) and Johann Jacob Breitinger (1701-1776) in Zurich, or Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) in Naples. But almost all give pride of place to Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713) in England, Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746) in Ireland and Scotland, and Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714-62) in Brandenburg-Prussia. Each of them has been influentially credited with breaking important new ground. Shaftesbury has been called the "inventor" of aesthetics and the author of "the first comprehensive and independent philosophy of the beautiful."<sup>2</sup> Hutcheson, a "father" of the Scottish Enlightenment and first major exponent of the "moral sense," has been described as the first philosopher "to write a clearly recognizable, extended, and self-contained work on what we would now call

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<sup>1</sup> The many examples of this general view include Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz, *History of Aesthetics*, v. 3 of 3 (Paris: Mouton, 1974), xix; Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz, *A History of Six Ideas: An Essay in Aesthetics* (London: Nijhoff, 1980), 310, 319-20; *Aesthetics*, prod. Camila O'Donnell, dir. Pablo Garcia, 51 min., Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 2004, digital video disc; Dieter Kliche, "Die Institutionalisierung der Ästhetik," *Ästhetische Grundbegriffe*, ed. Karlheinz Barck et al., vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2000), s.v. "Ästhetik/ästhetisch," 318; and George Dickie, *Introduction to Aesthetics: An Analytic Approach* (Oxford: UP, 1997), 10.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Chytry, *The Aesthetic State: A Quest in Modern German Thought* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1989), lv; Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, trans. F. C. A. Koelln and J. P. Pettegrove (Princeton: UP, 1951, rept. Boston: beacon Press, 1965), 312.

aesthetics or the philosophy of art.”<sup>3</sup> Baumgarten, Professor of Philosophy in the cities of Halle and Frankfurt/Oder, coined the very term, *aesthetica* in 1735 as the name of a new philosophy and, in Ernst Cassirer’s words, allowed philosophical aesthetics to “constitute itself as a philosophical discipline in its own right.”<sup>4</sup>

What precisely was modern about early eighteenth-century aesthetic theories? Historians of aesthetics tend to measure the modernity of a theory by the degree to which it approximates what most of them consider the supreme or first important model of modern aesthetic theory: Immanuel Kant’s 1790 *Critique of Judgment*. This is the principle by which a mere parade of stars – like Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Baumgarten – has long been presented as a coherent narrative.

Some authors of such narratives present early eighteenth-century aesthetic theories as valiant but inadequate attempts to pose and solve a problem ultimately and more convincingly addressed by Kant. The central problem is sometimes described as a conflict over whether human judgment of a thing’s beauty – or, more generally, whether knowledge itself – is ultimately a matter of sensation or reason. Bernard Bosanquet calls the problem a conflict between “individual” and “universal” philosophical tendencies;<sup>5</sup> Ernst Cassirer describes the problem as “the schematic conflict” between experience and reason;<sup>6</sup> Howard Caygill describes the problem as the paradox, addressed in different ways by two competing traditions, one British and the other German, of how to judge the rules according to which we use our own judgment to “unite the sensible with the intelligible”;<sup>7</sup> and Ted Kinnaman describes the problem as a paradox arising from the question, allegedly bequeathed to the modern world by Descartes, whether beauty is a “subjective” or an “objective”

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<sup>3</sup> Peter Kivy, “The ‘Sense’ of Beauty and the Sense of ‘Art’: Hutcheson’s Place in the History and Practice of Aesthetics,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 53 (1995), 355; cf. *Aesthetics*, prod. Camila O’Donnell.

<sup>4</sup> E. Cassirer, *Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, 341. Cf. Ted Kinnaman, “Aesthetics Before Kant,” in *A Companion to Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. Steven Nadler (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), 578-9; and Kai Hammermeister, *The German Aesthetic Tradition* (Cambridge: UP, 2002), 13.

<sup>5</sup> Bernard Bosanquet, *A History of Aesthetic*, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1904; rept. 1934), 170-6.

<sup>6</sup> E. Cassirer, *Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, 322. Cf. Monroe Beardsley, *Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present: A Short History* (New York: Macmillan, 1966; rept. Tuscaloosa: U Alabama P, 1975), whose seventh and eighth chapters (“Cartesian Rationalism” and “Empiricism”) immediately precede the chapter on Kant; Alfred Reimann, *Die Aesthetik Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus nebst einer Übersetzung dieser Schrift* (Wiesbaden: M. Sandig, 1973), 76; Ursula Francke, *Kunst als Erkenntnis: Die Rolle der Sinnlichkeit in der Aesthetik des Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens*, *Studia Leibnitiana*, suppl. vol. 9 (Wiesbaden, 1972), 7.

<sup>7</sup> H. Caygill, *Art of Judgment*, 4-7, 37.

quality.<sup>8</sup> Kant – so the stories go – convincingly resolved these problems.

Other histories of early eighteenth-century aesthetic theory present pre-Kantian theories as having anticipated concepts that came to fruition with Kant and thereby set the stage for later discussion.<sup>9</sup> The most heavily cited of these is the concept of the “aesthetic attitude,” a particular type of contemplative experience characterized by “disinterestedness” and “autonomy,” in the sense that the judgment it involves is subject to its own rules and is not directed toward any goal outside itself. What precisely the aesthetic attitude entails, and whether it is distinguishable from other kinds of experience, has long been a subject of controversy, and the lack of consensus about it among twentieth-century aesthetic theorists is reflected in the variety of stories about how it emerged as an object of investigation among eighteenth-century predecessors of Kant. Benedetto Croce, for example, writing at the turn of the twentieth century, traced his own concept of aesthetic experience as a type of non-conceptual cognition, or *intuition*, back through Kant to Vico, and, in an imperfect form, to Baumgarten.<sup>10</sup> Jerome Stolnitz, in a series of articles beginning in 1961, developed the influential argument that a concept of “disinterested aesthetic experience” – much like his own – first appeared in the work of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson before Kant gave it more elaborate exposition.<sup>11</sup> Paul Guyer, in a more recent argument untarnished by the heavy criticism endured by Stolnitz,<sup>12</sup> has looked

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<sup>8</sup> T. Kinnaman, “Aesthetics Before Kant,” 572.

<sup>9</sup> The explicit purpose of such histories is sometimes, but not always, a deeper understanding of Kant himself, as in studies of Baumgarten by Bernard Poppe, Karl Raabe, and Alfred Bäumler. U. Francke, *Kunst als Erkenntnis*, 6. Cf. Karl Raabe, *A. G. Baumgarten aetheticae in disciplinae formam redactae parens et auctor*, PhD Diss (U Rostock, 1873); Bernard Poppe, *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten: Seine Bedeutung und Stellung in der Leibniz-Wolffischen Philosophie und seine Beziehungen zu Kant* (Borna-Leipzig, 1907); and Alfred Bäumler, *Das Irrationalitätsproblem in der Ästhetik und Logik des 18. Jahrhunderts bis zur Kritik der Urteilskraft* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1975).

<sup>10</sup> Benedetto Croce, “The ‘Aesthetica’ of Baumgarten,” in *Philosophy, Poetry, History: An Anthology of Essays*, trans. Cecil Sprigge (Oxford: UP, 1966); cf. Patrick Romanell, introd. to *Guide to Aesthetics*, by B. Croce (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1965; rept. 1995), ix. Umberto Eco evidently has Croce’s aesthetic theory in mind as he measures the modernity of medieval aesthetics in *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, trans. Hugh Bredin (New Haven: Yale UP, 1986), 1.

<sup>11</sup> Jerome Stolnitz, “On the Origins of ‘Aesthetic Disinterestedness,’” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 20.2 (1961), 133; Miles Rind, “The Concept of Disinterestedness in Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetics,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 40.1 (2002), 67-8; and summarizing Stolnitz, George Dickie, “Stolnitz’s Attitude: Taste and Perception,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 43.2 (1984), 195-8.

<sup>12</sup> For example, by M. Rind, “The Concept of Disinterestedness,” 70-4 (most convincingly, 73); and G. Dickie, “Stolnitz’s Attitude,” 201. Evidence that Stolnitz’s discovery of the aesthetic attitude in the works of Shaftesbury can no longer be accepted uncritically is provided by Philip Ayres, Introduction,

to Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Du Bos, Addison, and, above all, Baumgarten for anticipations of Kant's concept of aesthetic experience as necessarily involving the "free play of the imagination."<sup>13</sup>

Kantian concepts are equally central to another category of histories of aesthetic theory: those oriented not toward unearthing the origins of Kant's ideas, the origins of problems Kant tried to solve, or the origins of later aesthetic theories, but rather toward answering questions addressed famously by Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno, among others, about the connections between aesthetic theory and fascist or capitalist ideologies. Like their counterparts among historians of aesthetics who avoid all trace of Marxist vocabulary, authors of these histories tend to take the concept of "autonomous" aesthetic experience, articulated influentially by Kant, as the essential element of modern aesthetic theory, and to discuss Kant's predecessors with a view to establishing the ways in which they anticipated later uses of the concept.<sup>14</sup> Their histories, too, in other words, present Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Baumgarten, and their fellow eighteenth-century theorists as milestones on the road to Kant and beyond.

Many of these histories of early eighteenth-century, pre-Kantian aesthetic theory probably contain a great deal of truth, but almost every one of them unites the protagonists of its story with a disappointingly flimsy bond: to a greater or lesser

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*Characteristics*, by Shaftesbury (Oxford: UP, 1999), xxviii. Ayres notes scholarly agreement that Shaftesbury moved *toward* aesthetic disinterestedness, thereby implicitly acknowledging that Stolnitz' discovery of aesthetic disinterestedness itself in Shaftesbury has been rejected.

<sup>13</sup> Paul Guyer, "The Origins of Modern Aesthetics, 1711-1735," in *Values of Beauty: Historical Essays in Aesthetics*, by P. Guyer (Cambridge: UP, 2005), 5, 28-36.

<sup>14</sup> Examples of this kind of approach include works by Terry Eagleton, Jonathan Hess, and Christoph Menke. Eagleton traces the concept of the autonomous aesthetic artifact – which he takes to be the essential subject of aesthetic theory – through the canon of aesthetic theorists, warning contemporary representatives of "Left moralism" not to forget that in the eighteenth century and at every later stage in its history, the concept not only reinforced bourgeois ideology – as is often assumed – but also, dialectically, served as a bulwark against "instrumentalist" thinking and provided the foundation for Marx's critique. Hess uses an analysis of works by Karl Philip Moritz and Kant to argue that the concept of aesthetic autonomy did not emerge as a defense of high culture under pressure from burgeoning consumerism (contra Martha Woodmansee), and should be considered neither "protofascist" (contra Walter Benjamin) nor a progenitor of the public sphere (contra Jürgen Habermas), but was developed specifically as a means of ascribing freedom to intellectuals under an absolute monarchy. Menke reconstructs and elaborates on Theodor Adorno's use of Kant's concept of "antinomy" to resolve the tension between apparently mutually contradictory conceptions of aesthetic experience as "autonomous" and as "sovereign." T. Eagleton, *Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Princeton: UP, 1990), esp. 3, 8-9; J. Hess, *Reconstructing the Body Politic* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1999), esp. 16-23, 31-2, 60-79; C. Menke, *The Sovereignty of Art*, trans. Neil Solomon (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998), vii-xi.

extent, they all approximated a theory none of them knew would come. The story is coherent, but from the perspective of a historian interested primarily in the early eighteenth century, its coherence is superficial. In so far as any of the theories resembled each other, the causes of that resemblance receive little or no scrutiny. The occasional suggestion that the theorists themselves had common aims bears no weight; it is a mere slip of the pen, a lapse in the conscientiousness with which a credible historian needs to distinguish what seems important to him, or what foreshadows later innovations, from what the protagonists of his history intended to achieve. Aesthetic theorist George Dickie illustrates the problem well in his own introduction to aesthetic theory, when he purports, in a historical prelude, to “trace the central, organizing strains of the field and thereby set the stage for discussion of present-day problems in aesthetics.”<sup>15</sup> Even putting aside the question of whether a single field of aesthetics has in fact persisted from the eighteenth century to the present day, Dickie’s silence about whether early aesthetic theorists perceived the “central, organizing strains” of the field as we perceive them opens the door to a dubious inference that Dickie does not disclaim: that eighteenth-century theorists deliberately organized their concepts and theories around questions and problems that occupy aesthetic theorists today.<sup>16</sup>

My purpose is to forestall this inference, by offering an alternative to the conventional history of the history of modern aesthetic theory before Kant, an alternative history whose coherence is not superficial but deep. Examining the contemporary intellectual contexts of some of the traditionally central figures of the pre-Kantian canon in substantially more detail than has yet been done, rather than dissolving the flimsy bond that currently unites them and leaving only a chaos behind, will reveal a much more substantial basis than has yet been articulated for including them in the same historiographical narrative, a narrative that turns out to be considerably different from the early histories of modern aesthetics in which they have hitherto featured so prominently.

According to this new narrative, aesthetic theories of the first half of the eighteenth century were part of a larger pattern of reactions in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, in much of Europe, to what could be called aspects of

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<sup>15</sup> G. Dickie, *Introduction to Aesthetics*, ix.

<sup>16</sup> Alexander Broadie’s summary of aesthetics in the Scottish Enlightenment, a brief tour of eighteenth-century Scottish philosophical treatments of several problems important to modern aesthetic theory, exemplifies the danger of this inference: the problems have obviously been chosen because of their later importance. A. Broadie, “Art and Aesthetic Theory,” in *Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. A. Broadie (Cambridge: UP, 2003).



the Augustinian legacy of early modern Christianity. For all its shortcomings, probably the most suggestive and incisive synthesis of this larger pattern remains Hugh Trevor-Roper's "Religious Origins of the Enlightenment," a forty-page comparative study, now over fifty years old, of proto-Enlightenment repudiations of seventeenth-century Calvinism in Holland, England, Scotland, France, and Switzerland.<sup>17</sup> Trevor-Roper portrays the birth of the Enlightenment in all these places as, in essence, a re-staging of the famous 1524-5 pamphlet exchange between Martin Luther and Desiderius Erasmus on the freedom of the will, with Luther's supporters now on the defensive against resurgent partisans of Erasmus. In opposition to the seventeenth-century heirs of Calvin, Beza, Buchanan, and Knox ("What a gallery of intolerant bigots, narrow-minded martinets, timid conservative defenders of repellant dogmas, instant assailants of every new or liberal idea, inquisitors and witch-burners!"<sup>18</sup>) Trevor-Roper places a large number of "Erasmian" and "Arminian" critics who rightly or wrongly endured in their own time a wide range of slurs – including *Arminianism*, *Socinianism*, *Deism*, *Pelagianism*, and *atheism* – and who, whatever the differences among them, shared a general antipathy toward the Calvinist teaching that human beings are by nature radically depraved, which is to say, naturally incapable of doing good in this life without the assistance of divine grace.<sup>19</sup>

In the eighteenth-century German and Scottish contexts of Hutcheson's and

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<sup>17</sup> Hugh Trevor-Roper, "The Religious Origins of the Enlightenment," in *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change*, 3rd ed. (London: Secker and Warburg, 1984). The usefulness of Trevor-Roper's study can be appreciated especially easily if his descriptions of the evidence on which he draws are salvaged from the superficial and outdated argumentative frame (that the Enlightenment should be regarded as the legacy of the political Right rather than the Left) in which he presents them.

<sup>18</sup> H. Trevor-Roper, "Religious Origins," 206.

<sup>19</sup> Attention to the rise of "Arminianism" as a largely pan-European phenomenon has not become standard in scholarly overviews of Enlightenment Christianity, where the greatest emphasis has long fallen on the development of "rationalism." Classic examples of this emphasis include Gerald R. Cragg, *The Church and the Age of Reason, 1648-1789* (New York: Penguin, 1960, repr. 1990); and, still definitive for the study of Christianity in eighteenth-century Germany, Karl Aner, *Die Theologie der Lessingzeit* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1929). Cragg's emphasis more or less persists in Mary Heimann, "Christianity in Western Europe from the Enlightenment," in *A World History of Christianity*, ed. Adrian Hastings (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999). Trevor-Roper's view corrects not only this emphasis, but also Paul Hazard's exaggerated association of the rise of theories of natural morality with the abandonment of "the Christian system," in *European Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1963), 160. Essentially in line with Trevor-Roper are, more recently, John McManners, "Enlightenment: Secular and Christian (1600-1800)," in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity*, ed. J. McManners (Oxford: UP, 1990), 289-92; and J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion: The Enlightenment of Edward Gibbon, 1737-1764*, v. 1 of 4 (Cambridge: UP, 1999), 50-71.

Baumgarten's work, the focus of my investigation, this controversy had persisted, and its subject had acquired a common name: "the foundation of morality" or *Grundlage der Moral*.<sup>20</sup> In broad and schematic terms, the question was this: To what extent can human beings become genuinely virtuous by exercising faculties they naturally possess? Crucial subquestions included (1) the identity of the natural faculties that needed to be exercised, and (2) the extent to which the exercise of these faculties must involve discovering God's existence and understanding divine law. In both the Scottish and the German versions of this debate, two basic positions were represented.

One position held that human beings in their natural state are simply incapable of acting in accordance with moral principles, including divine law, with any motivation other than the crass self-interest represented by a fear of the pain of divine punishments and a desire for the pleasure of divine rewards. Genuine virtue, on this view, requires a fundamental change or "regeneration" of the human soul by God in the course of a person's life, such that the motivation to act in accordance with moral principles ceases to be a desire for reward and fear of punishment, and becomes instead a disinterested love of God. In early eighteenth-century Edinburgh and Glasgow, this view was represented by so-called "orthodox" Presbyterians, and key aspects of it – above all the assumption that human beings are naturally motivated only by crass self-interest – could be found in the works of other authors familiar to Scottish university students, including Thomas Hobbes and Bernard Mandeville. In Halle, where Alexander Baumgarten began developing his aesthetic theory, a similar view was represented by a number of theologians and jurists who defy easy placement under a single heading, but who included canonical representatives of German Pietism and putative adherents to a tradition of natural jurisprudence with roots in the works of Samuel Pufendorf (1632-94).<sup>21</sup>

Another position in the debate, represented by many of Trevor-Roper's "Erasmians," held that without paying attention to the rewards and punishments attached to divine law, human beings are indeed capable of reaching a substantial degree of virtue, simply by cultivating and exercising a naturally inborn, more-or-

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<sup>20</sup> In the English-language context, one variation was the "foundations of morals."

<sup>21</sup> E.g. Johann Franz Buddeus (1667-1729), Nicolaus Hieronymus Gundling (1671-1729), and Christian Thomasius (1655-1728) – on all of whom, see below, ch. 4.

less instinctive human desire for virtue itself.<sup>22</sup> Between 1720 and 1750, the best known and most committed Scottish representative of this view was Francis Hutcheson, who devoted much of his career as a moral theorist and university professor to demonstrating that human beings possessed an instinctive benevolence, to asserting that virtue could by definition only be motivated by this benevolence, and to teaching his students and contemporaries how to cultivate benevolence in themselves. In Halle, the most important representative of a similar view was Christian Wolff, who attributed virtue to the exercise of the so-called *appetitus rationalis* or “rational appetite,” a natural impulse that would invariably prompt human beings unencumbered by their passions to choose a course of action that their own rational faculties and experience had led them to conclude would contribute to the perfection of themselves and others. Aesthetic theories, as Hutcheson’s presence here would suggest, were developed largely as a means of bolstering this second position in the debate about the foundation of morality.

The credibility of this thesis, that the emergence of aesthetic theories in early eighteenth-century Scotland and Germany can be explained as an outgrowth of simultaneous and similar debates about the foundation of morality, depends upon the soundness of an argument with essentially two steps: (1) there were similar debates about the foundation of morality in Scotland and in Germany in the first half of the eighteenth century, and (2) traditionally important aesthetic theories in both places should be construed as similar contributions to these debates. These two steps cross ground already traveled by other scholars. Although the foundation-of-morality controversy in eighteenth-century Scotland has received only a modicum of sustained, explicit scholarly attention as a phenomenon in its own right,<sup>23</sup> it has long received attention – and is now well understood – as a subject of disagreement between Francis Hutcheson and his fellow Scottish luminary, David Hume.<sup>24</sup> That Francis Hutcheson developed his ethical theory as a contribution to the foundation-of-morality debate, and that he used his aesthetic theory to reinforce his ethical

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<sup>22</sup> On the centrality of the concept of *synderesis* to this view, and on continuities between Thomas Aquinas and Francis Hutcheson, see Robert A. Greene, “Instinct of Nature: Natural Law, Synderesis, and the Moral Sense,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58.2 (1997): 175-98.

<sup>23</sup> The only noteworthy example known to me is Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment* (Cambridge: UP, 2000), 199-237.

<sup>24</sup> See below, ch. 2, pp. 65-71. The example of Hume and Hutcheson’s difference of opinion about the foundation of morality is now so well known that Luigi Turco, in a recent essay purportedly on the foundation-of-morals controversy in the Scottish Enlightenment, confines himself to rehearsing that one example of it. Luigi Turco, “Moral Sense and the Foundations of Morals,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment*, 136-56.

theory, is also well known.<sup>25</sup> On the German side, although the term, *Grundlage der Moral* has not, to my knowledge, been applied by scholars, a substantial outline of the controversy to which it refers is available in the case of Christian Wolff and some of his critics among professors of law at the University of Halle in the 1710s, 20s, and 30s.<sup>26</sup>

*Terra incognita* nonetheless remains. On the Scottish side, the persistent importance of Shaftesbury's moral and aesthetic ideas, though widely accepted, has been misunderstood. In particular, Hutcheson's deviation from Shaftesbury has received little attention, and the relative marginality of Hutcheson's aesthetic theory by the middle of the century, by comparison with Shaftesbury's, has gone wholly unnoticed.<sup>27</sup> Contrary to the conventional story of pre-Kantian aesthetics, in other words, from an historical perspective the best Scottish point of comparison in a study of the emergence of aesthetic theory should be not Hutcheson but rather several contemporaries of his who, while more obscure today, better represent the mainstream in their whole-hearted adoption of Shaftesbury's ideas of aesthetic and moral education.<sup>28</sup> On the German side, substantially more remains to be uncovered. First, the extent of the importance of the foundation-of-morality debate in the early German Enlightenment has not yet been recognized. Although information about Christian Wolff's disagreement with contemporary natural jurists about the issue can be found in recent scholarship, the connection between this disagreement and Wolff's far better-known quarrel with the Pietist theologians in Halle, who engineered his 1723 expulsion from Prussia, remains dim. Disagreement over the foundation of morality was in fact the axis on which both these controversies turned.<sup>29</sup> Second, Alexander Baumgarten's intellectual debts to many of those Pietist theologians in Halle have received little serious scrutiny.<sup>30</sup> Most assertions on the subject have been

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<sup>25</sup> In addition to Turco (n. 24, above), see below, ch. 2, n. 9 and n. 12 for the scholarship on which Turco's article is based.

<sup>26</sup> Most notably, in Gerald Hartung's large-scale survey, *Die Naturrechtsdebatte: Geschichte der Obligatio vom 17. bis 20. Jahrhundert* (Freiburg: K. Alber, 1998).

<sup>27</sup> See below, ch. 1.

<sup>28</sup> The exemplary case of William Cleghorn (1719-54) occupies ch. 2, below.

<sup>29</sup> Demonstrating this is the task of ch. 4, below.

<sup>30</sup> Most treatments of Baumgarten that do not examine him primarily in relation to Kant (see above, n. 9) nonetheless do not give very much attention to his immediate, German intellectual milieu, often preferring to discuss his predecessors and contemporaries among French aesthetic theorists – e.g. Alfred Reimann, *Die Aesthetik Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus nebst einer Uebersetzung dieser Schrift* (Wiesbaden: M. Sandig, 1973) – and almost always treating his aesthetic theory as a contribution to

speculative, and some are demonstrably inaccurate.<sup>31</sup> Nor have I seen any trace of the argument that Baumgarten developed his aesthetic theory for the purpose of contributing to the discussion of the foundation of morality that had embroiled Christian Wolff and Baumgarten's Pietist teachers, let alone any description of what kind of contribution Baumgarten hoped to make.<sup>32</sup>

The chapters that follow will dispel the mists around these little-known features of the two historical landscapes, Scottish and German, in which several canonical pre-Kantian aesthetic theories took form. As the mists disperse, the landscapes will reveal themselves to be, for all their differences, astonishingly alike. In fact, far more than simply allowing anyone who cares about the history of aesthetics to make an imaginative leap from one historiographical framework to another – that is, from austere, abstract pre-Kantianism to a more colorful and variegated history of debate about natural law, theology, and morality – the newly apparent similarities of the two historical settings will suggest in detail how a new history of early eighteenth-century aesthetic theory could be told. Aesthetic theories in Scotland and Germany did not resemble each other only by virtue of the simple fact that they developed in connection with debates over the foundation of morality; rather, they also shared crucial concepts and deployed those concepts in similar ways, to similar ends, and at similar stages in a pair of debates that not only shared a name and a subject, but also unfolded in multiple stages parallel to one another. The history of early eighteenth-century aesthetic theory can be told in terms of the unfolding of these debates. Admittedly, this history may not end up looking quite like its old self. There will be little mention of autonomy and the aesthetic attitude in the following pages. Francis Hutcheson, a familiar protagonist of the pre-Kantian story, will have to make room for a little-known disciple of Shaftesbury's and almost exact contemporary of Baumgarten's, William Cleghorn. But by comparison with that pre-Kantian story, the result will be at least as coherent, contextually better informed, less teleological, and more faithful both to the purposes of the theorists it examines and to the character of the theories themselves.

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epistemology rather than as a contribution to then-current debates about ethics. See e.g. U. Francke, *Kunst als Erkenntnis*; and Steffen Gross, *Felix Aestheticus. Die Aesthetik als Lehre vom Menschen* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2001). One notable though brief exception is the discussion of Baumgarten's affinities with Pietist medical theories in Dieter Kliche, "Die Institutionalisierung der Ästhetik," *Ästhetische Grundbegriffe*, ed. Karlheinz Barck et al., vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2000), s.v. "Ästhetik/ästhetisch."

<sup>31</sup> See below, ch. 3, n. 6.

<sup>32</sup> Such a description can be found in ch. 5, below.

## Chapter 1

### Francis Hutcheson at the Margins of the Scottish Enlightenment

To anyone with the even the faintest awareness of the term, *Scottish Enlightenment* and the eighteenth-century intellectual and cultural movement or milieu to which it has referred for over a century, placing Francis Hutcheson at the Scottish Enlightenment's margins offends common sense.<sup>1</sup> Hutcheson's central importance in the intellectual history of eighteenth-century Scotland is well known and indisputable. A long line of accounts of Enlightenment Scotland, stretching at least as far back as Dugald Stewart's early nineteenth-century *Dissertation . . . Exhibiting a General View of the Progress of Metaphysical and Ethical Philosophy, since the Revival of Letters in Europe*, has identified Hutcheson as founder, "father," or forefather of a Scottish philosophical tradition,<sup>2</sup> and in many respects this long-standing assertion of Hutcheson's importance is correct. The Scottish Enlightenment has come to be seen, in its initial phases, as the work of early eighteenth-century Presbyterian clergy and university professors who sought to reform Presbyterian theology and the moral philosophy curricula in Scottish universities along lines laid down by Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713).<sup>3</sup> Hutcheson was one of the oldest, most prolific, institutionally well-placed, and intellectually committed members of this group. There can be no doubt that he exerted considerable influence and developed most of his systematic philosophical thinking, including his moral philosophy and what has come to be known as his aesthetic theory, in support of the movement's aims. In this respect, Hutcheson hardly deserves to be described as marginal.

<sup>1</sup> The term, *Scottish Enlightenment* was "apparently first coined in 1900 by William Robert Scott" in his biography of Francis Hutcheson, according to Paul Wood, "Dugald Stewart and the Invention of 'the Scottish Enlightenment'," in *The Scottish Enlightenment: Essays in Reinterpretation* (Rochester: U Rochester P, 2000), 1.

<sup>2</sup> The most obvious recent example is T. D. Campbell, "Francis Hutcheson: 'Father' of the Scottish Enlightenment," in *The Origins and Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. R. H. Campbell and Andrew Skinner (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1982): 165-85. On the earlier history of this appellation, see Paul Wood, "Dugald Stewart," 4-20.

<sup>3</sup> Representative of the state of the field in this regard is David Daiches, "The Scottish Enlightenment," in *A Hotbed of Genius*, ed. D. Daiches, P. Jones, and J. Jones (Edinburgh: UP, 1986), 13.

And yet even in Hutcheson's lifetime, younger contemporaries of Hutcheson's – not to mention Hutcheson himself – publicly acknowledged what appears to have gone largely unrecognized since: Hutcheson had diverged from Shaftesbury in important ways.<sup>4</sup> By the 1740s and 50s, these younger contemporaries had publicly decided to prefer Shaftesbury to Hutcheson. The evidence of this preference can be found not only in their own direct attestations, but also in their moral philosophical writings and in their written contributions to the history of aesthetic theory, namely, their analyses of the human mental faculties involved in the perception of beauty and the contemplation of art. Those writings reveal that although both Hutcheson and many of his contemporaries developed aesthetic theories for the purpose of engaging in debates over the "foundation of morals," the main stream of aesthetic engagement in that debate was flowing unmistakably from Shaftesbury, with Hutcheson indeed standing at the margins.

*Hutcheson and the Shaftesburian Reform of Scottish Presbyterianism*

Most reformers of Scottish Presbyterianism in the first half of the eighteenth century, among whom Francis Hutcheson deserves to be counted without reservation, agreed with one another in at least one general principle: simply put, the Christian Church should acknowledge and promote human virtue, and the reigning orthodoxy was stifling it. In opposition to some of Presbyterianism's traditionally central doctrines, above all the doctrine that original sin had left human beings naturally incapable of transcending their own depravity without help from a divine act of regenerative grace, and that the only reliable instrument for promoting virtue among the unregenerated was knowledge of divine law and of the rewards and punishments attached to its observance or transgression, these new Presbyterians asserted, as a rule, that human beings naturally contained within themselves the means of virtue, granted to them by God in order that they might find happiness in this world.

The reformers' position had long roots in a number of theological and philosophical traditions, including traditions of opposition to religious persecution,

<sup>4</sup> Discussion of this divergence begins below, n. 60-3.

of insistence upon the right of private judgment in religious matters, and of antipathy toward creeds, all of which were imported in part from the dissenting churches of Ireland at the beginning of the eighteenth century and would develop into what became known in the nineteenth-century as moderate Presbyterianism.<sup>5</sup> Much of their direct inspiration and many of their central ideas, however, were to be found in a more proximate source, namely the writings of Shaftesbury, published in 1711 under the title, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*.<sup>6</sup> In Shaftesbury's *Characteristics* the Presbyterian reformers found, ready-made, an elaborate description of human nature calculated to challenge the moral authority of the Established Church.<sup>7</sup>

That Shaftesbury considered his *Characteristics* a sustained critique of positions he attributed to his former tutor, John Locke, is borne out by a significant body of modern scholarly commentary.<sup>8</sup> Even in the absence of a precise, conclusive, and exhaustive description of all the points of conflict, of the systematic connections among them, and of their intellectual context, the existing scholarship convincingly reveals that Shaftesbury associated Locke – an absence of references to him in the *Characteristics* notwithstanding – with Thomas Hobbes in denying that virtue was natural to human beings. In Shaftesbury's view, Locke, like Hobbes, had argued that

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<sup>5</sup> Hutcheson and his fellow reformers have been described as forerunners or founders of "moderate Presbyterianism," but it would be misleading to subsume their entire program under that label. It was applied in the nineteenth century to denote a party that formed within the Church of Scotland toward 1750. The term "new light," used at the time and well known to Hutcheson, is more accurate, but overly general. See Richard Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1985), 12-17; and Henry Sefton, "'Neu-lights and Preachers Legall': some observations on the beginnings of Moderatism in the Church of Scotland," in *Church Politics and Society: Scotland 1408-1929*, ed. Norman MacDougall (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1983), 186-96.

<sup>6</sup> A version of Shaftesbury's *Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit*, which is contained in the 1711 *Characteristics*, had also been published in 1699 by John Toland, possibly without Shaftesbury's approval. David Walford, Introduction to *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit*, by Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977), ix-x; and Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment*, v. 2, *Shaftesbury to Hume* (Cambridge: UP, 2000), 14.

<sup>7</sup> This formulation borrows heavily from Lawrence Klein's interpretation of Shaftesbury's larger program. See Lawrence Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), esp. 1-14.

<sup>8</sup> Recent commentaries, in reverse chronological order, include Daniel Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson* (Cambridge: UP, 2006), 129-42; I. Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment*, v. 2, 89-91, 127-30; Robert Voitle, *The Third Earl of Shaftesbury* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1984), 65-6, 69, 118-22, 125, 154-5, 230, 339; John Dussinger, "'The Lovely System of Lord Shaftesbury': An Answer to Locke in the Aftermath of 1688?" *Journal of the History of Ideas* 42.1 (1981), 151-8; Jason Aronson, "Critical Note: Shaftesbury on Locke," *American Political Science Review* 53.4 (1959), 1102-4; and Ernest Tuveson, "The Importance of Shaftesbury," *English Literary History* 20.4 (1953), 279-80.



moral principles and the motivation to obey them are by their very nature the creation of an arbitrary act of will by a lawgiver with the power to reward obedience and punish disobedience.<sup>9</sup> Morality must therefore, as Shaftesbury explained with explicit reference to Hobbes, be imposed by “our governors,”<sup>10</sup> human or divine. The “law” of custom, which Locke asserted to be the source of human opinions about virtue and vice – though not the source of genuine moral principles – appeared to Shaftesbury no less arbitrary.<sup>11</sup> Shaftesbury himself, by contrast, asserted that society was “natural” to human beings; in the absence of external coercion of any kind, human beings do not necessarily engage in war, and morality does not need to be imposed. Moral principles are eternal and immutable; they exist and can be discerned independently of a sovereign’s will. Moreover, the motivation to obey them can and should have its source in human beings’ awareness of virtue’s “natural advantages,” rather than in their awareness of any rewards and punishments that a sovereign, like God, may have attached to virtue and vice. To assert otherwise, in Shaftesbury’s view, leads to appalling conclusions. Denying that “*Justice and Injustice, Truth and Falsehood, Right and Wrong*” exist independently of God’s will renders the very words meaningless when applied to God, who therefore appears to be a being of merely supreme power rather than of “the highest goodness and worth.”<sup>12</sup> Likewise, insisting that virtue must be motivated by a desire for divine rewards and a fear of divine punishments only has the effect of strengthening crass self-love at the expense of the more generous affections toward others.<sup>13</sup>

Evidence that this was the essential substance of Shaftesbury’s disagreement with Locke, and that the refutation of Locke was a significant part of the impetus behind his development and public exposition of an alternative moral philosophy,

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. D. Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson*, 129-33; I. Rivers, *Grace, Reason, and Sentiment*, v. 2, 127; R. Voitle, *Third Earl of Shaftesbury*, 118-21; E. Tuveson, “The Importance of Shaftesbury,” 279. Note that although Carey describes Shaftesbury as having “resisted Locke’s moral philosophy because it resolved everything into diversity” (135), much of his own account also explicitly supports the standard view (represented by Tuveson, Voitle, and Rivers) that Shaftesbury resisted Locke’s moral philosophy because it resolved moral principles into arbitrary divine laws.

<sup>10</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, ed. L. Klein (Cambridge: UP, 1999), 42.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. D. Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson*, 129-30, 133.

<sup>12</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, 182.

<sup>13</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, 177-92.

abounds,<sup>14</sup> and it can be epitomized by two choice quotations. It may be difficult to judge whether Locke's own texts ultimately sustain Shaftesbury's interpretation of them, but it is easy to imagine – and in at least one instance possible to specify with full confidence<sup>15</sup> – passages in Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* that Shaftesbury found particularly objectionable. Clear indication of Locke's position, as Shaftesbury understood it, can be found in a passage from the *Essay's* second book:

That God has given a Rule whereby Men should govern themselves, I think there is no body so brutish as to deny. He has a Right to do it, we are his Creatures: He has Goodness and Wisdom to direct our Actions to that which is best: and he has Power to enforce it by Rewards and Punishments, of infinite weight and duration, in another Life: for no body can take us out of his hands. This is the only true touchstone of *moral Rectitude*; and by comparing them to this Law, it is, that Men judge of the most considerable *Moral Good* or *Evil* of their *Actions*; that is, whether as *Duties*, or *Sins*, they are like to procure them happiness, or misery, from the hand of the ALMIGHTY.<sup>16</sup>

Shaftesbury's opposition to the notion that divine will should be the "only true touchstone of moral rectitude," and fear of punishment and desire for rewards after death the only respectable motivation for moral rectitude, is equally obvious from his repeated criticisms of Locke.<sup>17</sup> Among the best known of these criticisms, cited by virtually every modern commentator, appears in Shaftesbury's letter to Michael Ainsworth on June 3, 1709, in which Shaftesbury remarks that Locke "threw all order and virtue out of the world, and made the very idea of these (which are the same as those of God) unnatural, and without foundation in our minds."<sup>18</sup> That is to say, Locke made morality a matter of divine law; he asserted that divine law was the source of moral distinctions, that knowledge of moral principles could only be

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<sup>14</sup> Carey and Rivers offer the two most recent collections of Shaftesbury's well-known published and unpublished references to Locke (and in Carey's case at least one hitherto unknown reference) and discuss them in the context of relevant passages from Locke's works. Cf. I. Rivers, *Reason, Grace, Sentiment*, v. 2, 126-8; and D. Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson*, 129-36.

<sup>15</sup> D. Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson*, 131-2.

<sup>16</sup> John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford, 1975), II.xxviii.8, also qtd. in I. Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment*, v. 2, 127.

<sup>17</sup> As cited, for example, in D. Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson*, 132-6.

<sup>18</sup> Shaftesbury to M. Ainsworth, 3 June 1709, in *The Life, Unpublished Letters, and Philosophical Regimen of Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury*, ed. B. Rand (London, 1900), 403.

derived reliably from knowledge of divine law (if not exclusively than at least primarily as recorded in Scripture),<sup>19</sup> and that the only reliable source of motivation for human beings to behave in accordance with moral principles was an awareness that God had attached rewards and punishments to his laws.<sup>20</sup>

The transmission of Shaftesbury's ideas and concerns into Scotland is a complex story.<sup>21</sup> As the story is currently understood, the principal vehicle of dissemination was a general program for educational and religious reform, directly inspired by the writings of a friend and disciple of Shaftesbury's: Robert, first Viscount Molesworth (1656-1725), a wealthy merchant, landowner, and member of the Irish and the English parliaments who retired to Dublin in 1722 after losing his seat in the House of Commons.<sup>22</sup> Molesworth had attracted the attention of Shaftesbury with the publication of his *Account of Denmark, as it was in the Year 1692*, occasioned by his ambassadorial mission to the Danish court in that same year. Parts of the book might as well have been written by Shaftesbury himself. According to Molesworth, philosophical and moral education was the guardian of political liberty. The people of Denmark and the other nations of Europe had lost "the precious jewel *Liberty*" because their education had been turned over to clerics in the service of the monarchy, and Protestant England was in serious danger of following their example. "'[T]is plain," Molesworth wrote,

the Education of Youth, on which is laid the very Foundation Stones of the Publick Liberty, has been of late years committed to the sole management of such as make it their business to undermine it. . . .<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. R. Voitle, *Third Earl of Shaftesbury*, 121; E. Tuveson, "The Importance of Shaftesbury," 279; D. Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson*, 137.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. I. Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment*, v. 2, 129; D. Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson*, 137.

<sup>21</sup> Parts of it have been thoroughly investigated and sketched in detail by M.A. Stewart. See "John Smith and the Molesworth Circle," *Eighteenth-century Ireland* 2 (1987): 89-102; "Rational Dissent in early Eighteenth-century Ireland," in *Enlightenment and Religion*, ed. Knud Haakonssen (Cambridge: UP, 1996): 42-63; "Berkeley and the Rankenian Club," in *George Berkeley: Essays and Replies*, ed. D. Berman (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1986), 25-45; "Academic Freedom: Origins of an Idea," *Bulletin of the Australian Society of Legal Philosophy* 16.57 (1991/1992): 1-31; and "George Turnbull and Educational Reform," in *Aberdeen and Enlightenment*, ed. J. Carter and J. Pittock-Wesson (Aberdeen: UP, 1987): 97-105. A detailed account of Shaftesbury's influence in England and Scotland can be found in I. Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment*, v. 2, 153-98.

<sup>22</sup> *DNB*, s. v. "Molesworth, Robert."

<sup>23</sup> Robert Molesworth, *An Account of Denmark, as it was in the Year 1692* (London, 1794; reprint, Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1976), b3r.

As a result, Molesworth continued, children are presented with “obscure and subtle notions,” and the principle of blind and passive obedience to authority,

whilst the weightier Matters of true Learning, whereof one has occasion every hour; such as good Principles, Morals, the improvement of Reason, the love of Justice, the value of Liberty, the duty owing to one’s Country and the Laws, are either quite omitted, or slightly passed over. . . .<sup>24</sup>

Molesworth’s Shaftesburian association of the promotion of virtue with the elimination of clerical authority over education found a great sympathizer in William Wishart (1692-1753), preacher in Edinburgh and later Principal of Edinburgh University, who in 1722 engaged Molesworth in a nine-month-long correspondence on precisely that topic.<sup>25</sup> Francis Hutcheson also had contact with Molesworth, but of a more intimate kind: in the early 1720’s after retiring to Dublin, Molesworth became his literary patron and a valuable source of ideas, as Hutcheson acknowledged in the preface to his first book, *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*.<sup>26</sup>

For the most part, of course, the transmission of Shaftesburian ideas was not strictly linear; the ideas were in the air, as it were, within a decade of the publication of the *Characteristics*, disseminated in part by the social clubs that were becoming an important fixture of the Scottish intellectual landscape.<sup>27</sup> The Rankenian Club was one example, founded in Edinburgh in 1717 by a number of professors and soon-to-be professors for the sake of “mutual improvement by liberal conversation and rational enquiry.”<sup>28</sup> A number of the club’s members – including William Wishart – had Shaftesburian sympathies, which unsurprisingly found their way into the

<sup>24</sup> R. Molesworth, *Account*, b3v.

<sup>25</sup> The other participant in this correspondence was George Turnbull (1698-1748). The occasion was a student uprising at Glasgow University over abuses of authority by the University Principal. M. A. Stewart, “Academic Freedom,” 17; and “Berkeley and the Rankenians,” 27, 31.

<sup>26</sup> F. Hutcheson, Preface to *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, 1st ed. (London, 1725; reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1971), x. Cf. William Robert Scott, *Francis Hutcheson* (Cambridge: UP, 1900), 18-36; and Michael Brown, *Francis Hutcheson in Dublin, 1719-30* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), 25-50.

<sup>27</sup> D. Daiches, “The Scottish Enlightenment,” 35; and, more thoroughly, Davis D. McElroy, *Scotland’s Age of Improvement: a Survey of Eighteenth Century Literary Clubs and Societies* (Pullman: Washington State UP, 1969).

<sup>28</sup> These are the words of one of the club’s founding members, George Wallace, quoted in Peter Jones, “The Scottish professoriate and the polite academy, 1720-46,” in *Wealth and Virtue*, ed. Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983), 99.

classroom as well. In several essays from the 1730s, 40s, and 50s by students of John Stevenson, Professor of Logic and Metaphysics at Edinburgh from 1730 to 1775 and a Rankenian himself, the Shaftesburian sentiments are unmistakable, with some essays containing whole sentences extracted directly from Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*.<sup>29</sup>

The general climate of interest in Shaftesbury within academic and clerical circles in Edinburgh, as well as its influence on the intellectual formation of Edinburgh students in the 1720s and 30s, is well-illustrated by the career of William Leechman (1706-85).<sup>30</sup> Leechman was more than twelve years younger than Hutcheson and Wishart, and it is almost certain that he had no direct contact with Molesworth, but by the time he became old enough to be their colleague, he, too, had adopted Shaftesburian principles. In 1724, while Wishart was preaching in Glasgow and discussing Shaftesbury with members of the Glasgow Trinamphorian Club,<sup>31</sup> and while Hutcheson was running a dissenting academy in Dublin and exchanging ideas with the circle of young men who had gathered themselves around Robert Molesworth, William Leechman was beginning his training in divinity at Edinburgh under the guidance of William Hamilton (1669-1732).<sup>32</sup> What Hamilton taught in his divinity classes is not known except through meager second-hand accounts, which suggest an aversion to religious persecution and perhaps a certain diffidence about orthodox Presbyterian redemption theology, but no explicit connection with Shaftesbury.<sup>33</sup> Some exposure, however, was inevitable, and in Leechman's case it would seem that at least the seeds of sympathy had been sown. Twenty years after studying with Hamilton, having left Edinburgh to become a private tutor and then a minister, Leechman joined the Shaftesburian fold. He was elected professor of theology at Glasgow in 1744 with the active support of Francis Hutcheson, with whom he had become acquainted many years earlier, and whose lectures he had

<sup>29</sup> P. Jones, "The Scottish professoriate," 100; Essays by Students of John Stevenson, EUL MS Gen 4.54. See also below, n. 138.

<sup>30</sup> Daiches identifies William Leechman and William Wishart as the most important voices of moderatism in the early eighteenth century. D. Daiches, "The Scottish Enlightenment," 13.

<sup>31</sup> The club was renamed "Sophocardian" ("wise-heart") in honor of Wishart's arrival. M. A. Stewart, "John Smith and the Molesworth Circle," 95-6.

<sup>32</sup> M.A. Stewart, "John Smith and the Molesworth Circle," 95-96; W. R. Scott, *Francis Hutcheson: His Life, Teaching and Position in the History of Philosophy*, (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1966), 30-33; James Wodrow, "The Life of Dr. Leechman, with some Account of his Lectures," in William Leechman, *Sermons*, v. 1 of 2 (London, 1789), 1-19.

<sup>33</sup> I infer Hamilton's diffidence from a story about his treatment of the Trinity, retold in Sefton, "Neu-lights and Preachers Legall': some observations on the beginnings of Moderatism in the Church of Scotland," 186-96. Cf. Thomas D. Kennedy, "Pulpit Eloquence and the Glasgow Enlightenment," in *the Glasgow Enlightenment*, ed. A. Hook and R. Sher (Phantassie: Tuckwell, 1995), 60.

attended after leaving Edinburgh.<sup>34</sup> Hutcheson, who had himself secured the Glasgow chair of moral philosophy with the help of William Wishart in 1729, became an intimate friend of Leechman, whom he believed would “put a new face upon Theology in Scotland.”<sup>35</sup> This meant, of course, that Leechman would reform theology along the lines of the new Presbyterianism promoted by Hutcheson and Wishart.

Hutcheson, Wishart, and Leechman founded their new theology principally upon ideas articulated by Shaftesbury in connection with (1) his objections to understanding moral principles as laws issued by God either arbitrarily or for reasons that cannot be discerned and evaluated by human beings, and (2) his conviction that human beings have a natural capacity to act genuinely virtuously, independent of their knowledge of divine law. In opposition to many of their Presbyterian colleagues, whom modern scholarship has classified as upholders of orthodoxy, they asserted the unbounded goodness of God, insisting that Calvinist voluntarism had rendered “goodness” meaningless by equating it with the will of God, and that God’s conformity to an independent, immutable, and eternal standard of goodness – namely, a disinterested desire to promote human happiness – is what makes him meaningfully good.<sup>36</sup> In accordance with his supreme wisdom and goodness, moreover, God had implanted in all human beings the means of achieving happiness in this world: an innate faculty for the perception of good and evil and an innate attraction to good and aversion to evil, independent of all considerations of reward or punishment in a future state. The implication of this view, namely, that even non-Christians are capable of a considerable degree of genuine virtue, is as evident in the reformers’ writings as the principles from which it follows.<sup>37</sup>

The most vivid illustrations both of Hutcheson’s, Wishart’s, and Leechman’s espousal of these positions, and of the heated controversy in which they consequently became embroiled, can be found in several incidents in which their careers were endangered by accusations of heresy. The three men’s books, sermons,

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<sup>34</sup> J. Wodrow, “The Life of Dr. Leechman,” 1-10; Roger Emerson, “The ‘affair’ at Edinburgh and the ‘project’ at Glasgow: the politics of Hume’s attempts to become a professor,” in *Hume and Hume’s Connexions*, ed. M. A. Stewart and John P. Wright (Edinburgh: UP, 1994), 17-18.

<sup>35</sup> Francis Hutcheson to Thomas Drennan, [1743], GUL MS Gen 1018; M. A. Stewart, “Academic Freedom,” 13.

<sup>36</sup> E.g. F. Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, 4th ed. (London, 1738; reprint, Westmead, England: Gregg International Publishers, 1969), 275; and William Wishart, *The certain and unchangeable Difference betwixt Moral Good and Evil* (London, 1732).

<sup>37</sup> E.g. W. Leechman, “Observations on the Truth of the Christian Religion,” GUL MS Gen 884, fol. 144-5.

and lectures revealed unambiguously that they found much to admire in Shaftesbury, and unsurprisingly, the accusations they endured from Presbyterian ministers in Edinburgh and Glasgow resembled those that Shaftesbury, made famous in part by his followers, was also receiving at the hands of such Irish and Scottish ministers as John Leland, George Berkeley, John Witherspoon, and Philip Skelton: they seemed to be false Christians, espousing deism and Socinianism under the cloak of true piety.<sup>38</sup> They allegedly denied the necessity of revelation or knowledge of Christ; they denied the natural depravity of mankind and insisted upon the possibility of salvation without divine regeneration; they attempted to exclude matters of religious orthodoxy from the province of civil authority; and from their “heathen religion of nature” they deduced moral principles that contradicted the Westminster Confession of Faith and the word of God as expressly stated in the holy scriptures.

In the case of William Wishart, elected Principal of Edinburgh University by the Town Council in 1737, the Edinburgh presbytery stood in the way of his appointment to minister in any Edinburgh church, and then to represent the university at the 1738 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, ultimately on the grounds that two sermons he had delivered in 1731 and 1732 contained principles contrary to the Bible and the Westminster Confession and thereby threatened the “purity and peace” of the Church.<sup>39</sup> According to the author of a contemporary pamphlet ostensibly written to convince two skeptical ministers of the validity of the presbytery’s complaints, Wishart demonstrated more familiarity with Shaftesbury’s *Characteristics* than with the Bible.<sup>40</sup> Copying the teachings of “Shaftesbury, and other Patrons of Deism,” he had denied “the perfection and perspicuity of the sacred scripture” by reducing all Christian virtue to charity and moderation, and by dismissing all the “peculiar” Christian doctrines that seemed to enjoin uncharitable

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<sup>38</sup> On Shaftesbury’s mid-century critics: I. Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment*, v. 2, 15-18, 187-90.

<sup>39</sup> *Some Observations on these Two Sermons of Doctor Wishart’s, Which have given Offense to the Presbytery of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1737), Dedication. The whole set of incidents can be reconstructed on the basis of a combination of existing secondary and primary documents, including Alexander Bower, *The History of the University of Edinburgh; chiefly compiled from original papers and records, never before published*, v. 2 of 3 (Edinburgh, 1817), 137; *Protest by Mr. Robert Stewart Professor of natural phylosophy, and Mr. John Ker professor of Humanity in the univarsity of Edinburgh by Commission from the University*, NLS MS 3431, fols. 70-71; Report of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, 19 April 1738, NLS MS 3431, fols. 74-75; and W. Wishart, *The certain and unchangeable Difference betwixt Moral Good and Evil*.

<sup>40</sup> *Some Observations*, 3.

actions, such as the punishment of sin;<sup>41</sup> and by objecting to the use of “awe of future rewards and punishments” as a means of instilling virtue in children, he had implicitly denied the natural depravity of all human beings, including children, and the necessity of divine regeneration and knowledge of the revealed word of God for salvation.<sup>42</sup>

In the case of Leechman, suspicions of deism were also accompanied by suspicions of Socinianism – namely, suspicions that Shaftesburian Christianity tended toward the denial of the essential divinity of Jesus Christ. In the aftermath of Leechman’s hotly contested election to the professorship of divinity at Glasgow University in January of 1744, the Glasgow presbytery refused to allow him to subscribe to the Confession of Faith, which was necessary for him to begin teaching. The bitter controversy that ensued ended – in Leechman’s favor – only after reaching the General Assembly. Citing an allegedly unorthodox sermon he had published in 1743, entitled “The Nature, Reasonableness, and Advantages of Prayer,”<sup>43</sup> the Glasgow presbytery claimed Leechman had denied the necessity of divine revelation for knowledge of God, and that he had substituted God for Christ as the object of prayer, failing to mention the intercession and the merits of Christ at all.<sup>44</sup> A pamphlet published in Glasgow in 1746, two years after the General Assembly dismissed the charges against Leechman, reaffirmed those charges and expanded the case to include William Wishart and all other ministers who, like Leechman, seemed to be contributing to an ominous trend: an increase in the preaching of sermons “without Christ, and consisting of Morality, without that relation to the Gospel of Christ (that alone can render it acceptable in the sight of God).”<sup>45</sup> Leechman and Wishart had allegedly struck at the heart of true Christian doctrine, asserting – as Leechman put it in the formal apology that prompted the General Assembly to dismiss the case against him – “that the Merits and Propitiation of Jesus Christ are not the only Grounds of a Sinner’s Acceptance with God, and of his obtaining the

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<sup>41</sup> *Some Observations*, 16-17.

<sup>42</sup> *Some Observations*, 33.

<sup>43</sup> Charles Hamilton Gordon and Joseph Williamson, *Memorial of the Reverend William Leechman* (Glasgow, 1744), NCL APS 3.84.34. See also Nathaniel Morren, *Annals of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, from the Final Secession in 1739, to the Origin of the Relief in 1752*, v. 1 of 2 (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1838), 46-60. For the controversy within Glasgow University preceding Leechman’s election, see R. Emerson, “The ‘affair’ at Edinburgh and the ‘project’ at Glasgow,” 17.

<sup>44</sup> N. Morren, *Annals*, 47-60.

<sup>45</sup> *An Essay to Prevent the Dangerous Consequences of the Moral Harangues, Now so common in Scotland* (Glasgow, 1746), 4. The quotation was taken from an account of the proceedings against Leechman, written by John Robe.



Forgiveness of Sin. . . .”<sup>46</sup> They seemed to have let their insistence upon God’s benevolence and mankind’s natural capacity for virtue cast a shadow over the necessity of Christ’s intercession on mankind’s behalf, even suggesting that the faculty by which human beings perceived moral principles was sufficient for salvation without knowledge of the word of God.<sup>47</sup>

Francis Hutcheson faced similar accusations, and his theological position remained a liability for him throughout his career in Glasgow. Shortly after joining the faculty of the university, he noted to his friend, Thomas Drennan, that his reputation had already begun to cause difficulties for his friends and associates there:

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 my self, but I see it hurts some ministers here who are most intimate with me.<sup>48</sup>

In 1738, Hutcheson’s situation became more dire when the presbytery of Glasgow prosecuted him, in the words of his biographer W. R. Scott,

for teaching to his students in contravention to the Westminster Confession the 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>49</sup>

The substance of the controversy, which was ultimately resolved in Hutcheson’s favor, can be discerned from a pamphlet that appeared in the midst of the ferment excited by the prosecution. It takes the form of a letter accusing Hutcheson of conspiring with Shaftesbury to undermine Christianity along deist lines. Hiding his

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<sup>46</sup> Quoted in John Robe, *An Appendix to Mr. Robe’s Historical and Remarkable Paper; Vindicating the Late Act of Assembly, concerning Mr. Leechman’s Affair* (Edinburgh, 1744), 10.

<sup>47</sup> On Benjamin Whichcote, the other culprit named in the pamphlet: I. Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment*, v. 2, 87; and Frederick Beiser, *The Sovereignty of Reason*, (Princeton: UP, 1996), 158-165, 177-179.

<sup>48</sup> Francis Hutcheson to Thomas Drennan, undated, GUL MS Gen 1018.

<sup>49</sup> W. R. Scott, *Francis Hutcheson*, 83-84. Scott quotes this summary almost directly from John Rae’s *Life of Adam Smith* (London, 1895), 12-13. Rae, however, does not cite any source, and I have been unable to find one.

infidelity under the cloak of reverence for a supremely benevolent God – so the anonymous author asserted – Hutcheson pretended that human beings could have “Knowledge of Moral Good and Evil” without knowing anything of “the Being of a God” or of “Divine Law,” though it was clearly inconceivable, not to mention inconsistent with the first commandment, that anyone could have knowledge of a law without knowing a thing about the lawgiver.<sup>50</sup> Equally objectionably, from the false premise that virtue consists of nothing more than the tendency of an action to promote other people’s happiness, Hutcheson had deduced that disobeying the divine prohibitions against suicide, lying, and gambling could under some circumstances be virtuous.<sup>51</sup> Like Shaftesbury, Hutcheson treated human beings’ so-called innate sense of virtue and vice as the highest arbiter in matters of conduct, leaving no need at all for God’s revealed word. Along similar lines, the author of the pamphlet alleged, Hutcheson had contradicted Scripture by asserting that human beings are naturally capable of virtue and that a majority of mankind would be saved, including the “heathens,” led to eternal happiness by the light of nature.<sup>52</sup>

Among the common threads running through all three controversies was the issue of the foundation of morals, on which Shaftesbury had taken a stand against Locke. This was also the issue that proved most obviously intractable. Hutcheson and his colleagues found ways of evading the more extreme accusation of “deism” and its implication that they had declared divine revelation superfluous in human beings’ moral education; they simply asserted that God had indeed needed to reveal his law in the distant past, when mankind’s “gross ignorance and corruption” had made extreme measures necessary,<sup>53</sup> and that even in “the present enlightened age of the world” the threat of divine punishment could help create an aversion to vice in people whose vicious passions were otherwise uncontrollable.<sup>54</sup> But Hutcheson and his colleagues had no intention of denying the charges that they had elevated charity above all the other Christian virtues and had asserted human beings’ capacity for genuine virtue without the aid of divine regeneration and knowledge of divine law. In fact, they consistently responded to such charges by simply restating the assertions that had come under attack and continuing to draw on the presuppositions about

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<sup>50</sup> Shaftesbury’s *Ghost conjur’d, or, a Letter to Mr. Francis Hutcheson, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow* ([n.p.], 1738), 6-7.

<sup>51</sup> Shaftesbury’s *Ghost conjur’d*, 8-20.

<sup>52</sup> Shaftesbury’s *Ghost conjur’d*, 22-26.

<sup>53</sup> W. Leechman, “Observations on the Truth of the Christian Religion,” fols. 144-5.

<sup>54</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 2nd ed., 268; cf. Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, 185-6.

human nature that their critics had called into question.<sup>55</sup>

The stalemate on this issue appears particularly vividly in the 1737 pamphlet containing anonymous objections to the sermons of William Wishart's that had drawn criticism from the Edinburgh presbytery. In his sermon on "The certain and unchangeable Difference betwixt Moral Good and Evil," Wishart had remarked

[t]hat the Awe of future Rewards and Punishments, as they are made Use of, without ever explaining the Nature and Justice of them, can contribute no more to promote a liberal Piety and Virtue, a Relish for true Goodness, and Savour of Honesty in the Mind, than *Whips* and *Sugar Plumbs*.<sup>56</sup>

To this passage, the pamphlet-writer responded:

Is it possible the Doctor can think, that the Hope of eternal Happiness will have no more Influence upon a rational Creature, possessed of a Desire of Immortality, to engage him to the Practice of Holiness, than the Hope of a Sugar-plumb? Or does he imagine, that the Fear of eternal Misery will be of no greater Weight to deter him from Sin, than the Fear of a Whipping?<sup>57</sup>

These rhetorical questions demonstrate that the writer of the pamphlet misunderstood Wishart in a way that illuminates the point of contention. Of course Wishart had not considered the appeal to people's hopes and fears to be an ineffectual method of inculcating obedience to divine commandments. He had disparaged whips and sugarplums not because he thought them insufficient instruments of terror and temptation, but rather because of their effectiveness. It was quite as revolting, he thought, that people should behave virtuously out of hope for eternal bliss and fear of eternal damnation, as it was that they should behave virtuously out of hope for sugarplums and fear of being whipped. Both pairs of

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<sup>55</sup> See e.g. William Wishart's anonymous defense of Shaftesbury from George Berkeley's *Alciphron: or, the Minute Philosopher* (London 1732): *A Vindication of the Reverend D--- B---y, from The scandalous Imputation of being Author of the late Book, intituled, Alciphron, or, the minute Philosopher* (London, 1734). A detailed description of the pamphlet and its attribution to Wishart can be found in M. A. Stewart, "William Wishart, Early Critic of *Alciphron*," *Berkeley Newsletter* 6 (1982/3): 5-9.

<sup>56</sup> W. Wishart, *The certain and unchangeable Difference betwixt Moral Good and Evil*, 33-35.

<sup>57</sup> *Some Observations on these Two Sermons of Doctor Wishart's*, 31.

instruments merely coerced outward conformity to moral principles, promoting hypocrisy rather than sincere virtue. Instead of inculcating a love of virtue and an aversion to vice, they inculcated a love of reward and an aversion to punishment. Wishart's critic simply did not see this, because he considered obedience to the letter of divine law to be the standard of virtue and took for granted that human beings, in their natural state, were incapable of acting out of any motive other than the two "inner springs" of hope and fear. That was simply the condition of post-lapsarian man; only the grace of God could bring any human being out his natural condition of depravity. As the author of *Shaftesbury's Ghost conjur'd* declared to Hutcheson,

If our Eyes were opened to see the original Corruptness of our Natures, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled and made opposite to all Good, and wholly inclined to all Evil, we would readily agree with our Saviour, that *a corrupt Tree cannot bring forth Fruit*.<sup>58</sup>

More simply put, "*there is none that doth Good, no not one.*"<sup>59</sup> This was the picture of human nature that Hutcheson, like Wishart and Leechman, rejected.

#### *Hutcheson's Divergence from Shaftesbury*

Hutcheson may have taken the Shaftesburian side in the basic debate over the foundation of morals within early eighteenth-century Scottish Presbyterianism, but when it came to some of the crucial details, he was hardly a Shaftesburian through and through. Of course, the view that Francis Hutcheson was in fact the most faithful exponent and defender of Shaftesbury's moral philosophy has a long history, beginning at least as early as the publication in 1725 of Hutcheson's *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue, in which the principles of the late Earl of Shaftesbury are Explain'd and Defended, against the Author of the Fable of the Bees: and the Ideas of Moral Good and Evil are establish'd, according to the Sentiments of the Antient*

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<sup>58</sup> *Shaftesbury's Ghost conjur'd*, 22.

<sup>59</sup> *Shaftesbury's Ghost conjur'd*, 22.

*Moralists*.<sup>60</sup> In support of Hutcheson's claim to have defended Shaftesbury's principles, Thomas Fowler wrote in 1882 that

Hutcheson acted quite rightly in connecting his name on the title-page with that of Shaftesbury. There are no two names, perhaps, in the history of English [sic] moral philosophy, which stand in a closer connexion.<sup>61</sup>

Nor has the view that Hutcheson's and Shaftesbury's philosophies bear close resemblance to each other ended with Fowler; it can be found in more recent classifications of the two men as members of the "sentimentalist" school of moral philosophy, allegedly founded by Shaftesbury as an answer to Hobbesian egoism and supplied by Hutcheson with a more elaborate and precise defense. According to this classification, Hutcheson and Shaftesbury agreed, in opposition to the school of "rationalists" or "intellectualists," that the perception of moral principles and the motivation of moral actions was "ultimately a matter of feeling rather than of knowledge."<sup>62</sup>

On the other hand, the view that Shaftesbury's and Hutcheson's philosophies differ quite considerably from one another has an equally long history. Recent commentators have challenged the classification of Shaftesbury as a sentimentalist, and not without good reason,<sup>63</sup> but the longer pedigree belongs to another conception of the major difference, one which in fact appears to have the strongest claim, stronger even than Fowler's view, to the authority of Hutcheson and many of his contemporaries. It can be found in a review of Hutcheson's posthumously published

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<sup>60</sup> On Hutcheson's critique of Mandeville, see below, ch. 2, n. 69-70.

<sup>61</sup> Thomas Fowler, *Shaftesbury and Hutcheson* (London, 1882), 183.

<sup>62</sup> This last phrase is J. B. Schneewind's, in *Moral Philosophy from Montaigne to Kant* (Cambridge: UP, 2003), 504. For standard descriptions of Hutcheson and Shaftesbury as sentimentalists, see L. Selby-Bigge, Introd. and ed., *British Moralists* (Oxford: UP, 1897; rept. New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1964) xlii, l-li, lxvi; and D. D. Raphael, *The Moral Sense* (Oxford: UP, 1947), 2, 17. The view that Hutcheson worked Shaftesbury's suggestive writings into a coherent system can be found in, among others, Raphael, *Moral Sense*, 17; and James Martineau, *Types of Ethical Theory*, 2 vols. (Oxford: UP, 1901), II.514, as cited in Stephen Darwall, *The British Moralists and the Internal 'Ought'* (Cambridge: UP, 1995), 207 n.1.

<sup>63</sup> The boldest version of this view, to my knowledge, can be found in Darwall, *British Moralists*, esp. 210. David McNaughton espouses a similar view in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward Craig, vol. 8 of 10 (London: Routledge, 1998), s.v. "Shaftesbury"; and Isabel Rivers offers a more detailed description of the ambiguities in Shaftesbury's writings which make definitive classification difficult, in *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment*, v. 2, 122-34.

*System of Moral Philosophy*, printed anonymously in 1755 in the first volume of the short-lived *Edinburgh Review*, and for clarity and incisiveness, it seems never to have been bettered.<sup>64</sup> Henry Sidgwick suggests it with some hesitation in his *Outlines of the History of Ethics*, and A. O. Aldridge notes it with less hesitation and less precision in his 1951 study of Shaftesbury,<sup>65</sup> but whereas Sidgwick and Aldridge interpret it as a modification or extension of Shaftesbury's philosophical system by Hutcheson, it is in fact quite a substantial difference. In the words of William Leechman's preface to Hutcheson's *System*, from which the reviewer of the *System* appears to have taken many cues, "the difference is the greatest imaginable."<sup>66</sup> It lies in their respective conceptions of "the supreme principle of human nature", and it corresponds to fundamental differences not only in their moral philosophies but also in their aesthetic theories.

According to Hutcheson's reviewer, probably the Edinburgh minister and later Professor of Rhetoric and *Belles-Lettres*, Hugh Blair (1718-1800),<sup>67</sup> both Shaftesbury and Hutcheson assert that human beings are naturally capable of disinterested affections, affections directed toward others and not toward themselves:

The ground-work of our author's philosophy is the same with that of Lord Shaftesbury. . . . Both agree in asserting a distinct order of kind affections in our nature, which have the happiness of others for their ultimate object, without reference to our own interest.

When it comes to the question of the origin of such "kind affections," however, Blair

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<sup>64</sup> [Hugh Blair?], Review of *A System of Moral Philosophy*, by Francis Hutcheson, *Edinburgh Review* 1 (1755): 15-16.

<sup>65</sup> Henry Sidgwick, *Outlines of the History of Ethics for English Readers*, 3rd ed. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1931; reprint, Bristol: Thoemmes, 1996), 202-3; A. O. Aldridge, "Shaftesbury and the Deist Manifesto," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 41 (1951), 314.

<sup>66</sup> Qtd. in William Leechman, preface, *System of Moral Philosophy*, by Francis Hutcheson (Glasgow, 1755), xlvi. Whether Leechman himself is the author of this passage is not clear.

<sup>67</sup> In the 1818 reprint of the *Edinburgh Review*, the originally anonymous review is attributed to Hugh Blair, but Richard Sher follows Leslie Stephen in demurring to state unreservedly that Blair is the author. Blair or not, the author of the review appears more or less to have taken his comments about Hutcheson's relation to Shaftesbury, with some paraphrase, from William Leechman's preface to Hutcheson's *System*. See Leslie Stephen, s.v. "Blair, Hugh", *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (Oxford: UP, 1921-2); Richard Sher, s.v. "Blair, Hugh", *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: UP, 2004); and James Mackintosh, "Preface to a Reprint of the *Edinburgh Review*," in *Miscellaneous Works of the Right Honourable Sir James Mackintosh*, v. 2 of 3 (London, 1854), 466.

notices a “remarkable difference in opinion between Mr. Hutcheson and that noble author”:

But when, all passions apart, we calmly consider what is the wisest regulation of human conduct; when the question is put, For what reason we ought to pursue virtue, and to cultivate the friendly and benevolent affections, rather than the selfish? the answer returned by Lord Shaftesbury is, Because virtue is the chief happiness, and vice the ill or misery of every one; because we experience the purest and sublimest joy in the gratification of the generous emotions. Thus, according to that philosopher, the calm desire of our own happiness, is the leading, the supreme principle of human nature. Whereas, according to our author, the desire of our own happiness is not the supreme principle in the soul. But, independent of this, and independent of all particular affections; there is a calm desire of the happiness of all rational beings; which is not only co-ordinate with, but even of superior authority to, the desire of our own happiness: insomuch that, should an opposition betwixt these principles fall out, the moral sense would declare in favour of the former; and would authorize and require the entire sacrifice of our happiness to the happiness of the rational system.<sup>68</sup>

Whatever ambiguities one may detect in Blair’s comparison of Hutcheson with Shaftesbury, such as the absence of any reference to Shaftesbury’s view of the moral sense by contrast with Hutcheson’s, one thing could hardly be clearer: Blair distinguishes their philosophical systems by the desire they identify as the “principle of human nature” that, in the course of calm consideration of the “wisest regulation of human conduct,” leads human beings to pursue virtue and cultivate benevolent affections. For Shaftesbury, it is the calm desire for one’s own happiness, and for Hutcheson it is an additional calm desire, the calm desire for the happiness of others. In the words of Leechman’s preface, Shaftesbury differs from Hutcheson in “taking it for granted, that there can be but one ultimate end of the agent’s cool and deliberate pursuit, viz. his own highest interest or personal happiness,” which is therefore

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<sup>68</sup> [H. Blair?], Review of *A System of Moral Philosophy*, 15-16.

necessarily the “determiner of his choice” to gratify his own benevolent affections.<sup>69</sup>

In the case of Shaftesbury, what may appear self-contradictory in Blair’s description – namely, that human beings are led by a desire for their *own* happiness to gratify affections that nonetheless have *others’* happiness as their ultimate object – is in fact born out by Shaftesbury’s own description of those affections. He associates them with goodness and virtue solely on account of their objects, and with no regard to the desire that leads to their gratification. A creature is *good*, according to Shaftesbury, in so far as its affections are directed immediately toward the “public good,” the good of the larger “system” of which it is a part; and a human being is *virtuous* in so far as its affections – a second order of affections – are directed immediately toward good affections and actions, as an object of mental reflection.<sup>70</sup> Affections directed immediately toward “self-good” and only accidentally toward the public good cannot be called good, and affections directed toward goodness not “for its own sake, as good and amiable *in itself*,” but rather for the sake of some “reward,” cannot be called virtuous.<sup>71</sup> Even where Shaftesbury readily admits that some affections that have self-good as their object are entitled to be called *good*, such as the affection toward self-preservation, he only includes those self-directed affections which are “not only consistent with publick Good, but in some measure contributing to it” and in that sense also have the good of the larger system as their immediate object.<sup>72</sup>

This definitional injunction against the direction of good and virtuous affections toward self-good and toward rewards by no means excludes the gratification of good and virtuous affections for the sake of the private happiness they afford. The problem with seeking rewards may seem to be simply that rewards

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<sup>69</sup> Qtd. in W. Leechman, Preface, xlv.

<sup>70</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. Philip Ayres, 2 vols. (Oxford: UP, 1999), I.199-200, 202-4. The difficulty of using cognates of the terms *good* and *virtue* with precision and consistency must be noted at the outset. Shaftesbury himself, unfortunately, does not always set a perfect example. The problem chiefly arises from the need to avoid clumsy verbiage while distinguishing four things: (1) actions, (2) a first order of affections toward objects of sensation, (3) a second order of affections directed toward the first order of affections as an object of reflection, and (4) an animal or human being who does or has one or more of the preceding three. Specifying a particular referent, unfortunately, greatly increases the chance of misrepresenting Shaftesbury, who often uses the terms ambiguously. With as much consistency as possible, I use *goodness* and *good affections* to refer to affections directed toward the good of the larger system, and I use *virtue* and *virtuous affections* to refer to the affections of a virtuous person – i.e. good affections as well as the second order of affection directed toward those good affections as an object of reflection.

<sup>71</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. P. Ayres, I.201, 221.

<sup>72</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. P. Ayres, I.200.



are a species of private happiness, but in fact the problem must be that gratifying good affections for the sake of rewards implies a second-order affection that is not directed toward those good affections. The truly virtuous, after all, do show regard for a different species of private happiness, one that Shaftesbury calls the *natural advantages* of virtue and identifies with “the intrinsick Worth or Value of the Thing [i.e. virtue] itself.”<sup>73</sup> These are the “mental enjoyments” or “speculative pleasure” attendant upon the contemplation of one’s own virtuous affections, and the “mental pleasure” (or “happiness” or “mental enjoyment”)<sup>74</sup> that arises from the “natural effects” of virtuous affections.<sup>75</sup> That the pursuit of this happiness does not in itself imply the directing of one’s affections toward self-good, Shaftesbury makes particularly clear in a critique of Rochefoucauld’s *Maxims*, one of various “modern” attempts to “new-frame the Human Heart” and “reduce all its Motions, Ballances and Weights, to that one Principle and Foundation of a cool and deliberate *Selfishness*”:

You have the very same Thought spun out a hundred ways, and drawn into Motto's, and Devises, to set forth this Riddle; That "act as disinterestedly or generously as you please, *Self* still is at the bottom, and nothing else." Now if these Gentlemen, who delight so much in the Play of Words, but are cautious how they grapple closely with Definitions, wou'd tell us only what *Self-Interest* was, and determine *Happiness* and *Good*, there wou'd be an end of this Enigmatical Wit. For in this we shou'd all agree, that Happiness was to be pursu'd, and in fact was always sought after; but whether found in *following Nature*, and giving way to *common* Affection; or in suppressing it, and turning every Passion towards *private* Advantage, a narrow *Self-End*, or the Preservation of *mere Life*; this wou'd be the matter in debate between us. The Question wou'd not be, "Who *lov'd* himself, or Who *not*," but "Who *lov'd* and *serv'd* himself the *rightest*, and after the truest manner."<sup>76</sup>

In explaining that Rochefoucauld's argument depends upon a specious identification of the pursuit of happiness with not only self-interest but also selfishness and

<sup>73</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. P. Ayres, I.55.

<sup>74</sup> Shaftesbury employs all these terms apparently interchangeably.

<sup>75</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. P. Ayres, I.229, 240-4.

<sup>76</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. P. Ayres, I.67.

therefore vice, Shaftesbury unambiguously distinguishes the pursuit of happiness from the directing of affections solely toward oneself. Whereas the latter constitutes vice, the former cannot be taken as the measure of vice or virtue at all. The difference between vice and virtue is the difference between two ways of pursuing happiness, one by “giving way to” affections directed toward “private advantage,” and the other by giving way to affections directed toward the common good. Shaftesbury draws a distinction, in other words, between the *object* or *direction* of an affection and what might safely be called – though not on Shaftesbury’s authority – the affection’s *motivation*.<sup>77</sup> In Shaftesbury’s view, the motivation that leads human beings to “give way” to an affection is invariably a desire for private happiness. Virtuous affections, therefore, are those which have the good of others as their ultimate object,<sup>78</sup> and which human beings give way to, motivated by a desire for the private happiness such affections afford. In this way, to borrow Henry Sidgwick’s classification, Shaftesbury’s moral philosophy is a refined variety of *egoistic hedonism*. At least with respect to motivation, it takes the proper aim of human action to be the happiness or pleasure (*hedonism*) of the individual actor (*egoistic*).<sup>79</sup>

Accordingly, Shaftesbury describes moral education not as a process of suppressing or transcending the desire for one’s own happiness, but rather as a process of discovering – without immediate reference to God’s will – that one’s own greatest or truest happiness or pleasure is in fact to be found in the pursuit of virtue.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Whether this distinction is in fact plausible may be open to question, but it is at any rate one which Robert Voitle, in his well-meaning efforts to defend Shaftesbury from the charge of egoism, has repeatedly overlooked. See R. Voitle, “Shaftesbury’s Moral Sense,” 23; and R. Voitle, *The Third Earl of Shaftesbury*, 130. The distinction bears some resemblance to a distinction between the *immediate* objects and the *intentional* objects of an affection, drawn by Gregory Trianosky in “On the Obligation to be Virtuous: Shaftesbury and the Question, Why be Moral?” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 14.3 (1978), 291-3.

<sup>78</sup> “Ultimate object” is the phrase used by Hutcheson’s reviewer. In this context, to say virtuous affections have the good of others as their “ultimate object” means simply that the second-order affection of a virtuous person is directed toward first-order affections which have the good of other people as their object.

<sup>79</sup> Henry Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics* (Indianapolis, 1981), 6-11.

<sup>80</sup> Shaftesbury’s frequent injunctions against seeking happiness in “mere pleasure” or in “whatever pleases me” refer not to the danger of seeking pleasure itself, but rather to the danger of allowing one’s unregenerated appetites, rather than “reason,” to dictate where pleasure is to be sought. The “true” or “real” pleasure that virtue affords and that reason enjoys may be “too refined for our modern Epicures,” and Shaftesbury often refers to it in various contexts as “joy,” “happiness,” “advantage,” or “real self-interest,” but he does not deny that it is a form of pleasure. On Shaftesbury’s distinction between true and false pleasures, cf. *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, e.g. 138-9, 250, 332; Shaftesbury, *Second Characters*, ed. Benjamin Rand (Cambridge: UP, 1914), 32 n., 114.

Shaftesbury describes this process in terms of aesthetic education, in that the virtue at which moral education aims is a love of contemplating the greatest possible beauty, and a desire for the mental pleasure associated with contemplating beauty is what motivates human “reason,” in Shaftesbury’s words, to seek to contemplate the greatest possible beauty.

Shaftesbury does not always make this motivation clear. He frequently describes the process by which we learn to discern beauty simply as a discovery of order in the objects of our contemplation. Order, Shaftesbury explains, refers to the “perfection” (or “unity”) of a thing, which in turn refers to the “sympathizing” of a thing’s parts, such that together the parts serve the purpose (or “good”) of the thing itself or “whole.” The purpose of the whole, in turn, is to serve the purpose of the larger whole of which it is only a single part.<sup>81</sup> In the case of any material object, the “real relation” of parts and the purpose they serve persist despite any changes in the matter of which the object consists, and Shaftesbury describes the “uniting principle” responsible for this persistence as the object’s “form” or “nature”: an immaterial and immortal substance that all wholes of a single type (whether all individual human beings, all types of animals, all types of inhabitant in the world, or all worlds in the universe) have in common.<sup>82</sup> Human beings are able to perceive order and the nature or form responsible for it by means of perceptive faculties that they naturally possess. The discovery of a purposive whole by the examination of the coherence among its parts, and the judgment of the degree to which those parts serve the purpose of the whole – that is, the judgment of how orderly or perfect a thing is – Shaftesbury attributes variously to “imagination,” “common sense,” and “internal sensation.”<sup>83</sup> The judgment itself, according to Shaftesbury, consists of a perception of a thing’s parts, followed by an “anticipation” or “pre-sensation” of the thing’s form, and finally a measurement of the degree of perfection of the thing itself by comparison with the full perfection of its form.<sup>84</sup> If Shaftesbury’s equation of the beautiful with the good<sup>85</sup> can be taken at face value, then *beauty* is another name for order,<sup>86</sup> a name that Shaftesbury tends to employ in the context of referring to the instinctive human

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<sup>81</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, 273-4, 299-301.

<sup>82</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, 299-303, 274-5.

<sup>83</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, e.g. 63, 67, 274, 353.

<sup>84</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, 178, 273, 282, 326, 329, 408, 429; D. Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson*, 110-19.

<sup>85</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, e.g. 254-5, 320.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Richard Glauser, “Aesthetic Experience in Shaftesbury,” pt. I, *The Aristotelian Society* suppl. vol. 76 (2006), 26-7.

preference of order to disorder, and to the love that human beings instinctively feel when they contemplate order.<sup>87</sup>

From this bare description, it is hardly obvious that the act of perceiving orderliness requires any significant motivation at all, let alone that the prospect of deriving pleasure from the contemplation of order is what sets the perceptive faculties in motion. But judging the degree of order and therefore beauty in any given thing can be difficult, and the difficulty increases with the scale and complexity of the whole under consideration. In the case of particular plants, for example, the real relations between the parts, and the degree to which those parts function together coherently, are easy to discern.<sup>88</sup> In the case of the universe as a whole, many of whose parts are inaccessible to us, conclusive judgment is impossible.<sup>89</sup> Judging the universe to be orderly would seem to depend on the inference that what is true of all the known parts is likely to be true of the whole: if the known parts of the universe are orderly by virtue of their forms or uniting principles, then the universe as a whole is almost certainly orderly by virtue of its uniting principle. To quote Theocles, one of two participants in Shaftesbury's philosophical dialog, *The Moralists*, if matter is

compounded and put together in a certain number of such parts as unite and conspire in these frames of ours and others like them, if it can present us with so many innumerable instances of particular forms, who share this simple principle, by which they are really one, live, act and have a nature or genius particular to themselves and provident for their own welfare, how at the same time shall we overlook this in the whole and deny the great and general One of the world?<sup>90</sup>

Theocles' conversation partner, Philocles, assents relatively quickly to Theocles' arguments,<sup>91</sup> but Shaftesbury clearly does not regard the discovery of forms and of the orderliness they convey as a matter of rational demonstration. Shaftesbury repeatedly indicates that the observation of orderliness in material objects does not lead immediately to the discovery of their forms and the perception of those forms'

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<sup>87</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, 320-1, 326.

<sup>88</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, 273.

<sup>89</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, 279, 298, 305-6, 315.

<sup>90</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, 301, cf. 305.

<sup>91</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, 279-80, 305-7.

orderliness; and the discovery of order in the universe is a much more challenging feat.<sup>92</sup> As in the arts of architecture, painting, and music, Theocles points out, “it is not instantly we acquire the sense by which these beauties are discoverable. Labor and pains are required and time to cultivate a natural genius ever so apt or forward.”<sup>93</sup> Theocles is referring to what Shaftesbury describes in the *Miscellanies* as “the labor and pains of criticism,” which necessarily precede the development of a taste for what is truly beautiful.<sup>94</sup> More obviously than the apparently simple act of perceiving order, this labor requires motivation.

That the motivation to undertake the labor consists necessarily of the prospect of pleasure afforded by the contemplation of beauty, appears especially vividly in Shaftesbury’s description of the discovery of beauty as a gradual process that can fruitfully begin with the contemplation of works of art. Shaftesbury clearly considers the contemplation of art, not to mention the production of art, an aid to the discovery of forms. The best art aims not at the reproduction of the details of any particular object, but rather at “the reduction of a thing to its species” or form, which Shaftesbury calls the communication of “plastic truth.”<sup>95</sup> The “virtuoso” or “gentleman of fashion” who admires “what is naturally graceful and becoming,” and who seeks to perfect his judgment of the beauty of works of art, implicitly accepts that there are such truths and that the correct representation of a given thing’s form is not merely a matter of opinion.<sup>96</sup> Consequently, according to Shaftesbury, John Locke would not have philosophized as he did – which is to say, he would not have thrown “all virtue and order out of the world” and reduced moral principles to acts of divine legislation – if he had been a virtuoso.<sup>97</sup> Shaftesbury moreover proposes that the love of art characteristic of the “virtuoso,” which derives from a delight in contemplating the forms represented by works of art, can provide the motivation necessary to cultivate one’s love of forms such that one progressively acquires a taste not ultimately for works of art, but rather for minds, then for communities of minds, and ultimately for the mind that directs the universe. This progressive acquisition of a taste for ever higher degrees of order<sup>98</sup> relies on the virtuoso’s persistent desire for

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<sup>92</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, e.g. 279, 298, 305-6.

<sup>93</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, 320.

<sup>94</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, 408, cf. 409.

<sup>95</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, 67; Shaftesbury, *Second Characters*, 98-102.

<sup>96</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, e.g. 62.

<sup>97</sup> B. Rand, ed., *Life, Unpublished Letters, and Philosophical Regimen*, 416-17, qtd. in D. Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson*, 132.

<sup>98</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, 415-16 n. 25.

pleasure. In an appeal to “the grown youth of our polite world,” Shaftesbury makes no effort to hide this fact:

Whoever has any impression of what we call gentility or politeness is already so acquainted with the decorum and grace of things that he will readily confess a pleasure and enjoyment in the very survey and contemplation of this kind. Now if in the way of polite pleasure the study and love of beauty be essential, the study and love of symmetry and order, on which beauty depends, must also be essential in the same respect.<sup>99</sup>

The path of the argument can already be foreseen: lovers of beauty in material objects and external behavior can be convinced, by appeal to the fact that what gives them pleasure is the contemplation of symmetry and order, to seek to admire symmetry and order in minds.

This appeal does not rely on a superficial analogy between spatial symmetry in material objects and well-ordered affections in minds.<sup>100</sup> Rather, in both cases the symmetry refers to the perfection of the thing under consideration, which is to say, the suitability of the thing’s parts to serve the purpose or “good” of the whole. In the case of the “imitative or designing arts”, Shaftesbury explains,

the truth or beauty of every figure or statue is measured from the perfection of nature in her just adapting of every limb and proportion to the activity, strength, dexterity, life and vigour of the particular species or animal designed.

Thus beauty and truth are plainly joined with the notion of utility or convenience, even in the apprehension of every ingenious artist, the architect, the statuary or the painter.

The same point, Shaftesbury continues, can be made about the health of the human body:

Natural health is the just proportion, truth and regular course of things in a constitution. It is the inward beauty of the body. And when the

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<sup>99</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, 414.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. R. Glauser, “Aesthetic Experience in Shaftesbury,” 28.

harmony and just measures of the rising pulses, the circulating humours and the moving airs or spirits are disturbed or lost, deformity enters and, with it, calamity and ruin.

It only remains for Shaftesbury to assert that the human mind can be understood in the same way:

Is there nothing which tends to disturbance and dissolution? Is there no natural tenor, tone or order of the passions or affections? No beauty or deformity in this moral kind? Or allowing that there really is, must it not, of consequence, in the same manner imply health or sickliness, prosperity or disaster? Will it not be found in this respect, above all, that what is beautiful is harmonious and proportionable, what is harmonious and proportionable is true, and what is at once both beautiful and true is, of consequence, agreeable and good?<sup>101</sup>

This rehearsal of the steps by which a lover of beauty in material things can be convinced to love moral beauty is more complex than it may seem. Shaftesbury is not simply restating the argument, well known from his *Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit*, that virtue is in every human being's self-interest. Here, he explicitly describes "utility or convenience" not as simply an attribute or effect of beauty, but rather as the measure of beauty; we measure a statue's beauty by determining the degree to which its parts – that is, "every limb and proportion" – are portrayed as adapted to promote the natural good of the creature represented in the statue. In other words, the beauty of a statue corresponds to the degree to which the sculptor has portrayed his subject in its perfect state, or achieved the "reduction of a thing to its species."<sup>102</sup> Anyone who acknowledges this can be convinced that the same principle applies to living bodies and to minds. Just as the "inward beauty" of a body is inseparable from the body's "natural health," so is the beauty of a mind dependent on the "natural tenor, tone or order of the passions or affections." The search for beauty of mind, Shaftesbury continues, can only succeed with the help of philosophy. Through this series of realizations, the virtuoso blithely following the "way of polite pleasure," as Shaftesbury calls it, can be led to engage in philosophy for the purpose of seeking still greater pleasure in contemplating internal order. This conclusion is the context

<sup>101</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, 415.

<sup>102</sup> See above, n. 94. Cf. Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, 417, n. 25.

in which Shaftesbury poses his well-known rhetorical question: “Who can admire the outward beauties and not recur instantly to the inward, which are the most real and essential, the most naturally affecting and of the highest pleasure as well as profit and advantage?”<sup>103</sup>

Nor does the pleasure of contemplating order cease for those who have proceeded to where Shaftesbury suggests the virtuoso can ultimately be led,<sup>104</sup> namely, to the contemplation of ever-higher degrees of inward beauties in ever-larger associations of human beings, and ultimately the highest degree of order: “that which fashions even minds themselves” and “contains in itself all the beauties fashioned by those minds and is consequently the principle, source and fountain of all beauty.”<sup>105</sup> Consider Philocles’ elaborate description of Palemon as an accomplished lover of beauty in the *Moralists*:

Knowing as you are . . . well-knowing and experienced in all the degrees and orders of beauty, in all the mysterious charms of the particular forms, you rise to what is more general and, with a larger heart and mind more comprehensive, you generously seek that which is highest in the kind. Not captivated by the lineaments of a fair face or the well-drawn proportions of a human body, you view the life itself and embrace rather the mind which adds lustre and renders chiefly amiable.

Nor is the enjoyment of such a single beauty sufficient to satisfy such an aspiring soul. It seeks how to combine more beauties and by what coalition of these to form a beauteous society. It views communities, friendships, relations, duties and considers by what harmony of particular minds the general harmony is composed and commonweal established.

Nor satisfied even with public good in one community of men, it frames itself a nobler object and with enlarged affection seeks the good

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<sup>103</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, 416. For a description of this process on a national scale, cf. Shaftesbury, *Second Characters*, 20:

And when our humour turns us to cultivate these designing arts, our genius, I am persuaded, will naturally carry us over the slightest amusements, and lead us to that higher, more serious, and noble part of imitation, which relates to history, human nature, and the chief degree or order of beauty; I mean that of the rational life. . . .

<sup>104</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, 416, n. 25.

<sup>105</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, 324, cf. 332.



of mankind. It dwells with pleasure amid that reason and those orders on which this fair correspondence and goodly interest is established. Laws, constitutions, civil and religious rites (whatever civilizes or polishes rude mankind!), the sciences and arts, philosophy, morals, virtue, the flourishing state of human affairs and the perfection of human nature – these are its delightful prospects, and this the charm of beauty which attracts it.

Still ardent in this pursuit (such is its love of order and perfection), it rests not here nor satisfies itself with the beauty of a part but, extending further its communicative bounty, seeks the good of all and affects the interest and prosperity of the whole. True to its native world and higher country, it is here it seeks order and perfection, wishing the best and hoping still to find a just and wise administration.

And since all hope of this were vain and idle if no universal mind presided, since without such supreme intelligence and providential care the distracted universe must be condemned to suffer infinite calamities, it is here the generous mind labours to discover that healing cause by which the interest of the whole is securely established, the beauty of things and the universal order happily sustained.<sup>106</sup>

Palemon's search for ever higher degrees of beauty – which proceeds from bodies to minds, from particular forms to more general forms, from the beauty of individual minds to the beauty of ever larger and more complex human societies, from all humanity to the universe itself, and ultimately to the intelligence governing the universe – is motivated explicitly by a "love of order and perfection." Dissatisfaction with a lower degree of perfection leads Palemon to seek to contemplate a higher degree. To discover the desire for pleasure behind Palemon's longing to contemplate ever higher degrees of order and perfection does not require imagining – however plausibly – that Shaftesbury, in invoking "dissatisfaction," has tacitly adopted Locke's conception of the human will as determined by an "*uneasiness* of the mind for want of some absent good,"<sup>107</sup> and with it Locke's classification of all goods and evils as species of pleasure and pain.<sup>108</sup> Shaftesbury himself suggests the motivation more

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<sup>106</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. L. Klein, 243-4.

<sup>107</sup> E. Tuveson, "The Importance of Shaftesbury," 281; J. Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, II.xxi.31.

<sup>108</sup> J. Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, II.xxi.41-2.

plainly than this. Palemon's "aspiring soul" is attracted explicitly by the "delightful prospects" and "the charm of beauty" in the "orders" responsible for the good of mankind. His soul "dwells" on them "with pleasure." There seems to be no reason to doubt that the prospect of pleasure in contemplating beauty draws Palemon's soul to contemplate the higher beauties as well.<sup>109</sup>

The contrast between this egoistic and hedonistic conception of an aesthetic moral education and Hutcheson's, as Hugh Blair noted, could hardly be more stark. In general terms, of course, the two conceptions served similar aims. Shaftesbury's aim in criticizing Hobbes and Locke resembles Francis Hutcheson's professed aim in refuting a position to which he attaches the names of Hobbes and Samuel Pufendorf: to establish that virtue is natural to man. In an article of 1724 in the *London Journal*, a preview to the first edition of his *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, Hutcheson declares his intent to establish that the "foundation of virtue" is not self-interest.<sup>110</sup> In his inaugural lecture as Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Glasgow, Hutcheson purports to show that human beings have a "natural inclination" to benevolence toward the public, without aiming at "favors" or at private advantage.<sup>111</sup> In both the 1724 *London Journal* article and the 1730 inaugural lecture, Hutcheson attaches the names of Hobbes and Pufendorf to the view he wishes to refute – namely, the view that human beings behave virtuously with the sole aim of attaining private advantage. "Many of our moralists, after Mr. Hobbs [sic]," Hutcheson writes,

tell us that men are to each other what wolves are to sheep; that they are all injurious, proud, selfish, treacherous, covetous, lustful, revengeful: Nay, the avoiding the mischiefs to be feared from each other, is . . . the sole motive in this life of any external good offices which they are to perform.<sup>112</sup>

In the same paragraph, Hutcheson describes Pufendorf along similar lines:

Pufendorf, and most recent writers, advocate the doctrine once

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<sup>109</sup> Cf. R. Glauser, "Aesthetic Experience in Shaftesbury," 51-3.

<sup>110</sup> F. Hutcheson, "Reflections on the Common Systems of Morality," in *On Human Nature*, ed. Thomas Mautner (Cambridge: UP, 1993; rept. 1995), 97-8.

<sup>111</sup> F. Hutcheson, *De naturali hominum socialitate*, in *On Human Nature*, ed. Mautner, §20.

<sup>112</sup> F. Hutcheson, *De naturali hominum socialitate*, §21.

proposed by the Epicureans, that is, that self-love alone, or everyone's search for his own pleasure or advantage, is the spring of all actions. . . .<sup>113</sup>

In opposition, Hutcheson proposes the answer recommended by "the excellent Lord Shaftesbury, a man combining nobility of mind with that of birth, who gave the best and most elegant account of this matter." On Shaftesbury's account, Hutcheson explains, human nature is also in itself, directly and in a primary sense benevolent, kind and sociable, even in the absence of any calculation of advantage or pleasure to oneself," and "there are implanted by nature in man many kind and benevolent affections and passions which, both immediately and in the longer view, have regard to the happiness of others. . . ."<sup>114</sup>

This homage to Shaftesbury in Hutcheson's inaugural lecture notwithstanding, Hutcheson's defense of virtue as natural to man in fact differed from Shaftesbury's along precisely the lines indicated by Hugh Blair. Hutcheson could agree that, as Shaftesbury had asserted, human beings were capable of affections that were not directed toward self-good, but he could not agree with Shaftesbury that those affections themselves flowed in any way from a desire for private happiness, in the form of the pleasures immediately attendant upon virtue itself. It was no accident that his critique of Pufendorf and the Epicureans for claiming "everyone's search for his own pleasure" to be "the spring of all actions" could have applied equally well to Shaftesbury. Moreover, for all his clarifications, inconsistencies, and changes of emphasis from one work to the next, Hutcheson clearly diverged from Shaftesbury on this issue from the very beginning. In the introduction to the second half of his 1725 *Inquiry*, Hutcheson explicitly sets out to distinguish himself from two groups of moralists who assert that human beings pursue virtue out of self-interest, and the second of these groups bears a striking resemblance to Shaftesbury:

Some other moralists suppose "an immediate Natural Good in the Actions call'd Virtuous; that is, that we are determin'd 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 also have a secret Sense of Pleasure accompanying

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<sup>113</sup> F. Hutcheson, *De naturali hominum socialitate*, §21.

<sup>114</sup> F. Hutcheson, *De naturali hominum socialitate*, §24.

such of our Actions as we call Virtuous, even when we expect no other Advantage from them." But they alledge at the same time, "That we are excited to perform these Actions, even as we pursue, or purchase Pictures, Statues, Landskips, from Self-Interest, to obtain this Pleasure which accompanys the very Action, and which we necessarily enjoy in doing it."<sup>115</sup>

Notice Hutcheson's conscientious allusion to the distinction, found in Shaftesbury, between public affections which are ultimately self-directed and therefore vicious, and public affections which are directed immediately toward their object and are therefore – according to Shaftesbury – good or virtuous. What Hutcheson proceeds to repudiate is Shaftesbury's supposition that even these virtuous affections are necessarily motivated by a desire for the pleasures they afford.

Unlike Shaftesbury, Hutcheson refuses to admit any fundamental distinction between affections directed toward private interest and affections toward which we are led by a desire for the pleasures of virtue itself. In so far as both types have as their end the attainment of pleasure, however sublime, Hutcheson considers them both self-interested. In the introduction to the second half of his *Inquiry*, Hutcheson establishes this connection in his definitions of *immediate good* and *advantage*:

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 call'd immediately Good. Those Objects which may procure others immediately pleasant, are call'd Advantageous: and we pursue both Kinds from a View of Interest, or from Self-Love.<sup>116</sup>

The pleasures of perceiving harmony and paintings, accordingly, Hutcheson associates with the pleasures of eating and drinking.<sup>117</sup> By extension, Hutcheson argues that the distinction between "rewards" and the immediate pleasures of virtue, a distinction on which Shaftesbury's distinction between virtue and vice ostensibly

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<sup>115</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, ed. Wolfgang Leidhold (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2004), 115-16. Except where otherwise noted, page references for Hutcheson's *Inquiry* refer to the original pagination and text of the second edition (London, 1726), as indicated by Leidhold.

<sup>116</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 2nd ed., 113.

<sup>117</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 2nd ed., 114.

rests, is merely a matter of degree. In a rebuttal to the argument that virtuous affections are excited by the prospect of the pleasurable perceptions of one's own virtue, Hutcheson asserts that if virtuous affections really did aim at immediate or "concomitant" pleasures, they would share a foundation with vicious affections, and since it is this – selfish – foundation that makes vicious affections vicious, any affections that rest upon it cannot be called virtuous:

[W]e do not by an Act of Will raise in ourselves that Benevolence which we approve as virtuous, with a View to obtain future Pleasures of Self-Approbation by our Moral Sense. Could we raise Affections in this manner, we should be engaged to any Affection by the Prospect of an Interest equivalent to this of Self-Approbation, such as Wealth or sensual Pleasure, with which many Tempers are more powerful; and yet we universally own, that the Disposition to do good Offices to others, which is raised by these Motives, is not virtuous: how then can we imagine, that the virtuous Benevolence is brought upon us by a Motive equally selfish?<sup>118</sup>

To Hutcheson, the pleasures of self-approbation, wealth, sensual pleasure are all species of self-interest – which is to say, selfishness – and therefore impossible candidates for the desires that motivate virtuous affections.

Hutcheson offers two reasons for rejecting these self-interested desires. On the one hand, it is simply implausible that they motivate the affections we regard as virtuous. In a discussion of whether the love of benevolence is motivated by a "nice view of self-interest" – that is, whether the "very frame of our nature" disposes us to pursue virtue for the sake of the pleasures it affords us – Hutcheson argues in the negative, asserting that not all virtue is in fact pleasant: we often expose ourselves to pain, voluntarily, for the sake of other people.<sup>119</sup> Moreover, the very theory that appears to underlie the argument that all passions must be self-interested, the theory that passion itself is a form of "uneasiness" whose satisfaction necessarily brings pleasure and indeed aims at that pleasure, Hutcheson dismisses as contrary to

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<sup>118</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 4th ed., 141-2.

<sup>119</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 2nd ed. 153-154. In the fourth edition of his *Inquiry*, Hutcheson reorganizes and expands this discussion by fourteen pages.

experience: the passions of sorrow, anger, jealousy, and pity give us merely pain.<sup>120</sup> Then there is the difficulty that, although Shaftesbury's explanation of virtue's foundations implies otherwise, we do not in fact approve of actions motivated in any sense by self-interest as virtuous:

To acknowledge the several generous ultimate affections of a limited kind to be natural, and yet maintain that we have no general controlling principle but self-love, which indulges or checks the generous affections as they conduce to, or oppose, our own noblest interest, . . . is a scheme which brings indeed all the powers of the mind into one direction by means of the reference made of them all to the calm desire of our own happiness, in our previous deliberations of our conduct. . . . But the feelings of our heart, reason, and history, revolt against this account: which seems however to have been maintained by excellent authors and strenuous defenders of the cause of virtue.<sup>121</sup>

Still more vividly, Hutcheson writes, "[T]hat disposition of mind must upon this scheme be approved which coolly sacrifices the interest of the universe to its own interest. This is plainly contrary to the feelings of our hearts."<sup>122</sup>

Nor is implausibility Hutcheson's only objection to Shaftesbury's scheme. Suggesting that human beings do in fact approve of fundamentally self-interested affections as virtuous, warns Hutcheson, also implies that we cannot distinguish a good God from an evil one. Since God's private advantage cannot depend upon the good of some greater system of which he is merely a part, and unless it can be proven that his happiness depends upon his creatures' happiness, we have no reason to suppose that the God whom we approve as virtuous is not in fact a "Manichean Evil God," aiming at our unhappiness.<sup>123</sup>

As an alternative to Shaftesbury's scheme, therefore, Hutcheson proposed the scheme summarized by the reviewer of his *System*: that human beings possess a "calm desire for the happiness of others," and that the regulation of the affections in accordance with *this* desire is what the moral sense approves. This is precisely what

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<sup>120</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 2nd ed., 152. Compare John Locke's theory of the will as determined invariably by "some (and for the most part the most pressing) uneasiness a Man is present under." J. Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, II.xxi.31. Cf. above, n. 107.

<sup>121</sup> F. Hutcheson, *System*, I.iv.12.

<sup>122</sup> F. Hutcheson, *System*, I.iv.12.

<sup>123</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 2nd ed., 151.

Hutcheson sets out to show in the second half of his *Inquiry*. While readily asserting, as does Shaftesbury, that virtuous actions give immediate pleasure to the actor, Hutcheson promises to show precisely what Shaftesbury does not:

That what excites us to these Actions which we call Virtuous, is not an Intention to obtain even this sensible Pleasure; much less the future Rewards from Sanctions of Laws, or any other natural Good, which may be the Consequence of the virtuous Action; but an entirely different Principle of Action from Interest or Self-Love.<sup>124</sup>

Hutcheson's words do not correspond precisely to his reviewer's; where the reviewer gives us *calm desire*, a term that becomes prominent only in Hutcheson's later writings,<sup>125</sup> in the *Inquiry* Hutcheson offers *principle of action*. The referent, however, is the same. It is an inclination or *instinct* toward benevolence, existing previous to all rational deliberation but nonetheless guided and strengthened by it, whose motivation of affections toward other human beings constitutes the necessary condition of the moral sense's approval and is therefore the criterion of genuine virtue.<sup>126</sup>

Accordingly, Hutcheson describes the cultivation of a virtuous character *not* as the progressive discovery that one's greatest pleasure comes from the contemplation of the greatest beauty, but rather as the progressive strengthening of one's own natural, instinctive benevolence. In the fourth edition of his *Inquiry*, in an explication of the "many places of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and others of the Antients, when they speak of 'natural Instinct or Disposition in each Being, toward his own Preservation and highest Perfection, as the Spring of Virtue,'" Hutcheson gives voice to his own conception of virtue as the perfection of particular instincts:

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<sup>124</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 2nd ed., 117.

<sup>125</sup> John D. Bishop, "Moral Motivation and the Development of Hutcheson's Philosophy," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 55 (1996), 292-3.

<sup>126</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 4th ed., 192; F. Hutcheson, *Letters between the late Mr Gilbert Burnet and Mr Hutcheson* (London, 1735), 50; F. Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections*, 3rd ed. (London, 1742; reprint Gainesville, Florida: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1969), 28-30; J. D. Bishop, "Moral Motivation," 285; S. Darwall, *British Moralists*, 224-8. Hutcheson occasionally appears to have used the term *instinct* with some reservation, because its connotation of a mental function characteristic of animals had provoked resistance from some of his contemporaries, including John Gay and John Balguy. See Robert A. Greene, "Instinct of Nature: Natural Law, Synderesis, and the Moral Sense," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58.2 (1997), 195-8.

'Tis acknowledged by all, that we have such an Instinct, which must operate very indistinctly at first, till we come to consider our Constitution, and our several Powers. When we do so, we find, according to them, the natural Principles of Virtue, or the φυσικαὶ ἀρεταί [natural virtues], implanted in us: They appear to us the noblest Parts of our Nature; such are our Desires of Knowledge, our Relish for Beauty, especially of the Moral Kind, our Sociable Affections. These upon Reflection we find to be natural Parts of our Constitution, and we desire to bring them to Perfection from the first-mentioned general Instinct.<sup>127</sup>

Hutcheson does not explain in much greater detail how precisely these virtuous instincts are to be brought to perfection, but in the 1742 edition of his *Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections*, he offers a more detailed account in the case of instinctive benevolence, which he calls a *calm* or *general desire* for the happiness of other people, or *calm universal benevolence*. Drawing explicitly on Malebranche's distinction of *affections* from *passions*, Hutcheson describes *calm general desire* as the desire of some good that appears "to our reason or reflection," and that "alone would incline us to pursue whatever objects were apprehended as a means of good." According to Hutcheson himself, the calm desire for any good upon which we reflect is not invariably enough to incline us to pursue it, since calm desire tends to be dominated by desires of "objects presented immediately to some sense," which Hutcheson calls *particular passions*, and which, when they are attended by bodily pleasure or pain, can "prevent all deliberate reasoning about our conduct." It is by a process of habituation, "through frequent reflection" on good and evil, that calm desire can be made stronger than the particular passions and thereby capable of inclining us consistently toward what we apprehend as good.<sup>128</sup>

By contrast with Shaftesbury's conception of moral education, Hutcheson's has hardly any clearly aesthetic component at all. He does, to be sure, devote most of the first half of his 1724 *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* to a defense of the existence of an innate sense of beauty, which has come to be regarded as a founding text in the history of aesthetic theory. But it is only one of many arguments he adduces in defense of the existence of human beings' instinctive benevolence and the moral sense by which they perceive and approve of

<sup>127</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 4th ed., 197-8.

<sup>128</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Essay*, 3rd ed., 28-30.



benevolence. Beauty, according to Hutcheson, is an idea derived from our perception of “uniformity amidst variety” in the objects of our external senses.<sup>129</sup> This uniformity amidst variety takes many forms, depending on whether we are contemplating a theorem (a unity from which an infinite number of varied truths can be deduced), a work of art (a unitary whole whose varied parts are capable of having a uniform proportion among themselves and between themselves and the whole), or some other object or set of objects.<sup>130</sup> What all these species of uniformity amidst variety have in common is that by virtue of an internal sense, distinct from all the external ones, they produce in us the sensation of beauty: a pleasurable sensation whose pleasure comes neither from any knowledge we may have of the things we are contemplating, nor from any way in which we may anticipate using the things to gratify our self-interest.<sup>131</sup> Nor, contra John Locke and other “opponents of innate ideas,” is this pleasurable sensation simply the effect of custom or education; Hutcheson insists that custom and education can alter our aversions and appetites but are incapable of generating in us a new sense. The sense of beauty must be natural to human beings, antecedent to custom, education, and all considerations of advantage, including considerations of pleasure.<sup>132</sup> The same arguments, Hutcheson explains, apply to our instinctive attraction to, and sense of, benevolence. In fact, as Hutcheson explains in his preface to the joint *Inquiry*, his very purpose in asserting and defending the existence of a sense of beauty is to make his portrayal of the moral sense easier to accept:

If the Reader be convinc'd of such Determinations of the Mind to be pleas'd with Forms, Proportions, Resemblances, Theorems, it will be no difficult matter to apprehend another superior Sense natural to Men, determining them to be pleas'd with Actions, Characters, Affections.<sup>133</sup>

More precisely, what Hutcheson purports above all to show is that, like the human sense and relish of beauty, the moral sense and the attraction to benevolence operate independently of all considerations of any advantage one hopes to derive from the

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<sup>129</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 1st ed., 15. On the charge that Hutcheson plagiarized his definition of beauty from Jean-Pierre de Crousaz, see David Raynor, “Hutcheson’s Defense against the Charge of Plagiarism,” *Eighteenth-Century Ireland* 2 (1987), 177-81.

<sup>130</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 1st ed., 27, 33.

<sup>131</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 1st ed., 10-12.

<sup>132</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 1st ed., 83-4.

<sup>133</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 1st ed., viii.

thing one is contemplating, and they are as inborn as any of the external senses.

Hutcheson's system of moral philosophy therefore differed from Shaftesbury's in a fundamental way. Whereas Shaftesbury held virtue to be natural in the sense that, in contradistinction to Locke's view, human beings were able to develop a desire for the private happiness specifically afforded by it, by recourse merely to the exercise of their innate affection for beauty and the cultivation of their powers of rational contemplation, Hutcheson abandoned Shaftesbury's aesthetic account of moral education and its egoistic and hedonistic implications. His references to virtue as a species of beauty were casual and infrequent. His very occasional references to beauty as in some cases the idea of harmony among the parts of a whole were far overshadowed by his insistence that most ideas of beauty were derived from uniformity amidst variety, a formulation nowhere to be found in Shaftesbury's writings.<sup>134</sup> He sharply dismissed the view, proposed unabashedly by Shaftesbury, that the pleasure we derive in contemplating beauty arises from any perception of utility whatsoever. He explicitly and categorically rejected the possibility that the desire for the pleasure of contemplating beauty should be the ultimate motivation of virtuous action. Hutcheson's primary purpose in discussing beauty at all was to reinforce the plausibility of his account of virtue as natural in the sense that human beings were naturally endowed with an instinctive benevolence and moral sense that, if properly cultivated, allowed them to pursue virtue without any regard whatever to the happiness it afforded them. From the perspective of a disinterested observer, of course, Hutcheson's defense of virtue merely differs from Shaftesbury's; he makes a similar point in response to adversaries whom he gives similar names, but he invokes a different conception of human nature and a different criterion of virtue. From Hutcheson's perspective, however, Shaftesbury could hardly have deserved to be called a defender of virtue at all, since his defense and his scheme of an aesthetic moral education whose success depended on an innate desire for pleasure presupposed what Hutcheson considered a view of human beings as fundamentally selfish, a view fundamentally no different from Pufendorf's and the Epicureans'.

That Hutcheson's departure from Shaftesbury's account of moral education as fundamentally aesthetic and unmistakably egoistic did not reflect the mainstream, even among Hutcheson's collaborators in the project of reforming Scottish Presbyterian theology and educational practice to reflect human beings' natural

<sup>134</sup> Cf. D. Raynor, "Hutcheson's Defense," 181; and, cited by Raynor, C. D. Thorpe, "Addison and Hutcheson on the Imagination," *English Literary History* 2 (1935), 215-34.

capacity for virtue, is relatively clear. First, there is the evidence of Hugh Blair's 1755 review of Hutcheson's *System of Moral Philosophy*. On the one hand, Blair finishes his review on a complimentary note:

On the Whole, Whatever objections may be made to some few particularities of Mr Hutcheson's scheme, yet, as a system of morals, his work deserves, in our judgment, considerable praise. He shows a thorough acquaintance of 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, that it has the air of being dictated by the heart, no less than the head.<sup>135</sup>

On the other hand, Blair's "On the whole" cannot be ignored. Among the objections he himself insinuates is the very divergence from Shaftesbury by Hutcheson that he takes pains to describe in detail. The tendency of Hutcheson's system to inspire "amiable views of human nature" may be praiseworthy in itself, but it probably departs slightly from the truth. By contrast with Shaftesbury's moral philosophy, Blair writes, Hutcheson's

must indeed be allowed to be the highest strain of the benevolent system. But how far it is consonant with human nature, is a question of fact which we shall leave to our readers to judge for themselves.<sup>136</sup>

The presence of this last sentence suffices to indicate Blair's own reservations.

Nor was Blair alone in suspecting Hutcheson of having gone slightly astray. He was merely one member of a generation of students at Edinburgh University who, guided in their reading of Shaftesbury by Professor John Stevenson over the course of a forty-five-year career, appear to have felt similarly.<sup>137</sup> The surviving collection of essays by Stevenson's students, written between 1735 and 1750,<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> [Hugh Blair?], Review of *A System of Moral Philosophy*, 438.

<sup>136</sup> [Hugh Blair?], Review of *A System of Moral Philosophy*, 435.

<sup>137</sup> On Stevenson, see above, n. 29.

<sup>138</sup> Essays by Students of John Stevenson, 1735-50, EUL MS Gen 4.54; and on the essays' contents, P. Jones, "The Scottish professoriate," 99.

display not only close familiarity with Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*, but also an unquestioning acceptance of precisely the egoistic hedonism that Hutcheson had rejected in Shaftesbury's aesthetic conception of moral education. The students commonly took for granted that moral education depends on harnessing a person's innate desire for the mental pleasures attendant on contemplating beautiful material things, such that one learns to take pleasure in the contemplation of higher orders of beauty in individual minds, communities of minds, and ultimately the divine mind governing the entire universe for the good of the whole.

Not every one of the student essays discusses topics in which the psychology of moral education plays a role, but some do. The position rejected by Hutcheson finds unambiguous expression in two of them: "On the Nature and Origin of Poetry," copied down in May 1740 by Robert Clerk, and "De pulchro," copied down in April 1739 by Gilbert Elliot, son of a friend and patron of Hutcheson's.<sup>139</sup> Clerk's discussion of moral education comes in the course of his description of poetry's two ends: to please and, above all, to reform mankind.<sup>140</sup> The proper means to both ends, Clerk explains, "is by exciting passion."<sup>141</sup> By way of justifying this assertion, Clerk remarks that "everyone who is pleased is moved," and that "we are moved by pleasure, which is happiness, to do every thing we do," from which follows the conclusion – or so Clerk proposes – that poetry ought to please us by presenting us with the prospect of attaining further pleasures. Poetry likewise ought to "reform our minds" by "mak[ing] vice odious & virtue lovely," which causes us to expect pleasure from virtue.<sup>142</sup> Poetry functions as an effective instrument of moral education, Clerk adds, because it "makes the very violence of our passions contribute to our reformation."<sup>143</sup> What Hutcheson found anathema, namely, that virtue be inculcated by appeal to the human desire for pleasure, even the pleasure of contemplating beautiful objects, Clerk states as a matter of fact. In Gilbert Elliot's essay, the Shaftesburian egoism and hedonism are even more obvious. Human beings are drawn to virtue by its loveliness, he asserts, once they realize that the "symmetry and proportion" of which virtue partakes "are most conducive to our happiness."<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> M. A. Stewart, *the Kirk and the Infidel* (Lancaster: UP, 1995, rev. 2001), 9.

<sup>140</sup> Robert Clerk, "On the Nature and Origin of Poetry," in *Essays by Students of John Stevenson, 1735-50*, EUL MS Gen 4.54, fol. 143.

<sup>141</sup> R. Clerk, "On the Nature and Origin of Poetry," fol. 144.

<sup>142</sup> R. Clerk, "On the Nature and Origin of Poetry," fol. 144-5.

<sup>143</sup> R. Clerk, "On the Nature and Origin of Poetry," fol. 145.

<sup>144</sup> G. Elliot, "De pulchro," in *Essays by Students of John Stevenson*, fol. 61-2.

Therefore, while it is fair to say that Hutcheson articulated an aesthetic theory in order to support a position in the foundation-of-morals controversy that many reformers of Presbyterianism and fellow admirers of Shaftesbury shared, it is not fair to call Hutcheson's theory, or its function in his moral philosophy, representative of an early or mid-eighteenth-century Scottish mainstream. That title belongs rather to an aesthetic theory of moral education more like Shaftesbury's, and its precise significance in the debate over the foundation of morals will become clear when we turn to one of its proponents, William Cleghorn.

## Chapter 2

### William Cleghorn and the Aesthetic Foundation of Justice

If anything is generally known about William Cleghorn the man, it is a single fact: he bested a far better known and almost certainly far greater philosopher, David Hume, in a contest for the Chair of Moral Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh in 1745. About Cleghorn the moral philosopher, still less is generally known, doubtless because he died at the young age of thirty-five, nine years after his appointment to the chair, without having published anything substantial on his subject. Even the most extensive published treatments of Cleghorn's thought to date have delved only deep enough into the few unpublished records of his ideas to afford a vague and fragmentary summary. According to the late Douglas Nobbs of Edinburgh University, author of the first and only published essay specifically on Cleghorn, Cleghorn expounded a theory of political obligation unlike Francis Hutcheson's and with frequent reference to ancient Greek and modern English republican authors.<sup>1</sup> According to J. C. Stewart-Robertson, Cleghorn drew upon and criticized Cicero's *De officiis* and *De finibus* in his moral philosophy lectures.<sup>2</sup> According to Richard Sher, the circumstances surrounding Cleghorn's election to the chair of moral philosophy can be taken as evidence that he "held acceptable views in religion and politics and possessed a suitably didactic, moralistic conception of the function of moral philosophy."<sup>3</sup> The picture that emerges of Cleghorn's philosophical system, in other words, remains colorless and dim. The only ray of light cast by virtually every commentator would seem to be this: Cleghorn criticized

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<sup>1</sup> Douglas Nobbs, "The Political Ideas of William Cleghorn, Hume's Academic Rival," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 26.4 (1965): 575-586; and, following Nobbs, Alexander du Toit in the *DNB*, s.v. "Cleghorn, William." Nobbs expressly disavows all interpretive claims about Cleghorn's moral philosophy.

<sup>2</sup> J.C. Stewart-Robertson, "Cicero among the Shadows: Scottish Prelections of Virtue and Duty," *Rivista Critica di Storia della Filosofia* 38.1 (Jan-Mar 1983): 29-34.

<sup>3</sup> Richard 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*, ed. M. A. Stewart (Oxford: UP, 1990), 106-9.

Francis Hutcheson's theory of the moral sense and espoused instead a "rationalist" theory of moral perception.<sup>4</sup> Even this observation, however, strictly correct though it is, does not clearly illuminate Cleghorn's moral philosophical system or his philosophical aims, for it assumes that moral rationalism and its implied opposite, moral "sentimentalism," constitute two sides of a significant eighteenth-century moral philosophical controversy.

The division of the so-called "British moralists" into rationalists and sentimentalists is not new. In English-language scholarship, it can be found in a particularly influential form as early as 1897, in L. A. Selby-Bigge's two-volume anthology, *British Moralists*. Selby-Bigge identifies two "principal lines of thought" among British moral philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He calls them the "intellectual" and the "sentimental" schools and asserts that they are "primarily distinguished by their adoption of reason and feeling respectively as the faculty which perceives moral distinctions."<sup>5</sup> Representatives of the intellectual school, according to Selby-Bigge, include Ralph Cudworth, Samuel Clarke, Richard Price, and John Balguy, while representatives of the sentimentalist school include Shaftesbury, Francis Hutcheson, Joseph Butler, David Hume, and Adam Smith.<sup>6</sup> Nor has respect for this dichotomy ended with Selby-Bigge; D. D. Raphael and Jerome Schneewind observe it as well, and Isabel Rivers has shown its applicability to a far wider range of authors than those treated by Schneewind, Raphael, and Selby-Bigge.<sup>7</sup> In the case of William Cleghorn, its continuing usefulness seems obvious; it allows the addition of color and focus to the otherwise indistinct picture of his ideas, by identifying him as a philosophical adversary of Francis Hutcheson and David Hume.<sup>8</sup>

That Hutcheson and Hume can be classed together as sentimentalists and mutual opponents of moral rationalism – as found, for example, in Samuel Clarke's second Boyle Lecture and William Wollaston's *Religion of Nature Delineated* – is

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<sup>4</sup> Douglas Nobbs, "Political Ideas," 575; Richard Sher, "Professors of virtue," 106-7; *Dictionary of Eighteenth-century British Philosophers*, ed. John W. Yolton, John Valdimir Price, and John Stevens (Bristol: Thoemmes, 1999), s.v. "Cleghorn, William."

<sup>5</sup> L.A. Selby-Bigge, *Introduct. and ed., British Moralists* (Oxford: UP, 1897, rept. New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1964), 1-1i.

<sup>6</sup> L. A. Selby-Bigge, *British Moralists*, lxiv-lxvi, lxxix-lxxxiii. Cf. above, ch. 1, n. 62-3.

<sup>7</sup> D.D. Raphael, *The Moral Sense* (Oxford: UP, 1947), 2, 17; J.B. Schneewind, *Moral Philosophy from Montaigne to Kant* (Cambridge: UP, 2003), 483, 504.

<sup>8</sup> Along the lines suggested by Sher, "Professors of virtue," 106-7.

beyond question.<sup>9</sup> The substance of Hutcheson's arguments against rationalist critiques of his 1724 *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* can be found, in an essentially similar form, in the text of David Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*. Both Hume and Hutcheson deny that ideas of virtue and vice arise from the operation of human reason, discovering relations between moral propositions and the judgments that inform actions, and they both insist to the contrary that ideas of virtue and vice arise from sensations internal to the mind of the beholder.<sup>10</sup> In 1740, Hume himself acknowledged this similarity between his view and Hutcheson's in a letter to Hutcheson, noting that "Morality, according to your Opinion as well as mine, is determin'd merely by Sentiment. . . ."<sup>11</sup> Cleghorn's unmistakable critique of Francis Hutcheson's sentimentalism, therefore, would seem to set him opposite Hutcheson and Hume.

In the case of the rationalist-sentimentalist dichotomy, however, its tight grip on the historiography of eighteenth-century moral philosophy notwithstanding, there is compelling evidence to suppose that its unfortunate implication – that it not only describes real patterns of division among eighteenth-century philosophical systems but also served as a source of deep and heated controversy among the exponents of those systems – falls short of the truth. The case of Francis Hutcheson and his relationship with David Hume, in fact, suggests very strongly that controversy over moral rationalism and sentimentalism was subordinate to the very different controversy over the foundation of morals, the broad outlines of which appear in the heated exchanges between Shaftesbury's reform-minded Presbyterian sympathizers – like Hutcheson, William Wishart, and William Leechman – and their critics. At issue in this controversy was not whether human beings perceive moral qualities by reason or sensation, but rather – as we have seen – the extent to which human beings are by nature capable of genuine virtue. Both Hume and Hutcheson

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<sup>9</sup> Mainly by virtue of arguments issued by Norman Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume: a Critical Study of its Origins and Central Doctrines* (London: Macmillan, 1960), esp. 23-51; and endorsed by D.D. Raphael, as described in James Moore, "Hume and Hutcheson," in *Hume and Hume's Connexions*, ed. M.A. Stewart and John P. Wright (Edinburgh: UP, 1994), 23-4. See also David Fate Norton, "Hume and Hutcheson: the Question of Influence," in *Oxford Studies in Early Modern Philosophy* 2 (2005), 211-12; and *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward Craig, 10 vols. (Routledge: London, 1998), s.v. "Francis Hutcheson," by David Fate Norton.

<sup>10</sup> David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. Mary and David Norton (Oxford: UP, 2000), II.3.3, III.1.1, esp. ¶26; Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense*, 3rd ed. (London, 1742; rept. Gainesville, Florida: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1969), 250-279.

<sup>11</sup> David Hume to Francis Hutcheson, 16 March 1740, *HL*, Letter 15.



took the Shaftesburian position, agreeing that human beings were indeed naturally capable of disinterested benevolence toward others, but they disagreed about the extent to which such benevolence was responsible for the formation and cohesion of human societies. From recent research into the details of Hume's failed campaign for the the Edinburgh chair of moral philosophy, it has become clear that Hutcheson, despite his agreement with Hume about the implausibility of moral rationalism, opposed Hume's candidacy largely on the grounds that Hume considered justice, the supreme social virtue and the principle of large-scale social cohesion, to be an artificially cultivated form of human self-interest rather than an enlargement of the human instinct of benevolence.<sup>12</sup> Further evidence of the subordination of the rationalism-sentimentalism disagreement to the controversy over the foundation of morals can be found in Francis Hutcheson's critiques of adherents to moral rationalism, including especially Gilbert Burnet and John Balguy, in which Hutcheson evinces a suspicion that moral rationalism is not only incoherent but also a cloak for the view that human beings are simply incapable of disinterested benevolence.

It is to this loosening of the sentimentalism-rationalism straitjacket, as it were, that an analysis of William Cleghorn's moral philosophy can contribute. The bright light cast on Cleghorn's ideas by examining them against the backdrop of Francis Hutcheson's disputes with David Hume and his earlier critics, moral rationalists included, reveals that Cleghorn aimed to address the problems of human benevolence and the nature of justice over which Hutcheson and Hume had been wrangling, and that he was employing a rationalist theory of moral perception, conjoined with an aesthetic theory of moral education much like Shaftesbury's, as an instrument to that effect. As a representative of those Shaftesbury-sympathizers like Hugh Blair, who thought Hutcheson had deviated too far from Shaftesbury, and of John Stevenson's students, who accepted without comment the egoism and hedonism in Shaftesbury's aesthetic account of moral education, Cleghorn was

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<sup>12</sup> The results of this research can be found primarily in M.A. Stewart, *The Kirk and the Infidel: an Inaugural Lecture delivered at Lancaster University on 9 November 1994* (Lancaster: Lancaster Univ., 1994, rept. 2001); James Moore, "Hume and Hutcheson"; and, with greater emphasis on issues of ideology and institutional politics, Richard Sher, "Professors of Virtue"; and Roger Emerson, "The 'affair' at Edinburgh and the 'project' at Glasgow: the politics of Hume's attempts to become a professor," in *Hume and Hume's Connexions*, ed. M. A. Stewart and John P. Wright (Edinburgh: UP, 1994). A more detailed elaboration of Moore's view, though not reliable in all its details, can be found in Simon Grote, *The Rejection of David Hume*, A.B. Diss. (Harvard College, 2001), EUL SC F 908. The older interpretation of Hutcheson's opposition to Hume's candidacy, now superseded, is Ernest Mossner's, in *The Life of David Hume*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: UP, 1980), esp. 157-60.

striking what, loosely speaking, could be regarded as a middle position between Hutcheson's and Hume's, one that acknowledged the difficulties with Hutcheson's position as indicated by Hume, but that aimed to explain how, in contradistinction to Hume's position, justice could be regarded as a form of disinterested benevolence.

### *William Cleghorn's Life*

In the attempt to understand this intellectual project, knowing all that can be known about William Cleghorn the man provides unfortunately only a modicum of help. The surviving details of Cleghorn's life allow for a biography that, if occasionally illuminated by the bright light of contemporary anecdote, remains in large part tantalizingly vague.<sup>13</sup> He was born in Edinburgh in 1719, the eldest child of Hugh Cleghorn and Jean Hamilton.<sup>14</sup> His father, who would die in 1734, was heir to a successful brewery and comfortable house close to the site currently occupied by the New Museum of Scotland, and his mother was the eldest daughter of William Hamilton, five-time moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and Professor of Divinity at the university from 1709 until becoming Principal nine months before his death in 1732.<sup>15</sup> Jean's fifteen younger siblings, some of whom lived at various points in the Cleghorn family home, included several models of professional success. William's uncle Gavin opened a book-selling business in 1729 and a printing business in 1739 that became the most important in Edinburgh for the next two decades. Between 1732 and 1745, Gavin also served on the Edinburgh town

<sup>13</sup> References to many of the most obscure documents in which these details appear can be found in Alwyn Clark, *An Enlightened Scot: Hugh Cleghorn, 1732-1857* (Duns: Black Ace, 1992), 1-11; and, with less helpful citations, in Douglas Nobbs, "Political ideas," 575-7.

<sup>14</sup> Hugh Cleghorn and Jean Hamilton were married 6 July 1718, as recorded in Henry Paton, *Scottish Record Society, Register of Marriages for the Parish of Edinburgh 1595-1750* (Edinburgh, 1905-8), 105. The year of Cleghorn's birth is not absolutely certain; it must be extrapolated from accounts of his age at the time of his death on 23 August 1754. An obituary in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* of 26 August 1754, notes his age as thirty-six; but his nephew, Hugh, who had obviously read the obituary with great care, refers to William as having died at the age of thirty-five. Hugh Cleghorn to John Lee, 25 July 1836, NLS MS 3441, fols 122-3; Alwyn Clark, *Enlightened Scot*, 7.

<sup>15</sup> Andrew Dalzell, *History of the University of Edinburgh from its Foundation*, ed. David Laing, 2 v. (Edinburgh, 1862), II.332; A. Clark, *Enlightened Scot*, 3; DNB, s.v. "Hamilton, William (1669-1732)." On Leechman, see above, ch. 1, n. 30-5, 43-7.

council, wielding considerable political power by virtue of his office and his loyalty to the interest of the “Squadrone” faction, led by John Hay, fourth Marquis of Tweeddale.<sup>16</sup> Another uncle of William’s, Alexander, studied medicine at Edinburgh and traveled to Annapolis, Maryland, where he established a successful medical practice and became a prolific writer of social and political commentary.<sup>17</sup> Nor was it unusual for a Hamilton to train for the ministry. William’s uncle Gilbert received his preaching license in 1736 and his D.D. in 1760, and his uncle Robert received his license in 1730 and became Professor of Divinity at Edinburgh in 1754.<sup>18</sup> If the distinguished example of William’s grandfather and namesake can be taken as a guide, the family’s Presbyterianism was hardly conservative; William Hamilton, the teacher of William Leechman,<sup>19</sup> has been identified as a major force for moderation, liberalism, and doctrinal relaxation within the early eighteenth-century Presbyterian church.<sup>20</sup>

The evidence of William Cleghorn’s own ideas and activities firmly suggests that he ought to be associated with the group of his better-known contemporaries influentially described by Richard Sher as “Christian Stoics,” identifiable by their conservative whiggish defense of the mixed constitution, their profession of an ethic of self-sacrifice for the sake of the public good, their view of preachers and professors as teachers of virtue, and their support of the Shaftesburian program for the reform of Presbyterianism pursued by Hutcheson, Leechman, and Wishart. On Sher’s account, they included Hugh Blair, John Home, Alexander Carlyle, and Adam

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<sup>16</sup> *DNB*, s.v. “Hamilton, Gavin (1704-1767),” by Warren MacDougal; R. Emerson, “The ‘affair’ at Edinburgh,” 3, 11.

<sup>17</sup> Alexander Hamilton, *Hamilton’s Itinerarium*, ed. Albert Bushnell Hart (Saint Louis, Missouri: William K. Bixby, 1907), Appendix 8; and *DNB*, s.v. “Hamilton, Alexander (1712-1756).

<sup>18</sup> *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, vol. 1, by Hew Scott (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1915), 11, 12, 46, 81.

<sup>19</sup> See above, ch. 1, n. 32-3.

<sup>20</sup> Henry Sefton, “‘Neu-lights and Preachers Legall’: some observations on the beginnings of Moderatism in the Church of Scotland,” in *Church Politics and Society: Scotland 1408-1929*, ed. Norman MacDougall (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1983). Robert Wodrow would later recall that William Hamilton himself, evidently a very popular lecturer, demurred to insist on belief in the doctrine of the Trinity and was thought more generally by some to have “departed from the Calvinistic doctrine.” Robert Wodrow, *Analecta, or Materials for a history of remarkable providences mostly relating to Scotch ministers and Christians*. ed. Matthew Leisman, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: Maitland Club, 1842-1843), III.102, IV.139; Roger Emerson, “The ‘affair’ at Edinburgh and ‘project’ at Glasgow: the Politics of Hume’s attempts to become a professor,” in *Hume and Hume’s Connexions*, ed. M.A. Stewart and John P. Wright (Edinburgh: UP, 1994), 17 n.9; James Wodrow, “The Life of Dr Leechman, with some Account of his Lectures,” in William Leechman, *Sermons*, v. 1 of 2 (London, 1789), 1-19; Francis Hutcheson to Thomas Drennan, [1743], GUL MS Gen 1018.

Ferguson.<sup>21</sup> The earliest evidence of Cleghorn's association with this group comes from his education at the University of Edinburgh, beginning in 1731 at the age of twelve, a year before his grandfather's promotion to Principal, and following closely in the footsteps of his uncles Gilbert, Gavin, and Alexander.<sup>22</sup> For the years 1731, 1732, and 1733, Cleghorn and Hugh Blair matriculated as students of Adam Watt, Professor of Humanity.<sup>23</sup> Shortly after Watt's death in March of 1734 – the same year in which Cleghorn's father died – his and Blair's names appear on the list of students of John Stevenson.<sup>24</sup> What Watt taught, unfortunately, cannot be identified with any certainty; if the standard progression is any guide, Cleghorn and Blair studied Latin and Greek authors.<sup>25</sup> Stevenson, whose teaching has been better documented, taught a number of works which would later make an appearance in Cleghorn's lectures as well.<sup>26</sup> Alexander Carlyle, in a sentiment shared by William Robertson, among others, would recall having "received greater benefit from that class than from any other."<sup>27</sup> The volume of essays by Stevenson's students, which reveals so vividly his importance as a disseminator of Shaftesburean aesthetic and moral philosophical ideas, begins in 1735, unfortunately, one year too late to include an essay by Cleghorn.<sup>28</sup>

How Cleghorn spent his remaining years in the University is somewhat less

<sup>21</sup> Richard Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: UP, 1985), 37-8, 175-212.

<sup>22</sup> *Matriculation Roll of the University of Edinburgh, Arts, Law, Divinity*, transcribed by Alexander Morgan, v. 1 of 4, 1623-1774, EUL Special Coll. Reading Rm, 192, 199.

<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately little appears to be known about Adam Watt. According to Alexander Bower, Watt was the son of an old friend of his predecessor, Laurence Dundas, and Dundas made Watt's appointment a condition of his retirement in 1727. "He is represented," Bower writes, "as having been a young man of promising talents, and the favorite pupil of Mr Dundas. . . ." Alexander Bower, *History of the University of Edinburgh*, v. 2 of 3 (Edinburgh, 1817), 262.

<sup>24</sup> *Matriculation Roll*, 199.

<sup>25</sup> Alexander Grant, *Story of the University of Edinburgh during its first three hundred years*, 2 vols. (London, 1884), I.264; Christine Shepherd, *Philosophy and Science in the Curriculum of the Scottish Universities in the Seventeenth Century*, PhD Diss. (University of Edinburgh, 1975), Introduction.

<sup>26</sup> A record of Stevenson's teaching can be found not only in anecdotes by admiring students, but also in an invaluable "Short Account of the University of Edinburgh" in the *Scots Magazine* of August 1741, which indicates that Stevenson taught Heineccius' *Elementa Philosophiae Rationalis*; Locke's *Essay*; De Vries's *Ontologia*; histories of philosophy by Heineccius, Diogenes Laertius, Thomas Stanley, and Johann Jakob Brucker; Longinus' *On the Sublime*; and Aristotle's *Poetics*. See "A Short Account of the University of Edinburgh," *Scots Magazine* 3 (Aug 1741): 373.

<sup>27</sup> Alexander Carlyle, *The Autobiography of Dr. Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk, 1722-1805*, ed. John Hill Burton (London: T. N. Foulis, 1910, rept. Bristol: Thoemmes, 1990), 48; A. Grant, *Story of the University of Edinburgh*, II.329.

<sup>28</sup> On Stevenson and the student essays, see above, ch. 1, n. 29, 138.

clear. Like Carlyle, Home, Ferguson, and Blair, he almost certainly began training for the ministry. Henry Mackenzie, biographer of John Home, refers to Cleghorn as a member of the “circle” of Home’s “fellow churchmen”; Douglas Nobbs has found in the Sasine Register a reference to Cleghorn as a “student of Divinity”; and a charter granted to William’s mother in 1760 refers to her late son as a “preacher of the Gospel.”<sup>29</sup> This implies that Cleghorn probably took instruction in the Scriptures and in Pictet’s *Theologia Christiana* from Professor of Divinity John Gowdie, memorably described by Alexander Carlyle as “dull and Dutch and prolix.”<sup>30</sup> He is also likely to have attended lectures in pneumatics and moral philosophy by the unoriginal and uninspiring John Pringle.<sup>31</sup> In any case, it is clear that he received his MA in 1739 under unusual circumstances. Cleghorn and four classmates – again including Hugh Blair – had agreed with Principal Wishart to revive a custom that had fallen into disuse since the advent of the professorial system, namely, to publish and publicly defend Latin theses.<sup>32</sup> On this occasion, the students seem to have chosen the subjects; in Cleghorn’s case, the result was a thirteen-page dissertation on natural philosophy, entitled, “Analogy and the First Philosophy” and dedicated to James Douglas, Earl of Morton.<sup>33</sup> The last record of Cleghorn’s attendance at the University occurs in the Commonplace book of Charles Mackie, Professor of History from 1719

<sup>29</sup> Henry Mackenzie, *Account of the Life and Writings of John Home*, in *Works*, by John Home (Edinburgh, 1822), 12; D. Nobbs, “Political Ideas,” 576; A. Clark, *Enlightened Scot*, 6-7.

<sup>30</sup> “A Short Account of the University of Edinburgh,” 371; A. Carlyle, *Autobiography*, 63-4.

<sup>31</sup> Pringle is known to have made use of Cicero’s *De officiis*, Bacon’s *Novum Organum*, Pufendorf’s *De officio hominis et civis*, Marcus Aurelius’ *Meditations*, and Harrington’s *Oceana*, among others. See A. Grant, *Story of the University of Edinburgh*, I.336-7; “A Short Account of the University of Edinburgh,” 373; A. Bower, *History of the University*, II.291; Andrew Kippis, *The Life of John Pringle*, in *Six Discourses*, by John Pringle (London, 1783), vii; John Pringle, *Lectures on Cicero*, taken down by a student, Edinburgh, 1741, EUL MS Gen 74D.

<sup>32</sup> C. Shepherd, *Philosophy and Science*, 13; A. Grant, *Story of the University*, I.277-8. The five graduands were Cleghorn, Hugh Blair, John Witherspoon, William Mackenzie, and Nathaniel Mitchell, all of whom defended their theses before a large crowd in the “Common Hall” on the morning of 23 February 1739. According to John Stephens, Cleghorn took his MA in 1735, but I can find no authority for this; Cleghorn’s name appears in the Edinburgh University Matriculation Book under the year 1739. See *Dictionary of Eighteenth-century British Philosophers*, ed. John W. Yolton et al. (Bristol: Thoemmes, 1999), s.v. “Cleghorn, William,” by John Stephens.

<sup>33</sup> William Cleghorn, *Dissertatio Philosophica Inauguralis, de Analogia et Philosophia Prima* (Edinburgh, 1739); *DNB*, s.v. “Douglas, James.” Morton was first president of the Edinburgh Philosophical Society and patron of the University of Edinburgh’s astronomical observatory. Though the Philosophical Society was founded in 1737 and included several Edinburgh Professors among its members, including John Stevenson and Charles Mackie, there is no evidence that Cleghorn ever became a member. Roger Emerson, “The Philosophical Society of Edinburgh, 1737-1747,” *The British Journal for the History of Science* XII.2.41 (July 1979), 154-62, 189-91.

until 1765, who notes Cleghorn's attendance in 1740 at his two sets of lectures, on universal history and on "Roman antiquities", describing him as having entered the household of Sir John Nisbet as a tutor to his son, Henry.<sup>34</sup>

A somewhat more colorful picture of Cleghorn emerges from the evidence of his academic career, which appears to have begun in 1742. That summer, John Pringle had been appointed physician to the Earl of Stair and taken a leave of absence to join the British army commanded by Stair in Flanders. His substitutes, according to the minutes of the Academic Senate, were Cleghorn and George Muirhead, a student of Francis Hutcheson's at Glasgow who had studied divinity at Edinburgh and taken his MA in the spring before Pringle's departure. Pringle had counted on being able to return to Edinburgh when his service in Flanders ended. As long as the Edinburgh Town Council and the presiding Provost, John Coutts – who together controlled academic appointments to the University – agreed to extend his leave, Cleghorn and Muirhead's appointment as his substitutes continued to be renewed.<sup>35</sup> In June of 1744, however, with the war in Flanders showing all signs of escalation, Pringle declared in a letter to Provost Coutts that he was prepared to resign, whence began a long and vicious contest over who was to be appointed to the soon-to-be-vacant chair of moral philosophy. The contest grew more heated as Pringle equivocated about his intentions and stalled for time. On one side, Coutts and his friends inside and outside the town council, under the patronage of Archibald Campbell, third Duke of Argyll, had arranged to back the candidacy of David Hume. On the other side was a mixed group of Hume's philosophical and clerical enemies and Provost Coutts' political rivals, including notably Cleghorn's uncle, Gavin Hamilton, acting to promote the Squadrone interest.<sup>36</sup> After many months of frustrating negotiations with Pringle had come to an end with Pringle's resignation in March of 1745, the Town Council declared the Chair of Moral Philosophy vacant and confirmed Cleghorn as Pringle's acting successor.<sup>37</sup> It is clear that by the middle of April, having attempted and failed to appoint Francis

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<sup>34</sup> A. Grant, *Story of the University*, II.367; Charles Mackie, "Alphabetical List of those who attended the Prelections on History and Roman Antiquities from 1719 to 1744 inclusive," in *Commonplace Book*, EUL Dc.5.24, vol. 2, 206; D. Nobbs, "Political Ideas," 576; *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club* (Edinburgh, 1908), I.121-2. Nobbs describes Cleghorn as tutor to Henry Nisbet in 1739 as well as 1740, but I can find no authority for this.

<sup>35</sup> M.A. Stewart, *the Kirk and the Infidel*, 4, 6-12; *DNB*, s.v. "Muirhead, George," by Richard Sher.

<sup>36</sup> *DNB*, s. v. "John Hay, fourth Marquis of Tweeddale (d. 1762)"; Romney Sedgwick, *The House of Commons 1715-1754*, vol. 1, *The History of Parliament* (London: HMSO, 1970), 159-160; John Stuart Shaw, *The Management of Scottish Society, 1707-1764* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1983), 48-55.

<sup>37</sup> TCM, 27 March 1745; Academic Senate Minutes, EUL Mic. M.730, 26 March 1745.

Hutcheson to the Chair, Gavin Hamilton and his allies on the Town Council were actively promoting Cleghorn's candidacy at the expense of Hume's reputation, and with great success on both counts.<sup>38</sup> Even after the Edinburgh clergy had voted to withhold their approval from Hume, prompting Coutts to nominate as a substitute candidate Principal Wishart – who only “early last Winter,” in Wishart's words, had agreed with Gavin Hamilton to support Cleghorn instead of seeking the Chair himself – Coutts could not overcome the opposition organized by Hamilton.<sup>39</sup> On 5 June, the town council elected Cleghorn to the Chair of Moral Philosophy by a majority of nineteen votes to Wishart's twelve.<sup>40</sup> The Academic Senate admitted him five days later, and after a year's postponement he delivered his inaugural lecture on 11 February 1748.<sup>41</sup>

Surviving testimony indicates without exception that Cleghorn's reputation as a teacher and philosopher, before and after his appointment to the Chair, was very good. Francis Hutcheson had recommended him as one of several possible candidates in a letter of 4 July 1744 to a friend of John Coutts, noting that although he did not know Cleghorn as well as he knew the other men he'd suggested for the position, he had met him in person and “judged him a very acute man from some few days conversation.”<sup>42</sup> Colin MacLaurin, Professor of Mathematics at Edinburgh from 1725 until his death in 1746, was still more impressed; he described Cleghorn in a letter of the same year as “a great Moral Philosopher.”<sup>43</sup> Nor was a positive impression of Cleghorn's abilities restricted to these two luminaries. One of the Marquis of Tweeddale's agents in Edinburgh, Alexander Arbuthnot, noted in a letter shortly after Pringle's resignation that Cleghorn had taught the moral philosophy class “for three years past . . . with great approbation.”<sup>44</sup> Four years after Cleghorn's promotion to the professorship of moral philosophy, Gilbert Hamilton reported in a

<sup>38</sup> Alexander Arbuthnot to the Marquis of Tweeddale, 16 April 1745, NLS MS 7065, fols. 157-8.

<sup>39</sup> William Wishart, “Copy [of] Letter, or Speech, intended: and Letter to John Forrest. June 5, 1745,” transcribed and expanded by M.A. Stewart as “The Wishart Speedhand,” in M. A. Stewart, *The Kirk and the Infidel: an Inaugural Lecture delivered at Lancaster University on 9 November 1994*, corrected ed. (Lancaster: Lancaster Univ., 2001).

<sup>40</sup> TCM, 5 June 1745.

<sup>41</sup> An indecipherable record of Cleghorn's inaugural lecture survives among Wishart's papers in the Edinburgh University Library. Academic Senate Minutes, 10 June 1745, 12 December 1746, 7 December 1747, 25 February 1748; M.A. Stewart, “Principal Wishart and the Controversies of his Day,” 67.

<sup>42</sup> Francis Hutcheson to Gilbert Elliot, Lord Minto, July 4, 1744, NLS MS 1104, fols 57r-v.

<sup>43</sup> Colin MacLaurin to the Earl of Morton, 5 May 1744, Scottish National Archives (previously Scottish Record Office), GD 150/3486/3.

<sup>44</sup> Alexander Arbuthnot to the Marquis of Tweeddale, 16 April 1745, NLS MS 7065, fols. 157-8.

letter to his brother Alexander that their nephew continued to enjoy this approbation. Almost eighty years later, Cleghorn's nephew, Hugh, would recall reports that Cleghorn had filled his classroom with students and townspeople "of all ages and of the most Liberal Professions."<sup>45</sup> These reports suffice to distinguish Cleghorn from the alleged dreariness of his less popular predecessor, Pringle, and his successor, James Balfour, who within six years of his appointment was urged to step down because the size of his class had dwindled almost to nothing.<sup>46</sup> If Cleghorn's whiggish politics and passionate defense of freedom of religious judgment were sources of irritation to some, like Thomas Ruddiman, well-known Jacobite and printer to the University during Cleghorn's years as a student, they certainly did not keep students and unmatriculated auditors from filling his classroom.<sup>47</sup>

Cleghorn's whiggish politics must have been common knowledge. Writing almost sixty years after the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745, John Home would remember Cleghorn as "one of the most zealous volunteers" among the students who had enlisted in the so-called "College Company" to defend Edinburgh from Prince

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<sup>45</sup> Gilbert Hamilton to Alexander Hamilton, reprinted in Alexander Hamilton, *Hamilton's Itinerarium*, ed. Albert Bushnell Hart (Saint Louis, Missouri: William K. Bixby, 1907), appendix 8, qtd. in A. Clark, *Enlightened Scot*, 10-11:

William has the reputation of a fine scholar; he is a well bred man, keeps the best company in Town and as he is the Professor of Moral Philosophy in the College of Edinburgh, so he teaches it with deserved applause.

See also Hugh Cleghorn's remark to John Lee (13 March 1836, NLS MS 3441 fol. 84-5), that he had heard "from many Eminent men, most of them not unknown to you, particularly from the late Sir William Pulteney, and from Andrew Stuart (a name Inferior to none) that his [William Cleghorn's] Lectures were universally esteemed and numerous attended by men of all ages and of the most Liberal Professions."

<sup>46</sup> R. Sher, "Professors of Virtue," 112, 114-15; A. Grant, *Story of the University of Edinburgh*, II.338-9.

<sup>47</sup> On Cleghorn's detractors, note George Chalmers' observation that the Edinburgh town council chose Cleghorn over Hume for the professorship of moral philosophy, "sagely considering that . . . a deist might probably become a Christian, but a Jacobite could not possibly become a Whig." Chalmers appears to have taken his cue partly from a comment allegedly by Thomas Ruddiman, on the subject of Cleghorn's teaching:

Inquiring once of the Reverend Robert Walker, who was then his amanuensis, what classes he had been attending at the college of Edinburgh; and being told, that he had that morning heard a lecture on *Liberty and Necessity*, Ruddiman said, "Well: does your professor make us free agents or not?" To which Mr. Walker answered, "He gives us arguments on both sides, and leaves us to judge." "Very well," rejoined Ruddiman; "*The fool has said in his heart there is no God*; and the professor will not tell you, whether the fool be right or wrong."

George Chalmers, *Life of Thomas Ruddiman* (London, 1794), 275-6. For Cleghorn's defense of freedom of judgment, see William Cleghorn, *Lectures*, taken down by William Dagleish, EUL MS Dc 3.3-6, I.373-5.



Charles Edward Stuart's approaching army. According to Home, it was Cleghorn who volunteered to "stand forth at the proper time" and lead his young companions in an eastward march toward the likely battleground, should the order come that Edinburgh was to be surrendered.<sup>48</sup> Alexander Carlyle would recall that Cleghorn and John Home had tried to persuade a group of their friends to march out of the city and join the Hanoverian army under Sir John Cope, and that Cleghorn, William Robertson, and Carlyle himself in fact made such an attempt.<sup>49</sup> There is also the evidence of a pamphlet attributed to Cleghorn, described by Hugh Cleghorn in 1834 as "the Address to some Gentlemen immediately after the Rebellion"<sup>50</sup> and identified by some catalogers as "The Spirit and Principles of the Whigs and the Jacobites compared: Being the substance of a discourse delivered to an audience of gentlemen at Edinburgh, December 22, 1745," printed in 1746 in Edinburgh and, with some alterations, in London.<sup>51</sup> The argument of the pamphlet favors the Whigs, identifying their aim as the promotion of "the interests of all mankind" through the instrument of limited monarchy, and attacking the Jacobites as a self-interested faction.<sup>52</sup>

The most obvious evidence not only that Cleghorn belongs among Richard Sher's whiggish "Christian Stoics," but also that his philosophy deserves serious attention, comes from Cleghorn's relationship with Adam Ferguson, who almost certainly heard Cleghorn lecture, possibly during his brief time in Edinburgh as a divinity student from 1743 to 1745, and with whom Cleghorn clearly grew to be on very close terms.<sup>53</sup> Upon becoming seriously ill in the last year of his life,<sup>54</sup> Cleghorn

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<sup>48</sup> John Home, *History of the Rebellion in the Year 1745* (London, 1802), 85-91.

<sup>49</sup> A. Carlyle, *Autobiography*, 121, 130-1, 134, 138-41.

<sup>50</sup> H. Cleghorn to J. Lee, 13 March 1836, NLS MS 3441 fol. 84.

<sup>51</sup> [William Cleghorn?], *A Comparison of the Spirit and Principles of the Whigs and the Jacobites: Being the substance of a discourse delivered to an audience of gentlemen at Edinburgh, Dec. 24, 1745* (Edinburgh, 1746); and [William Cleghorn?], *The Spirit and Principles of the Whigs and the Jacobites compared: Being the substance of a discourse delivered to an audience of gentlemen at Edinburgh, December 22, 1745* (London, 1746). One basis for attributing the pamphlet to Cleghorn, in addition to Hugh Cleghorn's description of it and occasional verbal echoes between the pamphlet and Cleghorn's moral philosophy lectures, is an inscription on the title page of the copy of the Edinburgh edition in the British Library (Classmark BL 8142.b.59(1)), which reads, "By W.C." According to M.A. Stewart, this inscription is in the hand of David Fordyce, whose acquaintance with the Wisharts during the time he spent in Edinburgh as a preacher in 1742 would have put him in a good position to know that Cleghorn had written the pamphlet. M.A. Stewart to Richard Sher and Mark Box, 30 April 2005, electronic mail in the possession of M. A. Stewart.

<sup>52</sup> [W. Cleghorn?], *The Spirit and Principles of the Whigs and the Jacobites compared*, 12-17.

<sup>53</sup> *DNB*, s.v. "Ferguson, Adam," by Fania Oz-Salzberger.

<sup>54</sup> According to Hugh Cleghorn, Cleghorn made a trip to Lisbon on account of his health shortly before

tried to arrange for Ferguson to assume the Chair of Moral Philosophy, but to no avail. His efforts attest to his friendship with Ferguson and his respect for Ferguson's abilities. "[W]hen the able and accomplished Mr Cleghorn was on his death-bed," John Lee wrote in 1824,

he urged his young friend to apply for the office, which, in his apprehension, no man was more capable of adorning. Mr Cleghorn, after expressing his regret at having no such influence with the patrons as to secure such an arrangement, added, as Mr Ferguson sometimes related with much emotion, "I can only say of you, as Hamlet did of Fortinbras, *He has my dying voice.*"<sup>55</sup>

Ferguson would have to wait ten years before assuming Cleghorn's chair. For all his nephew's efforts, Gavin Hamilton could not be persuaded to use his influence in Ferguson's favor and give up support for his brother-in-law and partner in the printing business, James Balfour; in fact, quite to the contrary. Under pressure from his uncle, Cleghorn resigned his professorship two days before his death, whereupon Balfour was elected to it.<sup>56</sup> Cleghorn's helplessness notwithstanding, Ferguson's gratitude and affection toward him remained very much in evidence. Eighty years after Cleghorn's death, Hugh Cleghorn would report that in his efforts to learn more about his "most Respectable relation," he had heard "many anecdotes concerning him from our friend Dr A. Ferguson who retained to the last the most affectionate remembrance of his Talents and his Virtues."<sup>57</sup> Hugh himself suspected that Ferguson had written the obituary that appeared in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* on Monday, 26 August 1754:

The same Day died here, in the 36th Year of his Age, after a tedious

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his death, but to no avail. H. Cleghorn to J. Lee, 13 March 1836, NLS MS 3441 fol. 84.

<sup>55</sup> *Supplement to the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Editions of the Encyclopaedia Britannica*. v. 4 of 6 (Edinburgh, 1824), s.v. "Ferguson (Adam, LL.D.)."

<sup>56</sup> H. Cleghorn to J. Lee, 13 March 1836, NLS MS 3441 fol. 84. This election, like Cleghorn's in 1745, was of some political import; Balfour, it seems, was not only the favorite of Gavin Hamilton, but also of the faction on the Town Council opposed to then-Provost George Drummond. William Alston, observing the Council's business on behalf of Andrew Fletcher, Lord Milton, wrote confidently to Milton in a letter of 20 August 1754, "Professor Cleghorn cannot live long, so that Mr Balfours Prospect is very near." William Alston to the Right Honorable Lord Milton, Edinburgh 20 August 1754, NLS MS 16685, fol.65. See also Richard Sher, "Professors of Virtue," 109.

<sup>57</sup> H. Cleghorn to J. Lee, 13 March 1836, NLS MS 3441 fol. 84.

Illness, Mr WILLIAM CLEGHORN, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh. For several Years he had filled that Station to the public Advantage and his own Honour, deservedly admired for singular Beauty of Genius, Richness of Imagination, and Fertility of Invention. Esteemed as a Philosopher, he was no less beloved as a Man and a Friend. Never indeed did anyone possess a greater Fund of innate Worth and Goodness. His whole Character was a bright Example of these moral Virtues he taught others. Fill'd with Sincerity and Candour; simple in his Manners; warm in his Friendships; disinterested in his Views; his strongest Passion was to be useful to the World. So worthy a Man cut off in the Prime of Life, gives Occasion to deep and lasting Regret in all who knew him.<sup>58</sup>

“It is the work of no ordinary hand,” wrote Hugh. “I have no authority for ascribing it to Dr Ferguson but it resembles his best style and breathes the veneration and affection with which He always mentioned his name.”<sup>59</sup>

A careful comparison of the two men’s philosophical systems would no doubt reveal that Ferguson owed another, intellectual debt to Cleghorn, beyond his personal affection for Cleghorn and Cleghorn’s professional support for him. The most immediate evidence for such a debt comes from Ferguson’s testament to it, in an incomplete draft of a philosophical dialogue, possibly completed in 1799, in which Ferguson assigns Cleghorn a major part, ascribes to him a concept of beauty like the one which Ferguson himself proceeds to expound, has him explicitly endorse Ferguson’s own belief that “the soldiers glory for which life is exposed a thousand times and often sacrificed” is the most pleasurable gratification of the human mind, and refers to Cleghorn as one of a company “from whom I had taken in my first draughts of moral science.”<sup>60</sup>

Of course, Adam Ferguson’s dialogue cannot be depended upon for an account of Cleghorn’s character or a clear and authoritative summary of his ideas; it is brief and fragmentary, and Ferguson completed it almost half a century after

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<sup>58</sup> *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, no. 5958, Monday 26 August 1754, [3]. In the *Scots Magazine*, vol. xvi (August 1754), p. 404, appeared the following announcement of Cleghorn’s death: “23. [August] At Edinburgh, in the 36th year of his age, after a tedious illness, Mr William Cleghorn, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh.”

<sup>59</sup> H. Cleghorn to J. Lee, 13 March 1836, NLS MS 3441 fol. 84.

<sup>60</sup> Adam Ferguson, “An Excursion in the Highlands: Discourse on Various Subjects,” in *Collection of Essays*, by Adam Ferguson, ed. Yasuo Amoh (Kyoto: Rinsen Book Co., 1996), 310, 45-6, 39.

Cleghorn's death. For a clearer and far more detailed picture of Cleghorn's mind than either Ferguson or Cleghorn's biography can supply, we must turn to the only surviving evidence of those details, three sets of dictates of his lectures on moral philosophy.

The most important of these is a set of four notebooks in the Edinburgh University Library, one of which bears the title, "The Heads of Professor Cleghorn's Lectures,"<sup>61</sup> and all of which bear the name of William Dalgleish of Linlithgow, who appears to have matriculated as a student of John Ker in 1740, of Robert Law in 1741, and of John Stevenson in 1742.<sup>62</sup> The set is certainly incomplete,<sup>63</sup> but the surviving volumes preserve at least two thirds of the lectures given by Cleghorn in the 1746-7 academic year, and they occupy almost six hundred pages. They also have the marks of being relatively faithful dictations of a then-common type: taken down as a lecturer spoke, aiming at an exact record of his words, each sitting lasting about an hour per day, from Monday through Friday.<sup>64</sup> The accuracy of Dalgleish's dictates is not easy to gauge, but he appears more often than not to have made a conscientious effort at recording Cleghorn word-for-word.<sup>65</sup> Throughout the dictates, places emerge where the spoken quality of Cleghorn's words makes itself distinctly felt.<sup>66</sup> The absence of the first volume, however unfortunate, is partly compensated by the two other surviving sets of dictates, each of which consists of a small notebook containing a section of the lectures entitled, "Plan of the whole course of moral

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<sup>61</sup> W. Cleghorn, *Lectures*, EUL, v. 5, [ii].

<sup>62</sup> *Matriculation Roll of the University of Edinburgh*, 13 February 1740, 18 March 1741, 12 February 1742.

<sup>63</sup> The spines are numbered as if the first of five original volumes were missing, and the 1861 auction catalogue of manuscripts in the possession of Hugh Cleghorn's friend, John Lee, indicates that this set of lecture dictates, when Lee possessed it, was composed of five volumes. The lectures themselves, moreover, begin with December 22, 1746, more than a month after other courses at the University appear normally to have begun. (In 1741, at any rate, most "colleges" began in the beginning or middle of November.) It is also possible, though probably impossible to confirm, that the final lecture in the set, from April 28, 1747, was not the final lecture in the course. See Y. Amoh, ed., *Adam Ferguson: Collection of Essays*, xiv, xxvii-xxviii; and "An Account of the University of Edinburgh," 371-4.

<sup>64</sup> C. Shepherd, *Philosophy and Science*, 4-8.

<sup>65</sup> Often the dictates display corrections to minor phrases and words, and occasionally Dalgleish seems to have marked (with an "X" or an asterisk) places in the dictates where he had not caught everything Cleghorn had said, sometimes adding the missing sentences or further explanatory remarks in the margins later, though other times not. He seems to have missed less and less as the year progressed, eventually marking an "X" very seldom and still more seldom adding any missing sections in the margins.

<sup>66</sup> E.g. W. Cleghorn, *Lectures*, EUL, I.231, 369-75, II.327.

Philosophy," likely delivered by Cleghorn at the very beginning of the course.<sup>67</sup>

These documents, however incomplete, are of course invaluable; they are the only known, reliable record of the mind of a man whose moral philosophy otherwise could only remain a mystery. With their help, we need not rest content with the generic view of William Cleghorn as a theologically moderate, whiggish republican, nor with the existing analyses of his thought and their emphasis on the factually correct but incomplete description of Cleghorn as a moral rationalist and critic of Francis Hutcheson's moral sense theory. Rather, we can begin to examine the more detailed reality of Cleghorn's use of moral rationalism and aesthetic moral education to engage with Hutcheson on an issue of greater moment to them both.

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<sup>67</sup> The first of these, taking up seventy-five pages in a small notebook which appears to have belonged to one Neill Duncanson, records the "plan" from Cleghorn's lectures in 1752. (The year 1752 appears at the end of the Plan, and Neill Duncanson's name appears on the first unnumbered page of the notebook.) Duncanson has been identified in the St Andrews catalogue as a schoolmaster. It is perhaps possible, though highly unlikely, that he is the same person whose name appears in the matriculation list of students of George Steuart at Edinburgh University in 1750. (See *Matriculation Roll of the University of Edinburgh*, 15 March 1750.) Duncanson's notebook, like the set of lectures taken down by Dalgleish, appears to have been in the possession of Hugh Cleghorn's friend, John Lee, and put up for auction in 1861. (See Yasuo Amoh, Introduction, *Adam Ferguson, Collection of Essays*, xiv, xxvii-xxviii.) The other copy of the "plan" fills seventy-two pages of a still smaller notebook, written in an unknown hand, and bearing no date. The two plans are in many parts identical, but the presence of obvious differences – a different introductory paragraph and some occasional differences in phraseology, for example – imply that they were not taken down in the same year. In any case, Dalgleish's copy of this plan has not been found, and the two versions of it provide a useful supplement to his lectures, especially because Cleghorn often made references to it as he spoke. See, e.g., W. Cleghorn, *Lectures, EUL*, e.g. I.81, I.365; William Cleghorn, "A plan of the whole course of moral philosophy," taken down by Neill Duncanson, Edinburgh University 1752, St Andrews University Library MS BJ 1021.C6 (formerly MS 1951); and William Cleghorn, "Plan of the whole course of moral philosophy," taken down by an unknown hand, [n.d.], StAndUL, Cleghorn Papers, MS dep. 53, box 3/3. There also survives, in addition to these three sets of lecture dictates, a 366-page commonplace book by Cleghorn, apparently from the years 1738-1740, entitled *Adversariorum Methodus, promptuarium, seu Loci communes, Tomus Primus* (St Andrews University Library, Cleghorn Papers, Box 3/1). Although it provides an extraordinarily useful record of texts which Cleghorn is certain to have read, I hesitate to include it among the most important records of his moral philosophy, simply because of the difficulty of discerning how Cleghorn interpreted the passages he transcribed.

That Hutcheson played a central role in fomenting opposition to Hume's candidacy for the moral philosophy chair was certainly clear to Hume himself. In the summer of 1744, Hume reported as much, with some astonishment, to his friend William Mure:

The accusation of Heresy, Deism, Scepticism, Atheism &c &c &c. was started against me; but never took, being bore down upon by the contrary authority of all the good Company in Town. But what surprized me extremely was to find that this Accusation was supported by the pretended Authority of Mr Hutcheson & even Mr [William] Leechman, who, 'tis said, agreed that I was a very unfit Person for such an Office. This appears to me absolutely incredible, especially with regard to the latter Gentleman. For as to Mr Hutcheson, all my friends think, that he has been rendering me bad Offices to the utmost of his Power. And I know, that Mr Coutts, to whom I said rashly, that I thought I could depend upon Mr Hutcheson's Friendship & Recommendation; I say, Mr Coutts now speaks of that Professor rather as my Enemy than as my Friend. What can be the Meaning of this Conduct in that celebrated & benevolent Moralist, I cannot imagine.<sup>68</sup>

Given the difficulties that Hutcheson and William Leechman themselves had faced over the previous decade, fending off accusations of "deism" and "heresy," it is hard to imagine that the various slurs reported by Hume represented the real basis of their opposition to him. That real basis, however, cannot be discerned with any clarity from documents contemporary with Hume's campaign for the Edinburgh professorship. Rather, it must be inferred from two earlier sources: Hume's side of an epistolary exchange with Hutcheson five years earlier, in which an area of intellectual disagreement related to the third book of Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* came quite clearly to the surface, and a review of that third book, which in the spring of 1741 appeared anonymously in the *Bibliothèque Raisonnée* but is known to have been assembled by a friend of Hutcheson's and appears to incorporate criticisms evident in the Hume-Hutcheson correspondence. The substance of Hutcheson's

<sup>68</sup> David Hume to William Mure of Caldwell, 4 August 1744, *HL* 24.

criticisms, as evinced by these two sources, is that Hume treats justice, the supreme social virtue whose exercise provides human societies with a principle of cohesion, not as an expression of instinctive disinterested benevolence toward other human beings, but rather as an artificially cultivated species of self-interest.

The difference between Hutcheson's and Hume's positions on the nature of justice can hardly appear more clearly than in their respective critiques of Bernard Mandeville, who in his *Fable of the Bees* had described justice as a product of the artificial cultivation of self-interest. What appeared to be a genuine desire for the public good, Mandeville had argued, was in fact a self-interested restraint of socially destructive passions, self-interested in that it arose from individuals' vain desire to be seen to be virtuous.<sup>69</sup> What appeared a virtue, in other words, had its roots in vice. Hutcheson's vituperative rebuttal followed from his basic view, also evident in his veiled critiques of Shaftesbury, that virtue must by definition be a species of disinterested benevolence. A desire for the public good, in Hutcheson's view, could not arise from the artificial cultivation of vanity: "We might have form'd the metaphysical Idea of publick Good, but we had never desir'd it, farther than it tended to our own private Interest, without a Principle of Benevolence."<sup>70</sup> Hume criticized Mandeville on precisely the opposite grounds. It made no sense, Hume observed in his 1754 essay, "Of Refinement in the Arts," to describe self-interest as a vice, when it produced so many public benefits:

Is it not very inconsistent for an author to assert in one page, that moral distinctions are inventions of politicians for public interest; and in the next page maintain, that vice is advantageous to the public? And indeed it seems upon any system of morality, little less than a contradiction in terms, to talk of a vice, which is in general beneficial to society.<sup>71</sup>

For Hume, the prospect of a human society whose cohesion and prosperity depended upon the indulgence of private desires, rather than on fundamentally benevolent affections, was by no means disconcerting.

Indeed, as far as Hume was concerned, there could be no other explanation for

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<sup>69</sup> Bernard Mandeville, *Fable of the Bees*, ed. F.B. Kaye, 2 v. (Oxford: UP, 1924), esp. I.43-4.

<sup>70</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 4th ed., 229.

<sup>71</sup> David Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts," in *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary*, ed. Eugene Miller (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1985), 280.

social cohesion and prosperity. For one thing, there was simply no such thing as “public benevolence.”<sup>72</sup> To be sure, human beings were naturally capable of instinctive, disinterested, generous affection, as Hutcheson had long insisted, but it appeared only among members of the same family, and it could by no means be made to extend to mankind as a whole.<sup>73</sup> Far from serving as a foundation for social life on a larger scale, it produced an anti-social clannishness:

But ‘tho this generosity must be acknowledg’d to the honour of human nature, we may at the same time remark, that so noble an affection, instead of fitting men for large societies, is almost as contrary to them, as the most narrow selfishness. For while each person loves himself better than any other single person, and in his love to others bears the greatest affection to his relations and acquaintance, this must necessarily produce an opposition of passions, and a consequent opposition of actions; which cannot but be dangerous to the new-establish’d union.<sup>74</sup>

As a substitute for instinctive benevolence as the foundation of social cohesion, Hume proposed a principle of human nature that could be made to check those excesses of self-interest which posed a danger to social life and to the external advantages that social life existed to secure. This substitute, which could not be explained as a form of benevolence, was the principle of *sympathy*.

According to Hume, sympathy is the foundation of human beings’ esteem and respect for justice. It is the principle by which human beings partake in the passions of others, and it serves as a principle of social cohesion in so far as it causes us to feel unease at the thought that an injustice is being done to someone else, even when that injustice has no bearing at all upon our own private interests. In a long and famous passage from the third book of his *Treatise*, Hume describes sympathy’s operation as follows:

After men have found by experience, that their selfishness and confin’d generosity, acting at their liberty, totally incapacitate them for society;

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<sup>72</sup> David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. David and Mary Norton (Oxford: UP, 2000), III.2.1, ¶12-13.

<sup>73</sup> D. Hume, *Treatise*, III.2.1, ¶12.

<sup>74</sup> D. Hume, *Treatise*, III.2.2, ¶6.



and at the same time have observ'd, that society is necessary to the satisfaction of those very passions, they are naturally induc'd to lay themselves under the restraint of such rules, as may render their commerce more safe and commodious. To the imposition then, and observance of these rules, both in general, and in every particular instance, they are at first induc'd only by a regard to interest; and this motive, on the first formation of society, is sufficiently strong and forcible. But when society has become numerous, and has encreas'd to a tribe or nation, this interest is more remote; nor do men so readily perceive, that disorder and confusion follow upon every breach of these rules, as in a more narrow and contracted society. But tho' in our own actions we may frequently lose sight of that interest, which we have in maintaining order, and may follow a lesser and more present interest, we never fail to observe the prejudice we receive, either mediately or immediately, from the injustice of others; as not being in that case either blinded by passion, or byass'd by any contrary temptation. Nay when the injustice is so distant from us, as no way to affect our interest, it still displeases us; because we consider it as prejudicial to human society, and pernicious to every one that approaches the person guilty of it. We partake' of their uneasiness by sympathy; and as every thing, which gives uneasiness in human actions, upon the general survey, is call'd Vice, and whatever produces satisfaction, in the same manner, is denominated Virtue; this is the reason why the sense of moral good and evil follows upon justice and injustice.<sup>75</sup>

Hume's repudiation of Hutcheson in this passage is radical. Whereas Hutcheson understands instinctive benevolence to be the social virtue that the moral sense approves and positively identifies as virtuous, Hume understands the "sense of moral good and evil" to respond to a form of private pleasure and pain. Though this form of pleasure and pain does not depend upon a sense of immediate and narrow private interest, by the effect of sympathy it comes to depend upon the sense that one's private interest is intimately connected with the welfare of a larger society whose order redounds indirectly to one's own benefit. Fundamentally, what Hume thought the "moral sense" approved – in other words, that quality of a person's character which Hume thought gave pleasure to the person contemplating it – was

<sup>75</sup> D. Hume, *Treatise*, ed. Norton, III.2.2, ¶24.

not benevolence *per se*. It was rather the “usefulness” or simply “agreeableness” of the quality in question, either to the contemplator or to its possessor.<sup>76</sup>

To this conception of justice, Hutcheson appears to have responded negatively. If Hutcheson’s response indeed made its way into an anonymous review of Book III of Hume’s *Treatise* in the *Bibliothèque Raisonnée*, as seems likely,<sup>77</sup> then the response was very negative indeed; Hume had merely presented “Hobbes’s system . . . in a new form.”<sup>78</sup> The details of Hutcheson’s negative response appear still more clearly and authoritatively in four surviving letters from Hume to Hutcheson between 1739 and 1743.<sup>79</sup> It is clear from the first of these, dated 17 September 1739, that Hume had sent Hutcheson a draft of the third book of the *Treatise*, and that Hutcheson had replied with a number of criticisms. Of these, Hume mentions three, the first of which vividly establishes the theme of the rest. “What affected me most in your Remarks,” Hume writes, “is your observing, that there wants a certain Warmth in the Cause of Virtue.”<sup>80</sup> This well-known comment has been interpreted in various ways,<sup>81</sup> but what Hume proceeds to write makes its meaning relatively clear:

There are different ways of examining the Mind as well as the Body. One may consider it either as an Anatomist or as a Painter; either to discover its most secret Springs & Principles or to describe the Grace & Beauty of its Actions. I imagine it impossible to conjoin these two Views. Where you pull off the Skin, & display all the minute Parts, there appears something trivial, even in the noblest Attitudes & most vigorous Actions: Nor can you ever render the Object graceful or engaging but by cloathing the Parts again with Skin & Flesh, & presenting only their bare Outside.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> D. Hume, *Treatise*, ed. Norton, III.3.1, ¶30.

<sup>77</sup> James Moore, “A Scots-Irish Bookseller in Holland: William Smith of Amsterdam (1698-1741),” *Eighteenth-Century Scotland: The Newsletter of the Eighteenth-Century Scottish Studies Society* 7 (Spring 1993), 8-11; James Moore and M. A. Stewart, “William Smith and the Dissenters’ Book Trade,” *Bulletin of the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland* 22 (April 1993): 21-26.

<sup>78</sup> Review of *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book III, by David Hume, *Bibliothèque Raisonnée* 26.2 (April-June 1741): 425, trans. James Feiser, in *Early Responses to Hume’s Moral Philosophy*, (Bristol: Thoemmes, 1999), 10-11.

<sup>79</sup> David Hume to Francis Hutcheson, *HL*, Letters 13, 15, 16, 19.

<sup>80</sup> D. Hume to F. Hutcheson, 17 September 1739, *HL*, Letter 13.

<sup>81</sup> Most notably by R. Sher, “Professors of Virtue,” 102-3; and J. Moore, “Hume and Hutcheson,” 35-8.

<sup>82</sup> D. Hume to F. Hutcheson, 17 September 1739, *HL*, Letter 13.

Hutcheson had very likely suggested what he clearly believed, namely, that the inner principles of human action necessarily appear as “beautiful” as the actions themselves – in other words, that virtuous motives lie behind virtuous actions. In the case of justice, of course, this meant that behind the “skin” of promoting the public good without regard to one’s own narrow interest, there must lie an equally disinterested, benevolent motive, not something “trivial” like a mere love of others’ utility to oneself. The remaining philosophical criticisms, as they appear from Hume’s responses, merely extend this theme. Hutcheson had objected to Hume’s description of justice as artificial rather than natural, to Hume’s inclusion of “natural abilities” among the virtues despite their remoteness from benevolence (which Hutcheson seemed to regard as the only genuine virtue), and to Hume’s assertion that sympathy, rather than a moral sense that approved of benevolence, was the source of human beings’ esteem for justice. The echoes of Hutcheson’s criticisms of Pufendorf and the “Epicureans” in his inaugural lecture are unsurprisingly unmistakable;<sup>83</sup> in response, Hume claims the authority of Pufendorf as he endorses Horace’s maxim that utility is “properly the mother of the just and equitable man”!<sup>84</sup>

Whether the dispute between Hutcheson and Hume can be summarized with any fairness as a revival of debates between the Stoics and the Epicureans is open to dispute,<sup>85</sup> but it cannot be denied that just as Hutcheson criticizes Hume for errors that he associates with Epicureanism, Hume responds to Hutcheson by pointing out the weakness of the Stoic position, as he finds it in the fourth book of Cicero’s *De finibus*, that virtue is the only genuine good. As a postscript to his letter of 17 September 1739, Hume writes to Hutcheson:

You are a great admirer of Cicero as well as I am. Please to review the 4th Book, *de finibus bonorum & malorum*; where you find him prove against the *Stoics*, that if there be no other Goods but Virtue, tis impossible there can be any Virtue; because the Mind woud then want all Motives to begin its Actions upon: And tis on the Goodness or Badness of the Motives that the Virtue of the Action depends. This

<sup>83</sup> See also above, ch. 1, n. 110-13.

<sup>84</sup> D. Hume to F. Hutcheson, 17 September 1739, *HL*, Letter 13.

<sup>85</sup> James Moore presents the seminal exposition of this revival in “Hume and Hutcheson,” 25-35. David Fate Norton has criticized Moore’s arguments, taking issue with the application of the terms “Stoic” and “Epicurean” and restating the case that Hutcheson and Hume should be regarded as moral sentimentalists, but he does not engage with Moore’s principal claim, that the issue dividing Hume and Hutcheson was the nature of justice. D. F. Norton, “Hume and Hutcheson,” 211-56.

proves, that to every virtuous Action there must be a Motive or impelling Passion distinct from the Virtue, & that Virtue can never be the sole Motive to any Action. You do not assent to this; tho' I think there is no Proposition more certain or important.<sup>86</sup>

Hume's point may seem limited, but in fact it can be taken as a reference to the nub of his disagreement with Hutcheson over the nature of justice. The difficulty with the Stoic identification of the ultimate good with virtue alone, as described by Cicero in Book IV of his *De finibus*, is that the Stoics overlook the fact that human beings are composed of bodies and minds, rather than minds alone. To insist that the only good is a "moral life," as Zeno does, contradicts the Stoics' own maxim that the greatest good is "life according to nature" – since nature "so strongly recommends" bodily goods like health and freedom from pain as necessary for any animal, human beings not excepted, to reach its supreme and happiest state.<sup>87</sup> More specifically, since bodily goods are the "springs of conduct" and the very things that excite desire, to reject them as irrelevant to the attainment of the supreme good is to reject the only means by which human beings can have any hope of attaining that good.<sup>88</sup> In referring to a "Motive or impelling Passion distinct from the Virtue," therefore, Hume insinuates that the Motive to virtue must be something capable of arousing desire by appeal to bodily interests, and that this motive should not be dismissed as alien or opposed to virtue. With reference to the error of the Stoics, in other words, Hume is redirecting his criticism of Mandeville against Hutcheson: justice is no less a virtue for arising out of self-interest.

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<sup>86</sup> D. Hume to F. Hutcheson, 17 September 1739, HL13. On the central importance of this observation to Book III of Hume's *Treatise*, see M. A. Stewart, "The Stoic legacy in the early Scottish Enlightenment," in *Atoms, Pneuma, and Tranquillity*, ed. Margaret Osler (Cambridge: UP, 1991), 284.

<sup>87</sup> Cicero, *De finibus bonorum et malorum*, ed. and trans. H. Rackham (London: Heinemann, 1914; rept. 1951), 329-31.

<sup>88</sup> Cicero, *De finibus*, 359.

The concurrent controversy over moral sentimentalism and moral rationalism, to borrow Selby-Bigge's terms, may seem at first glance to have been quite a separate issue from the substance of Hutcheson's quarrel with David Hume, not least of all because Hume and Hutcheson can with good reason be grouped together as moral sentimentalists.<sup>89</sup> Hutcheson himself, however, did not see it this way. In fact, he clearly considered the rationalism-sentimentalism issue to be intimately related to the question of natural benevolence and sociability.

The *locus classicus* for Hutcheson's view of rationalism is his epistolary exchange with Gilbert Burnet (1690-1726) in the *London Journal* of 1725, published in 1735 as *Letters between the Late Mr. Gilbert Burnet and Mr. Hutchinson, concerning the True Foundation of Virtue or Moral Goodness*.<sup>90</sup> The two men's dispute lasted almost twenty years. It began with a pseudonymous letter printed in the *London Journal* of 1725, in which Burnet expressed dissatisfaction with the theory of the moral sense advanced by Hutcheson in the recently published *Inquiry*, and it ended with Hutcheson's final responses to Burnet's criticisms, first in his 1728 *Illustrations on the Moral Sense*, and then, arguably, in additions to the 1745 edition of his *Inquiry*. Over the course of the original epistolary exchange between Burnet and Hutcheson, the basic questions at issue between them became clear: what are moral good and moral evil, by means of what mental faculty do human beings discern them, and what is the source of the obligation to act in accordance with good and not evil? By the end of the exchange, the incompatibility between Burnet's and Hutcheson's answers to those questions had become equally evident.

According to Burnet, the moral goodness of an action consisted of what he called its "reasonableness," "fitness," and "conformity to truth," and the discovery of this quality by the faculty of reason constituted the source of moral obligation.<sup>91</sup> Burnet borrowed these terms, and likely many of the tacit arguments behind his position, from the man whose principles he recommended above Hutcheson's as the "true and solid foundation" of virtue, Samuel Clarke (1675-1729). In his 1705 Boyle

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<sup>89</sup> See above, n. 9-11.

<sup>90</sup> Bernard Peach, "The Correspondence between Francis Hutcheson and Gilbert Burnet: The Problem of the Date," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* VIII.1 (Jan 1970): 87-91.

<sup>91</sup> Gilbert Burnet and Francis Hutcheson, *Letters between the Late Mr. Gilbert Burnet and Mr. Hutchinson, concerning the True Foundation of Virtue or Moral Goodness* (London, 1735), 11-12, 34, 37-9, 43.

Lecture, *A Discourse on the Unalterable Obligations of Natural Religion*, Clarke had argued, ostensibly in opposition to Hobbes, that the source of moral obligation was to be found neither in compacts, nor in the power of a lawgiver to attach sanctions to laws, nor in any considerations of advantages, rewards, and punishments, but rather in the “eternal and necessary differences between things.”<sup>92</sup> Moral obligation, he explains, is like the obligation to assent to a mathematical truth, in so far as it, too, is a “dictate of judgment,” albeit one that our “brutish lusts” often compel us to disobey.<sup>93</sup> In the case of action, the type of truth to which our judgment commands assent consists of the conformity between a proposition about what kind of action is good or evil, and the idea of some prospective action. If we will an action that our judgment has informed us is evil, then we are acting in accordance with a proposition that contradicts the one presented by our judgment. In this sense, Clarke declares, we are “willing a contradiction.”<sup>94</sup>

On the question of the source of moral obligation, Burnet is less explicit than Clarke; he is content to assert that reason is “That which lays the proper, and indeed, strictly speaking, the only Obligation upon us to act in a certain manner.”<sup>95</sup> On the further question of how we arrive at these propositions about good and evil that allow us to judge our own actions by an act of comparison, Burnet makes his position clearer than Clarke’s. As an example, he takes the case of acting for the public good:

If the Question be, *Why should I in my Actions regard Publick Good?* — The proper and first Answer is, “Because it is the *Fit* means of obtaining the *Public Good*, that every constituent Member of that *Publick* should regard it.” But if it be further demanded — *Why ought the Publick Good to be sought after?* — Then the right Answer is, — “Because it is *Fit* for the accomplishing the wise *End* of our Creator, to make all his Creatures Happy, that it should be so.” And if it be further urged — “Why is that *End* to be regarded?” The Answer is — “Because it is a *wise* and *reasonable* End.”<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Samuel Clarke, *A Discourse concerning the Being and Attributes of God, the Obligations of Natural Religion, and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation*, in *A Discourse concerning the being and attributes of God . . . being Sixteen Sermons*, 3rd ed. (London, 1711), II.5, II.50.

<sup>93</sup> S. Clarke, *Discourse*, II.53.

<sup>94</sup> S. Clarke, *Discourse*, II.50.

<sup>95</sup> G. Burnet and F. Hutcheson, *Letters*, 43.

<sup>96</sup> G. Burnet and F. Hutcheson, *Letters*, 39-40.

In order to judge whether an action is good, therefore, one must discover whether an action is reasonable – which, it seems, does not necessarily depend upon discovering the will of God, since God’s ends, too, can be judged reasonable or unreasonable. When pressed by Hutcheson to explain the meaning of “reasonable” and the way in which reasonableness can be perceived, Burnet has recourse to psychology. An end is *reasonable*, he explains, if human reason (which he calls “the Sense of the Agreement or Disagreement of our Simple Ideas, or of the Combinations of them, resulting from their Comparison”) perceives it to be best. The proposition “that it is in itself Best that all should be happy” is “immediately perceivable by all rational creatures.”<sup>97</sup> It is a “self-evident axiom” analogous to the mathematical equality of a whole with all its parts, an “unmoveable truth” that we perceive “intuitively” and that “will bear all the weight we can lay upon it.”<sup>98</sup> Moral perception, therefore, is an act of reason, comparing an intuitively perceived, supremely reasonable end with the end of a prospective action, and it is from this act of perception that moral obligation flows.

The problem with Hutcheson’s scheme of moral perception as the function of a “moral sense,” by contrast, seemed to Burnet to be two-fold. First, Burnet registers dissatisfaction with the notion that good and evil are discernible only by a sensation of pleasure arising from perceptions by a sense whose truthfulness cannot be verified except by appeal to the authority of God, the author of human nature.<sup>99</sup> Second, he finds it implausible that the sensation of pleasure following the perception of beauty in a human action, which on Hutcheson’s account appears to constitute moral approbation, should precede a rational judgment about whether the action is in fact virtuous. The “inward pleasure” of such approbation must follow and depend, he insists, upon the activity of reason.<sup>100</sup> After all, he adds, “Things do not seem to us to be True or Right, because they are beautiful, or please us; but seem beautiful, or please us, because they seem to be true or right.”<sup>101</sup> Even if it should be objected that “the Sense of Beauty or Pleasure moves faster than the Sense of Truth or Right,” in that the latter only operates “after a long Deduction of Reasoning,” this can be explained by the fact that we often “imagine” beauty in an object about which we have not yet formed a demonstrative judgment. It does not mean that we can take

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<sup>97</sup> G. Burnet and F. Hutcheson, *Letters*, 11. 61.

<sup>98</sup> G. Burnet and F. Hutcheson, *Letters*, 61-2, 66-8.

<sup>99</sup> G. Burnet and F. Hutcheson, *Letters*, 9-11.

<sup>100</sup> G. Burnet and F. Hutcheson, *Letters*, 11.

<sup>101</sup> G. Burnet and F. Hutcheson, *Letters*, 12.

our sense of beauty to be the criterion of beauty itself, since if we examine the object further and discover that we have initially judged wrong, “the Beauty immediately vanishes away, and a Sentiment of the contrary succeeds.”<sup>102</sup> In examining morally good actions, as in examining beautiful objects, human beings discern the moral goodness by an act of reasoning, and the pleasure of approbation follows. Even if, as Burnet admits, the sensation of pleasure is what ultimately motivates virtuous actions, this sensation cannot be the ultimate arbiter of an action’s goodness or rightness.<sup>103</sup>

According to Hutcheson, on the other hand, Burnet’s scheme has crippling problems of its own. The most fundamental of these is that the faculty of reason simply cannot do what Burnet expects of it; that is, it cannot identify ends of action, for this is in fact the province of the will. To assert otherwise, Hutcheson warns, is to forget that reason or intellect – Hutcheson uses the two words interchangeably – presents “the natures and relations of things,” whereas “affection, volition, desire, action” depend on the will. “But the will is forgot of late,” he writes,

and some ascribe to the *Intellect*, not only *Contemplation* or Knowledge, but *Choice, Desire, Prosecuting, Loving*. Nay some are grown so ingenious in uniting the Powers of the Soul, that *contemplating with Pleasure, Symmetry and Proportion*, and Act of the *Intellect* as they plead, is the same thing with *Goodwill* or the virtuous *Desire* of publick Happiness.<sup>104</sup>

To claim that some actions or ends of action are simply “reasonable,” and that this reasonableness can be discovered through an act of contemplation quite distinct from any desire or pleasure that may happen to accompany the discovery, is to ignore that this desire or accompanying pleasure is precisely what prompts us to identify an action or an end as reasonable.

To prove this point, Hutcheson turns to Grotius’ *De jure belli et pacis* for a bipartite classification of reasons for action.<sup>105</sup> Reasons, he declares, are either *exciting reasons* or *justifying reasons*. Although they both comprise “truths” in the form of propositions about the fitness of an action to achieve some end, neither

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<sup>102</sup> G. Burnet and F. Hutcheson, *Letters*, 14.

<sup>103</sup> G. Burnet and F. Hutcheson, *Letters*, 59.

<sup>104</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Illustrations*, 219-20.

<sup>105</sup> G. Burnet and F. Hutcheson, *Letters*, 48-9; F. Hutcheson, *Illustrations*, 218.



constitutes an ultimate end of action; exciting reasons must refer ultimately to desires or instincts, and justifying reasons must refer ultimately to sensations of approval, which is to say, to the activity of an internal or “moral” sense. Otherwise, we have no choice but get caught in an infinite regress. As an authority for this observation, and for the apparent corollary that all reasons must terminate in a desire or a sensation of approval, Hutcheson cites Aristotle:

But are there not *Exciting Reasons* even antecedent to any *End*, moving us to propose one *End* rather than another? To this Aristotle long ago answered, that there are *Ultimate Ends*, not desired with a view to anything further; and *Subordinate Ends*, desired with a view to something further. There are *Exciting Reasons*, or *Truths*, about subordinate Ends, shewing their Tendency toward the *Ultimate End*; but as to the *Ultimate Ends*, there is no Truth or Reason exciting us to pursue them. Were there *Exciting Reasons* for all Ends, there could be no *Ultimate End*; but we should desire One thing for the Sake of Another in an infinite Series.<sup>106</sup>

Hutcheson would later expand the significance of this observation, interpreting Aristotle’s assertion of the necessary existence of ultimate ends as a full-scale endorsement of his own moral sense theory.<sup>107</sup> Here, however, he refers to Aristotle by way of showing that Burnet’s position must be regarded as incoherent. The absolute “fitness” and “reasonableness” of actions, to which Burnet so insistently refers, necessarily presuppose an instinctive desire and a moral sense. It is on the basis of this fact that Hutcheson connects moral rationalism with Epicureanism.

Strictly speaking, of course, such a connection seems incredible. Hutcheson’s argument against Burnet appears not to bear at all on the question of whether human beings ultimately desire the good of others and approve as virtuous only acts of disinterested benevolence. Even Hutcheson himself does not assert that rationalist theories of moral perception necessarily presuppose an instinctive desire for private pleasure or a moral sense that approves of selfishness or utility as virtuous; they

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<sup>106</sup> G. Burnet and F. Hutcheson, *Letters*, 49-50.

<sup>107</sup> Francis Hutcheson, *Philosophiae Moralis Institutio Compendiaria*, 2nd ed. (Glasgow, 1745), I.6, 103n. This reference to Aristotle in the *Compend*, in which Hutcheson explicitly follows Henry More’s comment to the same effect in his *Enchiridion*, is explained by James Moore in his preface to Hutcheson’s *Logicae Compendium*, ed. James Moore and Michael Silverthorne (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2006), xxv-xxvi.

must simply presuppose *some* instinctive desire and *some* moral sense. Either they can be equated with the system of “Epicurus, Hobbes, and Rochefoucauld,” according to which all desires and sensations of moral approval are “reducible to self-love,” or they can be equated with Hutcheson’s own system, according to which some affections are genuinely benevolent and the moral sense approves of them alone.<sup>108</sup>

On the other hand, for all Hutcheson’s apparent neutrality, he clearly suspects that theories of virtue as “reasonableness” perceptible by intellect are in many cases mere cloaks for selfish theories. This suspicion is vaguely detectable in his epistolary responses to Burnet, in which he insists that in the absence of the presupposition of a moral sense, “reasonable” can only refer to the fitness of an action to serve one’s private interest.<sup>109</sup> It appears far more clearly in the corrections and additions to the fourth edition of Hutcheson’s *Inquiry*, which appeared in 1745, after Hutcheson had ostensibly finished his dispute with Burnet and had turned his attention to two other sources of criticism.

At first glance, it would seem that two of the critics whom Hutcheson appears to have had in mind as he prepared the fourth edition of his *Inquiry*, John Balguy (1686-1748) and John Clarke of Hull (d.1734), had attacked him from quite opposite directions.<sup>110</sup> Balguy, in his 1728-9 *Foundation of Moral Goodness, or, a Further Inquiry into the Original of our Idea of Virtue*, had assailed Hutcheson for “inverting the frame of our nature” and “transferring supremacy from the highest principle to the lowest” by identifying the foundation of virtue not as the faculty of reason but as an instinctive benevolence, something that human beings share with animals, and an apparently arbitrarily constituted moral sense.<sup>111</sup> Largely following “that excellent, that inestimable, Dr Samuel Clarke’s Boyle Lectures,” Balguy asserts that the foundation of virtue is “truth,” that virtue itself can be described as “fitness,” that the faculty of reason is sufficient to perceive the agreement and disagreement of “moral ideas,” and that it is by an act of reason that moral obligation arises. Moral obligation – which he calls “internal,” as opposed to the “external obligation” that follows from considerations of private pleasure – is “a state of mind into which [one]

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<sup>108</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Illustrations*, 207-213, 232-3. Hutcheson observes a similar dichotomy in the case of moral obligation: either obligation is explained as a function of the selfish affections or as a function of the approbation of a moral sense.

<sup>109</sup> E.g. G. Burnet and F. Hutcheson, *Letters*, 21-23.

<sup>110</sup> *DNB*, s.v. “Clarke, John (bap. 1687, d. 1734)”; and *DNB*, s.v. “Balguy, John (1686-1748)”.

<sup>111</sup> John Balguy, *Foundation of Moral Goodness, or a Further Inquiry into the Original of our Idea of Virtue* (London, 1728-9), 7-8, 14.

is brought by the perception of a plain reason for acting, or forbearing to act, arising from the Nature, Circumstances, or Relations of Persons or Things.”<sup>112</sup> With the exception of his terminology, his emphasis on the dignity of reason as opposed to instinct, and his omitting to lay stress on the intuitive nature of moral perception, Balguy does not deviate far from the line taken by Burnet three years earlier.

He goes farther than Burnet, however, and arguably farther even than Samuel Clarke, in his defense of reason as the “foundation” of morality. Whereas Burnet is willing to concede that reason cannot actually motivate action, that it merely presents an end to the mind and relies upon the pleasure of moral approbation to motivate the pursuit of that end, Balguy insists that moral approbation itself can motivate action. To the question whether “affections arise necessarily from rational apprehensions of good or evil,” Balguy answers in the affirmative.<sup>113</sup> Hutcheson’s “exciting” and “justifying” reasons, in other words, are identical.<sup>114</sup> In this sense, Balguy opposed Hutcheson with a more thorough-going rationalism even than Gilbert Burnet’s.

John Clarke, on the other hand, had attacked Samuel Clarke’s second Boyle lecture as unconvincing, for the same reason advanced by Hutcheson against Burnet: “fitness” was unintelligible without the presupposition of some ultimate end that could only be explained in terms of an individual’s desire for happiness. Unlike Hutcheson, however, John Clarke insisted that this desire could not have as its ultimate object the happiness of other people; it could only refer ultimately to the happiness of the individual, in the form of pleasure or the absence of pain. “Reasons and relations,” he declared in his 1726 *Foundation of Morality in Theory and Practice Considered*, “cannot stand against pleasure and pain any more than dust before a whirlwind. . . .”<sup>115</sup> When it came to Hutcheson’s theory of virtue as a thoroughly disinterested, instinctive benevolence, therefore, John Clarke was not convinced. He insisted that the only thing that could motivate human action was the prospect of pleasure, at the very least the pleasure that constituted moral approbation. Hutcheson had aimed to overturn precisely this view at the beginning of his *Inquiry*, and it was to this aim that John Clarke took exception.<sup>116</sup> On the one hand, he

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<sup>112</sup> J. Balguy, *Foundation of Moral Goodness*, 22-3, 31, 47-8, 57.

<sup>113</sup> J. Balguy, *Foundation of Moral Goodness*, 43-4.

<sup>114</sup> J. Balguy, *Foundation of Moral Goodness*, 45.

<sup>115</sup> John Clarke, *The Foundation of Morality in Theory and Practice considered, in an examination of the learned Dr. Samuel Clarke’s opinion, concerning the original of moral obligation; as also of the notion of virtue advanced in a late book, entitled, An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (York, 1726), 8.

<sup>116</sup> J. Clarke, *Foundation of Morality*, 43-4.

argued, it clearly contradicted the teachings of Paul,<sup>117</sup> and on the other hand, the anatomy of the human mind made it impossible. Borrowing explicitly from John Locke's theory of the will, Clarke argued that "everything but pain and pleasure is indifferent to the mind, since the mind can be at ease without those things." After all, he explained, "the desire of, or inclination for any thing, is nothing but an uneasiness for the want of it," and the prospect of pleasure is what creates the sensation of unease and thereby raises an affection or produces a disposition to act.<sup>118</sup> Clarke's implication, of course, was that all desires are by their very nature self-interested. Even the parental affection toward children, which Hume and Hutcheson had agreed was a form of irreducible generosity, Clarke considered self-interested, since it involves parents "taking pleasure" in their children's happiness.<sup>119</sup> To Clarke, this did not mean that parental affection was not genuinely benevolent, but of course to Hutcheson it did. As far as Hutcheson was concerned, John Clarke could be categorized as an Epicurean.

Moreover, in Hutcheson's view, Balguy's and John Clarke's positions amounted more or less to the same thing. John Clarke had simply made explicit what Balguy necessarily – though tacitly – presupposed: that human actions were driven by an instinctive self-love, previous to all rational deliberation. Balguy's position suffered from the same incoherence as Burnet's, namely, the presupposition that reason can discover an ultimate end of action in the form of a true proposition, without reference to any sensation of moral approbation. Balguy fell into the additional trap of thinking that this true proposition could motivate action. In fact, like Burnet, he had no choice but presuppose that all exciting reasons terminate in a desire or instinct. In Hutcheson's words:

Some will not allow that Virtue can spring from Passions, Instincts, or Affections of any Kind. . . . They tell us, That "Virtue should wholly spring from Reason;" as if Reason or Knowledge of any true Proposition could ever move to Action where there is no End proposed, and no Affection or Desire toward that End.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> J. Clarke, *Foundation of Morality*, 50.

<sup>118</sup> J. Clarke, *Foundation of Morality*, 27, 53.

<sup>119</sup> J. Clarke, *Foundation of Morality*, 61.

<sup>120</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 4th ed., 195-6. On the reference of this passage to Balguy, to whom Hutcheson appears to refer as "an ill-natur'd Adversary" in an accompanying footnote, see Robert A. Greene, "Instinct of Nature: Natural Law, Synderesis, and the Moral Sense," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58.2 (1997), 195-8.

The problem with Balguy, however, was that his aversion to the indignity of admitting that the moral nature of human beings consists of an instinct, rather than the faculty of reason, implied an unwillingness to admit that instincts could be anything but selfish. Otherwise, there could be no reason for him to deny that human beings might possess two instincts, one toward private happiness and the other toward public.<sup>121</sup>

John Clarke's theory of concomitant pleasures, therefore, represented a formidable defense of a position to which Hutcheson believed Balguy's could be reduced: the position that human beings cannot be genuinely benevolent. It can be no accident that in the fourth edition of the *Inquiry*, Hutcheson inserted his veiled refutation of Balguy immediately preceding the place where, in the previous editions, he had reiterated his refutation of the Lockean theory of desire wielded so destructively by John Clarke. As in those editions, though at greater length and shifted into a new fourteen-page discussion of the various ways of "deducing benevolence from self-love," Hutcheson attacks the supposition that without a sensation of uneasiness, human beings are incapable of desire:

We may be uneasy while a desired Event is in Suspense, and yet not desire this Event only as the Means of removing this Uneasiness: Nay, if we did not desire the Event without view to this Uneasiness, we should never have brought the Uneasiness upon ourselves by desiring it. So likewise we may feel Delight upon the Existence of a desired Event, when yet we did not desire the Event only as the Means of obtaining this Delight. . . .<sup>122</sup>

Desire, in other words, does not arise from unease; unease arises from desire, such that pleasure may follow the satisfaction of a desire without being the desire's object. The extension of this argument, which Hutcheson articulates in his *Essay*, is that the desire of the good of others is *entirely* unconnected with the sensations of pleasure and pain that arise from the satisfaction of desires for material things; even the pleasure that arises from the contemplation of moral goodness, Hutcheson describes as more akin to joy than to "immediate" bodily sensations.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 4th ed., 195-6.

<sup>122</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 4th ed., 149-50.

<sup>123</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Essay*, 3rd ed., 61-4.

Hutcheson's debates with Gilbert Burnet, John Balguy, and John Clarke, therefore, constitute a second context – the first is Hutcheson's disagreement with Hume about the foundation of justice – in which he asserted and defended his theory of disinterested benevolence as the only source of virtue. This was the vortex, as it were, that William Cleghorn attempted to navigate. He used a rationalist theory of moral perception, adapted to conform with Hutcheson's strictures against the crypto-Epicureanism of moral rationalism, and conjoined to a scheme of aesthetic moral education akin to Shaftesbury's, as a way of acknowledging Hume's insistence on justice's artificiality while nonetheless maintaining Hutcheson's insistence that it is a species of benevolence.

### *William Cleghorn's Alternative*

That Cleghorn sided with Hutcheson's rationalist critics on the general issue of how human beings perceive moral good and evil could not be clearer. In his lectures, he singles out Hutcheson's theory of the moral sense for explicit criticism, and he invokes arguments advanced to the same end by Gilbert Burnet. In the course of explaining that the "standard of the ultimate End" should be the "understanding," Cleghorn enters into a discussion of how the beauty that constitutes moral goodness is perceived.<sup>124</sup> "Now beauty," he begins, "consists of proportions etc. which can only be perceived by the understanding. Hence the more conversant the understanding power is about these objects, the more knowledge will it gain."<sup>125</sup> Cleghorn then begins to examine "the question whether these perceptions are communicated to the mind by a certain impulse, sense, or instinct[,] superadded by the Deity," in a manner reminiscent of Burnet's treatment of Hutcheson. Moral sense theorists, Cleghorn explains, are forced into the position of having to appeal to the authority of God to justify relying on the moral sense's approbation as the standard of moral goodness, since they insist that the perception of beauty is immediate, prior to any act of judgment by the faculty of reason:

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<sup>124</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.199, 219.

<sup>125</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.219.

Some deny the understanding to have any part here, and say that these perceptions are communicated by an implicit sense analogous to the sense of the body. If they are asked whence they have it, they answer, "from the Deity." This is said in consequence of that famous question whether the perception of beauty is prior to the knowledge of the proportions which constitute the beauty. We would here chuse to take the negative side. But the other is espoused by severals. Therefore we must take notice of the reasons by which they support their scheme. 1. They say that our perceptions of this kind are instantaneous, and are perceived in the same way as the sweetness in honey etc. are. Hence say they there is a power of sensation in the mind as well as in the body.<sup>126</sup>

To this, Cleghorn immediately offers a retort:

That this perception of beauty is immediate in all simple and ordinary cases we will readily allow; but unless it be so also in instances less common and more complex, in which a great variety of proportions are to be traced out, the hypothesis will not be agreeable to appearances. 'Tis certain that some species of beauty don't strike so much at the first as afterwards, and admiration always rises in proportion to our knowledge of the proportions on which beauty depends. If we attend to the reason of sudden perception, there will be no need to run to a moral sense to account for it. 'Tis plain that in simple and common instances [it] arises from obvious and habitual associations.<sup>127</sup>

The question of whether the sensation of beauty precedes judgment of proportions is one that both Cleghorn and Burnet answer in the negative, on similar grounds. Just as Burnet insists that the sensation of beauty in an action depends on the judgment that the action is "right," Cleghorn observes that the sensation of beauty in a thing increases with the knowledge of the thing's harmonious proportions. Likewise, just as Burnet attributes sudden perceptions of beauty to a pre-deliberative and non-rational process – namely, an act of imagination – Cleghorn attributes sudden

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<sup>126</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.219.

<sup>127</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.219-21. Cf. David Clerk, "Taste," May 1740, in *Essays by Students of Professor John Stevenson, 1735-50*, EUL MS Gen 4.54, fols. 122-3.

perceptions of beauty to “obvious and habitual associations.”<sup>128</sup>

In proposing an alternative to Hutcheson’s moral sense, however, Cleghorn does not follow Burnet’s example. Whereas Burnet ostensibly concedes Hutcheson’s division of reasons into *exciting* and *justifying*, rendering his position vulnerable to the specter of the infinite regress that Aristotle supposedly observed in his discussion of ultimate ends, Cleghorn makes no such concession. For one thing, he denies that Aristotle’s discussion of ultimate ends constitutes an endorsement of Hutcheson’s moral sense theory, observing instead that Aristotle identifies reason as the moral faculty.<sup>129</sup> What’s more, he refuses to accept Hutcheson’s division of reasons into exciting and justifying:

Tis said farther that reason can never be the faculty by which we perceive good; for, say they, tis either justifying or exciting, but both of these kinds presuppose an ultimate end or good. Indeed if there is no other kind [of reason] but these, the conclusion is good. But if there be a faculty superior to any of these, this distinction of theirs will be found to be ineffectual.<sup>130</sup>

There is a type of reason, it would seem, that does not presuppose an ultimate end. For all his conciliatory rhetoric, of course, Burnet had implied as much in his endorsement of reason as a faculty that could identify the self-evident, axiomatic propositions that allegedly guided the Deity, but Cleghorn’s approach differs from Burnet’s not only rhetorically but also in substance. Having distinguished two distinct types of reason earlier in his lectures, he jettisons the one that corresponds most closely to Burnet’s description, *intellect* or *intuitive reason*, favoring instead *discursive reason* as the only realistic answer to Hutcheson’s accusation that reason by its very nature is incapable of identifying ultimate ends:

Another consideration worthy of our attention is that they form too narrow a notion of the mind. The description is taken in its imperfect sense. We may recollect that intellect was divided into two kinds, intuitive and discursive. Now there is a great difference between these,

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<sup>128</sup> Note that Cleghorn himself often associates habits and habituation with the imagination. See below, n. 153, and cf. below, n. 153-5.

<sup>129</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.225.

<sup>130</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.223.



that is, between Intellect and Reason. Reason may be called imperfect intellect and intellect perfect reason. Now there is scarce anything in the world that is thus intuitive unless axioms, wherefore intellect can be competent to such a limited creature as man only in a weak degree and reaches very few truths. But the mind cannot intuitively view the ideas of good and beauty. This only belongs to the deity. However from this discursive faculty we may learn some imperfect hints and anticipations of that comprehended by the intellect or the Deity, in whom they are perfect. Yet these serve to guide us to the understanding of the ultimate good.<sup>131</sup>

As a testament to the importance of recognizing that intellect need not be accepted as the rational faculty of moral perception, Cleghorn adds, "On this difference between intellect and reason the whole controversy depends."

Having discarded intellect as the faculty of moral perception, Cleghorn also discards Burnet's description of the identification of moral goodness as an instantaneous act of apprehension, analogous to the apprehension of mathematical axioms. Rather, he describes it as an act of forming the idea of the "supreme end" or "ultimate good" of the universe itself, by means of the principal activities of which discursive reason is capable: the comparison of ideas, the discovery of relations, and the formation of the idea of a whole and its parts. In most cases, Cleghorn admits, the discovery of a whole by the examination of its parts and their relations does not produce the idea of an end, but the universe is an exception. In the "narrow and limited systems which we have occasion to meet with in this world," he explains, proponents of moral sense theories insist that

reason cannot be said to approve of them because the end lies without them, whence it is that the good is felt. Thus it is with respect to the human body. Reason in this case can do no more than investigate all its different parts and consider it as a whole. But the end is not in itself, and therefore can no other way be perceived than by certain sensations of pleasure and advantage, which must ultimately reside in something else than reason. But notwithstanding this, it would be very false reasoning to carry this observation and draw the same conclusion with

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<sup>131</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.219.

respect to the universe or general system.<sup>132</sup>

The universe is different because its end lies within itself, such that the conception of it as a whole necessarily involves a discovery of its end.<sup>133</sup> Cleghorn later restates his point in slightly more vivid and suggestive terms. Perceiving a relation between two things, he begins, is the same as perceiving a truth. The entire system of relations among the parts of a whole, he continues, constitutes the idea of a whole, which is nothing else than a “general truth.” Most wholes, however, have a good that is external to themselves, in the sense that they are good for something other than themselves, something of which they are themselves parts. In the case of a watch, for example, it is not difficult to perceive, by examining the relations between the spring, the chain, the balance, and so on, that the watch is a whole, and that the good of each part is connected with its relation to the other parts; but the perception of the relations of the watch’s parts do not give a clear idea of the watch’s relation to the larger world in which it exists as a part whose function is to tell time.<sup>134</sup> The watch’s good, in other words, describes a relation external to itself, and reason therefore cannot discover that good by an examination merely of the watch’s parts. In the case of the universe, however, there are no other relations than the relations among its parts. The “general truth” of the universe, therefore, is not separate from its “good” or end, and it follows that the discovery of the relations of the parts of the universe yields an idea of the supreme end.<sup>135</sup> Before the discovery of all these relations, of course, the idea of the supreme end cannot be complete and stable; it must remain an “anticipation” of the supreme end.

From this description of the supreme end as a “general truth” perceived – if only weakly and in the form of anticipation – by discursive reason, follows Cleghorn’s account of moral approbation and moral obligation. Rather than a mere pleasurable sensation, moral approbation is a perception of the “Agreement of Actions with these Anticipations” of the supreme end.<sup>136</sup> As in Burnet’s letters to the *London Journal*, moral obligation for Cleghorn simply follows from the perception of the supreme end or ultimate good, and of the type of actions that would accord with it. “When our Actions [are] agreeable to certain Anticipations of . . . Beauty, Truth,

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<sup>132</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.225.

<sup>133</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, e.g. I.227.

<sup>134</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, , I.283-7.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. P. Ayres, I.197-8.

<sup>136</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.231.

and Good,” Cleghorn explains,

then they are called right. Hence the Nature of Moral Obligation takes its Rise. For we mean nothing by saying that we ought to do such an Action than that tis Right to do it.<sup>137</sup>

Unlike Hutcheson, therefore, who treats obligation as deriving from an idea of goodness that arises not from considerations of interest but from the pleasurable sensation of a moral sense constituted to approve of benevolence, Cleghorn hews to the line articulated by Burnet, that “only reason lays an obligation on us to act,” and that the very idea of obligation presupposes “Reason as its foundation.”<sup>138</sup> Moral obligation arises not from a sensation, but from the perceptive activity of discursive reason.

The significance of Cleghorn’s insistence upon identifying moral approbation as a function of discursive reason rather than a “super-added” internal sense, especially with regard to debates in which Hutcheson himself was involved, becomes clearer in the light of a trope that Cleghorn employs throughout his lectures: he contrasts the “Stoics” with Plato and the “Platonists,” consistently taking the side of the latter. Now, it is clear from even the most cursory examination of Cleghorn’s references to Platonism and Stoicism that Cleghorn did not intend simply to attach himself to an ancient school, for his professed allegiance to Plato and “Platonism” is patently incomplete. While accepting arguments for the eternity of soul, which he attributes to groups whom he names the “Pythagoreans,” the “Chaldaeans,” and the “Platonists,” Cleghorn entertains doubts about their arguments for the “pre-existence” of human souls before being associated with human bodies.<sup>139</sup> Nor does Cleghorn accept a related argument that he attributes to Plato, namely, that the presence of so-called “common notions” or *κοίνα ἐννοίαι* can only be explained as a consequence of the pre-existence of human souls, unearthing knowledge as an act of “remembrance” or *ἀναμνήσις*.<sup>140</sup> On the issue of child-rearing, too, Cleghorn explicitly condemns Plato’s view that children ought to be raised by all parents in common rather than by their own parents, and he warns against Plato’s erroneous

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<sup>137</sup> W. Cleghorn, *Lectures*, EUL, I.287-9.

<sup>138</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 2nd ed., 266, 275; G. Burnet, *Letters between the late Mr Gilbert Burnet and Mr Hutcheson* (London, 1735), 43-5.

<sup>139</sup> W. Cleghorn, *Lectures*, EUL, I. 29-31.

<sup>140</sup> W. Cleghorn, *Lectures*, EUL, I.31.

preference of polygamy over monogamous, long-lasting marriages.<sup>141</sup> In the ancient and famous debate over the relative merits of the active and contemplative lives, Cleghorn even takes the Stoic side, preferring their advocacy of the active life to Plato's advocacy of the contemplative, albeit taking care to describe Plato's view as "peculiar" rather than – as in the case of the Epicureans' advocacy of the contemplative life – a species of advocacy for selfishness.<sup>142</sup> Rather than aligning himself with Platonism over Stoicism *tout court*, Cleghorn sought to use praise of Platonism as a way of illustrating his position on an issue in which he thought thought Francis Hutcheson had taken an unrealistic and unnecessarily rigid stance against David Hume. Specifically, Cleghorn praised Platonism over Stoicism in order to draw attention to his own use of a theory of aesthetic moral education, inspired primarily by Shaftesbury, as a means of correcting Hutcheson's conception of natural sociability as fundamentally benevolent, in light of Hume's more realistic account of the artificial principle of justice that unites political societies.

To that end, Cleghorn draws repeated attention to a particular issue on which he portrays the Platonic position as superior to the Stoic one. His depiction of the two schools was by no means unique; various elements can be found in, for example, David Fordyce's "Brief Account of the Nature, Progress, and Origin of Philosophy," probably delivered to students at Marischal College in 1743.<sup>143</sup> Cleghorn appears to have built his criticism of the Stoics largely from elements of Book IV of Cicero's *De finibus*, the very section that Hume had used to insinuate a critique of Hutcheson in his letter of 17 September 1739. Echoing Cicero's observation that the Stoics treat human beings as if they consisted of pure minds, rather than minds joined to bodies, Cleghorn repeatedly criticizes Stoics for ignoring human beings' "present mixed state" and "compound frame" in their discussions of the supreme good.<sup>144</sup>

What the Stoics did not sufficiently acknowledge, Cleghorn repeatedly points out, is that external things, which is to say, material objects, are indispensable to the cultivation of a virtuous human soul. On one level, Cleghorn says this by way of

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<sup>141</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.679-81, 685.

<sup>142</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.595-9.

<sup>143</sup> David Fordyce, "A brief Account of the Nature, Progress, and Origin of Philosophy delivered by the late Mr. David Fordyce, P. P. Marishal College, Aberdeen to his Scholars, before they begun their Philosophical course. Anno 1743/4," in *The Elements of Moral Philosophy in Three Books, with A Brief Account of the Nature, Progress, and Origin of Philosophy*, by D. Fordyce, ed. Thomas Kennedy (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2003), xvii, 182-3.

<sup>144</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, e.g. I.303; W. Cleghorn, "A plan of the whole course of moral philosophy," taken down by N. Duncanson, 4-5.

illustrating his view that sense-perception of material things plays an essential role in the psychology of a virtuous individual. In the case of motivating virtuous actions, the nature of the human being is such that affections are the only motives of actions, and reason alone cannot arouse affections; the formation of mental images of material objects, images derived in large part from the sense organs, is necessary. In the case of moral approbation, too, reason cannot be relied upon immediately; an awareness of the universal system, whose end – the ultimate end of all things – discursive reason can weakly perceive, can only be achieved by a process of contemplating smaller systems and the material things and beings that constitute them. On another level, Cleghorn criticizes the Stoics' insufficient attention to external things by way of illustrating his view that a desire for external things as goods in themselves is one of the principles of cohesion in societies larger than a single human family.

That external things play an indispensable role in the motivation of virtuous actions, Cleghorn takes to be a basic fact that follows from the anatomy of the mind and its relation to the body. Mind can only act on the body – and thereby motivate it to a particular physical action – through the mediation of the *imagination*, a faculty that also communicates sense impressions from the sense organs to the faculty of reason. “The Body has a power of acting upon the Mind, and the Mind upon the Body, so they mutually influence one another,” Cleghorn explains, “and this is principally maintained and carried on by Imagination.”<sup>145</sup> The specifically motivational power of the imagination derives from its role in the arousal of affections, a role that Cleghorn describes as involving a two-part process of perceiving sense impressions and then attaching to them ideas that cause us to desire the objects to which the sense impressions correspond:

The Imagination operates two Ways. 1. It apprehends and contemplates those Objects which are conveyed to the Mind by means of the organs of Sense. 2. It acts upon them that is it associates to them Ideas of its own Store. Such as those of Beauty Order and proportion etc. In consequence of this, these things come to be more the Objects of our Affections.<sup>146</sup>

This process of attaching ideas to sense impressions of material objects, Cleghorn

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<sup>145</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.23.

<sup>146</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.194.

calls the creation of *images*.<sup>147</sup> It is indispensable to the motivation of actions in accordance with reason, because it creates a connection between reasoning, which can only produce abstract ideas of beauty, and the functioning of the body, which can only take place in relation to material objects. The abstract ideas generated by discursive reason's "anticipations" of the supreme good "must be associated with outward circumstances of Beauty and Order to give them Weight and make them Influence the Affections, and give them the Power of Motives in the Mind's present mixed State."<sup>148</sup>

The principal question, of course, is how to ensure that the imagination forms images correctly – that is, that it attaches the correct ideas to sensory impressions, arousing affections toward good and not toward evil. The power of the imagination to arouse affections without guidance from reason's view of the supreme end is clearly the source of many vices; Cleghorn notes that intemperance, avarice, ostentation, and ambition result from the imagination associating various forms of sensual pleasure with the idea of genuine goodness.<sup>149</sup> The answer to this problem is *not*, he insists, the extirpation of the affections; this was the mistake of the Stoics.<sup>150</sup> The problem with the Stoic position, Cleghorn explains, was its inconsistency. On the one hand, the Stoics agreed with the "best writers of the ancients," including Plato, that because "Images so much influence our Affections, 'tis of great Consequence to have them formed right."<sup>151</sup> On the other hand, they advocated doing away with all passions, such that even well-formed images could have no effect:

The best writers among the Antients strongly inculcated this Necessity; The *orthai doxai* were much insisted on by Plato and the Stoics, which meant right notions of the External Things. . . . And according to them the *pathe* depended on erroneous Opinions. The passions which arise from these Opinions are hurtful and Dangerous and therefore ought to be exterminated as much as may be, however this does not conclude that they ought to be extirpated when they proceed on a right Taste or a general Affection founded on a right Taste. Concerning this, the Stoics

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<sup>147</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.194.

<sup>148</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.303.

<sup>149</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.199-201, 179-81.

<sup>150</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.194.

<sup>151</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.194.

seem not to have well understood their own principles.<sup>152</sup>

What Plato understood better than the Stoics, therefore, was that although the imagination could not be allowed simply to create images without guidance, the only solution was to train the imagination itself, not attempt to bypass it or ignore it. This meant, in Cleghorn's terms, using external things, which is to say, sense impressions of those things, to develop the proper imaginative associations. It was moreover the only way, he thought, to train oneself to act habitually in accordance with reason's anticipations of the supreme end, which was precisely the definition of virtuous action.<sup>153</sup> Toward the beginning of his moral philosophy lectures in 1746, Cleghorn repeatedly emphasized this observation by favorably distinguishing Plato from the Stoics:

External things are not only of use to us as Instruments of Virtue; but also necessary to form us to habits of Virtue, according to Plato. The Stoicks maintained External things to be no way useful but as the Instruments of actions, but Plato carried the thing farther and in several places seems to think them necessary to form us to the habits of Virtue.<sup>154</sup>

Developing the habits of virtue, in the language of Shaftesbury – “Plato's illustrious disciple,” according to Cleghorn – means developing “good taste” through the contemplation of corporeal things and the sense impressions they prompt.<sup>155</sup>

The process of using such sense impressions to form the imagination correctly, in accordance with discursive reason's anticipations of the good, is lengthy and difficult. In terms borrowed explicitly from Shaftesbury's account of aesthetic education, Cleghorn describes it as a process by which the imagination and human reason develop in tandem, such that the imagination comes to appreciate genuine beauty, beginning with the beauty of material objects and ending with the supreme beauty of the perfectly virtuous mind – the archetypal example of which is the mind

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<sup>152</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.195-7.

<sup>153</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.287, 491.

<sup>154</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.23. “The Stoics . . . habits of Virtue” is inserted in the margin.

Though Cleghorn does not refer specifically to any specific text by Plato, it is likely he had in mind Book IX of the *Republic*, which Hutcheson mentions in a similar context. See F. Hutcheson, *Essay*, 30.

<sup>155</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, II.365, I.237. Cf. Thomas Young, “A Dissertation on Taste,” 11 May 1742, in *Essays by Students of Professor John Stevenson, 1735-50*, EUL MS Gen 4.54, fols. 170-3.

of God – as expressed in the beauty of the universe. “The first objects that engage the mind,” Cleghorn explains, “are sensible and external. . . . At first, it perceives the forms of beauty as the Objects happen to appear before it, as in a cube, circle, etc.”<sup>156</sup> With the development of imitative artistic ability, the ability to “communicate those ideas of beauty to other materials,” comes the observation that “Ideas of Beauty and Order are not independent of an artist.”<sup>157</sup> Thus arises, again in terms borrowed from Shaftesbury, the notion of “design” by a “forming form,” from which follows immediately the discovery – by discursive reason – of the notion of an “end” and the associated idea of a “whole” (which Cleghorn calls “a Connection of Parts tending to some End”), all of which are themselves susceptible of what Cleghorn calls a “second order” of beauty.<sup>158</sup> Hence arises further the awareness of a “third order” of beauty, the beauty of the “former of the forming forms,” a mind communicating ideas of beauty to itself or other minds.<sup>159</sup> The ultimate aim of developing this awareness is that the imagination should associate the idea of beauty with the impression of a will that acts in accordance with the highest order of beauty, which is to say, the most supreme end. In more explicitly moral terms, Cleghorn describes this process as a growing awareness of ever-more-extensive moral communities and the moral relations which they involve. A child begins by developing an awareness of its own mind and proceeds to an awareness of its nursery; the inhabitants of its house; the family members who visit it; its playfellows; its village; its country and adjacent ones; and for a person “of a philosophical turn,” all mankind and the universe of all rational minds.<sup>160</sup>

The difficulty of this process consists in the fact that it is not simply the unfolding of an innate awareness or admiration, however faint, of moral beauty; the ascent also involves a transcendence of one’s original imaginative predisposition to attach ideas of beauty and goodness to things that give “simple and unmixed sensible pleasure.”<sup>161</sup> An attraction to genuine natural beauty, and a regard for material things as symbols of this beauty rather than mere sources of pleasure or

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<sup>156</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.233.

<sup>157</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.233.

<sup>158</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.283-5, I.233.

<sup>159</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.237. Cf. Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ed. P. Ayres, e.g. II.102-6, 115-22.

<sup>160</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, II.57-61, I.279. Cleghorn is clearly echoing ancient accounts of *oikeiosis*, some of which are preserved by Cicero. Cf. e.g. Cicero, *De finibus*, III.61; and, on *oikeiosis* more generally, S. G. Pembroke, “*Oikeiosis*,” in *Problems in Stoicism*, ed. A. A. Long (London: Athlone Press, 1971): 114-49.

<sup>161</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.289.



pain, only comes later, when reason has begun to become aware of relations, parts, wholes, and design. An attraction to the “moral beauty” of the universe – which Cleghorn takes to be equivalent to “moral truth” – comes last of all.<sup>162</sup> The process is an enlargement and thereby a transformation of one’s opinion of what is “most agreeable” to one’s nature, beginning with narrow affection for one’s own corporeal interests, and ending with an affection toward the good of the most expansive community of rational minds.<sup>163</sup> The method described by Cleghorn as necessary for this transformation, namely, the cultivation of the “inferior” virtues of temperance (which curbs the desire for sensible pleasures) and fortitude (which curbs the fear of pain), is accordingly not governed purely by any admiration of moral beauty; this was a fact that Cicero, in explaining the “foundations” of temperance and fortitude in his *De officiis*, had – in Stoic fashion – ignored. “[I]t is not this pure form [of beauty] that determines the Conduct of such a mixed Creature as Man is in his present state,” Cleghorn warned his auditors. “Therefore we may observe that Cicero is not so fit & useful for explaining and determining the Real Principle of human Action.”<sup>164</sup> The initial foundation of temperance and fortitude, according to Cleghorn, could be found primarily in “aversion,” the “apprehension of misfortune,” such that a desire to free oneself from pain could be said to be a “first step” toward virtue, only later superseded by a regard for moral beauty.<sup>165</sup>

The most concise illustration of how self-interested desire for pleasure is transcended comes from Cleghorn’s treatment of the issue of concomitant pleasures. On the one hand, with respect to the initial objects of desire, the external things which by virtue of giving pleasure are identified as beautiful by the imagination, Cleghorn accepts the very description of desire that Locke and John Clarke espouse and that Hutcheson condemns. “After the pleasure or sensible good is perceived by the *psyche*,” he explains,

there arises a certain uneasy sensation in the soul at the absence of it which is immediately followed by the Desire of it, so that we see there is an Intermediate perception and pursuit of sensible Good. From which, we may observe that if no uneasy sensation arise after the perception of this good, the soul will be indifferent to it and will never

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<sup>162</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.265, 289.

<sup>163</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.283, 265.

<sup>164</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.327.

<sup>165</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.377-9.

affect or pursue it.<sup>166</sup>

The mark of Cleghorn's agreement with John Clarke's view is unmistakable: the desire follows the unease rather than preceding it, such that without a sensation of unease there can only be indifference. This, of course, Hutcheson had taken to be the foundation of the view that the satisfaction of desire necessarily involves a subtle selfishness. On the other hand, Cleghorn immediately notes that the theory of unease does not apply in every case. Where the object of desire is insensible and belongs to the higher part of the soul, *nous*, the mechanism of desire is different:

In the First Case, the Good is external to the Mind, but here it is interior to it and lodges within it; whence perceiving Mental good and enjoying it are almost the same thing.<sup>167</sup>

In other words, the intermediate principles of unease and affection, between the initial stage of perception and the final stage of enjoyment, drop out. In the case of the virtuous human being, therefore, whose admiration for sensory pleasures has given way to an admiration for moral beauty, subtle selfishness does not have a place. Like Hutcheson, Cleghorn admits that "there arises [in the mind] a Pleasure from the Contemplation of its own [virtuous] Conduct," but he also directly contradicts John Clarke: "We don't here say what some philosophers have maintained, that the Mind is drawn to Virtue by its Consciousness of pleasure having attended it."<sup>168</sup> Likewise, while the association of the idea of good with the concomitant pleasures of moral approbation may play an intermediate role in the cultivation of genuine virtue, it is ultimately superseded by a purer idea of good as the supreme end of the universe: "I have here represented Good as compounded of the Anticipations of moral Beauty and Truth, and partly of the Pleasure which attends it," he says, "not that it is absolutely speaking a mixed form, but only in our gradual Way of acquiring the Idea of it."<sup>169</sup>

The second aspect of Cleghorn's criticism of the Stoics' inattentiveness to the importance of external goods provides him with yet another theater for distinguishing himself from Hutcheson. This time, he criticizes the Stoics by way of

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<sup>166</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.[i-ii].

<sup>167</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.[ii].

<sup>168</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.289, 265.

<sup>169</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.291.

making a concession to Hume's description of justice as an artificial virtue, one which cannot be regarded as an extension and codification of the benevolent affections visible within human families. Like Hume, Cleghorn views familial affection as an unreliable basis for social cohesion on a larger scale, and to a certain extent antithetical to it. To be sure, "tenderness and natural affection," especially in the form of that parental love which the Stoics called *στοργή*, can be said to preserve the familial or "oeconomick" association.<sup>170</sup> The pure type of benevolence that constitutes this familial affection, however, far exceeds the benevolence of separate families toward one another, which itself exceeds by the same proportion the benevolence that exists between still larger associations, to which Cleghorn refers in this context as "political associations" or "states."<sup>171</sup> This confinement of natural benevolent affection to the members of one's own family, Cleghorn adds, "is one of the Capital Sources of Human Vices."<sup>172</sup> It is a source of harm done by individual families to one another, which Hume had called "clannishness," and which Cleghorn also identifies in the relations between separate political communities:

Thus one who would scorn and think it below him to be parsimonious in his own individual Capacity yet can endure to assume the Character for the sake of his family, and thus too the members of a state, tho with respect to themselves they would be far from Ambition or Avarice, yet rejoice at any Occasion if their Politic Body acquire any Advantage of this kind of Power or Riches, tho' it be to the hurt of other States.<sup>173</sup>

Accordingly, the principle of cohesion in "political" societies can have very little to do with *στοργή*, and must be otherwise accounted for:

[I]n states which are made up of a great Number & Variety of families, Towns, etc., these Bonds which arise from Blood etc. have little Place; because there is but little pretense for operating to hold these together. There is not in Nature the same foundation for affection to a fellow Britain or Countryman as for a Brother or Son etc. Therefore in order to the same Subsistence of these Political Combinations, and to supply the

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<sup>170</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, II.19-21, 159.

<sup>171</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, II.157.

<sup>172</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, II.157.

<sup>173</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, II.157.

Defect and Want of Natural Affection and maintain the Association entire, Something else must be had recourse to. . . .<sup>174</sup>

This “something else,” which Cleghorn describes as the principle of associations “more artificial” than the family, associations which “seem to have obtained among Mankind by Reflexion and Experience,” is of course *justice*; and in describing it, Cleghorn keeps a certain distance between himself and Hutcheson by making concessions to Hume, namely, by referring to it as the principle of an “artificial” association and by incorporating into it a “sympathetic” principle and allowing the attainment of material possessions – things of use to the body – to be one of its ends.

The position that Cleghorn expresses a desire to refute, in declaring justice to involve a concern with bodies as well as minds, he attributes once again to the Stoics. It is “an error in the Stoic Philosophy,” he observes,

“That nothing is to be regarded on its own account but Virtue.” Tho this philosophically speaking is true yet the Stoics thereby hardened their hearts against the necessities of their fellow Creatures in Distress. And the more so as they were solicitous to inculcate it as a fundamental Maxim in their Philosophy, That all those Passions which implied any Perturbation or were not the pure Emotions of the rational soul ought to be restrained.<sup>175</sup>

According to the Stoics, Cleghorn continues, external evils do not constitute real suffering, and benevolence therefore cannot involve alleviating such evils. It is a case, once again, of failing to see that human beings have a “mixed frame,” and that in their “present state” they must pay attention to the fact that their minds are inextricably joined to bodies. Regard for others’ minds, he answers, must be regulated by a regard for others’ bodies, and vice versa, lest the former fail to dictate that genuine suffering, however corporeal, be relieved.<sup>176</sup> Cleghorn accordingly divides the offices of justice into two classes, *liberality* and *equity*, each of which can be distinguished by the degree to which its aim and the principle of human nature from which it flows relates to bodies as well as minds. Liberality, Cleghorn explains, is of two kinds. The first is entirely disinterested; it flows from a “benevolence of a

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<sup>174</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, II.159.

<sup>175</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.495-7.

<sup>176</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.497.

purer nature” which “seems to have its seat in a part of our constitution lower than the Rational [part],” and which aims directly at “the absolute good of minds.”<sup>177</sup> The other kind of liberality flows from a principle of “sympathetic benevolence” and aims immediately at securing the means of preserving the external goods – for example, the sustenance of corporeal life – by which the union of minds is secured. In different terms, Cleghorn explains that the first kind of liberality flows from a species of benevolent affections that aims at the *communitas vitae* or “intercourse of minds,” whereas the second kind of liberality flows from a species of benevolent affections that aim at the *communicatio utilitatum* or “intercourse of useful things.”<sup>178</sup> Equity, on the other hand, Cleghorn calls a “disposition to preserve the things made by God for men.”<sup>179</sup> It aims at the “outward order” of external goods that are “useful and agreeable” rather than “necessary” to human life. The “higher” type of equity, like both types of liberality, has as its ultimate aim the security of the union of minds; whereas the “lower” type regards external things as “good in themselves.”<sup>180</sup> What “moves the social affections” in the case of equity, Cleghorn notes, is “the convenience of outward things.”<sup>181</sup> Unlike the affection that constitutes liberality, therefore, which Cleghorn explicitly denies can be considered selfish in any regard,<sup>182</sup> equity must be considered selfish, at least by virtue of the fact that any desire for external things involves for Cleghorn the subtly selfish mechanism of unease that Hutcheson condemns in John Clarke but that Shaftesbury took for granted. This represents a deviation from Hutcheson’s strict insistence on justice as an extension of instinctive benevolence, and a partial concession to the Epicureanism that Hutcheson identified in Hume.

The reason for making such a concession, Cleghorn explains clearly and repeatedly. If justice is not admitted to be an artificial virtue, in the sense of involving a regard for external goods as ends in themselves, then the “whole foundation” of political society can be called into question. The danger of Hutcheson’s position, in other words, is its implausibility; having insisted that justice must be a natural virtue, which it clearly is not, Hutcheson effectively concedes the field to moralists of a different persuasion, who view the artificiality of justice as grounds for identifying it as mere selfishness. These philosophers, among whom

<sup>177</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.493-7.

<sup>178</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.493-7, 501-3, 567-9.

<sup>179</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.563.

<sup>180</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.563.

<sup>181</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.565.

<sup>182</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.569.

Cleghorn lists not only Hutcheson's favorite Epicurean targets, Hobbes and Pufendorf, but also Selden, Cumberland, and Heineccius, "have sought to weaken the real foundation of society by pretending to establish it only upon necessity, weakness, power, or arbitrary will."<sup>183</sup> The details of their theories differ, but the fundamental principle uniting them is that "moral obligation flows only from positive law from a superior," by virtue of the fact that only a superior can attach rewards and punishments to legislation, and only the prospect of rewards and punishments – that is, the prospect of acquiring external goods – can obligate human beings to act.<sup>184</sup> The alternative view, that there is an *internal* moral obligation to respect the principles of justice, independent of the *external* obligation created by the power of a superior to enforce laws,<sup>185</sup> would seem to require denying that justice arises from self-interest. This, of course, is Hutcheson's approach. For Cleghorn, however, the answer is to explain how internal moral obligation, which arises in an individual from the perception of moral principles by the faculty of discursive reason, gains force from life in a political society, despite the fact that by its very nature, a political society depends for its existence upon its members' desire for external goods.

The linchpin of Cleghorn's answer is his argument that life in a political community, one whose principle of cohesion is in part its members desire for material benefits, is in fact essential to the cultivation of a virtuous mind. By way of illustration, Cleghorn gives his students a translation, from Thomas Gale's *Opuscula Mythologica*, of "a passage of an old Pythagorean philosopher preserved by Stobaeus, from which it may appear how much they considered political establishments as a necessary preparation for public virtue," adding a lengthy gloss: The virtue of an individual depends on his membership in a virtuous aggregate of human beings, one to which there can be ascribed a beauty or harmony of its own, namely, a harmony of moral relations.<sup>186</sup> In this sense, Cleghorn explains, "the virtue of the whole is

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<sup>183</sup> W. Cleghorn, "A plan of the whole course of moral philosophy," taken down by N. Duncanson, 54-6.

<sup>184</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, II.339-43.

<sup>185</sup> Cf. W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.84-5.

<sup>186</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, II.207. The translated passage, only one line of which is preserved in Dalglish's dictates of Cleghorn's lectures, comes from Gale's edition of "Ocellus Lucanus," an author named in a list of Pythagoreans by Iamblichus and ostensibly preserved by Stobaeus but now considered spurious. See Thomas Gale, *Opuscula Mythologica* (Amsterdam, 1688), 537-8; *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 2nd ed., ed. N.G.L. Hammond and H.H. Scullard (Oxford: UP, 1970; rept. 1992), s.v. "Ocellus," by W.D. Ross.

previous to the virtue of any of the parts.”<sup>187</sup> What this means, more precisely, is that a well-formed political community is the only school, as it were, in which the soul of the individual can be fully trained in virtue – a virtue so perfect as to render the mind “fit for other larger Communities where they shall have no external interests to interfere.”<sup>188</sup> “What a noble end then must this be,” Cleghorn gushes, “This would be as it were a constant stream of Minds flowing from one world to another. This then is the true scope and Design human Policy should have in view.”<sup>189</sup> Virtue must be the end of a political community, therefore, though by no means necessarily the original or only principle of its formation or cohesion.

That there is no other way for human beings to become virtuous than by living in a political community is placed beyond doubt by Cleghorn’s Shaftesburian description of the mechanism by which the imagination and the reasoning faculty ascend in tandem to an awareness of the ultimate end, through the contemplation of ever-greater wholes, ending with glimpses at the “Intellectual System,” the universe of all rational beings. The ascent must be gradual, with the awareness of larger wholes and the moral relations associated with them proceeding gradually from one to the next; if awareness of an intermediate sphere does not develop, the ascent does not continue.<sup>190</sup> Cleghorn observes this fact even in the context of the order of his lectures. On 6 February 1746, long before beginning to discuss oeconomics or politics, he warns his students that the topic they are about to examine “can only be slightly touched here.” “Tis hardly possible for us to acquire any tolerable Notion of the universal System and the divine Being,” he explains, “without taking a View of the Intermediate Systems and the Offices of Mankind.”<sup>191</sup> The same principle holds true in the development of the human being over the longer term. The contemplation of the individual mind alone, of course, is insufficient for developing an awareness of the ultimate end.<sup>192</sup> Nor can such an awareness be achieved if children do not become aware of the moral relations within their families; hence Cleghorn’s repeated and vehement criticism of Plato’s suggestion that children should be raised by all adults in common.<sup>193</sup> The political association is no exception to this rule. By way of illustrating how Hutcheson falls afoul of it, Cleghorn turns

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<sup>187</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, II.209.

<sup>188</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, II.205.

<sup>189</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, II.205.

<sup>190</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, II.59. See above, n. 160.

<sup>191</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.281.

<sup>192</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.275.

<sup>193</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.681.

once again to the Stoics.

What the Stoics understood, Cleghorn explains, is that there exists an internal, genuinely moral obligation, distinct from the external, legal obligation emphasized by Hobbes and his fellow “jurisprudential” theorists. This moral obligation arises from the exercise of the individual’s faculty of moral perception, independent of any desire for external goods. The discussion of this type of obligation, Cleghorn calls “simple ethics.” What the Stoics did not understand, however, is that there is another type of ethics, one more intimately connected with human associations whose principle of cohesion is in large part a desire for external goods. This, Cleghorn identifies as “compound ethics,” the type of ethics that takes account of human beings’ “compound frame.”<sup>194</sup> By treating political associations under the heading of compound ethics rather than simply jurisprudence, and by moreover deferring an examination of the universe of all rational beings until he has finished his discussion of political communities, Cleghorn purports to indicate what the Stoics didn’t see: that moral obligation in an individual derives force from his presence in a community whose principle of cohesion must be largely jurisprudential. Cleghorn explains this as follows:

Tis a great Advantage of this Method that we are here enabled to distinguish the principles which operate in the moral World. In the common [method] the principles in an Individual Man and the Intellectual System are confounded; and in bringing about this Confusion the Stoics had a great hand. For they all along represented a virtuous Man as acting from Independent Principles and in these he was chiefly supported by Reflection on the Nature of the Universe. However these are distinct. A Man indeed may be supposed capable of acting independently to some Degree from reflecting on the Principles which are in himself and on the Independent powers of Will and Action and also from certain Sentiments of worth in Action, but this is at best but Imperfect. When we suppose the Individual to be a Member of a System, then his obligations derive new force.<sup>195</sup>

The mistake of the Stoics was to suppose that an individual could become aware of

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<sup>194</sup> W. Cleghorn, “A plan of the whole course of moral philosophy,” taken down by N. Duncanson, 54-6.

<sup>195</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, II.361.



the universe of all rational beings, and thereby attain at least a glimpse of the supreme good, without becoming progressively aware of ever-more-expansive moral communities and their beauty. Without making such an ascent, Cleghorn warns, one can only attain an imperfect view of the supreme end – which means that the standard by which one regulates one’s imagination must be imperfect, and perfect virtue must remain very much out of reach. Hutcheson, according to Cleghorn, tended toward this error as well.

The book in which Cleghorn professes to find Hutcheson displaying this tendency is his Latin textbook, the *Compend of Moral Philosophy*, published in 1742 and 1745. Recent commentators have noticed the philosophical divergence of the *Compend* from Hutcheson’s more overtly programmatic works, especially with regard to its accommodation of jurisprudential principles, and on first glance, the work bears some similarities to Cleghorn’s lectures.<sup>196</sup> Contrary to his disapproval of sympathy as a subtly selfish sentiment in his *System of Moral Philosophy*, Hutcheson describes sympathy in the *Compend* as something “we naturally approve.”<sup>197</sup> He moreover agrees with Cleghorn’s condemnation of Plato’s scheme of parenting.<sup>198</sup> Cleghorn nonetheless points out two areas in which he must take issue with the *Compend*. First, he criticizes the organization of the book for giving the impression that political and economic associations are subject solely to jurisprudential principles, rather than the principles of “simple ethics”:

The Compend of Mr Hutchinson is an excellent Treatise on this subject and will be of great use to you. His method of prosecuting it is different from ours; chiefly in this: that the first Book or simple ethics refers only to the Individual, whereas we make simple ethics to comprehend not only the individual but also a family and a state. The whole of oeconomics and politics he brings under the name of jurisprudentia and so the natural principles are overlooked.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> This philosophical divergence is the subject of James Moore’s article, “The two systems of Francis Hutcheson: On the origins of the Scottish Enlightenment,” in *Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. M. A. Stewart (Oxford: UP, 1990).

<sup>197</sup> Francis Hutcheson, *A System of Moral Philosophy, in Three Books*, 2 vols. (London and Glasgow, 1755), I.47-9; Francis Hutcheson, *Philosophiae Moralis Institutio Compendiaria* (Glasgow, 1742), I.i.9, I.ii.6. On Hutcheson’s condemnation of sympathy, see J. Moore, “The two systems of Francis Hutcheson,” 239-41.

<sup>198</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Compend*, 1742 ed., III.i.3.

<sup>199</sup> W. Cleghorn, *Lectures*, EUL, II.343-5.

Cleghorn refers, it seems, to the division of Hutcheson's *Compend* into three books, entitled respectively *Ethica*, *De Jurisprudencia Privata*, and *Oeconomices et Politices elementa*.<sup>200</sup> In the first book, Hutcheson makes no reference to families and political associations, discussing them only after his discussion of jurisprudence. The significance of this problem to Cleghorn becomes clearer in Cleghorn's next criticism, highly reminiscent of his complaint that the Stoics ignore the importance of political associations to the development of virtue in individuals:

Another difference betwixt the methods is this: that [Hutcheson] seems to confine the principles of the intellectual system to the Individual. Ultimately, indeed, they coincide, but with respect to such creatures as we are, there is good Reason to distinguish them. There is a difference betwixt those obligations which arise from being members of the intellectual system [and] those which arise from the nature of our own mind as moral agents. Thus do we distinguish for greater clearness and Accuracy betwixt the several principles which determine us to the same actions. These are the two chief reasons for varying from this author.<sup>201</sup>

Cleghorn's use of "seems" registers the fact that Hutcheson makes no explicit reference to the "intellectual system" at all. In describing Hutcheson as having "confined" the principles of the intellectual system to the individual, he appears to refer to the fact that Hutcheson describes the improvement of the individual mind, the development of prudence, the discovery of "the true plan of life," and the discovery of the "boundless excellencies" of the divine nature, all with reference solely to the individual's investigation of human nature – that is, the nature of the individual human being.<sup>202</sup> In doing so, according to Cleghorn, Hutcheson ignores the fact that the individual's perception of the supreme end, a perception from which moral obligation arises most fully, is only made possible by life in a well-formed political society.

At last, then, in this final lecture recorded by Dalgleish, Cleghorn's critiques of Hutcheson and the Stoics visibly converge. The inadequacies of the Stoics, Cleghorn has mentioned and continually reiterated: they neglect the importance of

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<sup>200</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Compend*, 1742 ed., i, v, ix.

<sup>201</sup> W. Cleghorn, *Lectures*, EUL, II.343-5.

<sup>202</sup> F. Hutcheson, *Compend*, 75-6 (I.vi.1).

external things to the development of virtuous habits, they insist that all affections are to be extirpated, and they deny the importance of cultivating sympathy as a part of justice. Cleghorn gives no explicit sign that any of these criticisms can be applied to Hutcheson as well, and indeed to attribute to Hutcheson an insistence that all affections are to be extirpated would require some interpretive acrobatics, to say the least.<sup>203</sup> On the other hand, the similarity of Cleghorn's final criticism of the Stoics to his reservations about Hutcheson's *Compend* is unmistakable: Hutcheson, like the Stoics, pays insufficient attention to the fact that the individual's development of justice in its purest, most disinterested, benevolent form requires the development of a perception of the ultimate good of the universe, which itself requires that the imagination be well-formed by the contemplation of the beauty of a well-formed political community, which consists of the community's harmonious moral relations. The unified conclusion to which all these criticisms point distinguishes Cleghorn from Hutcheson with great clarity. The conclusion is that self-interestedness in general, while not, strictly speaking, a virtue, is nonetheless necessary in the development of genuine virtue; it is a necessary early stage in the training of the imagination, and it is an unavoidable characteristic of the desire for external things, even as instruments of benevolence, which itself is an inextricable principle of cohesion in political associations.

This criticism of Hutcheson does not ally Cleghorn with David Hume. Rather, it could be said with fairness that Hume identified problems with Hutcheson's moral theory that Cleghorn saw as well. In what has since become a famous remark, Hume vented to Hutcheson some exasperation at a section of the draft of his 1742 *Compend*:

P. 129 & quae seq: You sometimes, in my Opinion, ascribe the Original of Property & Justice to public Benevolence, & sometimes to private Benevolence towards the Possessors of the Goods, neither of which seem to me satisfactory. You know my Opinion on this head. It mortifies me much to see a Person, who possesses more Candour & Penetration than any almost I know, condemn Reasonings, of which I imagine I see so strongly the Evidence.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> That Hutcheson distinguishes between the passions and the calm desires, of course, and that he encourages the strengthening of the calm desire of benevolence at the expense of the particular passions, cannot be denied. See above, n. 123, and ch. 1, n. 68 and 125.

<sup>204</sup> D. Hume to F. Hutcheson, 10 January 1743, *HL* 19.

Hume here appears to resurrect, in a moment of uncontained frustration, the dispute over the nature of justice that arose in his 1739 correspondence with Hutcheson. Hutcheson's position that justice was simply an exercise of ultimately instinctive benevolence by individuals whose moral sense perceived only such benevolence to be virtuous, Hume once again could not accept. Whether Cleghorn drew specifically on Hume's *Treatise* for the argument that natural affection within families cannot explain social cohesion on a larger scale is probably impossible to know; at the very least, he held the same view. On the other hand, as Adam Ferguson would recall many years after Cleghorn's death, the difference between Cleghorn and Hume was very great: whereas Hume asserted that the moral sense approves of justice by perceiving its utility, Cleghorn retained his rationalist conception of moral approbation as a perception of the ultimate good.<sup>205</sup> Moreover, though Cleghorn did not derive justice from instinctive benevolence, he insisted that, through the training of the imagination by a process of aesthetic education, and through the use of discursive reason to attain glimpses of the ultimate end of the universe, justice could reach its most supreme form, involving a benevolence which, if not instinctive, was nonetheless genuine.

### *Conclusion*

William Cleghorn's insistence on disinterested benevolence as the purest form of justice, in the form of a love for other minds, placed him in alliance with Francis Hutcheson on an issue that Hutcheson himself had considered to be of profound importance. That this was Cleghorn's view, in any case, can be seen in his praise of Hutcheson's discussion of "simple ethics." "The Compend of Mr Hutchinson,"<sup>206</sup> Cleghorn told his students, "is an excellent Treatise on this subject and will be of great use to you." Having proceeded to note his reservations, Cleghorn heightened his initial praise: "But this is one of the best Books on the Subject."<sup>207</sup> These are

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<sup>205</sup> A. Ferguson, "An Excursion in the Highlands," 26-8, 34-5.

<sup>206</sup> "Hutchinson" is of course an error by Dalgleish, since Cleghorn had met Hutcheson personally, read his books, and spelled his name correctly in his own commonplace book.

<sup>207</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, II.343-5.

hardly the words of an antagonist.

Likewise, in his criticisms of the Stoics, Cleghorn very often noted that the Stoic view was not entirely erroneous. The Stoics were led to the conclusion that “external things of themselves had no manner of Use in determining Men to the Practice of Virtue,” Cleghorn explains, “by the consideration that ‘Goods of fortune’ do not partake of the τὸ ἀγαθόν or good in itself.”<sup>208</sup> In other words, while the Stoics’ inference is false, their premise is true. The Peripatetics didn’t understand even the premise; they said, according to Cleghorn, that external things “partook in some Measure of the Nature of the τὸ ἀγαθόν.” Cleghorn adds:

But this is an inaccurate way of speaking, for nothing can partake of the nature of this but Virtue, and nothing can be Virtue but what belongs to the universal moral Whole.<sup>209</sup>

Likewise, Cleghorn observes that the Stoic maxim, “That nothing is to be regarded on its own account but Virtue,” cannot be faulted for inaccuracy; the problem is that the Stoics inferred from it an incomplete and blameworthy conception of the offices of justice, one that ignored the role of benevolence toward bodies as well as minds. Though the maxim “philosophically speaking is true,” Cleghorn explains, “yet the Stoics thereby hardened their hearts against the necessities of their fellow Creatures in Distress.”<sup>210</sup> In accordance with the truth of the Stoics’ maxim, Cleghorn himself is careful not to suggest that the desire of external things is essential, strictly speaking, to a virtuous character; it is merely a necessary means for developing such a character. “The Progression of such a finite Mind as Man depends entirely upon its Union with the Body in its present State,” Cleghorn declares, adding, “I don’t say *essentially*.”<sup>211</sup> Toward the Stoics, as toward Hutcheson, he assumes the posture of a reviser, not an opponent.

In introducing Plato as the exponent of a philosophical system superior to the Stoic one, Cleghorn appears to fit the brief addendum to Adam Ferguson’s famous account of Stoicism and Epicureanism in the late Roman republic. Having distinguished the two philosophical schools by their contrary conceptions of the

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<sup>208</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.423.

<sup>209</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.427-9.

<sup>210</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.495. Analogously, Cleghorn states that in advocating the extirpation of all affections, the Stoics have not taken a completely false position, but rather “seem not to have well understood their own principles.” W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.197.

<sup>211</sup> W. Cleghorn, Lectures, EUL, I.23.

good – the Epicureans resolving “the distinctions of right and wrong, of honour and dishonour, into mere appellations of pleasure and pain” and the Stoics maintaining that “a just man will ever act as if there was nothing good but what is right” – Ferguson notes the existence of other positions as well:

Other sects affected to find a middle way between these extremes, and attempted, in speculation, to render their doctrines more plausible; that is, more agreeable to common opinions than either. . . .<sup>212</sup>

In Cleghorn’s case, Plato offered a fitting model of the more plausible middle way, having attempted to show, in the words of Andrew Michael Ramsay, “that the shortest way to immortality is to discharge all the duties of civil and social life for the love of virtue.”<sup>213</sup> Contrary to the Epicurean or “jurisprudential” systems condemned by Hutcheson, Cleghorn’s Plato considered human beings capable of becoming just, in a way that evinced disinterested benevolence toward other minds. On the other hand, contrary to the implausible adherence of Hutcheson to the ostensibly Stoic view of instinctive benevolence as the only acceptable source of justice, Cleghorn could cite Plato’s suggestion – greatly elaborated upon in aesthetic terms by Shaftesbury – that the most supreme form of justice, which incorporates purely disinterested benevolence, must in fact be cultivated through a process of training the imagination. It is a process that at various stages depends for its success on fundamentally self-interested desire, as in the desire for external goods which plays such a vital role in the formation and cohesion of political associations, without whose proper functioning the development of the most supreme virtue in individuals cannot happen. Through the invocation of Plato and the adoption of much of the aesthetic conception of moral education that Shaftesbury, “Plato’s illustrious disciple,” had proposed, Cleghorn could acknowledge those weaknesses of Hutcheson’s system to which Hume had drawn attention, while adopting a view of justice that ultimately resembled Hutcheson’s far more than it did Hume’s.

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<sup>212</sup> Adam Ferguson, *The History of the Progress and Termination of the Roman Republic*, v. 2 of 3 (London, 1783), 113-15.

<sup>213</sup> Andrew Michael Ramsay, *The Travels of Cyrus, In two volumes, to which is annex’d, A discourse on the theology and mythology of the ancients*, v. 2 of 2 (London, 1727), 24-5.

## Chapter 3

### Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, Pietist *Aisthesis*, and the Ethics of Aesthetics

It is hardly a secret that Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714-62), best known today as the founder of aesthetics as a philosophical discipline, spent eight formative years as a student among Pietist theologians in Halle-an-der-Saale before issuing his influential call for an “aesthetic” philosophy in 1735. His biographers attest that he attended one of August Hermann Francke’s orphanage schools (the Latin School, to be specific) between 1727 and 1730, and that he studied theology and philosophy at the University of Halle between 1730 and 1735, hearing lectures by several of Halle Pietism’s greatest luminaries. It is moreover attested that his theological and philosophical education was guided by his older brother, Siegmund Jacob. Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten had himself attended Francke’s schools and studied theology under Pietist professors at the University of Halle. He had been close to the older and younger Franckes since his arrival in Halle in 1722, served as Inspector of the Latin School during Alexander’s time there as a student, became adjunct on the Halle theology faculty in 1732 and Professor *ordinarius* in 1734, and encouraged Alexander to teach in the orphanage schools while studying at the university.<sup>1</sup> These biographical facts make it seem obvious that understanding Halle Pietism should shed a great deal of light on Alexander Baumgarten’s philosophical projects, above all his reasons for calling for and developing an aesthetic philosophy. And yet while Baumgarten’s debts to another Halle luminary, Christian Wolff, have been and

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Abbt, “Leben und Charakter Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens” (Berlin, 1780), rept. in *Vermischte Werke*, by Thomas Abbt, v. 4 of 6 (Hildesheim: Olms, 1978), 218-23; Georg Friedrich Meier, *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens Leben* (Halle, 1763), 5-19; Johann Heinrich Zedler, *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste* (Halle and Leipzig, 1732), s.v. “Baumgarten, Siegmund Jacob”.

continue to be investigated with great diligence, our understanding of what Baumgarten learned from his theological studies remains paltry.<sup>2</sup>

One of the most recent gestures toward increasing that understanding only underscores the paucity of basic research. In an article of 2002, Steffen Gross asserts that Baumgarten's aesthetic theory represents his response to the two very different but equally "one-sided" theories of knowledge that he encountered in Halle. "On the one hand," Gross writes, "the rationalist stream in the Enlightenment," represented above all by Christian Wolff,

established a clear hierarchy among human faculties and capacities, privileging one-sidedly logical thinking and seeing human emotionality primarily as a darkening threat to clear thinking. On the other hand, Pietism concentrated on inner feelings, placed them at the top of the hierarchy, and showed hostility towards logical thinking and abstractions in general.<sup>3</sup>

"No doubt Baumgarten," Gross continues, "was in search of a third position beyond the traditional division and vertical hierarchization of human faculties, namely the division of man, as such, into a rational or intellectual and a sensual side."<sup>4</sup> Gross's view of the influence of Pietism on Baumgarten is by no means completely implausible, but nor is it compelling. Baumgarten may very well have absorbed an interest in "inner feelings" from Halle Pietists, but Gross subjects no Pietist texts to examination, and his assertion that "Pietism . . . showed hostility towards logical thinking and abstractions in general" is indefensibly crude. Among the many facts that undermine it is the presence of mathematics and logic in the curriculum of Francke's orphanage schools, taught with reference to textbooks by Christian Wolff

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<sup>2</sup> The clearest recent example of an otherwise useful "historical explanation" of Baumgarten's *Meditationes* that describes Baumgarten's debts to Wolff but makes no significant mention of Baumgarten's theological studies in Halle is Werner Strube, "Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens Theorie des Gedichts," in *Dichtungstheorien der Frühaufklärung*, ed. Theodor Verweyen (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1995): 1-25.

<sup>3</sup> Steffen Gross, "The Neglected Programme of Aesthetics," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 42.4 (Oct 2002), 407.

<sup>4</sup> S. Gross, "Neglected Programme," 408.



(extracts from *Anfangs-Gründe aller Mathematischen Wissenschaften*) and Johann Gottlieb Heineccius (*Elementa philosophiae rationalis*).<sup>5</sup> Suffice it to say, Gross's remarks prove virtually nothing about Baumgarten's connection with the ideas of his teachers in Halle.

A more significant discussion of this connection is to be found in Wilhelm Ludwig Federlin's *Kirchliche Volksbildung und Bürgerliche Gesellschaft*. In an attempt to correct what he calls an "ignorance of Baumgarten . . . in the area of theology," Federlin draws attention to the theological aspects and implications of Baumgarten's aesthetic philosophy, asserting that Baumgarten's reaction to his Pietist teachers was partly receptive and partly critical. On the one hand, Baumgarten's "Pietist upbringing," especially in Francke's Latin School, had "undoubtedly left its lasting traces."<sup>6</sup> Federlin notices these traces in Baumgarten's description of aesthetics as "die Wissenschaft der Verbesserung sinnlicher Erkenntnis" (the science of improving sense-type perception), to which the "Kunst der Aufmerksamkeit" (the "art of being aware") is indispensable. As Baumgarten himself expressly indicates, the "Kunst der Aufmerksamkeit" is what Pietist teachers in Halle, trying to encourage children to cultivate an awareness of their own inner psychological state, inculcated in their students with the command, "beschäftige dich nur hiermit! bedenke, warum du hier bist! gib acht! merk auf!"<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, Federlin asserts that Baumgarten did not devise his aesthetic theory as simply an elaboration on a Pietist regimen for training the sensory powers of the soul. Rather, Baumgarten's aesthetic theory represents a theological critique of the Pietist "Erfahrungslehre" (teachings on experience) and the Pietist "Unterdrückung der bösen Sinnlichkeit" (suppression of evil sensuality). Whereas Francke and other Pietists typically invoked darkness as a metaphor for the defectiveness of the human soul before conversion, according to Federlin, Baumgarten saw the perception of "dark" ideas by the sensory part of the human soul as capable of being used constructively.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Johann Anastasius Freylinghausen and Gotthilf August Francke, *Ausführlicher Bericht von der Lateinischen Schule des Wäysenhauses zu Glaucha vor Halle zum Dienst derer die Nachfrage zu tun pflegen* (Halle, 1736), 99.

<sup>6</sup> Wilhelm Ludwig Federlin, *Kirchliche Volksbildung und Bürgerliche Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt/Main: Lang, 1993), 61, 67: "Zweifellos hatten die pietistische Erziehung mit Liebe und Rute, aber auch ein ausgeprägter lebenskluger und dialektischer Selbsterhaltungstrieb ihre bleibende Spuren hinterlassen."

<sup>7</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Philosophische Briefe von Aletheophilus* (Leipzig, 1741), quoted in W. L. Federlin, *Kirchliche Volksbildung*, 75.

<sup>8</sup> W. L. Federlin, *Kirchliche Volksbildung*, 84-5.

Federlin's observations draw attention to aspects of Baumgarten's writings that have otherwise gone more or less unnoticed, but they are not the last word on the subject. Shedding light on Alexander Baumgarten's call for an aesthetic philosophy by understanding his connection with Pietists in Halle is a time-consuming and unfinished project, requiring a reconstruction of Baumgarten's intellectual relationships with individual teachers and colleagues in Francke's orphanage schools and with professors at the University of Halle, many of whose biographies, let alone their intellectual projects, remain a mystery. This reconstruction is made especially difficult by a relative dearth of detailed research into the history of theological and philosophical discussion in Halle in the periods of greatest interest: among August Hermann Francke and his colleagues (including Alexander's father, Jacob Baumgarten) before Francke's death in 1727, and still more importantly, in the very period in which Alexander Baumgarten began to publish in Halle, the 1730s. Federlin's conclusions about Baumgarten's theological critique of the Pietists, therefore, which do not draw upon an adequately detailed and differentiated account of the contemporary intellectual background, should be treated with great caution. Moreover, the difficulty of exhaustive research notwithstanding, one of the texts to which Federlin devotes considerable attention still has more to reveal about the connection between Baumgarten's Pietist-led education and his call for an aesthetic philosophy than has yet been uncovered, and much of what it reveals cannot be construed as critical of Pietist theology along the lines indicated by Federlin.

The text is Baumgarten's well-known *Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus*, or *Philosophical considerations of some things pertaining to poetry*. Baumgarten wrote it in 1735 as a *Habilitationschrift*, allegedly stimulated by his work as a teacher of poetry and logic to students in the most advanced Latin class of Francke's orphanage schools in Halle.<sup>9</sup> As Baumgarten puts it, he saw it as the duty of a philosopher not simply to repeat the rules of writing poetry, appealing to the

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<sup>9</sup> Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus* (Halle, [1735]), rept. as appendix in *Reflections on Poetry*, by A. G. Baumgarten, trans. Karl Aschenbrenner and William B. Holther (Berkeley: UC Press, 1954), 3-4; G. F. Meier, *Alexander Baumgartens Leben*, 13-14. In translating Baumgarten's Latin, I have consulted the (sometimes unreliable) English translation by Aschenbrenner and Holther, as well as the following German translations: Albert Reimann, *Die Ästhetik Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1928, rept. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1973); and Heinz Paetzold, ed. and trans., *Philosophische Betrachtungen über einige Bedingungen des Gedichtes*, by A. G. Baumgarten (Hamburg: Meiner, 1983).

authority of others in order to justify what he himself had learned by practice and imitation, but rather to prove those rules himself:

What was more reasonable in this situation than to put the principles of philosophizing into practice, since the first opportunity was presenting itself? What can I say is less worthy or more difficult for a philosopher than to pledge allegiance to the words of others and to recite the words of one's teachers with a stentorian voice? I needed to be ready to reconsider those things that I had learned, as was the custom, in the historical way: through practice, imitation (if not blind, then one-eyed), and the expectation of similar cases.<sup>10</sup>

In his treatise, Baumgarten therefore set out

to demonstrate that many things that have been said a hundred times but scarcely ever proven can be proven from the single concept of a poem that has been firmly in my mind for a long time.<sup>11</sup>

The fulfillment of this intention constitutes most of the rest of the *Meditationes*. Baumgarten begins his proof with a definition of a poem as *oratio sensitiva perfecta*, or a "perfect sensitive discourse."<sup>12</sup> From this definition, Baumgarten deduces the general characteristics of a perfect poem. The principal characteristic of such a poem, according to Baumgarten, is that it is written such that it tends, to the greatest extent possible, to produce "sensitive ideas" (*representationes sensitivae*) in the mind of its reader.<sup>13</sup> Applying terms influentially described by Leibniz in 1684 and in common use by the 1730s, Baumgarten calls those ideas *clarae* and *confusae*, or *clear* and

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<sup>10</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, 3-4:

*Quid hic erat aequius, quam praecepta philosophandi transferre in usum, qua se prima nobis offerebat occasio? Quid vero indicium dicam, an difficilius philosopho, quam iurare in verba aliorum, & scripta magistrorum stentorea voce recitare? Accingendus eram ad meditationem eorum, quae de more cognoveram historice, per usum, imitationem, nisi c<a>ecam, luscam tamen, & expectationem casuum similitium.*

<sup>11</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, 4: ". . . ut enim ex una, quae dudum mente haeserat, poematis notione probari plurima dicta iam centies, vix semel probata posse demonstrarem. . . ."

<sup>12</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, §9.

<sup>13</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, §8.

*confused*.<sup>14</sup> An idea is clear, in that it allows one to recognize what thing is being represented, because it contains representations of those characteristics of the thing that allow one to distinguish it from other things.<sup>15</sup> An idea is confused, as opposed to *distinct*, in that those distinguishing characteristics are not made explicit, so that the thing represented cannot immediately be classified according to a definition.<sup>16</sup> Unlike a logical proof, in other words, a poem does not contain words and phrases that denote general concepts and correspond obviously to definitions; rather, it contains words and phrases that represent particular objects of the senses.<sup>17</sup> But Baumgarten adds that these words should not simply convey “dead mental images” (*phantasmata mortua*).<sup>18</sup> From the principle that the perfect poem produces as many sensitive ideas in the mind of its reader as possible, Baumgarten concludes that the most perfect poems produce not only imagined sense impressions of particular objects, but also another kind of sensitive idea, namely, ideas of “momentary changes” (*mutationes praesentes*) in the human mind.<sup>19</sup> Baumgarten’s term is “sensual ideas” (*repraesentationes sensuales*), and he includes among them ideas of “affections” (*affectus*), which he calls “noticeable degrees of pain and pleasure” (*notabiliores taedii et voluptatis gradus*) in a person confusedly representing something to himself as bad or good.<sup>20</sup> The most perfect poems, therefore, arouse in their readers as many and as strong affections as possible.

After explaining the various rules for choosing and arranging the contents of a poem so as to produce as many sensitive ideas as possible, Baumgarten calls for the philosophical treatment of a new type of knowledge, which is to say, he calls for the creation of a new branch of philosophy, one that teaches the perception of truth not through the “higher” cognitive faculties of the soul, like reason, whose improvement has traditionally been considered the ambit of logic, but through the “lower” faculties, like the imagination and the memory, which play a more direct role in the generation of sensitive ideas and therefore a more direct role in the creation of and response to poetry as Baumgarten defines it. As a name for this new branch of

<sup>14</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, §§12-15.

<sup>15</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, §13. C.f. G. W. Leibniz, “Meditations on Knowledge, Truth, and Ideas,” in *Philosophical Essays*, by G. W. Leibniz, trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989), 24; C. I. Gerhardt, *G. W. Leibniz: Die philosophischen Schriften*, 7 v. (Berlin, 1875-90), IV.422-6.

<sup>16</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, §14; G. W. Leibniz, “Meditations,” 24.

<sup>17</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, §§25.

<sup>18</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, §29.

<sup>19</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, §24.

<sup>20</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, §25-7.

philosophy, Baumgarten suggests *aesthetic*.<sup>21</sup> It is in Baumgarten's choice of this word that the connection between his call for a new branch of philosophy and the Pietist background can be seen particularly clearly. What the connection reveals is moreover precisely what has tended to be overlooked by those who have not drawn attention to the Pietist background, and what Federlin, too, does not emphasize: namely, the ethical dimension of Baumgarten's project. Like many Halle Pietists, Baumgarten was advancing a conception of moral education as requiring the training of the human affections through the exercise of the sensitive faculties of the soul.

Baumgarten has occasionally been honored as the coiner of the term, *aesthetic*,<sup>22</sup> but Baumgarten himself declines this honor, referring explicitly to its ancient use in the form of the Greek word, *aisthetike* (printed by Baumgarten in Greek as αἰσθητικὴ) among "the Greek philosophers and the Church Fathers," for whom it referred to sensible things perceived by means other than reason.<sup>23</sup> What Baumgarten does not mention, but what he must have been aware of, is that the word *aisthesis*, a cognate of *aisthetike*, had already been in prominent use among theologians in Halle for several decades, in connection with a debate over the means by which God communicates with human beings, and over the involvement of human affections in that process of communication. One of these theologians was August Hermann Francke himself, who had given *aisthesis* (consistently printed in Greek as αἰσθησις) a significant place in his *Delineatio doctrinae de affectibus*, an addendum to a Latin introduction to reading the Bible (*Manuductio ad lectionum scripturae sacrae*), first published in 1693.<sup>24</sup>

Francke mentions *aisthesis* in connection with what he calls "expository" reading of the Bible, one of the seven types of biblical reading that altogether constitute a "complete study of divinity," and one of four types that aim at understanding the "spirit" of the text, as opposed to the "letter."<sup>25</sup> In Francke's words, an expository reading of a biblical text expounds "the literal sense as intended by the Holy Spirit," and the meaning it seeks is simple and is communicated without need of "labored interpretations," just as the will of God was communicated to the

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<sup>21</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, §115-16

<sup>22</sup> K. Aschenbrenner and W. B. Holther, *Reflections on Poetry*, v.

<sup>23</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, §116.

<sup>24</sup> Erhard Peschke, Introduction to *Manuductio ad lectionem scripturae sacrae*, in *Schriften zur biblischen Hermeneutik I*, by A. H. Francke, ed. E. Peschke (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 28-30. Francke himself appears to have given lectures in Halle on the *Manuductio* from 1698 through 1702. Later editions appeared in 1700 (Halle), 1706 (London), and 1709 (Halle).

<sup>25</sup> A. H. Francke, *Manuductio*, ed. E. Peschke, 36-7, 61.

earliest Christians by the Apostles. The general hermeneutical techniques by which one arrives at this meaning are many. One must consider, among other things, the *scopus* or purpose of the passage in question; the context of the passage; parallelisms with other biblical texts that may shed light on the meanings of particular words or ideas; the so-called “analogy of faith,” referring to meanings that one has drawn from apparently parallel biblical passages; the order in which the biblical authors typically expound their subjects; the circumstances referred to in the passage in question; and the affections or emotional state of the author of the passage.<sup>26</sup> It is in the course of explaining this last consideration in his *Manuductio* that Francke directs his readers to the much more extensive discussion of it in his *Delineatio*, where he invokes *aisthesis* by name.

In mentioning *aisthesis*, Francke, like Baumgarten, very likely had several “Greek philosophers and church fathers” in mind, but his most obvious source, one that he quotes, was the Letter to the Philippians, in which Paul prays “that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight [πάση αἰσθήσει] to help you determine what is best . . . .”<sup>27</sup> Paul’s reference to *aisthesis* had of course been interpreted and elaborated upon for many centuries before Francke’s birth, and descriptions of the word’s meaning in this context were easily available to him. He would have found – and likely did find – in the *Philologia Sacra* of the seventeenth-century Lutheran theologian Salomon Glassius (1593-1656), for example, an explication of *aisthesis* as “the internal experience of the soul, or the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit in the heart, about God’s grace and election to salvation [*experientia interior animae seu interius Spiritus sancti in corde testimonium, de gratia Dei, & adoptione ad salutem*].”<sup>28</sup> Both elements of this description – the “internal experience” and the “testimony of the Holy Spirit” – were equally central to Francke’s understanding of the word.

<sup>26</sup> A. H. Francke, *Manuductio*, ed. E. Peschke, 61-71.

<sup>27</sup> Paul, Letter to the Phillipians, in *The Greek New Testament*, ed. K. Aland et al. (Stuttgart: Württemberg Bible Society, 1966), 1:9-10: “. . . ἵνα ἡ ἀγάπη ὑμῶν ἔτι μᾶλλον καὶ μᾶλλον περισσεύῃ ἐν ἐπιγνώσει καὶ πάσῃ αἰσθήσει, εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τὰ διαφέροντα . . . .” Francke reproduces Paul’s pairing as “solida . . . ἐπιγνώσει, & αἰσθήσει” in his *Manuductio*, ed. E. Peschke, 92. Martin Luther’s translation, as published by Francke in 1714, reads: “daß eure liebe je mehr und mehr reich werde in allerley erkänntniß und erfahrung, Daß ihr prüfen möget, was das beste sey.”

<sup>28</sup> Salomon Glassius, *Philologia Sacra* (Leipzig, 1705), 1809. The description of *aisthesis* and its cognates is to be found in the context of a discussion of “metaphors that are derived from and refer to the human being,” under the heading, *Rhetorica Sacra*. Specific reference to Glassius’ description of the word can be found in the *Institutiones theologiae moralis* of Francke’s one-time colleague on the faculty of the University at Halle, Johann Franz Buddeus – on whom, see below, ch. 4.

On Francke's account, *aisthesis* is what allows someone to perceive the affections of a sanctified soul, and therefore the affections of the sanctified people whose words are recorded in the Bible. It is not available to everyone. The only people who seriously strive to attain *aisthesis* and are capable of it, according to Francke, are those people who have themselves been "reborn" (*rennatus* or, more familiarly in German, *wiedergeboren*), and who have therefore had personal experience of the "*habitus* of a soul that has been sanctified and endowed with divine wisdom."<sup>29</sup> This *habitus*, in fact, is the essential distinguishing mark of rebirth. It is the predominance of "spiritual" (*spiritualis*) over "natural" (*naturalis*) affections. Humility, serenity, love of God, and a desire to seek God's glory and the edification of mankind, for example, outweigh the perversely self-interested, turbulent desire for one's own private pleasure.<sup>30</sup> This experience of moral reform among the reborn is the precondition of *aisthesis*.

According to Francke, the importance of *aisthesis* and what it makes possible – the perception of the affections of a sanctified soul – is that it allows a reader of the Bible to understand not only the literal meaning of the text, the so-called "shell" (*cortex* or *Schale*), but also the spiritual truths contained in the text, the so-called "kernel" (*nucleus* or *Kern*).<sup>31</sup> That the literal meaning cannot be understood reliably without *aisthesis* follows in part from two key premises. The first of these premises is drawn from the very nature of all verbal discourse: affections are what cause people to make statements in the first place, and they are inseparable from language and its meaning.<sup>32</sup> "Everyday experience with familiar discourse," Francke writes, "confirms that the same words, uttered under the influence of different affections, differ in meaning."<sup>33</sup> One must therefore perceive the affections of a writer or speaker in order to say with confidence what the writer or speaker intended his words to mean.<sup>34</sup> The second premise is of course that the authors of the words recorded in the Bible indeed had affections like those of the reborn, such that the

<sup>29</sup> A. H. Francke, *Manuductio*, ed. E. Peschke, 91-2: "illum animae sanctificatae & sapientia divina donatae habitum".

<sup>30</sup> A. H. Francke, *Manuductio*, ed. E. Peschke, 93-4.

<sup>31</sup> A. H. Francke, *Manuductio*, ed. E. Peschke, 88.

<sup>32</sup> A. H. Francke, *Manuductio*, ed. E. Peschke, 88.

<sup>33</sup> A. H. Francke, *Manuductio*, ed. E. Peschke, 66:

*Testis etiam est quotidiana in famiari sermone experientia, quantum pondus addat, ad recte comprehendendum sensum dicentis, affectus, & quam varium eadem verba, diversimode ob diversum affectum pronunciata, sortiantur sensum.*

<sup>34</sup> C.f. A. H. Francke, *Einleitung zur Lesung Heiliger Schrift*, in *Schriften zur biblischen Hermeneutik I*, ed. E. Peschke, 141.

reborn can apply an understanding of the authors' affections, derived from their own experience, to the interpretation of the authors' words.

That a biblical passage's spiritual meaning, too, can only be grasped by means of *aisthesis*, follows not only from these two premises, but also from Francke's view of what it means to grasp the spiritual truth of a Biblical text. In the important case of interpreting the divine commandments, grasping the spiritual truth means not only identifying a precept issued by God and being able to apply it to oneself, but also being able to understand and strive more fully to attain the spiritual *habitus* to which the precept ultimately refers. Francke's final exhortation in the *Treatise on the Affections* summarizes this thought as it applies to biblical interpretation in general:

Rule XI: *And so, in examining affections, we profit most of all by an imitation and pious emulation of those affections that we have perceived in the holy authors.*

For the more we put on [*induerimus*] the same affection, the more skillfully and deeply we will be able to seek it, assess it, and show it in the holy texts. And so whenever an affection of the holy authors presents itself to us, let us diligently try under the same circumstances to obtain the same affection in ourselves, and indeed the same degree of the affection, if possible; and let us try, with the help of God's grace, to correct every faulty [affection]. The meaning of scripture, grasped in this way by the heart rather than the head, will penetrate to the very marrow of our bones, and will transform our souls "from glory to glory" [*ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν*],<sup>35</sup> and we will experience truly that the word of God is effective [*efficacem*], and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing all the way to the division of mind and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerns the thoughts and intentions of the heart.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> II Cor 3:18.

<sup>36</sup> A. H. Francke, *Manuductio*, ed. E. Peschke, 98:

*Reg. XI. Tandem in scrutinio affectuum potissimum proficimus imitatione, pique aemulatione eorum, quos in Scriptoribus S. semel perspexerimus affectuum. Quo enim magis eundem induerimus affectuum, eo solertius, ac profundius eum in Textibus sacris rimari, perpendere, ac demonstrare poterimus. Quoties itaque affectus se nobis sistet Scriptorum S. toties posito vel ficto eodem casu, eundem in nobis ipsis affectum, imo eundem affectus gradum, quoad ejus fieri potest studiose quaeramus, deprehensumque defectum per gratiam DEi auxiliatricem corrigere studeamus. Sic Scripturae sensus, corde potius quam cerebro comprehensus, ad medullas usque ossium penetrabit,*



On Francke's account, grasping the spiritual truth of a biblical text means being morally transformed by the text, not only on the superficial level of behavior, but on the deeper level of one's own affections. To be sure, experience of spiritual affections on the part of the reader is a precondition of grasping the spiritual meaning of the text, but it is also the result. Recognizing the spiritual affections of the holy authors is the indispensable means of further strengthening those affections in oneself by a process of imitation, at the expense of the "faulty" natural affections that they outweigh. Implicit in Francke's hermeneutic discussion of *aisthesis*, therefore, is a theory of moral education.

References to this theory can be found throughout Francke's published discussions of pedagogy, which themselves indicate how deeply it informed the design of the educational institutions he developed and administered. In his *Kurzer und Einfältiger Unterricht wie die Kinder zur wahren Gottseligkeit und Christlichen Klugheit anzuführen sind*, a manual on the education of children written ostensibly for the benefit of their teachers, including teachers in Francke's own orphanage schools, Francke describes the purpose of education as *cultura animi* or "Gemüths-Pflege": the cultivation of the child's soul, such that the child comes to love God and therefore makes honoring God its highest, overriding aim.<sup>37</sup> This process necessarily involves training both the will and the intellect, and Francke's account of how the will should be trained recalls unmistakably his biblical hermeneutic theory.<sup>38</sup> More important than any other means of producing love of God in children of a tender age, Francke

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*nostramque animam transformabit ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν, & revera experiemur, sermonem DEi esse efficacem, & penetrantiorē quovis gladio, utrinque incidente, ac pertingente usque ad divisionem animae simul ac Spiritus; compagumque ac medullarum, & discretorem cogitationum & intentionum cordis.*

<sup>37</sup> A. H. Francke, *Kurzer und Einfältiger Unterricht wie die Kinder zur wahren Gottseligkeit und Christlichen Klugheit anzuführen sind, zum Behull Christlicher Informatorum entworfen* (Halle, 1733), 5; Peter Menck, *Die Erziehung der Jugend zur Ehre Gottes und zum Nutzen des Nächsten: Die Pädagogik August Hermann Franckes* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2001), 99-102.

<sup>38</sup> A. H. Francke, *Kurzer und Einfältiger Unterricht*, 5:

*Die wahre Gemüths-Pflege gehet auf den Willen und Verstand. Wo man nur auf eines unter beyden sein Absehen hat, ist nichts gutes zu hoffen. Am meisten ist wol daran gelegen, daß der natürliche Eigen-Wille gebrochen werde. . . . Hingegen muß auch der Verstand heilsame Lehren fassen, wenn der Wille ohne Zwang folgen soll.*

repeatedly stresses, is the power of a good example.<sup>39</sup> By presenting himself as virtuous, and as possessed of a genuine love of God as a result of having already experienced the conversion (*Bekehrung*) that he aims to induce in his pupils, the teacher will awaken in them a similar love and an attraction to virtue. The reason for this, Francke explains, lies primarily in the psychology of young children: they remember and imitate virtually everything they see and hear.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, even though what they imitate is merely behavior, and therefore “external”, when the behavior is genuinely good the children “will thereby be inculcated, unconsciously, with a *love* of virtuous behavior.”<sup>41</sup> Francke does add that teachers should accompany their presentation of examples with clear (*klar*) and distinct (*deutlich*) explanations of what exactly is meant to be exemplary, but the means by which the imitation of virtuous behavior produces love of virtuous behavior is below the level of the child’s consciousness and does not itself involve the intellect.

Although Francke does not describe this psychological mechanism with great precision, his repeated stress on the importance of sensory impressions, “external” *habitus*-formation, and imitation as a means of awakening love of virtue and love of God helps to fill in some of the details. He recommends, for example, that teachers “paint the virtues and vices with lifelike (*lebendig*) colors,” adding that the “heathens” considered this “a good way to awaken virtue and to pull people away from vices.”<sup>42</sup> In the supremely important case of presenting children with the perfect model of virtue, Jesus Christ, this means presenting him frequently (*öfters*), movingly (*beweglich*), and with love and gentleness (*Liebe und Sanftmuth*), so that the children “get a longing to always carry in their memory and their heart the perfect picture of the lord Jesus – how he was made for their wisdom, justice, sanctification,

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<sup>39</sup> A. H. Francke, *Kurzer und Einfältiger Unterricht*, 6-7. Cf. Fritz Osterwalder’s suggestively similar summary of the pedagogical writings of Fénelon: “Theologische Konzepte von Erziehung. Das Verhältnis von Fénelon und Francke,” in *Das Kind im Pietismus und Aufklärung*, ed. J. N. Neumann and U. Sträter (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2000), 84.

<sup>40</sup> A. H. Francke, *Kurzer und Einfältiger Unterricht*, 55.

<sup>41</sup> A. H. Francke, *Kurzer und Einfältiger Unterricht*, 8 [emphasis added]:

*Hierzu mag es nicht wenig dienen, wann die Vorgesetzte mit Fleiß gute und löbliche Handlungen in Gegenwart der Kinder vornehmen. Denn obwohl die Handlungen nur äusserlich seyn, . . . wird dadurch unvermerckt ihnen eine Liebe zu tugendhaften Handlungen beygebracht.*

<sup>42</sup> A. H. Francke, *Kurzer und Einfältiger Unterricht*, 25 (cf. 4):

*Es giebt auch nicht wenig Vortheil, wann der Informator denen Kindern die Tugenden und Laster mit lebendigen Farben, doch ohne einigen Anstoß, vor zu mahlen weiß. Solches ist bereits von denen vernünftigen Heyden als ein guter Handgriff, die Tugend zu erwecken, und von denen Lastern die Leute abzuziehen, angesehen worden, wie solches bezeugen des Theophrasti Characteres. . . .*

and salvation.”<sup>43</sup> The origin of the love of God that this longing represents is ultimately, it would seem, the child’s experience of God’s love, evoked by the teacher’s portrayal of it in a lifelike way.<sup>44</sup>

Nor did Francke accord experience this kind of power only in the case of young children. In one of his *lectiones paraeneticæ*, a long series of presentations to Halle’s theology students during the weekly, hour-long *collegia* that Francke and his colleague, Joachim Justus Breithaupt (1658-1732), developed for the purpose of contributing to the students’ own conversion and successful pursuit of their theological studies, Francke makes the importance of experience as a pedagogical instrument particularly clear.<sup>45</sup> Having just read aloud from one theology student’s written account of his own struggle against temptation and his quest to increase his love of God, Francke explains why, in order to comfort and instruct those in the room who have had similar experiences, he has quoted the student instead of retelling the story in his own words:

It is the case, as the moralists are careful to remind us, that when one describes the signs of virtues and vices as they express themselves, one can present the thing much more vividly [*lebhaft*], than when one gives mere definitions of it. In the same way, when a temptation like this, a struggle like this that happens within one’s heart [*Gemüth*], is described by means of the experience of the person who feels [*empfindet*] it, it imprints itself better and is also more instructive than when one says a lot of abstract things about it or describes it as one kind of thing or another.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> A. H. Francke, *Kurzer und Einfältiger Unterricht*, 19-20:

*Muß man insonderheit ihnen Christum aus der heiligen Schrift zeigen, wie derselbe sey das vollkommene Sühn-Opfer für unsere Sünde, und das vollkommene Exempel und Muster, darnach wir unser gantzes Leben einzurichten haben. Solches muß ihnen mit grosser Liebe und Sanftmuth öfters beweglich vorgestellt werden, damit sie selbst ein Verlangen kriegen, das vollkommene Bild des HErrn Jesu, wie derselbe ihnen von GOtt gemacht ist zur Weisheit, zur Gerechtigkeit, zur Heiligung und zur Erlösung, beständig in ihrem Gedächtniß und in ihrem Herten zu tragen.*

<sup>44</sup> This is Peter Menck’s conclusion about the psychological mechanism on which Francke’s based his educational theory. See P. Menck, *Die Erziehung der Jugend*, 101-2.

<sup>45</sup> A. H. Francke, *Lectiones paraeneticæ*, v. 1, 2nd ed. (Halle, 1730), *Vorrede*.

<sup>46</sup> A. H. Francke, *Lectiones paraeneticæ*, v. 1, 2nd ed., 271:

*Es ist damit so beschaffen, wie die Moralisten gar wohl zu erinnern pflegen, daß wenn man die characteres virtutum & vitiorum beschriebe, wie sie sich äusserten, man die Sache viel lebhafter vorstellen könne, als wenn man bloss definitiones davon gebe. So ist darinnen auch, wenn eine solche*

Conveying the *Empfindungen* or felt experiences of a particular person rather than describing those experiences in the abstract has, in Francke's view, the same benefit as describing the characteristics of people with particular virtues and vices rather than describing those virtues and vices in the abstract: because the thing to be conveyed is presented vividly, in the form of a lifelike example to which the listener's own similar experiences allow him to relate, it imprints itself more deeply into the listener's character and can thereby have a more salutary effect on his affections. In other words, Francke conceives of the good teacher as making use of a psychological mechanism apparently very similar to the one by means of which the inspired authors of the Bible communicate spiritual truths to readers capable of *aisthesis* by virtue of having been reborn.

Francke was neither the originator nor the only representative of the view that understanding the affections of those authors is essential to understanding the literal and spiritual meanings of their words. He himself cites, as authorities for his view, Martin Luther, Wolfgang Franzius, and Philip Jakob Spener, among others.<sup>47</sup> Nor did Francke stand alone among his contemporaries in this regard. A view very similar to his, also with explicit reference to *aisthesis*, can be found in two hermeneutical texts by Francke's student, colleague, and successor in the Halle Divinity Faculty, Johann Jacob Rambach: Rambach's 1723 *Institutiones sacrae hermeneuticae* and, more elaborately, Rambach's German commentary on his own *Institutiones*, published posthumously in 1738 under the title, *Erläuterung über seine eigene Institutiones hermeneuticae sacrae*.<sup>48</sup> The basic principles asserted by Rambach – that “perception

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*Anfechtung, ein solcher Kampf, der im Gemüthe vorgehet, mit der eigenen Ehrfahrung dessen, der sie empfindet, beschrieben wird, so dringets besser ein, und ist auch lehrreicher, als wenn man sonst gleich vieles in abstracto davon redet, und es so oder so beschreibet.*

Note Francke's allusion, as in his *Kurzer und einfältiger Unterricht* (above, n. 42), to Theophrastes' *Characteres*.

<sup>47</sup> A. H. Francke, *Manuductio*, ed. E. Peschke, 88-9.

<sup>48</sup> Rambach had a relatively close relationship to Francke. Born in Halle in 1693, he attended Francke's orphanage schools from 1708 to 1712 and then enrolled as a theology student at the University of Halle until 1715, where he is attested to have studied hermeneutics with Francke. After working on a new edition of the Hebrew Bible with Francke's colleague on the Halle Theology Faculty, Johann Heinrich Michaelis, he spent two years studying in Jena and then returned to Halle in 1723 to take up an adjunct position in the Halle theology faculty and an inspectorship at Francke's schools. Upon Francke's death in 1727, Rambach became Professor *ordinarius* of Theology, leaving Halle again in 1731 to take up a professorship in Giessen. Johann Heinrich Zedler, *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste* (Halle and Leipzig, 1732), s.v. “Rambach, Johann Jacob”; Friedrich Wilhelm Strieder, *Grundlage zu einer hessischen Gelehrten-und-Schriftsteller-Geschichte*, v. 2, s.v.

of affections is necessary for an accurate interpretation,” and that “no sane person can think that affection is absent from the style of sacred [authors]” – are essentially the same as Francke’s.<sup>49</sup> What differs is minor. Rambach adduces more and different authorities, citing among others Francke himself and, notably, Longinus, alleged author of *On the Sublime*.<sup>50</sup> He also explains the principles somewhat more elaborately and occasionally with a slightly different emphasis. More explicitly than Francke, for example, Rambach asserts not simply that words cannot be understood without an understanding of their author’s affections, but that the words are a means of communicating those affections. “Our thoughts,” Rambach writes, “are almost always bound up with particular private affections, . . . so that by means of words we are causing others to understand not only our thoughts, but also the affections of ours that are bound up with them.”<sup>51</sup> Rambach also articulates the moral-educational implications of this idea differently than Francke, but his point is similar. For Rambach, affections are “the soul of discourse” (*anima sermonis*), the transmission of which allows readers to benefit fully from the words of biblical authors, in that the words “fill[ ] our own hearts with good and holy affections.”<sup>52</sup> Like Francke,

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“Rambach, Johann Jacob” (Hessen, 1797), rept. in *Deutsches Biographisches Archiv* (New York: Sauer, 1982).

<sup>49</sup> Johann Jacob Rambach, *Institutiones hermeneuticae sacrae* (Jena, 1723), 123; J. J. Rambach, *Erläuterung über seine eigene Institutiones hermeneuticae sacrae*, ed. Ernst Friedrich Neubauer (Giessen, 1738), 381.

<sup>50</sup> J. J. Rambach, *Institutiones hermeneuticae sacrae* (Jena, 1723), 128. To the best of my knowledge, Rambach’s reference to Longinus has not been noticed until now. His connections to Immanuel Jacob Pyra (1715-44), a contemporary of Alexander Baumgarten’s in Halle who has usually been credited as the first significant German interpreter of Longinus and therefore the earliest German representative of a tradition of interest in the sublime that can be traced to the end of the eighteenth century and beyond, deserve investigation. On Pyra and Longinus, see Carsten Zelle, “Pietismus und Erhabenheit – Immanuel Jacob Pyras Beitrag zur Literaturkritik der Aufklärung,” in *Aufklärung und Erneuerung: Beiträge zur Geschichte der Universität Halle im ersten Jahrhundert ihres Bestehens (1694 - 1806)*, ed. G. Jerouschek and A. Sames (Hanau: Dausien, 1994): 94-103.

<sup>51</sup> J. J. Rambach, *Erläuterung*, 374:

*Unsere Gedancken . . . sind fast allezeit mit gewissen geheimen Affecten verknüpft, . . . daher geben wir durch die Rede nicht nur unsere Gedancken, sondern auch unsere damit verknüpften Affecten andern zu verstehen.*

<sup>52</sup> J. J. Rambach, *Erläuterung*, 377-8:

*[W]ir müssen nicht nur von den Worten, sondern auch von den Affecten der heiligen Männer zu profitiren suchen, und müssen daher die Schrift auch um deswillen lesen, damit . . . unser Hertz mit guten und heiligen Affecten erfüllt werde.*

Cf. Axel Bühler and Luigi Cataldi Madonna, “Von Thomasius bis Semler. Entwicklungslinien der Hermeneutik in Halle,” in *Hermeneutik der Aufklärung*, ed. Bühler and Cataldi Madonna (Hamburg: Meiner, 1993), 58-9.

Rambach calls the capacity to perceive these affections “aisthesis,” which he translates as “geistliche Empfindung” and ascribes to the *Wiedergeborene* alone.<sup>53</sup>

Francke and Rambach’s conception of divine communication and moral education through the arousal of human affections, with its stress on the indispensability of *aisthesis*, was clearly controversial. That one point at issue was the nature of divine inspiration or *theopneusia*, and more specifically, whether God’s direct communication with human beings through inspiration by the Holy Spirit involves a dampening of the prophets’ human affections, becomes clear when one considers two objections to Francke’s and Rambach’s position, dealt with explicitly and at some length both by Francke in 1693 and by Rambach decades later. The first objection, as Francke puts it, is that “it would be an offense against the Holy Spirit, if one attributed affections to the inspired authors, since the Holy Scripture must be credited not to the holy authors, but to the Holy Spirit, speaking through their mouth[s].”<sup>54</sup> The alleged danger, as Rambach explains, is that attributing affections to human authors of scripture excludes the possibility that those authors were inspired, because inspiration necessarily involves the suppression of human affections by the Holy Spirit. To this objection, Francke and Rambach give similar answers: the inspired authors clearly did not write the biblical texts “like blocks, without sense or *aisthesis*”<sup>55</sup> (Rambach writes, “completely without *Empfindung*”<sup>56</sup>). To the contrary, the Holy Spirit should be seen not only as having illuminated the intellects of the holy authors but also as having stirred up their wills “with pious, holy, and ardent emotions [*motibus*],”<sup>57</sup> having been at work in their “phantasy, intellect, and will,”<sup>58</sup> and having “accommodated” itself to their human mental characteristics – including their individual temperaments and their characteristically human inability to grasp any representation of God as a pure essence.<sup>59</sup>

A second objection, according to Francke and Rambach, was that looking to the affections of scriptural authors as the key to the meaning of their words renders

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<sup>53</sup> J. J. Rambach, *Erläuterung*, 388-9.

<sup>54</sup> A. H. Francke, *Manuductio*, 90:

*Existimare aliquis posset, illum fore in ipsum Spiritum S. injurium, qui Scriptoribus θεοπνεύστοις sive ex afflatu divino scribentibus affectus tribuerit; neque enim Scripturam S. esse Scriptoribus S. sed Spiritui S. per ipsorum os loquenti acceptam ferendam.*

<sup>55</sup> A. H. Francke, *Manuductio*, 90.

<sup>56</sup> J. J. Rambach, *Erläuterung*, 378.

<sup>57</sup> A. H. Francke, *Manuductio*, 90.

<sup>58</sup> J. J. Rambach, *Erläuterung*, 377.

<sup>59</sup> J. J. Rambach, *Erläuterung*, 377, 389, 411.

those words ambiguous and their meaning uncertain, such that a reader can derive from them whatever meaning he may want.<sup>60</sup> The alleged danger again appears to be that assuming the language of biblical authors to be laden with affections excludes the possibility that it was inspired, since inspired words must by their nature be unambiguous, and affect-laden words are not. To this objection, Francke and Rambach offer a simple rebuttal: it is simply a fact, verifiable by our experience with everyday language, that the meaning of an utterance depends on the affections of the utterer. Paying attention to those affections is therefore the only way to eliminate ambiguity and uncertainty.<sup>61</sup>

Francke's and Rambach's controversial insistence on the importance of perceiving and imitating the affections of divinely inspired biblical authors as a means of moral improvement appears to have implied a similarly controversial defense of poetry as a verbal means of communicating divine truths and improving the affections of a reader or listener. The character of this defense is hinted at in a slim booklet of poems and poetic fragments by Martin Luther, published in Magdeburg in 1729 by Johann Justus von Einem, who had studied biblical hermeneutics and rhetoric with Francke between 1706 and 1708.<sup>62</sup> Apparently in defense of reading and writing poetry as activities worthy of a holy person, Einem asserts that Luther himself took delight in reading ancient poets, whose style he compared to the style of holy scripture. Luther moreover claimed to have found the poetic passages of scripture – above all in the Psalms – much more moving than the prosaic ones. In withdrawing to the monastery in Erfurt, Einem claims, Luther left behind all his books, even his books on law, with a single exception: the poetry of Vergil. Vergil's affections Luther thought had come "not from nature or the vulgar tribe of the Muses, but rather as a gift of the spirit, imbued by Jesus Christ."<sup>63</sup>

Einem's characterization of Luther as an admirable poet and great lover of poetry of course implies that poetry should not be condemned outright as the

<sup>60</sup> A. H. Francke, *Manuductio*, 90; J. J. Rambach, *Erläuterung*, 378.

<sup>61</sup> A. H. Francke, *Manuductio*, 90; J. J. Rambach, *Erläuterung*, 374-9.

<sup>62</sup> Einem dedicates the book to Francke's and Rambach's colleague on the Halle theology faculty, Joachim Justus Breithaupt ("easily the prince, father, patron, and instructor of the poets of this age"), whose lectures on dogmatics and morals (*die Grundsätze der Glaubens- und Sittenlehre*) Einem is said to have heard during his years in Halle, and whom Alexander Baumgarten is also attested to have heard. s.v. "Einem, Johann Justus von," *Beytrag zu einer Geschichte berühmter und verdienster Gottesgelehrten auf dem Lande*, by Johann Anton Trinius, v. 1 (Mansfeld, 1751), rept. *Deutsches Biographisches Archiv*; Johann Justus von Einem, *Martini Lutheri poemata* (Magdeburg, 1729), Vorrede; G. F. Meier, *Alexander Baumgartens Leben*, 10.

<sup>63</sup> J. J. von Einem, *Martini Lutheri poemata*, Vorrede.

product of inspiration by the Muses, or as the product of no inspiration at all, but rather ought to be admired as – at least in some cases – a gift of the Holy Spirit, capable of moving human beings in a salutary way. This view finds much more elaborate and explicit articulation in Johann Jacob Rambach’s preface to the 1727 collection of his own poems, *Poetische Fest-Gedancken*. In discussing the “abuse and correct use of poetry,” Rambach condemns at great length and in no uncertain terms all poetry that is used as an instrument of “carnal desire, love of honor, and love of money” (*Wohllust, Ehrgeiz und Geldgeiz*), singling out for special attention the poems of Anacreon, Ovid, Catullus, Tibullus, and Propertius, for undermining their readers’ chastity, modesty, and fear of God.<sup>64</sup> The danger of such poems arises, according to Rambach, by virtue of the mechanism by which words have power over the character of their readers; they awaken feelings by causing the reader to imagine the things to which the words refer, and the more frequently one imagines things that arouse a particular desire, the deeper such desire impresses itself into the reader’s heart.<sup>65</sup> Dangerous poems describe “things that violate the purity of one’s character” (*Sachen, die die Keuschheit des Gemüths verletzen*), in so far as those things arouse a “fleshly desire for pleasure.”<sup>66</sup> Poetry itself, however, Rambach calls an “honorable gift of God” (*eine edle Gabe des Höchsten*), capable of being used as an instrument for improving the reader’s character as well. It must be written

to honor God, to celebrate his boundless perfections, his unapproachable [*unanzubetenden*] majesty, which the prophets manage to describe in a style so sublime that the reader cannot but be seized with a fit of spiritual trembling. . . .<sup>67</sup>

The effect on readers of poems that fulfill these conditions, is that

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<sup>64</sup> J. J. Rambach, *Poetische Fest-Gedancken* (Jena, 1727), Vorrede, §1-§3.

<sup>65</sup> J. J. Rambach, *Poetische Fest-Gedancken*, Vorrede, §6.

<sup>66</sup> J. J. Rambach, *Poetische Fest-Gedancken*, Vorrede, §6.

<sup>67</sup> J. J. Rambach, *Poetische Fest-Gedancken*, Vorrede, §11:

. . . zur Ehre GÖttes, zur Besingung seiner unendlichen Vollkommenheiten, seiner unanzubetenden Majestät (deren Beschreibung die Propheten mit einer so erhabenen Schreibart verrichten, daß dem Leser dabey ein heiliger Schauer überfallen muß. . . .



their hearts can be awakened to fear of God, to love of Jesus Christ, to praise of the creator, to perception of their own insignificance, to longing for His holy community, and to holy conduct and godly life.<sup>68</sup>

This attitude toward poetry as an instrument of moral education whose effectiveness derives from its power to awaken spiritual affections in its readers by means of a sublime style, like the power of the affection-laden words uttered by inspired biblical prophets and authors, must have been familiar to Alexander Baumgarten.

Baumgarten's acquaintance with the question of poetry's usefulness as an instrument of divine communication is strongly suggested by a reference in his *Meditationes* to a 1710 dissertation written under the supervision of the Helmstedt theologian (and one-time teacher of Johann Justus von Einem), Johann Andreas Schmidt, entitled, *De modo propagandi religionem per carmina*, or, *On the method of propagating religion by means of poems*.<sup>69</sup> Baumgarten invokes the dissertation as an authority for the claim that virtue and religion have been promoted for a very long time by means of fictional stories fashioned into poems (*carmina*), and the dissertation lends itself to Baumgarten's use of it; the dissertation describes "poetic theology" as having flourished in various ancient communities, and it describes poems as having been the standard vehicle of transmitting divine law and true religion before Moses.<sup>70</sup>

That Baumgarten was also directly acquainted with Francke's and Rambach's invocation of *aisthesis* in connection with a defense of divine inspiration as elevating rather than suppressing the human affections of inspired authors is difficult to doubt. Although Francke's *Manuductio* does not seem to have been assigned to students in his orphanage schools during Baumgarten's time in Halle, all students in the Latin School – attended by Baumgarten from 1727 to 1730 – were required to read

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<sup>68</sup> J. J. Rambach, *Poetische Fest-Gedancken*, Vorrede, §11:

. . . die Herzen dadurch zur Ehrfurcht vor GOTT, zur Liebe JEsu Christi, zum Lobe des Schöpfers, zur Erkenntniß ihrer Nichtigkeit, zum Verlangen nach seiner seligen Gemeinschaft, zum heiligen Wandel und gottseligen Leben erwecket werden können.

<sup>69</sup> Johann Andreas Schmidt, praes., *Dissertatio historico-theologica de modo propagandi religionem per carmina*, def. Ludovicus Guntherus Gelhud (Helmstadt, 1710). A second edition of the dissertation appeared in 1728. Einem is attested to have studied under Schmidt in 1705. See Trinius, *Beytrag*, in *DBA*, s.v. "Einem, Johann Justus von".

<sup>70</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, §58; J. A. Schmidt, *Dissertatio*, e.g. §§3, 5, 6, 9.

Francke's *Einleitung zur Lesung Heiliger Schrift*, in which the *Manuductio* is explicitly mentioned.<sup>71</sup> Nor of course would the Latin of Francke's *Manuductio* have been a barrier to Baumgarten even during his first years in Halle; upon enrollment in the Latin School at age 13, he was placed in the second-most-advanced Latin class, showing an ability very rare among classmates his age.<sup>72</sup> His knowledge of Rambach's *Institutiones hermeneuticae sacrae* could have come from several sources. One likely source is Christian Benedict Michaelis, Professor *ordinarius* in theology and philosophy at the University of Halle, a friend of August Hermann Francke's and a respected philologist who taught biblical languages and biblical interpretation to two generations of theology students at Halle. Baumgarten is attested to have attended his lectures as a student of theology between 1730 and 1735.<sup>73</sup> Between 1731 and 1732, Michaelis taught hermeneutics from Rambach's *Institutiones*.<sup>74</sup> Baumgarten is also likely to have learned about Francke's and Rambach's hermeneutical positions from his brother, Siegmund Jacob, who is alleged to have guided Alexander's education.<sup>75</sup> Having attended Francke's orphanage schools and studied theology in Halle with Rambach and Michaelis, among others, Siegmund Jacob was appointed Professor *ordinarius* of Theology in 1734 and gave lectures on Rambach's *Institutiones* in 1735.<sup>76</sup> In his 1745 *Unterricht von Auslegung der heiligen Schrift*, he recommends, among other books on hermeneutics, Francke's *Manuductio* and parts of Rambach's *Institutiones*.<sup>77</sup>

Baumgarten's acquaintance with Francke's and Rambach's engagement in the controversy over *aisthesis* and the role of the human affections in divine communication, as well as the related controversy over the suitability of poetry as a means of divine communication and of moral improvement, can also be inferred from Baumgarten's own involvement in another, larger polemical effort, well under way in Halle in the 1730s, of which Francke's and Rambach's controversial positions were one support among many. This larger polemical effort aimed at proving that the authors of biblical texts were divinely inspired at all, and its connection with the

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<sup>71</sup> *Album scholae latinae* (1712-1729), AFSt / S L2, fols. 331-2; Johann Anastasius Freylinghausen and Gotthilf August Francke, *Ausführlicher Bericht*, 97-9; A. H. Francke, *Einleitung zur Lesung Heiliger Schrift*, in *Schriften zur Biblischen Hermenetic I*, ed. E. Peschke, 133.

<sup>72</sup> *Album scholae latinae* (1712-1729), AFSt / S L2, fols. 331-2.

<sup>73</sup> G. F. Meier, *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens Leben*, 10.

<sup>74</sup> *Catalogus lectionum aestivalium* (Halle, Apr. 1732).

<sup>75</sup> G. F. Meier, *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens Leben* (Halle, 1763), 11.

<sup>76</sup> *Index acroasium ex omni scientiarum et disciplinarum bonarum genere* (Halle, Sept. 1735).

<sup>77</sup> Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten, *Unterricht von Auslegung der heiligen Schrift* (Halle, 1742), 2.

controversy over affection-laden divine communication finds a particularly vivid illustration in hermeneutical writings by Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten. According to Baumgarten, many passages in the Bible appeared to make no sense to any reader who did not keep in mind that divine inspiration had put the human authors of those passages in a state of heightened emotion (*starke sinnliche Gemüthsbewegung*). This included passages where

general truths are uttered in a very concrete [*sinnlich*] way; . . . fully equivalent or at least very similar and interchangeable expressions are repeated; . . . absent people and even unthinking and lifeless objects are spoken to; . . . short, broken-off sentences and comments appear; . . . dedicatory words appear, which the context and the integrity of the meaning didn't call for; . . . the discussion is interrupted by ideas that do not add to the comprehensibility of the things being discussed . . .

and so on.<sup>78</sup> The danger, it seems, was that the divine inspiration of biblical authors could be called into question if apparently senseless or internally contradictory passages could not be proven to be suitable products of divinely inspired authorship, and the occasional presence of unsuitably affect-laden language was evidently one reason for this danger.

The immediate sources of the danger were of course those biblical critics who had called the divine inspiration of the words of biblical authors into question along precisely the lines described by Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten. One of the most prominent of these critics, and the most relevant to an investigation of Alexander Baumgarten's role in the controversy, was the Genevan theologian and man of letters, Jean Le Clerc (1657-1736). In 1685, Le Clerc had published *Sentiments de quelques Theologiens de Hollande sùr l'Historie Critique du vieux Testament*, a critique of Richard Simon's *Critical History of the Old Testament* in epistolary form.<sup>79</sup> In the eleventh and twelfth letters of the critique, published five years later in English as the first two

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<sup>78</sup> S. J. Baumgarten, *Unterricht von Auslegung*, 56-7:

. . . von allgemeinen Wahrheiten sehr sinnlich geredet wird; . . . gantz einerley Ausdrucke oder doch sehr ähnliche und gleichgültige wiederholt werden; . . . sonderlich abwesende Personen auch wol unvernünfftige und leblose Dinge angedet werden; . . . kurtz abgebrochene Sätze und Reden vorkommen; . . . Zueignungsworte vorkommen, die der Zusammenhang und die Volständigkeit des Verstandes eben nicht erforderte; . . . die Rede durch eingeschaltete Vorstellungen unterbrochen wird, die zur Verständlichkeit der vorgetragenen Sachen nicht gehören; . . . [etc.].

<sup>79</sup> Samuel L. Golden, *Jean LeClerc* (New York: Twayne, 1972), 31.

chapters of Le Clerc's *Five Letters Concerning the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*, Le Clerc insists that the "sense" of biblical authors' words was perhaps in some cases inspired, in that God imparted to some prophets, for example, a "clear and distinct idea" about the future, but that the words themselves in most cases cannot have been God's. Even disregarding several biblical authors' explicit denials that the Holy Spirit dictated their texts word-for-word, Le Clerc explains, it is clear from the various contradictions in the historical books, the apparently haphazard variations of vocabulary, and the vagueness about dates and numbers in general, that biblical authors' words were in most cases not the result of divine inspiration at all.<sup>80</sup>

Corresponding to Le Clerc's incredulity about the divine origins of most biblical words, it seems, was a presupposition that divinely inspired discourse must by its nature meet the standards to which Le Clerc thought human beings should aspire in their own use of language. One of the most important standards was "perspicuity of style."<sup>81</sup> In an essay on "True and False Eloquence", Le Clerc devotes ten pages to the discussion of the three canonical styles, but he virtually omits discussion of the "pleasing" and "sublime" styles, devoting far more space to describing and praising the "simple and proper style," which he appears to take as a model of perspicuity:

The principal rock, which we ought to avoid in this simple and natural language is obscurity, and 'tis for that reason that we carefully shun everything that may produce it, as equivocal terms, too great plenty of figures, and an ill disposition of words and thoughts.<sup>82</sup>

Among the several dangers of deviating from a perspicuous style, according to Le Clerc, is the perpetuation of an ethical "disorder" that false eloquence tends to occasion in the world. "[I]f the end of the discourse be to correct the faults of the readers and auditors," Le Clerc writes,

the multitude of impertinent words, the weakness of the reasonings, and the <in?>judicious choice of the thoughts, produce but very sorry effects. As we are pers<u>aded without knowing why or wherefore, and have no clear and continued principles to preserve ourselves from

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<sup>80</sup> [Jean Le Clerc], *Five Letters Concerning the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures* (London, 1690), 20-41.

<sup>81</sup> [Jean Le Clerc], *Parrhasiana*, trans. [?] (London, 1700), 79.

<sup>82</sup> [J. Le Clerc], *Parrhasiana*, 82.

error, and to regulate our conduct aright, our manners will infallibly derive an unhappy tincture from the disorder of our minds; we do good and evil without discerning them so distinctly as we ought to do, and our lives become a perpetual mixture of a little virtue and a great deal of vice. We know the general rules of good and evil confusedly, and we apply them almost by mere accident to the particular actions of life.<sup>83</sup>

Ethically effective eloquence, Le Clerc implies, ought to use a perspicuous style to convey “general rules of good and evil” such that they can be understood clearly and distinctly. Le Clerc’s reservations about poetry as an instrument of moral education therefore come as no surprise. While claiming to deny “that poets are altogether unuseful,”<sup>84</sup> Le Clerc nonetheless expresses caution at every turn: everything about a poem that creates “sensible pleasure” in its audience – whether its beautiful style, its power to arouse the passions, or the agreeable sounds of its words and cadence – blind the audience to all the “false thoughts” the poem contains.<sup>85</sup> Le Clerc moreover asserts that the intent of a poet to communicate a particular moral lesson by means of a poem cannot be reliably discerned from the poem itself. In his view,

there never was any narration in the world from which some sort of a moral might not be deduced, altho’ the author of it never dreamt of any such thing. . . . Therefore to be assured that any poet had a design to give us certain lessons, ‘tis necessary that he should tell us so himself, or at least set it down in his writings after such a manner that no body cou’d doubt it.<sup>86</sup>

The effect of a poem on its reader’s or listener’s affections, in other words, is not a sufficient indicator of the moral truth that the poet wished to convey. Le Clerc’s view is a far cry from the position of Francke and Rambach, who take the affections aroused by divinely inspired words as themselves an important “spiritual truth” and one of the indispensable indicators of the intended meaning of the words. Le Clerc’s lack of interest in the sublime style and lack of firm confidence that poetry can be

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<sup>83</sup> [J. Le Clerc], *Parrhasiana*, 65-6.

<sup>84</sup> [J. Le Clerc], *Parrhasiana*, 41.

<sup>85</sup> [J. Le Clerc], *Parrhasiana*, 6-7, 9-10, 20-1.

<sup>86</sup> [J. Le Clerc], *Parrhasiana*, 42-3.

used for educational purposes, moreover, stands in contrast to Rambach's defense of poetry in his *Poetische Fest-Gedancken*.

Le Clerc's challenge to the divine inspiration of the bible's human authors was answered by none other than Alexander Baumgarten, under the direction of Christian Benedict Michaelis, an open critic of Le Clerc. In 1733, Michaelis had assigned an older classmate of Alexander's, Johann Christian Meisner, the task of writing a dissertation defending the authorship of Exodus 36 by Moses, whose authorship had been called into question by Spinoza, Iitschakus, Richard Simon, and Jean Le Clerc. The danger of allowing that some author later than Moses had inserted the chapter, Michaelis explained in his review of Meisner's dissertation in the *Wöchentliche Hallesche Anzeigen*, was twofold. First, it made the exegesis of all the other chapters uncertain, by unsettling the conviction that Moses wrote the passages that had traditionally been ascribed to him. Moreover, it seemed to argue against the divine inspiration of the author of the chapter in question. In Michaelis' words, "How could a God-driven man have inserted a new part into the laws of Moses without indicating its distinctness from Moses's own laws?"<sup>87</sup> Michaelis' defense of the divine inspiration of the biblical authors continued in 1735, when he assigned Alexander Baumgarten the task of "saving" a number of verbal expressions whose usage in the Book of Genesis had been criticized – by Le Clerc, among others – as chaotic and imprecise, such that they seemed unbecoming an author inspired by a perfect God.<sup>88</sup> The result was Baumgarten's *Dissertatio chorographica*, a defense of biblical authors' use of the words, *superus* and *inferus* ("above" and "below") as internally consistent rather than haphazard. The usage may appear haphazard to those interpreters who "scarcely blush at imputing the mark of invalidity [*akurologia*] to the style of the sacred book," Baumgarten explains, but this appearance of haphazardness is simply the result of the words' having been used in a variety of senses, corresponding to the various aspects of the things to which the words are attached; sometimes they refer to physical locations, sometimes to moral qualities, and sometimes the physical and the moral aspects are connected with each other.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Christian Benedict Michaelis, [Review of Meisner], *Wöchentliche Hallesche Anzeigen*, 24 August 1733 (v. XXXV), 553-6.

<sup>88</sup> Christian Benedict Michaelis, Review of *Dissertatio chorographica*, by A. G. Baumgarten, *Wöchentliche Hallesche Anzeigen*, 14 March 1735 (v. XI), 166-171; 21 March 1735 (v. XII), 181-5.

<sup>89</sup> Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Dissertatio chorographica notiones superi et inferi, indeque adscensus et descensus in chorographiis sacris evolvens*, praes. C. B. Michaelis (Halle, 1735), in *Commentationes theologicae*, ed. Johann Caspar Velthusen, Christian Theoph Kuinoel, and Georg Alexander Rupert (Leipzig, 1798), 401, 404-5.

Baumgarten presented this dissertation, apparently to great acclaim, six months before completing his *Meditationes*.<sup>90</sup>

That Baumgarten wrote his *Meditationes*, too, in sympathy with Francke and Rambach's defense of affect-laden discourse as divinely inspired, and with Rambach's defense of poetry as a divinely sanctioned and effective means of moral improvement, cannot be inferred from unambiguous assertions by Baumgarten himself. Various arguments and allusions in the *Meditationes* nonetheless tend toward this conclusion. First, Baumgarten's assertion that a poem is capable of perfection, and that a poem is moreover perfect in proportion to its tendency to arouse affections in the mind of the reader through the presentation of indistinct ideas, implies that the use of indistinct ideas to arouse affections also befits a perfect God, who would only use a perfect means of communication. Baumgarten himself suggests this implication at several points in the *Meditationes*. He describes miracles, for example, as well as prophetic predictions whose accuracy is verifiable (because the events they describe have already come to pass), as subjects that tend to contribute to the perfection of a poem.<sup>91</sup> Baumgarten's allusions to biblical stories and prophecies, here, are so difficult to ignore, that they can hardly be accidental. (At any rate, Baumgarten's reason for including them cannot have been simply that they follow from his criteria of perfection in a poem, for he does not test every possible subject of a poem against those criteria.<sup>92</sup>) Baumgarten also describes the development of a poem's theme as similar to the creation of a world; the ideal ordering principle of representations in a poem, according to Baumgarten, corresponds to the order "in which things in the world follow one another, such that the glory of the Creator is revealed – the highest and ultimate theme of an immense poem, so to speak."<sup>93</sup> Another persuasive indicator of Baumgarten's sympathy with Francke and Rambach can be found in his call for an aesthetic philosophy at the end of the *Meditationes*. As he describes it, this philosophy is meant to aid in the use of the lower cognitive faculties for the attainment of knowledge (*scientia*), or, in other

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<sup>90</sup> According to the records of the Philosophy Faculty at Halle, the text of Baumgarten's *Meditationes* was submitted to the faculty censor, Johann Heinrich Schulze, on August 9, 1735. Halle Universitätsarchiv, Rep. 21, III.261, f. 74.

<sup>91</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, §64.

<sup>92</sup> I must therefore disagree with Werner Strube's assertion that Baumgarten purports to present a theory of poetry that is *vollständig*, in so far as Baumgarten "leitet aus dem Grundsatz, jedenfalls der Idee bzw. der Intention nach, alle einzelnen poetologischen Regeln ab." Werner Strube, "Die Entstehung der Ästhetik als einer wissenschaftlichen Disziplin," *Scientia Poetica* 8 (2004), 15.

<sup>93</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, §71, cf. §68.

words, for the perception of truth (*veritas*).<sup>94</sup> The correspondence between this truth and the “spiritual truth” invoked by Francke and Rambach, which is also transmitted by the arousal of affections, is difficult to overlook.

That Baumgarten’s defense of affection-laden discourse as a means of divine communication and moral improvement corresponds to a defense of a theory of moral education understood by Baumgarten himself to resemble Francke’s and Rambach’s may seem implausible, given Baumgarten’s heavy use of a philosophical vocabulary usually considered foreign to Francke, Rambach, and other Pietists – above all, the words, *clarus*, *confusus*, and *distinctus* in the technical senses delineated by Leibniz. In the case of Baumgarten, Francke, and Rambach, however, the verbal differences are less significant than one might think. The suitability of Baumgarten’s philosophical terms for describing ideas of moral education like Francke’s and Rambach’s is revealed particularly clearly by Alexander’s brother, Siegmund Jacob. In his *Unterricht vom recht-mäßigen Verhalten eines Christen*, a textbook of moral theology, Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten aims to describe the process of *Sinnesänderung* or *Bekehrung*, the moral transformation that Francke describes in his *Delineatio* as a replacement of carnal by spiritual desires. Baumgarten describes the moral transformation with a terminological emphasis slightly different from Francke’s, characterizing it as a replacement of *Scheintugend*, pseudo-virtue, by *Tugend*, genuine virtue. What the terms refer to, however, would have been quite recognizable to Francke. Baumgarten describes the aim of moral transformation as the development of a *habitus*, calling virtue at various points a *Gemüthsfassung* and a *Fertigkeit* – more specifically, a “*Fertigkeit zur möglichsten Beobachtung des Gesetzes*” (a habit of observing the law as well as possible).<sup>95</sup> *Natürliche Tugend* (natural virtue) refers to natural law, and *Christliche Tugend* (Christian virtue) refers to divine law.<sup>96</sup> The difference between *Tugend* and *Scheintugend* is the *Beweggrund* or motivation for observing the law in question: *Scheintugend* is motivated by an overbearing *Eigenliebe* (self-love), whose various forms include *Wollust*, *Hochmut*, and *Geiz* (sensual desire, pride, and greed), whereas genuine *Tugend* is motivated by an “inclination of one’s character toward God, such that a man takes God to be his God and his highest good,

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<sup>94</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, §115.

<sup>95</sup> S. J. Baumgarten, *Unterricht vom recht-mäßigen Verhalten eines Christen oder Theologische Moral* (Halle, 1744), 593.

<sup>96</sup> S. J. Baumgarten, *Unterricht vom recht-mäßigen Verhalten eines Christen*, 600-1.



and expects his well-being to come from Him.”<sup>97</sup> The correspondence between Baumgarten’s two sets of motivations and Francke’s two types of desires, natural and spiritual, is unmistakable.

Also like Francke, Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten repeatedly emphasizes that the perception of “divine truths” (*Göttliche Wahrheiten*) by the intellect alone is not sufficient for the genuine improvement of one’s character (*Gemüthsfassung*) and for the replacement of natural desires by spiritual ones. In Baumgarten’s words:

The inner working of God extends not only to distinct ideas [*deutliche Vorstellungen*], and therefore the higher powers of the soul, but also to indistinct [*undeutliche*] and dark [*dunkele*] [ideas] . . . , which not only make the necessary impression of distinct perception onto the heart, but are also indispensable in the special case of children before they can use their reason. . . .<sup>98</sup>

Baumgarten uses terms recognizable from his brother’s *Meditationes*, referring to the higher faculties of the soul and to obscure and distinct ideas, to advance a position similar to Francke’s and Rambach’s. Whereas Francke and Rambach assert that spiritual truths must be grasped through *Empfindung* – a receptiveness to, and imitation of, the affections of the authors who give voice to those spiritual truths – and that God works on the will and arouses the emotions of the authors and prophets he inspires, Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten insists that God’s “inner effect” on one’s character works through indistinct and obscure ideas, graspable by the lower rather than the higher cognitive faculties of the soul.<sup>99</sup>

That Alexander Baumgarten considered this philosophical vocabulary suitable for advancing a position similar to his brother’s, and moreover meant to advance such a position, is not immediately obvious from his 1735 *Meditationes*. If

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<sup>97</sup> S. J. Baumgarten, *Unterricht vom recht-mäßigen Verhalten eines Christen*, 115-16: “Neigung des Gemüths gegen Gott, daß ein Mensch Gott für seinen Gott und höchstes Gut annimmt, und sein Wohlfahrt von demselben erwartet.”

<sup>98</sup> S. J. Baumgarten, *Unterricht vom recht-mäßigen Verhalten eines Christen*, 680:

*Die innere Wirkung Gottes . . . [erstreckt] sich nicht nur auf deutliche Vorstellungen, und folglich obere Kräfte der Seele, sondern auch auf undeutliche und dunkele [Vorstellungen] . . . , die sowol bey erwachsenen Personen den nötigen Eindruck der deutlichen Erkenntnis ins Gemüt verursachen, als sonderlich bei Kindern vor dem Gebrauch des Verstandes unentberlich sind. . . .*

<sup>99</sup> In general, the use of a philosophical vocabulary to describe what earlier Pietists tended to describe in other terms is characteristic of Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten, according to Axel Bühler and Luigi Cataldi Madonna, “Von Thomasius bis Semler. Entwicklungslinien der Hermeneutik in Halle,” 61-2.

Baumgarten can be taken at his word, he wrote the *Meditationes* for the purpose of “making it clear that philosophy and the knowledge of how to construct a poem, which are often held to be entirely antithetical, are linked together in the most amiable union,” a formulation that echoes his call for philosophers to inquire into the means of improving the lower cognitive faculties.<sup>100</sup> “[A]nyone who knows our logic,” Baumgarten writes, “is not unaware of how uncultivated this field is.”<sup>101</sup> This comment in turn finds echoes in Baumgarten’s other writings. In his *Philosophische Brieffe*, for example, Baumgarten remarks that logic “seems to promise more than it delivers, when it pledges to improve our cognition (*Erkenntnis*) as a whole,” since “we possess far more cognitive faculties of the soul than can simply be placed in the category of reason or intellect.”<sup>102</sup> But here, too, the ethical implications of the attention Baumgarten draws to the deficiencies of logic as taught by many of his contemporaries, and to the consequent need for an aesthetic philosophy that inquires into the improvement of indistinct rather than distinct perception, are not obvious.

The ethical implications become more obvious in *De vi et efficacia ethices philosophiae* (*The Force and Efficacy of Ethical Philosophy*), a dissertation written under Baumgarten’s supervision by Samuel Wilhelm Spalding in 1741, a year after Baumgarten had left Halle to take up a professorship in Frankfurt-an-der-Oder.<sup>103</sup> The dissertation, according to Spalding, is based on Baumgarten’s *Ethica philosophica* (1740) and *Metaphysica* (1739), and its aim is to demonstrate that the truths one learns by studying ethics have an effect on one’s behavior, even when those truths are not perceived distinctly. Indistinct ideas about ethics may be incapable of the same force as distinct ideas – which, unlike indistinct ideas, can be technically described as “effective” (*efficax*) and “motivating” (*movens*) – but Spalding argues that they are nonetheless the motivating reasons for most people’s behavior.<sup>104</sup> The practical effect of indistinct ideas of ethical truths, Spalding points out, are particularly noticeable among people who are unaccustomed to behaving virtuously and who obviously

<sup>100</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, 4: “. . . philosophiam & poematis pangendi scientiam habitas saepe pro dissitissimis amicissimo iunctas connubio ponerem ob oculos. . . .”

<sup>101</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, §115.

<sup>102</sup> [A. G. Baumgarten], *Philosophische Brieffe von Aletheophilus II* (Leipzig, 1741), 6:

*Weil wir nun aber weit mehrere Vermögen der Seelen besitzen, die zur Erkenntnis dienen, als die man bloß zum Verstande oder der Vernunft rechnen könne, so scheint ihm die Logik mehr zu versprechen, als sie halte, wenn sie unsere Erkenntnis überhaupt zu verbessern sich anheischig macht. . . .*

<sup>103</sup> Samuel Wilhelm Spalding, resp., *De vi et efficacia ethices philosophiae*, praes. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (Frankfurt/Oder, 1741).

<sup>104</sup> S. W. Spalding, *De vi et efficacia ethices philosophiae*, §§21, 26. Note Spalding’s use of *efficax*, also used by Francke in reference to the effectiveness of God’s word. See above, n. 36.

have no distinct ideas about ethics, but who nonetheless display an internal resistance to wrong-doing when they apologize for their transgressions and ask for forgiveness.<sup>105</sup> The practical effect of indistinct ideas of ethics is also detectable among those who call themselves Christians and appear to behave accordingly: “Many if not most good actions,” Spalding writes, “not only of human beings but even of those who take their name from Christ, rest on a foundation of confused perception of ethical things, the things demonstrated in ethical philosophy.”<sup>106</sup> Put more precisely, confused perceptions of ethical things provide people with a “sufficient reason” for the various appetites and aversions, or “instincts,” associated with good actions.<sup>107</sup>

The connection between Spalding’s dissertation and Baumgarten’s *Meditationes* becomes clearer in Spalding’s assertion that the confused perception of ethics is made practically more effective by a “good and virtuous education.” Such an education works, according to Spalding,

by increasingly developing and strengthening good instinctive desires and aversions as well as their roots, exciting suitable affections, [and] more often restraining contrary affections, by means of stories [*fabulis*], histories, comedies, tragedies, rules, proverbs, homilies, and so on. . . .<sup>108</sup>

The educational effectiveness of these various forms of literature, Spalding further explains, depends on their producing in the mind of their readers or auditors ideas whose various characteristics recall the characteristics of the ideas Baumgarten says a perfect poem tends to produce: clarity and vividness. “The more steady [*frequens*], clear [*clarus*] and vivid [*vividus*] an idea of something is to me,” Spalding writes,

the greater my cognition [*cognitio*] becomes – since if it already had force [*vim*] when it was obscure, this, too, increases along with the increasing clarity [*luce*]. And so from a good education, from fables,

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<sup>105</sup> S. W. Spalding, *De vi et efficacia ethices philosophiae*, §22.

<sup>106</sup> S. W. Spalding, *De vi et efficacia ethices philosophiae*, §26:

*Sublatis vero his praeiudiciis quisque videbit, multas, nisi plurimas, actiones bonas non hominum solum, sed et eorum, qui a Christo nomen habent, fundamento confusae Ethicorum, quae in Ethica Philosophica demonstrantur, cognitionis niti.*

<sup>107</sup> S. W. Spalding, *De vi et efficacia ethices philosophiae*, §19.

<sup>108</sup> S. W. Spalding, *De vi et efficacia ethices philosophiae*, §23.

histories, and so on, I acquire a greater degree of motivating cognition. . . .<sup>109</sup>

The usefulness of this mechanism in moral education, Spalding concludes, should not be underestimated:

The ancient philosophers' custom of presenting morals by such diverse means should not only not be rejected, but rather it should be recommended to the greatest extent possible. Indeed, in *Paschio*, too, you find the words: "that there is almost no subject in moral philosophy that cannot be illustrated from the poets." And Conrad Durrius shows the same thing more fully in his work, *De recondita philosophia poëtica*. Even Horace himself says about Homer, "He explains what is beautiful, what is base, what is convenient, and what is not, in a fuller and better way than Chrysippus and Crantor." What's more, the scandalous poets often contain the best teachings, such that reading them is not justly considered useless to everyone or entirely to be rejected.<sup>110</sup>

It is clear from these remarks that Spalding considers his defense of moral education through the communication of steady, clear, and vivid – but confused – ideas to imply a defense of poetry as an instrument of moral education, an instrument whose effectiveness logicians should not ignore.

That Spalding's dissertation faithfully articulates Baumgarten's aims in calling for an aesthetic philosophy in his *Meditationes* cannot, of course, be proven beyond the shadow of a doubt. Nor, to the extent that the dissertation does illuminate the

<sup>109</sup> S. W. Spalding, *De vi et efficacia ethices philosophiae*, §24:

*Quo enim frequentior, clarior et vividior de aliqua re mihi est repraesentatio, eo maior mea redditur cognitio, quae si vim iam habuit obscura, crescet et haec crescente luce, hinc bona educatione, fabulis, historiis, etc. maiorem acquiri cognitionis moventis gradum. . . .*

<sup>110</sup> S. W. Spalding, *De vi et efficacia ethices philosophiae*, §24:

*[E]t ideo non modo non reiiciendus mos veterum Philosophorum, moralia tam diverso modo proponendi, sed etiam quam maxime suadendus. Ita et in iam allegato Paschio, verba invenies: "Nullum fere caput esse philosophiae moralis, quod ex Poëtis non possit illustrari." Quod et Conr. Durrius in oratione de Recondita Philosophia Poëtica amplius ostendit. Jam et ipse Horatius de Homero dicit, quod*

*Hic, quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non, Plenius ac melius Chrysippo ac Crantore dicat.*

*Immo optimas saepe obscoeni Poëtae continent doctrinas, inde horum lectio inutilis omnibus, aut omnino reiicienda haud iuste deprehenditur.*

ethical dimension of Baumgarten's call for an aesthetic philosophy, should the appearance of themes and positions common to Baumgarten and several of his Pietist teachers be allowed to obscure the ways in which Baumgarten may have deviated from at least some of those teachers. Baumgarten's use of the word, *aisthetike*, for example, cannot be assumed to imply his agreement with Francke's and Rambach's view that *aisthesis*, a perceptive ability available only to the reborn and the chief means of moral improvement for a reader of the Bible, was absolutely indispensable for understanding the spiritual meaning of a biblical text. Direct, unambiguous signs of disagreement are not obvious either, but Alexander's brother, Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten, does deviate slightly from Francke and Rambach's position. While allowing that "experience of the things described by the words" makes the perceptions of an aspiring biblical exegete more distinct and more reliable, Baumgarten stops short of describing it as indispensable, asserting in fact that "the unconverted as well as the converted can discern the correct sense of holy scripture."<sup>111</sup> This deviation from Francke and Rambach may explain Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten's avoidance of the word, *aisthesis* in his own hermeneutical writings. Whether Alexander Baumgarten agreed with his brother or with Francke and Rambach on this issue is difficult to discern.

A deviation from Rambach is easier to discern in Baumgarten's frequent endorsement of mythological figures as images appropriate to a perfect poem, an endorsement echoed by Samuel Wilhelm Spalding's indirect praise of Homer as an effective moral teacher and his direct praise of the "scandalous poets." In his *Poetische Fest-Gedancken*, Rambach worries that the "heathen religion" nourishes the fleshly desire for pleasure.<sup>112</sup> To be fair, as one contemporary reviewer noted, Rambach himself does not always avoid mythological subjects in his own poems: in one of them he "forgets himself," making reference to Apollo and the Muses.<sup>113</sup> In general, though, his wariness of mythological subjects stands in clear contrast with Baumgarten's enthusiasm for them.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> S. J. Baumgarten, *Öffentliche Anzeige seiner diesmaligen Akademischen Arbeit* (Halle, 1734), §10; S. J. Baumgarten, *Unterricht von Auslegung der Heiligen Schrift*, 18.

<sup>112</sup> J. J. Rambach, *Poetische Fest-Gedancken*, Vorrede, §3.

<sup>113</sup> Review of *Johann Jacob Rambachs geistliche Poesien*, in *Unschuldige Nachrichten von Alten und Neuen Theologischen Sachen*, ed. Valentin Ernst Löscher (Wittenberg, 1736), 785-7.

<sup>114</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, e.g. §36. Other signs of the disagreement between Baumgarten and Rambach on the appropriate subject of a good poem can be found in a student's notes on a *collegium* Baumgarten held on his aesthetic philosophy in Frankfurt/Oder, probably in 1750, edited by Bernard Poppe as *Kollegium über die Ästhetik*, in *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten: Seine Bedeutung und Stellung in*

But even if Baumgarten did not simply endorse Francke's and Rambach's ideas about poetry and moral education in every detail, what he does seem to have endorsed suggests how much he learned from their writings while studying in Halle. Francke and Rambach had taken what they themselves portrayed as a controversial position in a debate about biblical hermeneutics: the spiritual meaning of a biblical text consists of its power to reform the affections of a reader who has had the experience of conversion. This position, marked by Francke's and Rambach's reference to *aisthesis*, presupposed another controversial view, namely, that divine inspiration reformed rather than suppressed the human affections of the people subject to it. Furthermore, Francke and Rambach conceived of moral education in general as a process of reforming one's own affections, and they considered imitation of other people's spiritual affections to be one of this education's important methods. In Rambach's view, poetry, too, could have an edifying effect on the affections of its audience. In other words, Rambach and Francke may very well have urged the "Unterdrückung der bösen Sinnlichkeit" and considered darkness a metaphor for the defectiveness of the unconverted human soul, as Wilhelm Ludwig Federlin points out, but this should not obscure the fact that in the idiom of Leibniz, as employed by Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten, among others, they were describing both divine inspiration, biblical interpretation, and moral education as processes that make use of "indistinct" and "dark" ideas.

Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten absorbed all this. By the time he called for philosophers to study the method of perfecting the lower cognitive faculties of the soul, he had been exposed to Francke's and Rambach's ideas of hermeneutics and moral education from several directions as a student in Francke's Latin School and the University of Halle; he had written a dissertation in defense of the divine inspiration of the Bible under Christian Benedict Michaelis; and he was aware of the controversy over poetry's suitability as a means of divine communication. His 1735 *Meditationes* reflects all this, in part by its use of the word, *aesthetica*, and in part by its unmistakable implications for the character of divine inspiration. If Baumgarten's sympathy with Francke and Rambach's general view of moral education is somewhat understated in the *Meditationes*, it becomes more obvious in the

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*der Leibniz-Wolffischen Philosophie und seine Beziehungen zu Kant* (Borna-Leipzig, 1907), e.g. §183, where Baumgarten expressly denies that a beautiful poem must necessarily express praise of God (*Lob der Gottheit*). I have not yet seen compelling evidence for the apparently standard view that this represents a repudiation of the Pietist denial of *adiaphora* – on which, see Wolfgang Martens, *Literatur und Frömmigkeit in der Zeit der frühen Aufklärung* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1989), esp. 129-72.

dissertation supervised by Baumgarten in 1741, *De vi et efficacia ethices philosophia*. It will become still more obvious when we turn to Baumgarten's own *Aesthetica*, which he began to publish in 1750.

But first, to understand the purpose to which Baumgarten made use of this view of moral education in his aesthetic theory, we now turn again to the 1720s and 30s, and to the controversies surrounding the philosophical works of Christian Wolff, whose importance to Baumgarten has not gone uninvestigated but has yet to be fully revealed.

## Chapter 4

### Christian Wolff's Critics and the Foundation of Morality

That the controversies in the 1720s and 30s surrounding the philosophical writings of Christian Wolff (1679-1754) deserve careful scholarly attention has long been obvious. Doubt that they represent a seminal moment in the history of philosophy, the history of Christianity, and European intellectual history in general, at any rate, is hard to find, even if judgments of the precise significance of that moment vary widely. The controversies in which Wolff and his critics in Halle and elsewhere were embroiled have been called fundamentally a conflict between “intellectualism” and the belief that knowledge of God depends on revelation,<sup>1</sup> between “Spinozism” and “idealism,”<sup>2</sup> between support for and opposition to the “Wohlfahrtstaat,”<sup>3</sup> between confidence in the powers of the human intellect and consciousness of the boundaries of human capacities,<sup>4</sup> between approval and suspicion of the very enjoyment of life,<sup>5</sup> and between fundamentally incompatible approaches to educational reform among the theological, legal, and philosophical faculties of arguably the most influential university in the early eighteenth-century German-speaking world.<sup>6</sup> As far as the consequences of the controversies, Wolff's opponents have been credited with exposing the fundamental inability of the so-called Leibniz-Wolffian philosophical system to give a credible account human freedom and to attribute actions to individual human beings, thereby laying the

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<sup>1</sup> Max Wundt, *Die deutsche Schulphilosophie im Zeitalter der Aufklärung* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1945; rept. Hildesheim: Olms, 1992), 239.

<sup>2</sup> M. Wundt, *Die deutsche Schulphilosophie*, 239.

<sup>3</sup> Carl Hinrichs, *Preussentum und Pietismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), 394, 396.

<sup>4</sup> M. Wundt, *Die deutsche Schulphilosophie*, 231, 237; cf. C. Hinrichs, *Preussentum und Pietismus*, 388-9.

<sup>5</sup> C. Hinrichs, *Preussentum und Pietismus*, 395.

<sup>6</sup> Jonathan Holloran, *Professors of Enlightenment at the University of Halle, 1690-1730*, PhD diss. (U of Virginia, 2000), 309. My thanks to Erik Midelfort for alerting me to Jonathan Holloran's work.



groundwork for its demise at the hands of Kant.<sup>7</sup>

Whatever the larger philosophical significance of the controversy over Wolff, Alexander Baumgarten's biography makes its importance to him, too, seem extremely likely. Many of his teachers in Francke's schools and at the university were intimately involved in the controversy, which continued to rage as he arrived in Halle, age thirteen, in October 1727.<sup>8</sup> Six years earlier, as the story is conventionally told, Christian Wolff, *ordinarius* Professor of Mathematics and Philosophy at Halle since 1706,<sup>9</sup> had delivered a lecture on the practical philosophy of the Chinese and thereby given his long-standing critics on the university's theological faculty an opportunity to attack him openly.<sup>10</sup> The result was a denunciation of the lecture from the pulpit of Halle's *Schulkirche* by Johann Justus Breithaupt, an investigation of Wolff's philosophical writings by the theology faculty, and sustained – though initially unsuccessful – maneuvering by Breithaupt, August Hermann Francke, and their colleague Joachim Lange (1670-1744) to secure a denunciation of Wolff's lecture

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<sup>7</sup> Bruno Bianco, "Freiheit gegen Fatalismus. Zu Joachim Lange's Kritik an Wolff," *Zentren der Aufklärung I: Halle*, ed. Norbert Kinske, *Wolffenbütteler Studien zur Aufklärung* 15 (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1989), 112-13, 116-17, 122-6.

<sup>8</sup> *Album scholae latinae* (1712-1729), AFSt / S L2, fols. 331-2; Georg Friedrich Meier, *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens Leben* (Halle, 1763), [5].

<sup>9</sup> Wilhelm Schrader, *Geschichte der Friedrichs-Universität zu Halle*, 2 v. (Berlin: Ferd. Dümmlers Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1894), I.169, II.550.

<sup>10</sup> Georg Volckmar Hartmann, *Anleitung zur Historie der Leibnizisch-Wolffischen Philosophie* (Leipzig, 1737, rept. Hildesheim: Olms, 1973), 665. The conventional account of the story, as repeated in various retellings in the past century, is derived largely from sources friendly to Wolff, above all Carl Günther Ludovici and Georg Volckmar Hartmann. For the sake of presenting a concise chronology, I have extracted only the outlines of the conventional story, omitting as much as possible the tendentious causal explanations and commentary provided by Hartmann and Ludovici. It should be noted, though, that even the conventional chronology, beginning with Wolff's lecture on Chinese practical philosophy, is somewhat misleading. August Hermann Francke noted his concern about Wolff years before the provocative lecture, and he began to keep a dossier on allegedly suspicious teachings by Wolff in 1717 at the latest. Lange's warnings to students about Wolff can be traced as far back as 1712. See C. Hinrichs, *Preussentum und Pietismus*, 397-401; and Albrecht Beutel, "Causa Wolffiana: Die Vertreibung Christian Wolffs aus Preußen 1723 als Kulminationspunkt des theologisch-politischen Konflikts zwischen Halleschem Pietismus und Aufklärungsphilosophie," in *Reflektierte Religion*, by A. Beutel (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 132-3, drawing on Francke's Journal and G. V. Hartmann's *Anleitung*. I have voiced scepticism about Hartmann's allegation that the conflict between Wolff and Francke had long roots, in "Lucas Geiger (1682-1750) und der Reiz des Wolffianismus in Franckes Waisenhaus" (paper presented at the Interdisziplinäres Zentrum für die Erforschung der Europäischen Aufklärung, Halle/Saale, Germany, 9 Dezember 2009).

from the Prussian court.<sup>11</sup> The conflict between Wolff and his critics reached a fever pitch two years later, in 1723, with the publication – encouraged by Joachim Lange – of a critique and denunciation of Wolff’s metaphysics by a former student of his, Daniel Strähler. In the midst of the ensuing fight over whether Strähler should be punished for violating the university statute against issuing such denunciations in public, and amidst attempts on both sides to win university and royal support, the polemic escalated. Lange began a long series of thinly-veiled printed attacks against Wolff’s metaphysics and ethics, prompting the first of a series of indignant and derogatory responses by Wolff. The same year, a direct appeal by Francke to King Frederick Wilhelm I, circumventing Wolff’s supporters at court, had the desired effect: the King issued orders that Wolff leave Prussian territory immediately, which Wolff obeyed, taking up a professorship in Marburg that had been offered to him the year before.<sup>12</sup> Over the next several years the polemical exchanges continued. Critiques of Wolff from the University of Jena at the hands of *ordinarius* Professor of Theology, Johann Franz Buddeus (1667-1729), and his son-in-law, *ordinarius* Professor of Rhetoric, later also of Poetry and Theology, Johann Georg Walch (1693-1775), appeared in print shortly after Wolff’s banishment. By 1726, critiques like those raised by Strähler, Lange, Buddeus, and Walch were being debated in universities throughout the German lands.<sup>13</sup> In 1727, citing concern that Wolff was finding an alarming number of supporters, Francke and Lange succeeded in convincing the king to ban the reading, teaching, and selling of Wolff’s metaphysics and ethics, under threat of fine.<sup>14</sup> Five months after the ban was imposed, Alexander Baumgarten began his studies in Francke’s Latin school. Only nine years later, one year after the publication of Baumgarten’s *Meditationes*, was the ban lifted.<sup>15</sup>

The evidence that in the course of his philosophical and theological studies Baumgarten was confronted with this ban, as well as with the unabating debate over the allegations that had prompted it and continued to be invoked as a justification for it, is overwhelming. In their biographies of Baumgarten, both Thomas Abbt and Georg Friedrich Meier attest to Baumgarten’s secret study of Wolff in Halle under the

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<sup>11</sup> J. Holloran, *Professors of Enlightenment*, 293-302; cf. C. G. Ludovici, *Ausführlicher Entwurf einer vollständigen Historie der Wolffischen Philosophie*, v. 1, 3rd. ed. (Leipzig, 1738; rept. Hildesheim: Olms, 2003), 8.

<sup>12</sup> J. Holloran, *Professors of Enlightenment*, 327-65.

<sup>13</sup> J. Holloran, *Professors of Enlightenment*, 413.

<sup>14</sup> J. Holloran, *Professors of Enlightenment*, 419.

<sup>15</sup> Ferdinand Josef Schneider, “Das geistige Leben von Halle im Zeichen des Endkampfes zwischen Pietismus und Rationismus,” *Sachsen und Anhalt* 14 (1938), 145.

guidance of his brother, Siegmund Jacob; to his doubts about the soundness of the attacks against Wolff; and to his visits to the University of Jena for the purpose of hearing lectures by several of Wolff's supporters on the faculty.<sup>16</sup> Meier writes,

Baumgarten's academic life coincided with that period in which teaching the Wolffian philosophy at the University of Halle was forbidden. This notwithstanding, without being noticed he was led to a thorough investigation of it. . . . He had read and heard many charges against Wolff. His own thoughtfulness; his brother's judgment of the Wolffian philosophy, which little by little was becoming milder and milder; his attentive interaction with clever students from Jena and Halle; and his own multiple visits to the University of Jena, where he listened to Reusch, Carpov, Koehler, and Hamberger with the greatest attentiveness – all these factors kept him from jumping to conclusions and condemning what he himself had not yet sufficiently investigated and confirmed.<sup>17</sup>

Nor of course could Alexander Baumgarten have been unaware of the trouble caused by his brother's sympathy for Wolff; Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten's allegedly Wolffian tendencies became the grounds for formal criticism by members of the theology faculty in 1736.<sup>18</sup> But whether Alexander's call for the development of an aesthetic philosophy represented in any way a contribution or response to the controversy over Wolff is less obvious, largely because the intellectual content of the

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<sup>16</sup> G. F. Meier, *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens Leben*, 11-12; ; Thomas Abbt, *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens Leben und Character* (Halle, 1765), 8-10.

<sup>17</sup> G. F. Meier, *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens Leben*, 11-12:

*Baumgartens akademisches Leben fiel eben in denjenigen Zeitpunkt, in welchem, die Wolffische Philosophie auf der Hallischen Universität zu lehren, verboten war. Demohnerachtet ward er unvermerckt, zu einer gründlichen Untersuchung derselben, geleitet. . . . Er hatte, sehr viele Beschuldigungen wider Wolfen, gelesen und gehört. Allein sein eigenes Nachdenken, das Urtheil seines Bruders von der Wolfischen Weltweisheit, welches nach und nach immer gelinder wurde, sein fleißiger Umgang mit geschickten Studenten, welche aus Jena und Halle kamen, und sein eigener mehrmaliger Besuch der Universität Jena, wo er, Reuschen, Carpoven, Kölern und Hambergen, selbst mit der grösten Aufmerksamkeit hörte: alle diese Ursachen bewahrten ihn vor der Uebereilung, dasjenige ganzlich zu verdammen, was er selbst noch nicht genugsam untersucht und geprüft hatte.*

<sup>18</sup> F. J. Schneider, "Das geistige Leben," 145; "Einige Scripturae, des Hn. Prof. Baumgartens philosophische Lehrart betreffend" (1736), AFSt /H E7; Martin Schloemann, *Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten: System und Geschichte in der Theologie des Überganges zum Neuprottestantismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974), 41-8. See also below, ch. 5, n. 102-28.

controversy itself has yet to be expounded in a way that makes the connection with Baumgarten's aesthetics clear.

Admittedly, it does not help that the controversy appears in some respects not to have been philosophical or theological at all. Wolff and several of his supporters repeatedly alleged, in public and in private, that the real source of the animus against him was bitterness over his attempt in 1723 to secure a recently vacated professorship of philosophy at Halle for a student of his, Ludwig Thümmig (1697-1728), thereby causing candidates preferred by Lange, Francke, and most of the rest of the theology faculty to be passed over. This allegation, however partial to Wolff's cause, does find some support in surviving contemporary documents.<sup>19</sup> Among the other plausible motivations for the attacks against Wolff are jealousy over his popularity among students, who seem to have been flocking from Lange to Wolff throughout the 1720s, and irritation among honor-conscious members of the theology faculty over Wolff's unpleasantly arrogant habit of aggrandizing himself and belittling his theological colleagues.<sup>20</sup> And yet the readily apparent patterns in the objections raised against Wolff's philosophical works throughout the 1720s and 1730s by critics geographically far away from Halle and with no personal investment in the internal maneuverings of Halle's professors indicates that if the motivations behind the earliest attacks were at least partly personal, they were probably not entirely personal. In any case, the arguments against Wolff, whatever the motivations for discovering them, took on a life of their own shortly after they appeared in print.<sup>21</sup>

The charges themselves, following a pattern largely set by Joachim Lange, confirmed by Buddeus and Walch in 1723, and then repeated with little substantial variation in most contributions to the debate between 1723 and 1736 – and in most summaries of the debate long afterwards – were manifold. Allegations that Wolff's teachings represented a danger to student piety and an unmistakable cause of student immorality were not unusual.<sup>22</sup> Nor were a wide array of slurs; Wolff was denounced as an advocate of Spinozism, Stoicism, fatalism, and atheism.<sup>23</sup> As far as

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<sup>19</sup> C. Hinrichs, *Preussentum und Pietismus*, 405-9; J. Holloran, *Professors of Enlightenment*, 310-21, 338.

<sup>20</sup> J. Holloran, *Professors of Enlightenment*, 376; Johann Christoph von Dreyhaupt, *Pagus neletici et nudzici, oder diplomatisch-historische Beschreibung des Saal-Kreijses*, rev. and expanded by Johann Friedrich Stiebritz (Halle, 1773), II.168-9; C. Hinrichs, *Preussentum und Pietismus*, 398-400; and, quoted by Holloran, *Nicolas Veridicus Impartialis Bohemus [=Nicolaus Hieronymus Gundling], Unpartheyisches Sendschreiben* (Wittenberg [=Halle?], 1724), 13, 31, 33 – on which, see below, n. 184-8.

<sup>21</sup> J. Holloran, *Professors of Enlightenment*, 412.

<sup>22</sup> B. Poppe, *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten*, 6; J. Holloran, *Professors of Enlightenment*, 360, 400.

<sup>23</sup> B. Poppe, *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten*, 7-9.

philosophically specific attacks, Wolff's critics alleged, among other things, that by endorsing Leibniz' description of the relationship between mind and body as a "pre-established harmony," and by adopting Leibniz's theory of monads, he denied that the human soul ruled over the body, thereby denying human freedom and "mechanizing" the soul; that he rejected the soundest and most convincing proofs of God's existence; that he portrayed God as a source of evil as well as good; and that he described natural law as if it could exist even in God's absence, thereby undermining the foundations of religion and morality.<sup>24</sup> This last type of critique is one with which Alexander Baumgarten appears to have grappled throughout his career, from his days as a student in Halle in the early 1730s onward, and it will become clear that he developed his theory of aesthetics in order to address it.

The meaning of this critique and the reasons for its importance to Baumgarten and his contemporaries deserve significantly more attention than they have until now received. The reason for the lack of sufficient attention, it would seem, is that on first glance the nature of the alleged danger seems clear: Wolff undermined the "foundations of religion and morality." Why a Christian theologian would have considered these things to be dangerous seems so obvious, that the question of what it meant to undermine the foundations of religion and morality, and how Wolff was allegedly doing so, has seldom seemed necessary. To be sure, defensible suggestions and allusions are not hard to find in recent commentaries on the subject, even when the evidence for them is not explicitly provided. Albrecht Beutel, for example, offers a particularly pithy summary:

The substantive reason for the conflict that Wolff and the Halle Pietists had to fight out lay in the controversial question of the method of perception: whether, to put it biblically, fear of God, or, in Wolff's terms, the power of the human intellect is the beginning of wisdom.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> As described by Bernard Poppe, *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten: seine Bedeutung und Stellung in der Leibniz-Wolffischen Philosophie und seine Beziehungen zu Kant* (Münster, 1907), 6; F. J. Schneider, "Das geistige Leben," 140; M. Wundt, *Die deutsche Schulphilosophie*, 235-7; T. J. Hochstrasser, *Natural Law Theories in the Early Enlightenment* (Cambridge: UP, 2000), 158-9.

<sup>25</sup> A. Beutel, "Causa Wolffiana," 128:

*Der sachliche Grund des Konflikts, den Wolff mit den halleischen Pietisten auszufechten hatte, lag in der strittenen Frage der Erkenntnismethode: ob, biblisch gesprochen, die Furcht Gottes oder aber, mit Wolff zu reden, die Kraft der menschlichen Verstandes der Weisheit Anfang sei.*

Although Beutel follows this comment with probably the most insightful recent narration of the Wolffian controversy, he unfortunately declines to explain or justify his summary of the controversy's

An anticipation of Beutel's remark can be found in a classic article from 1938 by Ferdinand Josef Schneider, still in many respects the most informative account of Wolff's influence in 1730s Halle. Recalling Joachim Lange's remark, in a letter to a student of Wolff's, that "nowhere else is the conversion of the audience the chief aim, the way it is in Halle,"<sup>26</sup> Schneider explains why Lange and his colleagues perceived Wolff to be so dangerous:

Pietism's very zeal for conversion seemed in Halle to be called into question. Once anyone had taken the poison of Wolffianism, it was difficult to lead him back to the humble sensibility of a sinful creature wearing itself out with penance [*im Bußkampf*].<sup>27</sup>

Schneider does not refer explicitly to "the controversial question of the method of perception" mentioned by Beutel, but he has in fact placed it, or something very much like it, at the center of the conflict between Wolff and his critics. Whether fear of God or the exercise of the human intellect independent of such fear is the beginning of wisdom corresponds directly, as we shall see, to the question of whether regarding oneself as a sinful creature and undertaking the so-called *Bußkampf* is the necessary condition of moral improvement – that is, whether those things and the knowledge they require, namely, knowledge of God's will, are the only adequate foundation of morality. Wolff's apparently negative answer to this question seemed to his critics to be false and therefore dangerous.

At the heart of the controversy stood Christian Wolff's defense of the idea of

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intellectual substance, referring the reader to somewhat different accounts by Clemens Schwaiger and Bruno Bianco.

<sup>26</sup> F. J. Schneider, "Das geistige Leben," 140:

*Zu seiner und seiner Amtsgenossen Verteidigung machte später Lange einem einstigen Schüler des Philosophen gegenüber vor allem den Grund geltend, daß man an keinem anderen Ort "die Bekehrung der Zuhörer zum Hauptzweck habe, so wie in Halle."*

<sup>27</sup> F. J. Schneider, "Das geistige Leben," 141:

*Der ganze Bekehrungseifer des Pietismus schien in Halle tatsächlich in Frage gestellt zu sein. Wer da das Gift des Wolffianismus einmal in sich aufgenommen hatte, war schwer noch zur demütigen Gesinnung einer im Bußkampf sich aufreibenden sündlichen Kreatur zurückzuführen.*

*obligatio naturalis* or natural obligation.<sup>28</sup> Wolff had explained the meaning of the term in his *Deutsche Ethik*, first published in Halle in 1720, one year before his allegedly provocative lecture on Chinese practical philosophy, and then again in 1722 and 1728 with additions reflecting his awareness of the controversy that had ensued. In the preface to the 1722 edition, Wolff credits himself with having described natural obligation in a newly illuminating way, and he makes its significance obvious. “When one wants to direct a human being,” he explains, “one can go about it in one of two ways. Either one directs him by force [*Zwang*] like cattle, or with the help of reason [*Vernunft*], like a rational creature.” Natural obligation refers to the latter: it is a means of directing human actions that makes use of human reason (*Vernunft*) to produce internal obedience – which is to say, genuine virtue – while preserving the freedom of those who act in accordance with it. All other kinds of obligation refer explicitly to the “will of a superior” and involve the use of force, violence, and fear (*Zwang, Gewalt, Furcht*) to produce merely external discipline (*Zucht*). To be sure, compulsion and fear are indispensable for restraining certain people from doing what they want, but only in the case of those people who, like cattle, lack a well-functioning intellect and the capacity to reason. Those whose intellects and rational faculties function well need only natural obligation.<sup>29</sup> The chief implication of this

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<sup>28</sup> Dieter Hüning has described Wolff’s development and explanation of this concept in an essay generously adorned with pertinent quotations and comparative textual references, which I have taken as my point of departure: “Christian Wolffs Begriff der natürlichen Verbindlichkeit als Bindeglied zwischen Psychologie und Moralphilosophie,” in *Die Psychologie Christian Wolffs*, ed. Oliver-Pierre Rudolph and Jean-François Goubet, *Hallesche Beiträge zur Europäischen Aufklärung* 22 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2004): 143-67.

<sup>29</sup> Christian Wolff, *Vernünfftige Gedancken von der Menschen Thun und Lassen, zu Beförderung ihrer Glückseeligkeit* [= *Deutsche Ethik* ], 4th ed. (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1733), Preface to 2nd ed., [xx-xxii] (cf. Preface to 3rd ed., §10):

*Ich habe . . . gezeigt, wie es möglich ist einen Menschen zu verbinden etwas zu thun und zu lassen, und insonderheit die natürliche Verbindlichkeit in einem unverhofften Lichte vorgestellt, die man vor diesem mehr zu nennen, als zu erklären gewust. Und eben daraus erhellet, daß bloß mit der natürlichen Verbindlichkeit die Tugend bestehen kan; alle übrige aber weiter nichts als eine äuserliche Zucht würcket. Derowegen da man in der Moral zeigen sol, wie man zur Tugend gelanget, so kommet es hauptsächlich darauf an, daß man zeigt, wie es anzufangen, damit man der natürlichen Verbindlichkeit ein Genügen thut. Bey dieser Verbindlichkeit bleibet der Mensch gantz frey in seinen Handlungen und er ist niemahls freyer als wenn er nach derselben handelt: hingegen bey aller übrigen Verbindlichkeit ist eine Art des Zwanges anzutreffen, welcher für die jenigen nöthig ist, die die Beschaffenheit ihre Handlungen recht einzusehen nicht vermögend sind. Verständige und vernünfftige Menschen brauchen keine weitere Verbindlichkeit als die natürliche: aber unverständige und unvernünfftige haben eine andere nöthig und die muß die knechtliche Furcht für die Gewalt und Macht eines Oberen zuriicke halten, daß sie nicht thun, was sie gerne wolten. Wenn man demnach den*

account, which Wolff repeatedly stresses, is that by virtue of natural obligation, people whose rational faculties are intact and who are either unaware of the will of God or do not acknowledge his existence – which is to say, atheists – are nonetheless obliged to act virtuously.<sup>30</sup>

Wolff's account of how natural obligation functions depends explicitly on a substantial number of psychological, metaphysical, and ontological presuppositions. The word *obligation* itself, Wolff defines simply as motivation, which he understands to be a reason to want or to not want something (*ein Grund des Wollens und nicht Wollens*) and calls a *Bewegungsgrund*.<sup>31</sup> The source of natural obligation in particular, according to Wolff, is the human conscience, passing judgment on whether an action is good or bad, understood by Wolff to mean whether an action conduces to the perfection (*Vollkommenheit*) of the actor or not.<sup>32</sup> Underlying Wolff's account of natural obligation, therefore, is an explanation of what perfection is, how the human mind passes judgment on whether any given action conduces to it or not, and how this judgment moves the will, such that the will is directed toward good actions and away from bad actions without the use of fear and coercion.

In general, perfection or *Vollkommenheit*, the idea of which Wolff called the "source of my practical philosophy" (*fons philosophiae practicae meae*), refers to the relationship among the parts of a larger whole. The greater the extent to which those parts function together, in such a way as to promote the purpose for which the whole exists, the greater the perfection of the whole.<sup>33</sup> In the case of a human being, all the individual actions over the course of an entire life are the "parts" that constitute the "whole," and the degree of perfection refers to the extent to which the individual actions "harmonize" with each other to promote the ultimate purpose or intent (*Absicht*) of the person's life, which Wolff takes to be the conformity of the life to the

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*Menschen lencken wil, so kan man es auf zweyerley Weise angreifen. Entweder man lencket ihn durch Zwang wie das Viehe; oder durch Hülffe der Vernunft, wie eine Vernünfftige Creatur. Mit dem ersten habe ich in der Moral nichts zu thun: denn dadurch bringet man niemanden zur Tugend, sondern bloß zu einer äusserlichen Gewohnheit im Guten, oder auch zu einem verstellten Wesen, dabey keine Wahrheit ist.*

<sup>30</sup> C. Wolff, *Deutsche Ethik*, Preface to 3rd ed., §§4, 10; cf. D. Hüning, "Christian Wolffs Begriff der natürlichen Verbindlichkeit," 147.

<sup>31</sup> C. Wolff, *Deutsche Ethik*, §8: "To obligate someone to do something or to stop doing something," in Wolff's words, "is nothing other than to attach to it a motivation (*Bewegungsgrund*) to want or to not want [to do it]." Cf. D. Hüning, "Christian Wolffs Begriff der natürlichen Verbindlichkeit," 145-6.

<sup>32</sup> C. Wolff, *Deutsche Ethik*, §§41, 75.

<sup>33</sup> Christian Wolff, *Vernünfftige Gedancken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen, auch allen Dingen überhaupt* [= *Deutsche Metaphysik* ], 11th ed. (Halle, 1751), §§152-4.



essence and nature of the human being.<sup>34</sup> Conformity to the essence and nature of the human being in turn refers to the best possible condition of the essential parts of the human being, namely the greatest possible health of the body and the best possible functioning of the perceptive powers of the soul.<sup>35</sup> The result of achieving complete perfection, by engaging only in actions that harmonize with each other in promoting the health of the body and the perceptiveness of the soul, is in turn happiness (*Glückseligkeit* or *Seligkeit*), which consists of joy.<sup>36</sup>

The task of perceiving which actions contribute to one's own perfection, Wolff assigns to the conscience (*Gewissen*). By virtue of what Wolff calls the *nexus rerum* or *Zusammenhang der Dinge*, the fact that all things are directly or indirectly connected with one another by an invariable relationship of cause and effect – which is to say, with Wolff, that each thing has a *Grund* or reason for its existence, and that this *Grund* is to be found in another thing – the question of whether a particular thing actually promotes one's perfection is a matter of fact.<sup>37</sup> This fact is discoverable through the application of a maxim established by the memory and the imagination on the basis of repeated experience, stating whether things of that type in general promote one's perfection. This process of discovery, performed by the conscience, relies on the construction of syllogisms. The perception of the thing in question as a thing of a particular type is the major premise, the maxim (i.e. that things of this type do or do not promote one's perfection) is the minor premise, and the perception that the thing in question does or does not promote one's perfection – in other words, the perception of the thing as good or bad – is the conclusion.<sup>38</sup>

This conclusion by the conscience, on Wolff's account, necessarily moves the will, which Wolff explicitly refers to as the *appetitus rationalis* or "rational appetite."<sup>39</sup> The mechanism by which the complete subservience of the will to the conscience can be explained is that obeying the conscience produces tranquillity (*Ruhe*), whereas disobeying produces restlessness (*Unruhe* or *Gewissensbisse*) and therefore unhappiness, and the will invariably prefers tranquillity.<sup>40</sup> The capacity of the will to effect action, in turn, corresponds to the strength of the desire (*Begierde*) or motivation

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<sup>34</sup> C. Wolff, *Deutsche Ethik*, §14; C. Wolff, *Deutsche Metaphysik*, §168, 144, 146.

<sup>35</sup> C. Wolff, *Deutsche Ethik*, §§19, 225.

<sup>36</sup> C. Wolff, *Deutsche Ethik*, §§45, 51-3.

<sup>37</sup> C. Wolff, *Deutsche Ethik*, §5, 90; C. Wolff, *Deutsche Metaphysik*, §§30, 912-13.

<sup>38</sup> C. Wolff, *Deutsche Ethik*, §192; C. Wolff, *Deutsche Metaphysik*, §§238, 266, 337-8.

<sup>39</sup> C. Wolff, *Deutsche Metaphysik*, pt. II: *Ausführliche Anmerckungen*, §155; cf. D. Hüning, "Christian Wolffs Begriff der natürlichen Verbindlichkeit," 157.

<sup>40</sup> C. Wolff, *Deutsche Ethik*, §§90, 128.

produced by the conscience, which depends on the degree to which the conclusion of the conscience is certain (*gewiss*), and therefore the degree to which the terms of the syllogism employed by the conscience are distinct (*deutlich*). The conscience leads most reliably to action when the perception of the thing in question (the major premise) and the perceptions from which the memory and imagination construct the maxim (the minor premise) are as distinct as possible.<sup>41</sup> Admittedly, clear but indistinct perceptions, produced by the senses and the imagination, also produce motivation and thereby lead to action, but the conclusions based on such perceptions are less certain and are more likely to confuse real perfection with merely apparent perfection.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, clear and indistinct perceptions, which on Wolff's account cause action by arousing affections rather than by stimulating the *appetitus rationalis*, thereby detract from the freedom of the actions to which they lead. "By means of the affections," Wolff writes,

a human being is drawn to do and to avoid this and that, and they [the affections] make the sensate desires and aversion stronger than they would otherwise be. . . . But because a person in a state of affection doesn't consider what he does, and because he doesn't have control over his actions any more, he is forced both to do and to avoid what he otherwise would not do or avoid if he had a distinct perception of it. Therefore, because the affections arise from the senses and the imagination, the rule of the senses, the imagination, and the affections constitutes the slavery of the human being. And one therefore calls *slaves* those who let their affections rule and stay simply with the indistinct perception of the senses and the imagination.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> C. Wolff, *Deutsche Metaphysik*, §§206-209, 238, 266, 326, 333, 337-8.

<sup>42</sup> C. Wolff, *Deutsche Metaphysik*, §§414-16, 502; C. Wolff, *Deutsche Ethik*, §§94, 180-1.

<sup>43</sup> C. Wolff, *Deutsche Metaphysik*, §§490-1:

*Durch die Affecten wird der Mensch hingerissen dieses und jenes zu thun und zu lassen, und machen sie die sinnliche Begierde und den sinnlichen Abscheu stärker, als er sonst seyn würde. . . . Da nun aber bey den Affecten der Mensch nicht bedencket, was er thut, und er seine Handlungen nicht mehr in seiner Gewalt hat; so wird er gleichsam gezwungen zu thun und zu lassen, was er sonst nicht thun, noch lassen würde, wenn er deutlich begriffe, was es wäre. Derowegen weil die Affecten von den Sinnen und der Einbildungs-Kraft herrühren; so macht die Herrschaft der Sinnen, der Einbildungs-Kraft und Affecten die Slaverey des Menschen aus. Und nennet man dannenhero auch Slaven diejenigen, welche sich ihre Affecten regieren lassen, und bloß bey der undeutlichen Erkenntniß der Sinnen und Einbildungs-Kraft verbleiben.*

Cf. C. Wolff, *Deutsche Ethik*, §§87, 180-3, 186.

The motivation produced by the affections therefore cannot be described as the natural obligation whose existence Wolff wishes to prove, since the obligation to act virtuously can by no means involve force, let alone slavery. Rather, the effectiveness of natural obligation must correspond to the degree of distinctness and therefore the degree of certainty in the syllogism on which the conscience bases its conclusion.

Moral education, accordingly, depends primarily on training the conscience to draw conclusions as distinctly as possible, and on accustoming oneself to use the conscience's conclusions as the exclusive basis of one's actions. In large part this is a matter of habituation. Among the exercises Wolff recommends are taking time before bed to reflect upon whether the actions one performed during the day in fact conduced to one's own perfection, and taking time upon waking up to consider which actions tomorrow will best further one's own perfection. This process of reflection, he explains, involves rehearsing the syllogisms employed by the conscience, and repeating it leads to greater ease and facility in deduction.<sup>44</sup> The ultimate aim, which Wolff calls the highest degree of wisdom, is to be able to order all one's intentions and actions, such that they are all subservient to the single ultimate purpose of furthering one's own perfection.<sup>45</sup>

What moral education does not necessarily involve, by contrast, is training the intellect to perceive the will of God as such. On the one hand, Wolff does argue that human beings are naturally obliged to recognize God's perfections and, as a consequence of that recognition, his will.<sup>46</sup> The obligation to recognize God's perfection, which invariably motivates human beings to "honor" God, Wolff deduces from the natural obligation to promote one's own perfection. Recognizing God's perfections as distinctly as possible, he explains, promotes one's own perfection, in that acknowledging God's desire (itself deducible from his perfections) that what is natural come to pass strengthens the motivations for acting on one's natural obligation to promote one's own perfection.<sup>47</sup> Wolff moreover argues that atheists, who lack this strengthened motivation, are therefore incapable of as high a degree of

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<sup>44</sup> C. Wolff, *Deutsche Ethik*, §§173-5, 188.

<sup>45</sup> C. Wolff, *Deutsche Metaphysik*, §§908-9, 914-20. Cf. C. Wolff, *Deutsche Ethik*, §§140, 146.

<sup>46</sup> C. Wolff, *Deutsche Ethik*, §§650-1. Wolff's argument is admittedly somewhat unclear, here: a human being cannot in fact promote the perfection of God, since God is unchangeable, and so "nothing is left but that he recognize the perfections of God and use them as motivations of his actions [*Derwegen bleibt nichts übrig, als daß er die Vollkommenheiten Gottes erkennt und sie zu Bewegungs-Gründen seiner Handlungen brauchet*]."

<sup>47</sup> C. Wolff, *Deutsche Ethik*, §§654-60.

virtue as those who perceive the existence and perfections of God.<sup>48</sup> But Wolff also repeatedly emphasizes that even atheists are naturally obliged to act virtuously; the “natural law” that prescribes the pursuit of perfection and that obliges human beings by means of their own consciences would persist, Wolff remarks, even in God’s absence.<sup>49</sup> That is to say, even if this same natural law obliges all human beings, including atheists, to discover the perfections of God and recognize them as distinctly as possible, the obligation precedes the discovery rather than initially deriving from it. Wolff does admit that among those who have neither a taste (*Geschmack*) for virtue nor aversion to vice, a servile fear (*knechtliche Furcht*) of God can be a useful corrective tool, but it is by no means universally necessary.<sup>50</sup>

There can be no doubt that Wolff’s defense of natural obligation as an effective basis for a program of moral education was precisely what disturbed some of his most prominent critics. One contemporary testimony to its place at the heart of the controversy can be found in Gottlieb Stolle’s 1727 *Anleitung zur Historie der Gelahrheit*. According to Stolle, those opponents of Wolff who have found fault with his metaphysics “don’t want to be satisfied with his moral philosophy either, because the one is based on the other.” What those opponents object to, Stolle explains, are three things: (1) that human actions are good or bad in themselves, independent of God having willed them or not, (2) that human actions would remain good or bad even if there were no God, and (3) that God does not direct human beings by means of lordship (*Herrschaft*), and the natural laws by means of which he guides them are accordingly not laws in the strict sense of the word.<sup>51</sup> In the course of his *Anleitung*,

<sup>48</sup> C. Wolff, *Deutsche Ethik*, §§47, 71, 675.

<sup>49</sup> C. Wolff, *Deutsche Ethik*, §§20-1.

<sup>50</sup> C. Wolff, *Deutsche Ethik*, §706.

<sup>51</sup> Gottlieb Stolle, *Anleitung zur Historie der Gelahrheit* (Jena, 1727), III.i, §64:

*Des Herrn Auctoris Discipel finden nichts bedenckliches darinnen; seine Gegner aber, welche wider die Metaphysic sehr viel su erinnern haben, wollen auch mit dieser Morale nicht zufrieden seyn, weil sie auf jene gebauet ist. Sonderlich werden von einigen drey Puncte daran aufgesetzt, welche doch Herr Wolff mit orthodoxen Lehrern unsrer Kirche gemein haben will.*

1. Ich will diese Puncte mit den eignen Worten des Herrn Hof-Raths anführen: Der I. steht §.5. und lautet also: “Weil die freyen Handlungen der Menschen durch ihren Erfolg gut oder böse werden; was aber aus ihnen erfolget, nothwendig daraus kommen muß, und nicht aussen bleiben kan: so sind sie vor und an sich selbst gut oder böse; und werden nicht erst durch Gottes Willen dazu gemacht. Hoc est, dantur actiones hominum per se bonae & malae antecedenter ad voluntatem Dei, wie die Scholastici reden.

2. Der II. Punct, so hierauf folget, ist dieser: “Wenn es derowegen gleich möglich wäre, daß kein Gott wäre, und der Gegenwärtige Zusammenhang der Dinge ohne ihm bestehen könnte; so würden die freie Handlungen der Menschen dennoch gut oder böse verbleiben.”

Stolle makes no effort to hide his partisanship for Wolff, but his perception of the crucial points at issue is faithful to the critics' own words. Of course, understanding those points more precisely and identifying their significance for Alexander Baumgarten requires a more sustained examination of the critics and their writings than Stolle provides, and for that we turn to representatives of two variations on the central critique: a pair of professors whose views of Wolff Baumgarten encountered during his time in Halle, Johann Liborius Zimmermann (1702-34) and Nicolaus Hieronymus Gundling (1671-1729).

*Johann Liborius Zimmermann*

Johann Liborius Zimmermann is hardly well known today. The most recent article of any significance about him, a hundred-page biography based largely on unpublished manuscripts by Zimmermann and his friends, appeared in 1898 in the *Zeitschrift des Harz-Vereins für Geschichte und Altertumskunde*, and its portrayal of Zimmermann has not been improved since: Zimmermann was a gifted preacher, spiritual counselor, and theologian who had many admirers among the Halle theological faculty and their students, and he deserves some credit for the Pietist

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3. Der dritte Punct ist: "Daß GOtt uns zum Gesetze der Natur nicht als ein Herr, sondern als ein Vater verbindet, oder wie es andre geben: Quod leges divinae naturales non sint leges proprie, sed improprie sic dictae." Damit man aber auch hierrinnen den Auctorem recht verstehe, so will ich seinen 58. und 59. §. ganz hersetzen: "Indem nun Gott den Menschen ausser der natürlichen Verbindlichkeit noch auf eine besondre Art verbindet, nach dem Gesetze der Natur zu leben; so beweist er dadurch, wie er bereit ist, des Menschen Glückseligkeit zu befördern, und also ihm gutes zu erzeugen: folgens legt er eine Probe seiner Güte ab. Es betrügen sich demnach diejenigen, welche ihnen einbilden, als wenn ihnen GOtt durch das Gesetze eine Last auflegte, und ich weiß nicht was für eine Ehre der Herrschafft darinn suchte, daß es durch das Gesetz ihre Freyheit einschränckte. Wenn wir Gott als einen Gesetzgeber betrachten, so erblicken wir ihn nicht unter dem Bilde eines Herrschüchtigen Herrn, der sich daraus eine Freude machet, und was zu seyn düncket, wenn er andern mit befehlen kan beschwerlich fallen sondern vielmehr unter dem Bilde eines gutigen und liebreichen Vaters, der uns arnet für dem, so Schaden bringet, und ermahnet zu dem, was uns glücklich machen kan, auch alle seine Kräfte anwendet uns von jenem abzuhalten, und zu diesem anzuhalten: welches der Herr Geheimde Rath Thomasius nach seiner Einsicht in diese Art der Wahrheiten längst erinnert.

On the significance of Stolle's comparison of Wolff with Thomasius, see below, n. 174.

“awakening” in his home town of Wernigerode in Saxony.<sup>52</sup> To be sure, he was not always a friend of the Halle theological establishment that he ultimately joined in the last years of his life. Notwithstanding the generic demands of the conversion story into which Zimmermann would later fashion his memories of adolescence, including memories of his school years in the “dissolute” (*lüderlich*) city of Halberstadt, his first distinct impression of the University of Halle, colored by a friend’s unrelenting hostility toward Halle Pietism, was probably negative. When it came time to choose a university, he followed in the footsteps of many other prospective students who saw Jena as the most appealing alternative to Halle, and in 1721, at the age of nineteen, began his studies there.<sup>53</sup> At Jena, he heard lectures by at least one of the same professors whom Alexander Baumgarten is attested to have heard on his own visits to Jena in the 1730s, Georg Erhard Hamberger (1697-1755).<sup>54</sup> Unlike Baumgarten, though, who sought out Jena as a place to study Wolff’s philosophy unencumbered by the ban imposed in Prussia in 1727, Zimmermann fell in with a circle of professors and students outspoken in their opposition to Wolff and sympathetic toward Halle Pietism and its criticisms of the orthodox Lutheran theology associated with Wittenberg. This circle included most importantly Johann Franz Buddeus, its chief sponsor, and Johann Georg Walch.<sup>55</sup> In addition to hearing Johann Reinhard Ruß’s lectures on Hebrew grammar, Zimmermann is attested to have attended philosophical lectures by Walch and the first part of Buddeus’ lectures on moral theology.<sup>56</sup>

On the basis of letters between Zimmermann and several friends at Jena, it would seem that Zimmermann soon became much more sympathetic toward Pietism than he had been as a student in Halberstadt. Encouraged by fellow students from Wernigerode, he attended Buddeus’ *collegium pietatis*. Subsequent reports to his friends on the *Bußkampf* in which he was engaged indicate that he was diligently reading, in addition to works by Martin Luther, Johann Arndt’s *Wahres Christentum*.<sup>57</sup> Zimmermann later moved into Buddeus’ house as a boarder, and it is clear from the

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<sup>52</sup> Ed. Jacobs, “Johann Liborius Zimmermann und die pietistische Bewegung in Wernigerode,” *Zeitschrift des Harz-Vereins für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 31 (1898): 121-226, here 121, 181, 188.

<sup>53</sup> Ed. Jacobs, “Johann Liborius Zimmermann,” 129-31.

<sup>54</sup> G. F. Meier, *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens Leben* (Halle, 1763), 11-12; *Geschichte der Universität Jena*, v. 1 of 2 (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1958), 209.

<sup>55</sup> Ed. Jacobs, “Johann Liborius Zimmermann,” 135.

<sup>56</sup> Ed. Jacobs, “Johann Liborius Zimmermann,” 132.

<sup>57</sup> Ed. Jacobs, “Johann Liborius Zimmermann,” 136-7; Samuel Lau, “Erbauungs- und Gedächtniß-Rede,” in *Wernigerodisches Denckmal* (Wernigerode, 1734), 10-11.

dedication of his first dissertation, among other sources, that Buddeus directed and strongly encouraged his theological studies.<sup>58</sup> He became an instructor in philosophy at Jena in 1725, and with Buddeus' support he inculcated in his own students the same habits that he had developed under Buddeus' supervision, delivering lectures on philosophy in conjunction with *collegia pietatis* of his own. He endorsed and adopted, in other words, what Joachim Lange alluded to in his claim that in Halle "the conversion of the audience is the chief aim": the characteristically Pietistic association of two roles, philosophical instructor and moral and spiritual guide, in the person of the professor, such that a professor's tasks were to develop the student's knowledge and to inculcate *Wissenschaft*, and at least as importantly, to reform the student's character (*Gemüth*) by other means as well.<sup>59</sup>

What Zimmermann conceived this reform to entail becomes particularly clear in his best-known work, *Die überschwengliche Erkenntnis Jesu Christi*, a sermon he delivered in his home town of Wernigerode after poor health had forced him in 1728 reluctantly to abandon his teaching duties in Jena, after a mere three years, and accept an appointment to the position of *Hofprediger* and *Konsistorialrat* from Count Christian Ernst of Stolberg-Wernigerode. The count's wife, Sophie Charlotte, had been so impressed by Zimmermann's preaching during his visit to Wernigerode during a sabbatical the previous year that she had decided to enlist him as her spiritual counselor, and the sermon repeats many of the themes discernible in the letters Zimmermann had already written to her in this capacity.<sup>60</sup> Drawing explicitly on Paul's Letter to the Romans, Zimmermann portrays the reform of a person's character as having three phases. In the first phase, the *Welt-Mensch* or "man of the world" lives under the control of his own sinful desires, with no awareness of God and no concern for the state of his soul. Becoming aware of the existence of God and of divine law, he then enters the second phase, life "according to the law" (*Gesetz*). His conscience prompts him to fear that God will punish his transgressions of divine law, and he therefore begins the so-called penitential struggle or *Bußkampf*, attempting to reform his character and thereby become worthy of God's approval. Only after repeatedly failing in these attempts, and suffering under the torments of his conscience, can he become convinced of his own "paltriness" (*Nichtigkeit*): a lack of faith in God's mercy is the source of the corruption of his character, and that

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<sup>58</sup> Ed. Jacobs, "Johann Liborius Zimmermann," 135-8; J. H. Zedler, *Universal-Lexicon*, s.v. "Zimmermann, Johann Liborius."

<sup>59</sup> Ed. Jacobs, "Johann Liborius Zimmermann," 145.

<sup>60</sup> Ed. Jacobs, "Johann Liborius Zimmermann," 146-8, 157-9.

genuine faith is not in his power.<sup>61</sup> This experience enables him, with God's help, to pass into the third phase, life "according to the Gospel" (*Evangelium*). Now he thinks of God as a loving and forgiving parent, rather than a vengeful tyrant; his troubled conscience throws away its cares; his fear is replaced by a love of God and a desire that God direct his will; his trust in God begins to exert influence over how he lives (it develops a "living power" or *lebendige Kraft*; and his soul reaches a state of tranquillity.<sup>62</sup> Quoting Paul's Letter to the Philippians, Zimmermann describes this third phase as the "effusive knowledge of Jesus Christ" (*überschwengliche Erkenntnis Jesu Christi*), a phrase he obviously cherished and apparently inscribed into almost every *Stammbuch* he ever signed.<sup>63</sup>

Zimmermann repeatedly emphasizes that the passage into this third phase, though ultimately the result of a miraculous act of grace by God, is facilitated by a process with pronounced sensory and experiential aspects. On the one hand, there is the experience of one's own corruption, described by Zimmermann in visual terms, and consequently a willing submission to God's justice under the law:

A person has to *experience* [*erfahren*] the law, to the point that he *sees vividly before his eyes* [*lebendig vor Augen sehe*] his deep corruption and complete powerlessness, recognizes God's severe treatment of sin, and thereby infers the absolute necessity of the justice of Jesus Christ together with a sanctified and pure heart. . . .<sup>64</sup>

The indispensibility of *Erfahrung* in the transition from *Gesetz* to *Evangelium* runs throughout Zimmermann's writings and biography. In the *Erbauungsstunden* he conducted in Jena, Zimmermann is reported to have focused his energies on producing in students the "experience" (*Erfahrung*) of the presence of the Holy

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<sup>61</sup> Johann Liborius Zimmermann, *Die Überschwengliche Erkenntnis Jesu Christi* (Halle, 1731), 28-45.

<sup>62</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *Überschwengliche Erkenntnis*, 96, 45, 53.

<sup>63</sup> Samuel Lau, "Erbauungs- und Gedächtniß-Rede," 4; Ed. Jacobs, "Johann Liborius Zimmermann," 205-6; Paul, Letter to the Phillipians, 3:8.

<sup>64</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *Überschwengliche Erkenntnis*, 99. Emphasis added. Cf. J. L. Zimmermann, *Das evangelische Predigt-Amt, wie es denen Menschen zur Seligkeit gereichen soll* (Wernigerode, 1728), 19, 44:

[E]in Mensch [muß] das Gesetz in so fern erfahren, daß er sein tiefes Verderben und gänzliche Ohnmacht lebendig vor Augen sehe, Gottes Ernst über die Sünde daher erkenne, und die höchste Notwendigkeit der Gerechtigkeit Jesu Christi nebst eines geheiligten und reinen Herzens daraus ersehe. . . .



Spirit.<sup>65</sup> “Penance, faith, and rebirth,” he declared in one *collegium*, “must be experienced, sensed, and felt.”<sup>66</sup> Then there is the traditional visual exercise to which Zimmermann returns again and again in his best-known sermon, and which he prescribed in letters to Sophie Charlotte: contemplation of the wounds and blood of Christ, from which should follow the recognition that Christ has “obliterated” our sins, and that they will therefore be forgiven.<sup>67</sup> Hymn-singing was another of the exercises Zimmermann valued; his friend from the University in Jena, Samuel Lau, reported often hearing him singing in his own room, alone, from the *Hallesches Gesangbuch*.<sup>68</sup> (In light of the emphasis he laid on these visual and musical exercises, Zimmermann’s own pronounced talents as a painter and singer come as no surprise.<sup>69</sup>) The task of the preacher, moreover, Zimmermann described as the encouragement of all these exercises, as well as the presentation of a “blameless example” to his congregation, assisted by the Holy Spirit – reminiscent of August Hermann Francke’s description of the task of a Christian teacher.<sup>70</sup> If his own reputation as a moving speaker is any indication, the auditory effect of a preacher’s words, too, appears to have played for Zimmermann an important role in facilitating the transition from *Gesetz* to *Evangelium* in his audience. As in Wernigerode, where his preaching had made such a strong impression on Sophie Charlotte, Zimmermann is attested to have impressed audiences in Halle, where in 1731 he was called to take up the *ordinarius* professorship of theology recently vacated by Johann Jacob Rambach. Zimmermann accepted the position, and upon hearing him preach, Peter von Ludewig, Professor of Law, is reported to have remarked, “The boys must be asses [*Esel*] if they didn’t hear the man!”<sup>71</sup>

But what Zimmermann brought to Halle was not only a powerful preaching style and a conception of moral education as more or less a three-stage process whose second major transition was facilitated by sensory experience and sensory exercises. He also brought with him a forceful critique of Wolff, which he had developed during his studies at Jena and incorporated into his philosophical teaching, and

<sup>65</sup> Samuel Lau, qtd. in Ed. Jacobs, “Johann Liborius Zimmermann,” 145.

<sup>66</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *collegium* taken down by Samuel Lau (ULB Sachsen-Anhalt, Handschriften-Abteilung, Wernigerode Bestand, Sig. Zd 104), qtd. in Ed. Jacobs, “Johann Liborius Zimmermann,” 225: “Buße, Glaube, und Wiedergeburt muß erfahren werden, empfunden und gefühlt sein.”

<sup>67</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *Überschwengliche Erkenntnis*, 93, 110; Ed. Jacobs, “Johann Liborius Zimmermann,” 154; cf. J. L. Zimmermann, *Das evangelische Predigt-Amt*, 16.

<sup>68</sup> Samuel Lau, “Erbauungs- und Gedächtniß-Rede,” 12.

<sup>69</sup> Ed. Jacobs, “Johann Liborius Zimmermann,” 123-5.

<sup>70</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *Das evangelische Predigt-Amt*, 31; on Francke, see above, ch. 3, n. 37-46.

<sup>71</sup> Qtd. in Ed. Jacobs, “Johann Liborius Zimmermann,” 169.

which reflected his view of the first major transition, from life as a “Welt-Mensch” to life according to the law. The substance of the critique can be found in the earliest surviving document that attests to Zimmermann’s reputation as a critic of Wolff: *De actionum humanarum moralitate nec non de obligatione iuris, legibusque structe dictis*, a dissertation he delivered and defended in Jena in 1728, with three years of teaching behind him and less than a year before his precarious health apparently forced him to leave Jena for Wernigerode and the less strenuous duties of *Hofprediger*. The circumstances under which Zimmermann delivered the dissertation eventually became well known outside Jena. Joachim Lange described them in one of his many published attacks on Wolff, the *Hundert und Dreyßig Fragen aus der neuen Mechanischen Philosophie*, printed in 1734, and Lange’s report appears to have served as the principal source for the many other accounts that appeared in the following decades.<sup>72</sup> Claiming Zimmermann himself as his principal source, Lange reports that students of Wolff’s supporters in Jena, having learned the title of Zimmermann’s dissertation and the date on which he was to deliver and defend it, spent the night before in an uproar. The streets of Jena were filled with shouts of “Vivat Wolff!” and “Pereat Zimmermann!” During the defense itself, the students accompanied Zimmermann’s comments with “tumultuous laughter, foot-stamping, hand-clapping, and whistling through their fists.” Afterwards, Lange continues, the still-tumultuous students harassed Zimmermann and prevented him from returning to his lodgings at Buddeus’ house. One observer, Lange claims, later passed a judgment to the effect that before witnessing the whole affair, “he had not had a good impression of the Wolffian philosophy, but now he has seen with astonishment that it makes human beings absolutely inhuman.”<sup>73</sup> This quotation, which Lange admits is not exact, of course conveniently summarizes the lesson that Lange hopes the story of Zimmermann’s dissertation will convey: that Wolff’s philosophy undermines the foundation of morality. In Lange’s words, the story is one of many examples of “the

<sup>72</sup> For example, in C. G. Ludovici, *Ausführlicher Entwurf einer vollständigen Historie der Wolffischen Philosophie*, v. 1, 3rd. ed. (Leipzig, 1738; rept. Hildesheim: Olms, 2003), §385; J. H. Zedler, *Universal-Lexicon*, v. 62 (Halle and Leipzig, 1749), s.v. “Zimmermann, Johann Liborius”; and Johann Christoph von Dreyhaupt, *Pagus neletici et nudzici, oder diplomatisch-historische Beschreibung des Saal-Kreijßes* (Halle, 1755).

<sup>73</sup> Joachim Lange, *Hundert und Dreyßig Fragen aus der neuen Mechanischen Philosophie* (Halle, 1734; rept. Hildesheim: Olms, 1999), 140-2:

[D]er ältere Herr Graf Reuß, wie von Ihm damals referiert worden, . . . wo nicht gänzlich den Worten, doch dem Sinne nach, also geurtheilet: Sie hätten zwar von der Wolfianischen Philosophie bereits vorher keine gute Idee gehabt, nunmehr hätten sie mit Erstaunen gesehen, daß sie aus Menschen rechte Unmenschen mache[.]

fruits” of Wolff’s philosophy, showing that it “scraps natural and revealed religion together with the entirety of moral philosophy [*die natürliche und geoffenbarte Religion mit der gantzen Sitten-Lehre über einen Haufen wirft*].”<sup>74</sup> This comment by Lange also captures the thrust of the dissertation itself.

The fundamental problem with Wolff’s moral philosophy, as Zimmermann diagnoses it, is the norm Wolff proposes for judging human actions to be morally good or bad. Instead of taking the criterion of a morally good action to be the human actor’s freely chosen obedience to the will of God, a just lawgiver, Wolff takes the criterion to be the success of the action, measured by its consequences, in promoting the perfection of the actor.<sup>75</sup> In place of divine law, in other words, Wolff substitutes the precept, “Do what makes you and your condition more perfect.”<sup>76</sup> Wolff does offer a defense of his precept, arguing that actions have necessary consequences, that they subsist in a stable nexus of cause and effect, a *Zusammenhang der Dinge* or *nexus rerum* that God created and that therefore represents the will of God, or if you like, the “law” of God that good consequences will follow some actions, and bad consequences others. All this, Zimmermann concedes.<sup>77</sup> But for several reasons he finds the defense deceptive and inadequate and insists that although Wolff’s precept can be accepted as a norm for judging human actions to be *naturally* good or bad,<sup>78</sup> by definition it is not a norm for judging human actions to be *morally* good or bad, because it cannot be regarded as divine law. Wolff’s *Zusammenhang der Dinge*, Zimmermann asserts, can be discerned without reference to God at all and would persist, according to Wolff, even in God’s absence. Wolff associates the will of God with the *nexus rerum*, from which God’s “law” can be discerned, merely *ex accidenti*; if the accident changes or disappears, the substance still persists.<sup>79</sup> The law, in other words, exists independently of God’s will. Nor can the *Zusammenhang der Dinge* be attributed without qualification to God’s will, in Zimmermann’s view, unless one is willing to attribute to God the evil actions performed by human beings.<sup>80</sup> Then there is the problem of Wolff’s use of the word, *law* (*lex*). On Wolff’s account, Zimmermann explains, a law is simply a precept to which rewards and punishments are attached. This conception of law excludes all consideration of whether the

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<sup>74</sup> J. Lange, *Hundert und Dreyßig Fragen*, 123-4.

<sup>75</sup> Johann Liborius Zimmermann, *De actionum humanarum moralitate* (Jena, 1728), 1, 3.

<sup>76</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *De actionum humanitatum moralitate*, 3.

<sup>77</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *De actionum humanitatum moralitate*, 3, 8-9.

<sup>78</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *De actionum humanitatum moralitate*, 4.

<sup>79</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *De actionum humanitatum moralitate*, 9.

<sup>80</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *De actionum humanitatum moralitate*, 9.

lawgiver has any right to govern, any *ius imperandi*, and for Zimmermann the lawgiver's *ius imperandi* is precisely what qualifies his decree as a law rather than a *consilium*, or recommendation. Wolff calls his moral precept a *lex*, but by Zimmermann's definition it is merely a *consilium*.<sup>81</sup>

This difference in definitions was no inconsequential quibble over terminology; it went right to the heart of Zimmermann's conviction – apparent in his famous sermon on the *überschwengliche Erkenntnis Jesu Christi* – that moral education requires, in its early stages, a *Bußkampf*, a period of striving to conform to God's law. For Zimmermann, genuine law could be an effective instrument of moral education in a way that a mere command or recommendation could not. Law was more than simply a norm of action. It could obligate (*obligare* or *astringere*) a lawgiver's subjects to obey; it could exert a force (*vis* or *vis obligandi*) that *consilia* could not muster.<sup>82</sup> The reason, on Zimmermann's account, is that only law can enlist the support of the conscience. Anyone who apprehends divine law “feels in his mind some compulsion to obey [*necessitas obsequendi*].”<sup>83</sup> This feeling of compulsion is the force exerted by conscience. According to Zimmermann,

*Conscience* is a judgment or reasoning about whether our actions are good or bad. We feel its force when, in accordance with the various reasons for our actions, it excites various affections and sensations in us, i.e. hope or fear, mental unease or tranquillity. The greatest use of conscience is that by means of it we are called away from committing crimes and sins, and we are pushed by a strong instinct toward whatever things are eminent and prescribed by law.<sup>84</sup>

Like Wolff, Zimmermann regards the force of conscience as consisting of its power to arouse sensations of desire or aversion in response to actions that it judges to be good or evil, respectively. What conscience deliberates about, though, is not, as Wolff

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<sup>81</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *De actionum humanitatum moralitate*, 9.

<sup>82</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *De actionum humanitatum moralitate*, 21-2.

<sup>83</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *De actionum humanitatum moralitate*, 24.

<sup>84</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *De actionum humanitatum moralitate*, 25:

*Conscientia iudicium vel ratiocinatio est de actionibus nostris, utrum bonae sint, an malae: vim autem illius sentimus, quando varios in nobis pro actionum diversa ratione adfectus sensationesque excitat, spem videlicet aut metum, inquietem animi vel tranquillitatem. Maximus conscientiae usus est, quod beneficio illius a sceleribus peccatisque committendis revocemur, ad praeclara autem quaevis legeque praecepta valido instinctu permoveamur.*

would have it, whether our actions are *naturally* good or bad, not whether they are *commodum* or *incommodum*, but whether they are *morally* good or bad, which is to say, whether they conform to a moral norm defined by a lawgiver with the right to command. The power of conscience to excite our affections and sensations such that we instinctively shun bad deeds and are impelled to commit good deeds therefore depends entirely on a prior judgment that the lawgiver indeed has the right to command.<sup>85</sup> When a lawgiver is presumed either not to exist or to exist but without *ius imperandi*, then conscience withholds its endorsement of obedience to the lawgiver's commands. In Zimmermann's words, conscience loses all its efficacy (*efficacia*), and obligation therefore "goes up in smoke."<sup>86</sup>

This meant that Wolff's equation of moral good and evil with natural good and evil effectively robbed moral education of its most effective tool. His so-called "moral" precept, which made no reference to God's *ius imperandi* and therefore no appeal to conscience as Zimmermann understood it, did not have the necessary force (*vis*) to induce human beings to make fundamental changes to their own desires. Like the law laid down by a tyrant, whose rewards and punishments are essentially no different from any other natural goods and natural evils, Wolff's precept could perhaps in some cases change a person's "outer life," but power (*potentia*) alone could lead no one either to the pursuit of virtue nor "to the true emendation and cultivation of the soul."<sup>87</sup> What Zimmermann meant by this, more specifically, was that the precept could not effectively induce human beings to love God and therefore desire to honor him. On the one hand, the natural evils described by Wolff as "punishments" were ineffective; they hardly had the corrective power of punishments inflicted by a discernibly just ruler, presumably for the good of his subjects.<sup>88</sup> On the other hand, Wolff's precept seemed to make the natural goods, or "rewards," ends in themselves, with zeal for the glory of God and obedience to God's

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<sup>85</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *De actionum humanitatum moralitate*, 22.

<sup>86</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *De actionum humanitatum moralitate*, 25.

<sup>87</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *De actionum humanitatum moralitate*, 28.

<sup>88</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *De actionum humanitatum moralitate*, 25-7. Here, Zimmermann was articulating a view evident in August Hermann Francke's instructions to the *informatores* in his Waisenhaus schools: punishment needed to be inflicted with obvious reluctance and a clear display of fatherly concern, and without any trace of anger, lest the punished child be inflamed with hatred of the *informatore* and the punishment therefore have the opposite of the intended, correctional effect. See A. H. Francke, *Instruction für die Praeceptores, was sie bei der Disciplin wohl zu beachten haben*, in *Pädagogische Schriften*, by A. H. Francke, ed. Hermann Lorenzen (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1957); Peter Menck, *Die Erziehung der Jugend zur Ehre Gottes und zum Nutzen des Nächsten: Die Pädagogik August Hermann Franckes* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2001), 48-55.

will merely instruments for promoting one's own perfection, rather than an outgrowth of love of God *per se ipsum*. In practice, Zimmermann feared, this would have the effect of diminishing the zeal with which human beings strove for the glory of God, since such zeal would appear to be only a means to a further – private – end. Here Zimmermann saw in Wolff the specter of Pufendorf, who had derived human duties to God from the “necessity of *socialitas*” – which is to say, from the necessity of *socialitas* as a means to the attainment of indispensable natural goods – and had therefore robbed those duties of their force (*vis*).<sup>89</sup>

In his capacity as professor of philosophy at Jena, Zimmermann therefore proposed a course of moral education whose aim was systematically to develop what he thought Wolff's metaphysics could not provide: a “lebendige Erkenntnis Gottes,” which is to say, a perception of God that can consistently and effectively move the will to perform good actions, actions that promote the honor of God and the happiness of human beings, motivated by an “orderly” love of God. What makes this perception a reliable stimulus to the will, Zimmermann explains in terms that he and Wolff have in common. Like Wolff, Zimmermann conceptualizes the will as moved by inclinations (*Neigungen*) and desires (*Begierde*) that themselves arise as a result of the activity of the intellect (*Verstand*), perceiving things to be good or bad. In Zimmermann's vocabulary, a perception (*Empfindung*) of a thing as pleasant (*angenehm*) is the internal motivation (*innerlicher Bewegungsgrund*), or the source of an “internal necessity” (*innere Notwendigkeit*) that causes the will to engage in an action whose aim is union with the thing in question.<sup>90</sup> Like Wolff, Zimmermann takes the perception of perfection or *Vollkommenheit* to be an immediate cause of inclinations and desires, a cause made all the more forceful and reliable when the intellect has been trained to perceive perfection and to pass judgments about the conduciveness of an action to the attainment of that perfection: the more distinct and true the idea of perfection and the idea of the action in question, the more certain (*gewiß*) the intellect's judgment, the more likely the judgment is to be correct, and the more power that judgment has to move the will to action. As Zimmermann summarizes it, in order to direct the will correctly and effectively, the judgments of the intellect (more specifically, the *Erkenntnisse* of the *Urteilstkraft*) must be *wahr, gewiß, deutlich*, and *lebendig*, which is to say, they must be true, certain, distinct, and thereby capable

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<sup>89</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *De actionum humanitatum moralitate*, 17-19.

<sup>90</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *Natürliche Erkenntnis Gottes, der Welt und des Menschen* (Jena, 1730), §§50, 52, 125.

of moving the will.<sup>91</sup> Obscure and confused perceptions can only lead to erroneous judgments, judgments that produce inclination toward what is in fact bad and aversion to what is in fact good.<sup>92</sup> In these observations about the psychology of the human will, and in assigning to logic the task of training the intellect to perceive the nature and therefore the perfection of a thing as distinctly as possible, Zimmermann resembles Wolff.<sup>93</sup>

But Zimmermann diverges from Wolff in two radical ways. First, he identifies the perfection of the human being directly and unequivocally with union with God, and he accordingly identifies the *lebendige Erkenntnis* of good and bad with the judgment – of the conscience – not that an action conduces or does not conduce to the perfection of the actor, but rather that it conforms or does not conform to God’s will.<sup>94</sup> God’s will, in turn, Zimmermann says must be gathered in part from God’s positive law as recorded in the Bible, and in part from the “ultimate ends of things” or *Endzwecke der Dinge*, which are themselves to be deduced from the necessary, and necessarily eternal, existence of a cause of the world, namely God, and from his relationship to the world as its creator.<sup>95</sup> Here, Zimmermann had recourse to the so-called *notitia Dei* or “eingepflanzte Erkenntnis Gottes,” a proof of the existence and attributes of God characteristic of seventeenth-century Lutheran dogmatic theology: the absolute dependence of all things on God and the status of God as therefore the supreme and ultimately the only benefactor of mankind, allegedly easily deducible from the necessity that all things have a cause, is the basis of God’s *ius imperandi*,<sup>96</sup> and it implies that God has made all things for the purpose of his own glorification or *Verehrung*.<sup>97</sup> Moral education therefore begins, in Zimmermann’s view, with an

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<sup>91</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *Natürliche Erkenntnis Gottes, der Welt und des Menschen* (Jena, 1730), §§533, 535, 622, 635. Cf. J. L. Zimmermann, *Gründliche Anweisung zum eigenen Nachsinnen*, in *Kurzer Abriß einer Vollständigen Vernunft-Lehre* (Jena, 1730), §47.

<sup>92</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *Natürliche Erkenntnis* (Jena, 1730), §§617, 618, 633.

<sup>93</sup> In fact, Zimmermann’s metaphysics resembled Wolff’s closely enough that he was not immediately recognized as one of Wolff’s opponents. Carl Günther Ludovici initially shared some of the confusion about whether to classify Zimmermann as a disciple of Wolff’s or not, but in response to protest by Zimmermann, and in consideration of Zimmermann’s unambiguous polemics against Wolff, he ultimately included him among Wolff’s opponents with confidence. C. G. Ludovici, *Ausführlicher Entwurf einer vollständigen Historie der Wolffischen Philosophie*, I.§180; III.§56.

<sup>94</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *Natürliche Erkenntnis*, §622; J. L. Zimmermann, *Gründliche Anweisung*, §§39, 47.

<sup>95</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *De actionum humanitatum moralitate*, §3; J. L. Zimmermann, *Natürliche Erkenntnis*, §§809, 525; J. L. Zimmermann, *Gründliche Anweisung*, §68.

<sup>96</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *Natürliche Erkenntnis*, §§60, 796; J. L. Zimmermann, *Gründliche Anweisung*, §§6, 11, 15.

<sup>97</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *Natürliche Erkenntnis*, §68; J. L. Zimmermann, *Gründliche Anweisung*, §§19, 39.

education in metaphysics whose aim is to convey to students as distinctly as possible, by the application of the rules of logic to allegedly incontestable, immediately graspable truths about the world, that there is a God who created the world for the purpose of his own glorification and the happiness of rational creatures, who therefore wills that this purpose be furthered by those creatures, and on whom human beings are absolutely dependent.<sup>98</sup>

The necessity of discovering God's will follows not only from Zimmermann's definition of human perfection, but also from a psychological presupposition that constitutes Zimmermann's second radical divergence from Wolff. In contrast to Wolff, Zimmermann denies that the consequence of recognizing God's perfections is immediately love of God and a desire for the perfection that union with him represents. The reason for this, Zimmermann explains, is ultimately the Fall. The result of Adam and Eve's original sin is the inescapable corruption of the human will, so "horribly weighed-down by disorderly love" that the attainment of a genuinely *lebendige Erkenntnis* of those perfections, producing love of God, is impossible. Zimmermann tends to account for this impossibility in two ways. On the one hand, as a result of the will's corruption, the intellect is consigned to "ignorance, error, and foolishness" (*Unwissenheit, Irrthum, Thorheit*) and is hardly capable of attaining the degree of truth, certainty, and distinctness necessary to produce a *lebendige Erkenntnis* of God's perfections.<sup>99</sup> For, as Zimmermann repeatedly emphasizes, the will is not simply the slave of the intellect; although it cannot function at all without the initial judgment of the intellect that a prospective action is good or bad, the intellect itself does not engage in longer, more careful consideration without the consent of the will. The very act of cultivating the intellect to pass certain and distinct judgments at all, let alone about God's perfections, therefore presupposes a desire to do so. On the other hand, even those few who have managed to achieve certain and true perception of God's perfections, presumably motivated by love of the honor, money, or other pleasures it may bring them, do not thereby develop a love of God:

What use is knowledge, even true knowledge, ultimately, to most people, given that it remains in their intellect, completely dead and devoid of force? Some philosophers talk and prove a lot about the greatest good in its length and width, but in reality nothing is less

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<sup>98</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *Natürliche Erkenntnis*, §§809, 811, 825.

<sup>99</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *Gründliche Anweisung*, §47.



esteemed in their eyes. The slightest honor, worldly comfort, and monetary sum is capable of inciting most people's will to undertake the most difficult task; knowledge of God, however, doesn't motivate them enough to lift a single foot from its place.<sup>100</sup>

Zimmermann's presupposition, here, that philosophers with unreformed wills can cultivate their intellects to an extent that allows them to describe the perfections of God with great exactitude, may seem to contradict his repeated emphasis on the difficulty of cultivating the intellect to recognize God's perfections without first reforming the will, but both claims share at least an underlying principle: the will cannot be reformed, nor disorderly love eradicated, by the exercise of the intellect alone.

Rather, the reform of the will requires the process of preparation for divine grace that Zimmermann describes in his philosophical textbooks, recalling his sermon on the *überschwengliche Erkenntnis Jesu Christi*, as life "according to the law." The discovery of God's perfections, to the extent that it is at all possible without the reform of the will, Zimmermann explains, must be accompanied by three other discoveries: the will of God, the threat that those who do not conform to his will will be punished justly, and one's own inability to conform. The result is necessarily fear of God, the only reliable means of developing an aversion to sin and an outward obedience to God's will. Hence the necessity that God be understood not only as a father but also as a lord or *Herr*, capable of anger and of punishment. In Zimmermann's words,

If human beings in the course of their vices kept a merciful God in mind, and had no punishments to await, they would hardly consider themselves miserable in putting their disgraceful lusts into practice; experience teaches that most people in such a condition don't even once

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<sup>100</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *Natürliche Erkenntnis*, §405:

[W]as hilft endlich alle, auch wohl wahre Erkenntniß den allermeisten, da sie bloß in ihrem Verstande gantz todt und unkräftig verbleibet. Mancher Welt-Weiser redet und demonstriert viel von dem höchsten Gute in die Länge und in die Breite, nach der Wahrheit aber ist wol nichts weniger geachtet in seinen Augen. Die geringste Ehre, Comodität dieses Lebens und Geldes werth ist vermögend den Willen der mehresten zur beschwerlichsten Arbeit anzutreiben: die Erkenntnis Gottes aber vermag bey ihnen nicht so viel, daß sie einen Fuß aus der Stelle setzen solten.

desire union with God or a better happiness.<sup>101</sup>

Only by encountering the threat of just punishment at the hands of God can a human being be made to realize that the happiness he seeks in vice is in fact misery, and convinced to seek a superior happiness by laying the foundation for a transition, assisted by God's grace, into "life according to the Gospel": a genuine love of God, accompanied by genuine tranquillity.

Unsurprisingly, Zimmermann was not alone in the stance he took against Wolff. Both in his specific criticisms and in many of the basic elements of the system of moral education that he proposed as an alternative, he was aligning himself with his teachers at Jena, Buddeus and Walch, both of whom had attacked Wolff in print, both of whom Zimmermann quoted approvingly, and both of whom likely had a hand in the construction of the arguments in Zimmermann's 1728 *De actionum humanitatum moralitate*, over which Buddeus himself presided. On the level of polemic, the similarities between Zimmermann and Buddeus are clear. In his opening salvo in 1724, Buddeus had charged Wolff with, among other things, undermining the "foundation of religion and morality" by disabling the human conscience and leaving no effective replacement. Foreshadowing Zimmermann's dissertation, Buddeus attacked Wolff for asserting that natural law could obligate atheists, since the very idea of a law, strictly speaking, required the idea of a legislator.<sup>102</sup> Nor was Wolff's proof of the existence of God adequate to give natural law obligatory force. Wolff had cast doubt on "the usual and most solid proofs of the existence of God," including above all the *notitia dei*, and had replaced them with the idea of a "substance that represents the entire universe distinctly to itself," which is to say, a God who is essentially passive.<sup>103</sup> God's governance of the world, Wolff had explained by recourse to Leibniz's theory of pre-established harmony, thereby accepting an idea that he himself admitted had been the foundation of denials of divine providence by Aristotle and by the Epicureans, and making it into the

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<sup>101</sup> J. L. Zimmermann, *Natürliche Erkenntnis*, §740:

*Denn wenn nur die Menschen bey ihren Untugenden einen gnädigen GOtt behielten, und keine Straffen desfalls zu erwarten hätten, würden sie sich in Ausübung ihrer schändlichen Lüste nicht eben gar elend schätzen; wie denn die Erfahrung lehret, daß die meisten in solchem Zustande die Vereinigung mit GOtt, und eine bessere Glückseligkeit nicht einmal begehren.*

Cf. J. L. Zimmermann, *Natürliche Erkenntnis*, §§647, 741-5, 807; J. L. Zimmermann, *De actionum humanitatum moralitate*, §10.

<sup>102</sup> J. F. Buddeus, *Bedencken über die Wolffianische Philosophie*, Frankfurt-am-Main, 1724), 37.

<sup>103</sup> J. F. Buddeus, *Bedencken*, 8-15, 38-9, 84-5.

foundation – and therefore the fundamental weakness – of his own philosophical system.<sup>104</sup> As in Zimmermann’s dissertation, the problem for Buddeus was that Wolff had proposed a conception of God, and by extension a conception of God’s relationship to the universe, that was powerless to effect moral change in the person contemplating it, while at the same time appealing to the stringent requirements of mathematical demonstrations as a reason to reject conceptions of God with far more moral-pedagogical force. Atheists, those who had not even taken the first step away from the self-oriented desires that dominated them, could not be moved by Wolff, and in fact their numbers were likely to grow: “If people are now brought to the point of considering the most powerful convictions of the conscience to be groundless opinion, isn’t it certain that ultimately atheism will be the result?”<sup>105</sup> The essentially passive God that Wolff proposed as a replacement for the just, lawgiving, providential God whose decrees engage the conscience could not have the same effect: “Why should I pray and subject myself to a God who knows nothing of me, and who neither punishes evil nor rewards good?”<sup>106</sup> Loosely speaking, this was the position that Zimmermann would defend and expand in 1728.

More precisely, Zimmermann was following Walch, who had hewed more or less to the lines of argument sketched by Buddeus, but with a number of elaborations and significant additions that sharpened the disagreement between Buddeus and Wolff, giving it a form recognizable in Zimmermann’s dissertation. More clearly than Buddeus, Walch portrayed the central weakness of Wolff’s philosophical system to be the inadequacy of his metaphysics and ethics as a foundation of morality. By means of a literary trope in his first defense of Buddeus’ attack on Wolff, published in 1724, Walch relentlessly insinuated that Wolff’s and Buddeus’s behavior in the midst of the controversy exemplified the practical effects of their respective philosophical systems, repeatedly describing Wolff as dominated by worldly affections despite his *Scharfsinnigkeit* – implying, it would seem, that Wolff’s philosophical system has no edifying effect on the will – while equally often describing Buddeus as “impelled by conscience” to criticize Wolff.<sup>107</sup> In providing a substantive basis for these

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<sup>104</sup> J. F. Buddeus, *Bedencken*, 42-3, 96.

<sup>105</sup> J. F. Buddeus, *Bedencken*, 30: “Wenn nun die Menschen dahin gebracht werden, daß sie die kräftigsten Überzeugungen des Gewissens *pro vana persuasione* halten, muß denn nicht endlich der Atheismus daraus entstehen?”

<sup>106</sup> J. F. Buddeus, *Bedencken*, 39-44, 45: “[W]arum sollte ich einen solchen Gott anbeten, und ihm dienen, der nichts von mir weiß, der auch weder das Böse bestraft, noch das Gute belohnet?”

<sup>107</sup> J. G. Walch, *Bescheidene Antwort auf Herrn Christian Wolffs Anmerkungen* (Jena, 1724), 2, 3, 4, 6, 16, 7, 41, 96.

insinuations, Walch attempted to show that Wolff's account of moral obligation lay at the heart of the dispute.

The clearest and most concise of Walch's various such attempts is to be found in the entry on "Moralität" in the 1726 edition of his *Philosophisches Lexikon*.<sup>108</sup> With the initial exchanges in 1724 between Buddeus, Wolff, and himself in the background, Walch used the article to summarize their discussion of moral obligation in a way that made Buddeus' criticism of Wolff seem as credible as possible and made Wolff's own summary of the disagreement seem inaccurate. In his response to Buddeus' initial criticisms, Wolff had denied that the disagreement between them pertained to the question of whether there can be moral obligation independent of divine law. Although Wolff agreed that in his *Ethics* he had claimed that what binds human beings to the natural law is *Natur* and *Vernunft*, he had also asserted that natural law was legislated by God, and that God in fact obliges human beings to obey it.<sup>109</sup> On the question of the origin of moral obligation, therefore, and whether natural law is, strictly speaking, a law, Wolff claimed that Buddeus was wrong to assert any disagreement. Rather, the question at issue was whether God has reasons for what he wills. By denying Wolff's assertion that actions are *per se* morally good or bad, antecedent to God's commanding them or prohibiting them, Buddeus had – so Wolff claimed – effectively denied that God had reasons for commanding some things and prohibiting others. Buddeus was thereby defending the view that divine justice is arbitrary, the principle of *justitia arbitraria* asserted by Pufendorf to the consternation of many Lutheran theologians in the late seventeenth century and defended by Christian Thomasius while Buddeus himself was studying in Halle.<sup>110</sup> In his article on "Moralität", Walch takes issue with this portrayal of the substance of the dispute by Wolff. On Walch's account, the question is not whether God has reasons for what he wills; Walch readily grants that "the quality of the thing is the reason why he has commanded one thing and forbidden another," since God only wills what conforms to his own sanctity (*Heiligkeit*), and that God therefore could not have enacted any natural law other than the one he in fact enacted.<sup>111</sup> Rather, the question is whether moral obligation only arises from an act of legislation by God – whose actual result is divine law, as revealed in the form of natural law – or whether humans would be

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<sup>108</sup> J. G. Walch, *Philosophisches Lexikon* (Leipzig, 1726), s.v. "Moralität."

<sup>109</sup> J. F. Buddeus, *Bedencken über die Wolffianische Philosophie*, ed. with commentary by Christian Wolff (Frankfurt/Main, 1724), 31(t).

<sup>110</sup> J. F. Buddeus, *Bedencken über die Wolffianische Philosophie*, ed. with commentary by Christian Wolff (Frankfurt/Main, 1724), 32(u), 33-4(x).

<sup>111</sup> J. G. Walch, "Moralität," 1829, 1830.

obliged even if God had not acted.<sup>112</sup> According to Walch, Buddeus can hold the first of these positions (and in fact does hold it), while at the same time holding, like Wolff, that there are discernible reasons for the divine law that God in fact issued. These reasons, Walch explains, can be discerned in the world that God created – as Wolff would agree. In issuing divine law, God’s will should therefore be understood to have been informed by his intellect, examining that created world, even if creation itself must be understood as an act of divine will whose reasons are inscrutable to the human intellect.<sup>113</sup> This answer to Wolff may of course seem to be a mere quibble over how to define the term, *moral obligation*, as Wolff claimed it was, but Walch’s citation of Paul’s Letter to the Romans in support of his own position tells a different story. According to Walch, Paul correctly understood that the recognition of one’s sins can only come from recognition of divine law, and the very ideas of good and bad must therefore derive from the law.<sup>114</sup> For Paul, as invoked by Walch, just as for Zimmermann two years later, the dispute over the origin of moral obligation amounted to a dispute over whether moral reform required knowledge of God’s law as such.

Naturally Zimmermann’s debt to his teachers extended beyond the repetition and expansion of the arguments they had used in their engagement with Wolff. Zimmermann had clearly absorbed the conception of moral education on which those arguments were based. It was a conception that Buddeus had been developing for decades and had expounded in a series of textbooks that by 1728 had found widespread use in universities throughout the German-speaking world, above all in his textbooks on moral philosophy and moral theology, the *Elementa Philosophiae Practicae* (1697) and the *Institutiones Theologiae Moralis* (1711).<sup>115</sup> Though Buddeus’ psychological vocabulary in those books bears less resemblance to Wolff’s than Zimmermann’s does, substantial continuities with Zimmermann’s ideas are clear. Buddeus repeatedly emphasizes that the intellect and the will are distinct faculties of the soul, that the cultivation of the intellect alone is incapable of effecting moral improvement in its possessor, and that moral education must therefore aim primarily

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<sup>112</sup> J. G. Walch, “Moralität,” 1828-9.

<sup>113</sup> J. G. Walch, *Bescheidene Antwort*, 30-5; J. G. Walch, *Philosophisches Lexikon*, s.v. “Moralität.”

<sup>114</sup> J. G. Walch, *Philosophisches Lexikon*, s.v. “Moralität.”

<sup>115</sup> *Geschichte der Universität Jena*, 199. The sometimes overlooked fact that Buddeus had developed his philosophical system before his public engagement with Wolff’s is pointed out by M. Wundt, *Die deutsche Schulphilosophie*, 63. On the propagation of Buddeus’ textbooks, A. F. Stolzenburg, *Die Theologie des Jo. Franc. Buddeus und des Chr. Matth. Pfaff* (Berlin: Trowitzsch & Sohn, 1927; rept. Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1979), 396-7; J. H. Zedler, *Universal-Lexicon*, s.v. “Buddaeus, Joann Francisc.”

to improve the will, by means of what Buddeus calls the “techniques of medicine”: the attraction of the unregenerated soul to pleasure (*voluptas*), honor, and wealth is to be treated as a sickness, and the model of health at which the cure aims, the *sanitas mentis*, is the overriding love of God characteristic of the regenerated soul.<sup>116</sup> The cure is ultimately the result of divine grace,<sup>117</sup> but it is necessarily preceded by a process whose three phases are familiar from Zimmermann’s sermon on the *überschwengliche Erkenntnis Jesu Christi*: a false sense of tranquillity is followed by the discovery of divine law and a period of fearful servitude to God, followed ideally, with the help of God’s grace, by faith in God, genuine tranquillity, and obedience to God’s law, motivated only by love and gratitude.<sup>118</sup> In Buddeus’ account, therefore, as in Zimmermann’s, the improvement of the will requires attaining knowledge of God’s law, a knowledge which is revealed in the text of the Bible but which is also available in a less complete but more universally accessible form through the exercise of the human intellect, scrutinizing itself and the world.

Like Zimmermann, Buddeus refers to this universal means of acquiring knowledge of God as the *notitia Dei*, accepting the conventional classification of this *notitia* as *insita* (that is, acquired by reflection on one’s own intellect) or *acquisita* (acquired by reflection on the wider world) and explicitly including the former among the “usual and most solid proofs of the existence of God” whose denial by Wolff he identified as dangerous to the foundations of morality.<sup>119</sup> It is through the *notitia Dei* that every human being, by exercise of his intellect, can discover that God is his creator and preserver, as well as the creator and preserver of everything in the universe, and that as a mere creature, he absolutely depends on God for everything that he is. From here it is for Buddeus a very small step to the firm belief that one “has not been created and furnished with such immense favors by [God] so that he may present God with hatred, but rather so that he may love him,”<sup>120</sup> and to the conviction that God has both the power and just cause to oblige human beings to obey his law, which is revealed both to those who examine human nature with a

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<sup>116</sup> J. F. Buddeus, *Institutiones Theologiae Moralis* (Leipzig, 1727; rept. Hildesheim: Olms, 2007), I.Vorrede.§4; J. F. Buddeus, *Elementa Philosophiae Practicae*, 3rd ed. (Halle, 1707; rept. Hildesheim: Olms, 2004), I.vi.§§1-3.

<sup>117</sup> E.g. J. F. Buddeus, *Institutiones Theologiae Moralis*, I.1.§36.

<sup>118</sup> J. F. Buddeus, *Institutiones Theologiae Moralis*, II.Vorbericht.§8.

<sup>119</sup> Carl Ratschow, *Lutherische Dogmatik zwischen Reformation und Aufklärung*, v. 2 of 2 (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1966), 29-32; J. F. Buddeus, *Institutiones Theologiae Dogmaticae*, III.i.§1-9; and on Wolff’s denial of the *notitia Dei insita*, see above, n. 103.

<sup>120</sup> J. F. Buddeus, *Elementa Philosophiae Practicae*, I.vi.§29.

healthy intellect, and more clearly to those who read the Bible.<sup>121</sup> The result of this conviction is fear of God. It arises from the discovery by the conscience that the powers of one's soul, corrupted by original sin, are unable to obey divine law, together with an awareness that God is supremely just and will condemn the disobedient to eternal punishment after death. Revealing human sin and producing fear, in Buddeus' view, is in fact the very purpose of divine law.<sup>122</sup>

The fear it produces is moreover an indispensable stimulus to the attempt to reform one's corrupted will by a means that Buddeus calls "philosophical" and describes as a regimen of sensory-oriented exercises in affection-control that recall the pedagogical system of Francke's orphanage schools. The God-fearing person subjects his will to intense scrutiny; deliberately refrains from activities that he knows excite his base desires; tries to observe and imitate examples of genuine virtue, including in books; disciplines his *phantasia* by contemplating exclusively "serious, pious, and upright things" (*res serias, pias, honestas*); and tries above all to cultivate the two most important virtues for the suppression of vices, namely *constantia* and *patientia*.<sup>123</sup> Buddeus describes these exercises as having a two-fold result. On the one hand, little by little they reform the will, like a medicine whose effectiveness depends on repeated doses: as the base affections slowly wane, love of God (*amor numinis*) slowly waxes.<sup>124</sup> On the other hand, their effect on the will is ultimately minimal. This ineffectiveness – and therefore the depth of one's own depravity – becomes increasingly clear, and the result is desperation.<sup>125</sup>

The awareness of God's goodness, however, prompts one to believe that there must be another means of satisfying him, and if it cannot be discovered by reason alone, then it must have been revealed by God himself, and moreover in the text of the Bible.<sup>126</sup> At this point a new regimen of spiritual exercises (*geistliche Übungen*) is added to the old regimen. These new exercises, which recall those advocated by Zimmermann, include meditation on scripture, above all according to the paraenetic method, and tireless prayer, all in the hope that by the grace of God one's will can be

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<sup>121</sup> J. F. Buddeus, *Institutiones Theologiae Moralis*, II.ii. §§8, 6.

<sup>122</sup> J. F. Buddeus, *Institutiones Theologiae Moralis*, I.i. §§7, 11, II. Vorbericht. §8; cf. also the summary of Buddeus' teachings, allegedly drawn from his textbooks and lectures, by Johann David König: *Kürzester und leichtester Weg, die Grundsätze und Beschaffenheit einer grundlichen Moral und Politic zu erlernen* (Leipzig, 1723), 71, 78, 101.

<sup>123</sup> J. F. Buddeus, *Elementa Philosophiae Practicae*, I.vi. §§30-46.

<sup>124</sup> J. F. Buddeus, *Elementa Philosophiae Practicae*, I.vi. §§32, 34

<sup>125</sup> J. F. Buddeus, *Elementa Philosophiae Practicae*, I.vi. §§48-58.

<sup>126</sup> J. F. Buddeus, *Elementa Philosophiae Practicae*, I.vi. §§58-64.

healed.<sup>127</sup> Like Zimmermann, Buddeus describes the ideal result as a new perception of God, one that incites love rather than fear: it is a *lebendige Erkenntnis*, one which is not only true (*vera*) and certain (*certa*) but also, most importantly, vivid (*viva*) and effective (*efficax*), and it necessarily involves a sense (*sensum*) and experience (*experientia*) of divine things, which Buddeus calls *aisthesis*.<sup>128</sup> What necessarily flows from this *lebendige Erkenntnis* is what the medical treatment of the will aims at: an overriding love of God.

Buddeus' lack of confidence that Wolff's program of moral education could have the same result becomes abundantly clear, more clear in many respects even than in Buddeus' relatively brief published criticism of Wolff, in his conceptual outline of the history of philosophy, continual references to which are one of the most obvious hallmarks of Buddeus' writings. In proposing a system of theology whose ultimate aim was to reform the human will, Buddeus consistently represented himself as engaged in a struggle against the so-called "Scholastics" and their far less edifying theological systems. As for the actual errors encompassed by this historical label, Buddeus of course presented their intellectual origins as distant, primarily in the philosophy of Aristotle and his medieval admirers, but his primary concern was with his contemporaries. Buddeus admired the early Reformers, above all Luther and Melancthon, and found much to admire even in some Lutheran theologians of the seventeenth century, including Johann Wilhelm Baier (1647-95). The influence of the Wittenberg theologians who effectively founded and dominated Lutheran dogmatic theology in the seventeenth century, however, above all Johann Friedrich König (1619-64) and Johann Andreas Quenstedt (1617-88), Buddeus associated with a "Scholastic" period, in which the influence of Catholic theology, he thought, had become excessive.<sup>129</sup> The problems with these new "Scholastics" were allegedly manifold. They lay too much emphasis on Aristotle's distinction among the four causes and produced theological systems full of "vain, otiose, and inept" principles rather than trying to draw attention to the beauty of God and of theology; they

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<sup>127</sup> J. F. Buddeus, *Elementa Philosophiae Practicae*, I.vi.§65; J. F. Buddeus, *Institutiones Theologiae Moralis*, I.i. §§13, 15; c.f. J. D. König, *Kürzester und leichtester Weg*, 20-1, 106.

<sup>128</sup> J. F. Buddeus, *Institutiones Theologiae Moralis*, I.Prolegomena. §§8-9. Note that according to Johann David König, Buddeus considered *Gewissheit* to be a consequence of a "historic" *Erkenntnis* of a thing, engendered by meditation. J. D. König, *Kürzester und leichtester Weg*, 47.

<sup>129</sup> Fredericke Nüssel, introduction to *Institutiones Theologiae Dogmaticae*, by Buddeus (Hildesheim: Olms, 1999), vi; K. Heussi, *Geschichte der theologischen Fakultät zu Jena* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1954), 155-6; A. F. Stolzenburg, *Die Theologie des Jo. Franc. Buddeus*, 240-2; Max Wundt, *Die Philosophie an der Universität Jena* (Jena: Fischer, 1932), 66.



followed the lead of their own curiosity without paying attention to the utility of their investigations; they assumed that perception by the intellect alone, which they considered the source of the highest perfection for man as well as for God, was an adequate means to virtue, and that virtue itself was a means to genuine happiness rather than a consequence of love of God; they falsely denied that God's will could be understood with the same exactness as his being; and they falsely asserted that God's commands were in fact commands of *recta ratio*, and that there could be a divine law in the absence of a divine lawgiver.<sup>130</sup> These and Buddeus' other specific criticisms are of course not all identical to one another, but at least one common thread is obvious: the "Scholastics' " theological systems engaged the intellect but for various reasons did not have the requisite medicinal effect on the will. Buddeus saw himself as part of a modern response to this Scholastic error, led by Descartes, Pufendorf, and, by virtue of their attention to the improvement of the *Gemüth*, Philip Jacob Spener and Johann Arndt.<sup>131</sup> Wolff, on the other hand, who had erred in insisting that human actions could be recognized as morally good or bad without reference to divine law, Buddeus readily classified among the Scholastics. More precisely, he identified Wolff's error as the legacy of the Scholastics, defended unconvincingly by Grotius and then revived by Leibniz, Wolff, and their adherents. Unsurprisingly, Walch and Zimmermann repeated Buddeus' genealogy.<sup>132</sup>

The critical posture toward Wolff adopted by Buddeus, Walch, and most pointedly by Zimmermann could not have escaped Alexander Baumgarten during his theological and philosophical studies in Halle in the early 1730s. The works of Buddeus and Walch had already been well known in Halle for years, and they found frequent use in theological and philosophical lectures.<sup>133</sup> Buddeus himself was obviously well liked by several members of the theology and philosophy faculties. His friendships with Joachim Lange and August Hermann Francke were demonstrably close, and he had at various points taken in both Johann Jacob Rambach and Francke's son, Gotthilf August, as boarders in Jena while they were

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<sup>130</sup> F. Nüssell, introduction to *Institutiones Theologiae Dogmaticae*, vii-ix; J. F. Buddeus, *De eo, quod in theologia pulchrum est*, 18-19, 23; J. D. König, *Kürzester und leichtester Weg*, 85-7, 97-8; J. F. Buddeus, *Institutiones Theologiae Moralis*, II. Vorbericht. §§3-4.

<sup>131</sup> K. Heussi, *Geschichte der theologischen Fakultät zu Jena*, 155-6; A. F. Stolzenburg, *Die Theologie des Jo. Franc. Buddeus*, 242-3; J. F. Buddeus, *Institutiones Theologiae Moralis*, I.i. §§21, 26.

<sup>132</sup> J. F. Buddeus, *Bedencken*, 37; J. L. Zimmermann, *De actionum humanitatum moralitate*, §1; J. G. Walch, "Moralität", 1829-30.

<sup>133</sup> Examples can be found in virtually every semester between 1730 and 1735: *Catalogi lectionum . . . publicati in Academia Fridericiana* (Halle, 1730-5).

still students.<sup>134</sup> Upon joining the Halle theological faculty in 1731, invited principally by his friend Gotthilf August Francke to help replenish the faculty's ranks after the departure of Rambach and the death of Francke's father, Zimmermann began to represent Buddeus' views in person. In his lectures, which Alexander Baumgarten attended, Zimmermann read from Buddeus' textbooks on dogmatic and moral theology.<sup>135</sup> Upon Zimmermann's death after a mere four semesters, Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten – who succeeded him as *ordinarius* Professor of Theology – observed in his memorial sermon that Zimmermann had “venerated” Buddeus and had adopted substantial elements of Buddeus' theological teachings and arguments.<sup>136</sup> As for Alexander Baumgarten's attitude toward Zimmermann, the evidence is regrettably thin. Even the best evidence that can be mustered from his brother's memorial sermon, itself at best an indirect source of Alexander's views, is difficult to evaluate. On the one hand, his praise is effusive. “In writing and arguing,” Siegmund Jacob comments, Zimmermann “had few equals and no superiors,”<sup>137</sup> and he “produced more men schooled in solid erudition, integrity of religion, and zeal for promoting virtue and knowledge of Christ than many other learned men have listeners over the course of their entire lives.”<sup>138</sup> Zimmermann's life, though not long, was “extremely fruitful” (*fructuosissima*), and he could not have spent his final years more gloriously or more usefully.<sup>139</sup> And yet it is difficult not to imagine that in his evaluation of Zimmermann's textbook on metaphysics, the “extremely worthy” (*dignissima*) *Natürliche Erkenntnis Gottes, der Welt und des Menschen*, Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten meant to convey some disaffection behind the veneer of praise demanded by the occasion. That Zimmermann “could have become one of the best in this discipline,” as Baumgarten puts it, “if he hadn't devoted himself fully to theology,” has all the ambiguity of a back-handed compliment.<sup>140</sup> It is perhaps telling, that whereas Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten, as Zimmermann's successor, was obliged to deliver a memorial sermon, the task of delivering the oration at Zimmermann's funeral fell to

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<sup>134</sup> A. F. Stolzenburg, *Die Theologie des Jo. Franc. Buddeus*, 249-52.

<sup>135</sup> G. F. Meier, *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens Leben*, 10; *Catalogi lectionum . . . publicati in Academia Fridericiana* (Halle, Winter 1731-Spring 1733).

<sup>136</sup> S. J. Baumgarten, *In funus summe rever. Jo. Liborii Zimmermanni*, in *Opuscula*, by S. J. Baumgarten, ed. Gotthilf Christoph Bake (Halle, 1746), 60-3, 73.

<sup>137</sup> S. J. Baumgarten, *In funus summe rever. Jo. Liborii Zimmermanni*, 58.

<sup>138</sup> S. J. Baumgarten, *In funus summe rever. Jo. Liborii Zimmermanni*, 63.

<sup>139</sup> S. J. Baumgarten, *In funus summe rever. Jo. Liborii Zimmermanni*, 64, 67.

<sup>140</sup> S. J. Baumgarten, *In funus summe rever. Jo. Liborii Zimmermanni*, 73.

Zimmermann's friend, Gotthilf August Francke.<sup>141</sup> Whatever the case may be, it is at least clear that what Zimmermann had taught, including his publicly critical attitude toward Wolff, was well known both to Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten and to his brother.

### *Nicolaus Hieronymus Gundling*

The same can be said, if perhaps less conclusively, about another of Wolff's public critics among the Halle professoriate, Nicolaus Hieronymus Gundling. By 1727, the year Alexander Baumgarten arrived in Halle and enrolled in Francke's Latin School, Gundling's life was nearly over. As he took up the Pro-Rectorship of the University for the last time in 1729, his doctor and predecessor as Pro-Rector, Friedrich Hoffmann, doubted that he would live to pass the academic scepter to a successor.<sup>142</sup> Gundling's death the same year, the first time a Pro-Rector of the university had died in office, proved Hoffmann right. But when Baumgarten entered the university one year later, in 1730, Gundling's legacy was still very much potent. Even if we assume that Baumgarten never heard him speak, it is difficult to imagine how he could have escaped an encounter with the memory of Gundling and the ideas Gundling had recorded in his voluminous writings.<sup>143</sup> Gundling had arrived in Halle thirty years earlier, in 1698. He had already studied theology for several years at the universities of Altdorf and Jena, gathered a year of preaching experience in Nürnberg, near his home town, and seemed to be headed toward a pastoral and theological career like his father's. But in Halle he fell under the spell of Christian Thomasius, who inspired him to redirect his professional ambitions and devote

<sup>141</sup> Ed. Jacobs, "Johann Liborius Zimmermann," 181.

<sup>142</sup> C. F. Hempel, *Nicolai Hieronymi Gundlings Umständliches Leben und Schriften* (Leipzig, [1736?]), 7055.

<sup>143</sup> Although the presence of a book in the auction catalog of Alexander Baumgarten's library, published shortly after his death in 1762, by no means proves conclusively that Baumgarten read or even knew of the book, it does make Baumgarten's acquaintance with the book seem more likely. It is therefore worth mentioning that a significant number of Gundling's works were sold as a part of Baumgarten's library after his death. These included Gundling's *Otia* (Frankfurt, 1706), volumes from *Gundlingiana* (Halle, 1715-32), *Via ad veritatem* (1713), *Historia philosophiae moralis* (Halle, 1706), and *Ius naturae* (1728). See *Catalogus Librorum A Viro Excellentissimo Amplissimo Alexandro Gottlieb Baumgarten* (Frankfurt/Oder, 1762).

himself to the academic study of law. After receiving his doctoral title in 1703, Gundling soon acquired a long string of professorships in unusually quick succession: he became *extraordinarius* Professor of Philosophy (*professor philosophiae universae*) in 1705 and *ordinarius* Professor of Philosophy in 1707, succeeded the late renowned Christoph Cellarius as Professor of Antiquities and Rhetoric (*antiquitatum et eloquentiae*) in 1707, and took up the professorship of the law of nature and of nations (*iuris naturae et gentium*) in the law faculty in 1712.<sup>144</sup> The variety of the subjects on which Gundling lectured, and the volume of writing he produced, were enormous, and one hardly needs to accept uncritically the high praise of his most thorough biographer and admirer, Christian Friedrich Hempel, to appreciate the breadth of his learning. He published dozens of volumes of essays and book reviews, as well as numerous textbooks, and over ten thousand pages of his lectures were published in the decade after his death.<sup>145</sup> Beginning in 1731, Gundling's admiring student and first biographer, Friedrich Wideburg (1708-58), used textbooks by Gundling as the basis for several of his own lectures as Professor *extraordinarius* of Antiquities and Rhetoric, and, like Gundling before him, he based his *collegium politicum* on the third part of Buddeus *Institutiones theologiae moralis*.<sup>146</sup> As for Gundling's friends among the professors who survived him, they included not only Wideburg, but also the supervisor of Baumgarten's first dissertation, Christian Benedict Michaelis, whom Gundling had asked to share the task of looking after his children's education, and who supervised the auction of Gundling's vast library.<sup>147</sup> Johann Jacob Rambach delivered the memorial sermon at Gundling's funeral.<sup>148</sup>

That Gundling's legacy in the controversy over Christian Wolff and the foundation of morality was his defense of a position very much like Zimmermann's and Buddeus' should come as a surprise, given what is currently known about the relationship between Gundling and Buddeus. The trend of the last fifty years of

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<sup>144</sup> J. H. Zedler, *Universal-Lexicon*, s.v. "Gundling, Nicolaus Hieronymus"; *DBA*, s.v. "Gundling, Nicolaus Hieronymus"; C. F. Hempel, *Nicolai Hieronymi Gundlings Umständliches Leben und Schriften*, 7019-48.

<sup>145</sup> Hempel's catalog of Gundling's writings takes up over four hundred pages: C. F. Hempel, *Nicolai Hieronymi Gundlings Umständliches Leben und Schriften* (Leipzig, [1736?]), 7084-7536 (ch. 8).

<sup>146</sup> Hans Schröder, *Lexikon der hamburgischen Schriftsteller*, v. 8 (Hamburg, 1888), rept. in *DBA*, s.v. "Wiedeburg, Friedrich"; C. F. Hempel, *Nicolai Hieronymi Gundlings Umständliches Leben und Schriften*, 7544, 7548; *Catalogi lectionum . . . publicati in Academia Fridericana* (Halle, 1732-5).

<sup>147</sup> C. F. Hempel, *Nicolai Hieronymi Gundlings Umständliches Leben und Schriften*, 7082; Christian Benedict Michaelis, ed., *Catalogus bibliothecae Gundlingianae* (Halle, 1731).

<sup>148</sup> J. J. Rambach, *Gedächtniß-Rede von dem Geheimniß der Evangelischen Weisheit*, 1st ed. (Halle, 1730), 2nd ed. (Halle, 1732).

research on German natural law theory in the early eighteenth century has been to place them on opposite sides of a controversy over the legacy of the teacher and colleague they had in common during their years in Halle: Christian Thomasius (1655-1728). In 1688, as lecturer at the University of Leipzig, two years before he arrived in Halle as a teacher of philosophy and jurisprudence at the city's *Ritterakademie* and six years before the *Ritterakademie* was granted the privileges that transformed it into a university, Thomasius had produced his *magnum opus*, the *Institutiones jurisprudentiae divinae*. It was a textbook on natural and divine law in which he purported to prove and strengthen the principles laid out in Samuel Pufendorf's 1673 *De officio hominis et civis juxta legem naturalem*, which he quoted at great length.<sup>149</sup> But in the late 1690s and early 1700s, as his contemporaries soon perceived, Thomasius changed his mind about several substantial elements in the natural law theory he had articulated in his *Institutiones*. This change of mind, which has been described repeatedly as an intellectual "crisis," appears to have followed from changes in Thomasius' fundamental conception of the human will and how it can be regenerated.<sup>150</sup> The consequences of these changes for Thomasius' natural law theory became evident in a set of "improvements" to his *Institutiones*, published in 1705 under the title *Fundamenta iuris naturae et gentium*.<sup>151</sup> In the preface to the *Fundamenta*, while claiming that he neither regrets having defended Pufendorf in the *Institutiones* nor wants to weaken or overturn anything he argued there, Thomasius nonetheless expressly purports to set his natural law theory on a new foundation and to present the entire "Gebäude der Moral" in a new way.

The principal error of Pufendorf, and by extension the 1688 *Institutiones*, according to Thomasius, was the presumption that "universal divine positive law," the law issued expressly by God to all human beings, has the same obligatory force as human law, and that like human law, it obliges human beings by means of the

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<sup>149</sup> On Thomasius' arrival in Halle: W. Schrader, *Geschichte der Friedrichs Universität zu Halle*, 15-16; J. Holloran, *Professors of Enlightenment*, 93-121. On Thomasius' *Institutiones*: Frank Grunert, Introduction to *Grundlehren des Natur- und Völkerrechts*, by C. Thomasius (Hildesheim: Olms, 2003), v.

<sup>150</sup> E.g. Werner Schneiders, *Naturrecht und Liebesethik* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1971), 241, 246-7; Heinz D. Kittsteiner, *Die Entstehung des modernen Gewissens* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1995), 254; T. J. Hochstrasser, *Natural Law Theories in the Early Enlightenment*, 129; and by far the most differentiated account of the changes in Thomasius' thinking, Thomas Ahnert's *Religion and the Origins of the German Enlightenment* (Rochester: U Rochester P, 2006), 27-42.

<sup>151</sup> I have drawn primarily on the German translation, *Grundlehren des Natur- und Völkerrechts*, translated Johann Gottfried Zeidler (1655-1711) in cooperation with Thomasius, which appeared in Halle in 1709. On the circumstances of the translation: Frank Grunert, Introduction to *Grundlehren des Natur- und Völkerrechts*, by C. Thomasius, xv-xvi.

threat of punishment attached to it by a lawgiver.<sup>152</sup> What Pufendorf overlooked was that divine punishment, unlike human punishment, has a "natural connection" with human transgressions of divine law.<sup>153</sup> From Thomasius' point of view, the consequences of this overlooked fact are enormous. Briefly put, it means that knowledge of God's will, which Pufendorf proposed as the source of moral obligation, is not in fact a reliable inducement to virtue. The reason for this, Thomasius explains with reference to a conceptual structure that he elaborated repeatedly and at great length in his *Fundamenta*. At its center is the distinction Thomasius draws between internal and external obligation. Both types of obligation induce action by arousing hope and fear in the obligated person, but their sources differ: whereas *internal* obligation (*innerliche Verpflichtung*) arises when the conscience perceives an unavoidable natural connection between an action and its good or bad consequences for the actor, *external* obligation (*äusserliche Verpflichtung*) arises when the conscience perceives a potentially avoidable connection, established by an arbitrary decision on the part of a human being. Thomasius further defines the source of internal obligation as *Rath*, or *consilium*, and the source of external obligation as *Herrschaft*, or *imperium*.<sup>154</sup> The former, he adds, makes use primarily of logical deductions (*Vernunft-Schlüsse*), while the latter makes more use of force (*Gewalt*).<sup>155</sup> Thomasius diverges from Pufendorf in categorizing divine law as a *Rathsschlag*, and therefore a source of internal, not external, obligation:

But guard yourself against the thought that the natural and positive, divine and human types of law have the same nature. Natural and divine law belong more to the *Rathsschläge*; human law in the correct sense is only pronounced by the norm of *Herrschaft*.<sup>156</sup>

As a result, a large category of human beings, namely those who cannot be induced to action by internal obligation as easily as by external obligation, cannot be made

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<sup>152</sup> C. Thomasius, *Grundlehren*, Vorrede. §§8-10.

<sup>153</sup> C. Thomasius, *Grundlehren*, Vorrede. §§11.

<sup>154</sup> C. Thomasius, *Grundlehren*, I.iv. §§61-2.

<sup>155</sup> C. Thomasius, *Grundlehren*, I.iv. §§51, 55-6.

<sup>156</sup> C. Thomasius, *Grundlehren*, I.v. §34:

*Hüte dich demnach, daß du nicht meinst, als wenn das natürliche und gegebene, das göttliche und menschliche Gesetze Arten von einerley Natur wären: Das natürliche und göttliche Gesetze gehört mehr zu den Rathschlägen, als zu denen Herrschaften; das menschliche Gesetze in dem eigentlichen Verstande genommen wird nur von der Norm der Herrschaft gesaget.*

more virtuous by any consciousness of divine law – which Thomasius denies is a law in the strict sense.<sup>157</sup> These are the so-called “fools” (*Narren*). By contrast with the “wise,” whom Thomasius describes as being primarily internally obligated to virtue by their consciousness of its natural advantages and by their perception of the will of God, whom they fear in a childlike (*kindlich*) rather than a servile (*knechtisch*) way,<sup>158</sup> fools do not perceive virtue’s natural advantages and can only be induced to become wise by means of external obligation – more precisely, by the application of force on the part of the wise, in the form of the threat of punishment attached to human law. In contrast to divine punishments and rewards, Thomasius explains,

the punishments of promulgated law are more graspable and visible, and are therefore also more suitable for instilling fear in fools, just as the rewards of promulgated law, too, are more apparent.<sup>159</sup>

Of course this is not to say that the moral education of fools by the wise is a matter simply of coercion by means of the brute force of the law;<sup>160</sup> Thomasius emphasized the necessity that the teacher exert force in a “friendly” way and present himself as an example of the virtues he is trying to inculcate, so as not to disturb the student’s

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<sup>157</sup> C. Thomasius, *Grundlehren*, I.vi.§6.

<sup>158</sup> C. Thomasius, *Grundlehren*, I.iv.§64, I.v.§§34-5, 41-2.

<sup>159</sup> C. Thomasius, *Grundlehren*, I.v.§§57-8:

§57. *Denn wenn die Narren nicht schon angefangen haben die Thorheit abzulegen, so sind sie wenig geschickt den Nutzen und Annehmlichkeit des wahren guten, welches zugleich ehrlich, anständig und gerecht ist, ernstlich nachzudenken, und den Verdruß und Schaden des wahren bösen, welches zugleich schändlich, und anständig und ungerecht ist, zu untersuchen, ob sie gleich durch weiser Leute Rath täglich zu dieser Nachsinnung und Meditation angetrieben werden. Denn weil zwar der Schade und Vortheil des guten und bösen eine nothwendige Verbindung haben, aber nicht so eine sichtbare und handgreiffliche oder unmittelbare, so sind die Thoren nicht geschickt, daß sie dasjenige fürchten, was zu fürchten ist, oder hoffen, wo zu hoffen ist, allein die Thorheit betrieget sie, daß sie meinen, sie vermögen durch ihre List und Verschlagenheit diesen nothwendigen Sachen zu entgehen, oder sie glauben nicht, daß sie wegen Ermangelung der Erfahrung die nothwendige Gute, so die Tugend und Gerechtigkeit begleitet, erlangen können.*

§58. *Aber die Straffen des publicierten Rechts sind handgreiflicher und sichtbarer, daher sind sie auch geschickter denen Narren eine Furcht einzujagen. Wie denn auch die Belohnungen des publicierten rechts gleichfals mehr in die Augen fallen.*

<sup>160</sup> Contra Werner Schneiders, who presents Thomasius’ description of obligation in the *Fundamenta* similarly to the discussion above, but lays unmitigated emphasis on the role of force in Thomasius’ conception of the moral education of fools, in *Naturrecht und Liebesethik*, 259-60. Cf. Helmut Holzhey, “Christian Thomasius und der Beginn der deutschen Aufklärung,” in *Grundriß der Geschichte der Philosophie: die Philosophie des 17. Jahrhunderts*, v. 4, Das heilige Römische Reich, ed. H. Holzhey and W. Schmidt-Biggemann (Basel: Schwabe, 2001), 1195-7.

trust and contented obedience to the teacher's will. There is nonetheless no mistaking Thomasius' abandonment of the perception of God's will as a sufficiently forceful impetus to the reform of the human will in the earliest stages of moral education.

This change in Thomasius' thinking had significant consequences for his intellectual legacy, and it has become standard to describe those consequences in terms of the formation of two "schools," defined by their members' attitudes toward Thomasius' *Fundamenta*. Those admirers of Thomasius' *Institutiones* who continued to voice approval of Pufendorf's natural law theory after 1705 and did not agree with the innovations of the *Fundamenta* constitute the "first" school, whereas those who found the *Fundamenta* convincing constitute the "second" school.<sup>161</sup> Nor was this short-hand classification unknown in the eighteenth century. As Hinrich Rüping, its most visible recent exponent, has pointed out, description of the controversy over Thomasius' *Fundamenta* can be found in the 1729 edition of Gottlieb Stolle's *Anleitung zur Historie der Gelahrheit*, and a list of the two schools' members appears in Christian Friedrich Georg Meister's *Bibliotheca iuris naturae et gentium* (1749-57).<sup>162</sup> Rüping, like Meister, numbers Buddeus among the members of the first school and Gundling among the members of the second school.<sup>163</sup>

In light of the lack of extensive and detailed research on the vast bodies of work produced by most or all the members of these lists, the accuracy of the "two-school" classification is difficult to judge, but in the case of Buddeus, it certainly contains some truth. Buddeus was called to Halle in 1693, three years after Thomasius, to take up a professorship of moral philosophy. Over the next twelve years he produced his own first major works – several textbooks that quickly became standard reading in many universities outside Halle<sup>164</sup> – in the shadow of Thomasius' 1688 *Institutiones*. His relationship with Thomasius was in many respects close during this period. Buddeus' documented contributions to the *Observationes selectae ad rem litterarium*, a journal founded by Thomasius, illustrate their intellectual cooperation,<sup>165</sup> and this cooperation was clearly fruitful: essential elements of

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<sup>161</sup> Hinrich Rüping, "Budde und die Thomasianer," in *Grundriß*, 1203; Hinrich Rüping, "Christian Thomasius und seine Schule im Geistesleben des 18. Jahrhunderts," in *Recht und Rechtswissenschaft im mitteldeutschen Raum*, ed. Heiner Lück (Köln: Böhlau, 1998), 129-31.

<sup>162</sup> H. Rüping, *Grundriß*, 1203.

<sup>163</sup> H. Rüping, "Christian Thomasius und seine Schule," 130, 132.

<sup>164</sup> See above, n. 115.

<sup>165</sup> K. Heussi, *Geschichte der theologischen Fakultät zu Jena*, 157; A. F. Stoltzenburg, *Die Theologie des Jo. Franc. Buddeus*, 304.



Thomasius' thinking are obvious, for example, throughout Buddeus' textbook on practical philosophy, the *Elementa philosophiae practicae*, first published in 1697.<sup>166</sup> Among the many positions of Thomasius that Buddeus apparently found sympathetic were his derivation of natural law from the will of God and his rejection of *moralitas objectiva*, the idea that actions are morally good or bad *per se*, which Wolff, as we have seen, would later make central to his *German Ethics*.<sup>167</sup> But with the publication of Thomasius' *Fundamenta*, their intellectual relationship apparently cooled. Thomasius, evidently perceiving Buddeus' unenthusiastic reception of the deviation from Pufendorf in the *Fundamenta*, criticized him for "half-heartedness."<sup>168</sup> For his part, Buddeus, who had once expressed equal admiration of Thomasius and Pufendorf,<sup>169</sup> began to reserve his praise of Thomasius explicitly for the *Institutiones*. In naming the most noteworthy contributors to the history of natural jurisprudence, Buddeus mentions Pufendorf, Hertius, Barbeyrac, Titius, A. A. Hochstetter, and Thomasius' *Jurisprudentia divina*. About Thomasius' later work, he proceeds with a vagueness that suggests thinly-veiled disapproval: Thomasius published the *Fundamenta* "because some principles in [the *Jurisprudentia divinae*] didn't suit the author himself, who had changed his mind about some points of divine law. . . ."<sup>170</sup>

Buddeus' admiration of Pufendorf, on the other hand, was obvious long after the publication of Thomasius' *Fundamenta*. In his 1719 *Institutiones theologiae moralis*, moreover, he repeatedly singled out for praise one essential element of Pufendorf's natural law theory that Thomasius had decided to discard. Pufendorf's chief success, Buddeus explained, was in showing that positive divine law created universally binding moral obligations that could be deduced with precision and certainty by means of human reason, examining human nature in its corrupt state.<sup>171</sup> Admittedly, the single principle from which Pufendorf had deduced all those obligations, namely, the necessity of maintaining social life, was for the purposes of Buddeus' lectures on moral theology too limited. Buddeus himself wanted to expound on the obligations

<sup>166</sup> Walter Sparr, Introduction to *Elementa philosophiae practicae*, by J. F. Buddeus (Hildesheim: Olms, 2004), 26-7.

<sup>167</sup> A. F. Stoltzenburg, *Die Theologie des Jo. Franc. Buddeus*, 304.

<sup>168</sup> A. F. Stoltzenburg, *Die Theologie des Jo. Franc. Buddeus*, 305.

<sup>169</sup> A. F. Stoltzenburg, *Die Theologie des Jo. Franc. Buddeus*, 304.

<sup>170</sup> J. F. Buddeus, *Institutiones theologiae moralis*, II.Vorbericht.§20n:

*Weil aber in derselben [jurisprudentia divina] dem Herrn verfasser selbst einige ätze misßfielen, als welcher seiner meynung in etlichen puncten des göttlichen rechts geändert hatte, als hat er aufs neue fundamenta juris naturae & gentium ex sensu communi deducta, in quibus ubique secernuntur principia honesti, justi ac decori, zu Halle 17005. in 4. heraus gegeben.*

<sup>171</sup> J. F. Buddeus, *Institutiones theologiae moralis*, Vorrede, [7].

of Christians, and he therefore proposed to discover the first principle of human obligations by examining human nature in its *regenerated* state, drawing not only from the evidence of God's will supplied by human reason, but also on the evidence revealed – far more precisely and vividly – in the text of the Bible. Unlike Pufendorf, Buddeus' first principle was the necessity that the reborn unite with God (*vereinigung der Wiedergeborenen mit Gott*).<sup>172</sup> His method of deducing obligations from a first principle had nonetheless come, he asserted, from Pufendorf, and he readily agreed with Pufendorf that divine law, as discoverable by human reason in the way Pufendorf had proposed, was “the supreme and strongest bond of human society” (*das höchste und feste Band der menschlichen Gesellschaft*). It served both the “political” aim of restraining the non-reborn from vice by engendering fear of divine punishment, as well as the “theological” aim of motivating the sinful to try to overcome their sinfulness.<sup>173</sup>

Given the substance of Buddeus, Walch, and Zimmermann's criticism of Christian Wolff for having undermined the foundation of morality, it is therefore not difficult to imagine where in the *Fundamenta* the danger of Thomasius' innovations on Pufendorf must have appeared particularly clearly. Pufendorf's specification of the necessity of sociability as the principle from which all moral obligations could be derived may not have met with unadulterated praise from Buddeus and Zimmermann, but Thomasius' *Fundamenta* must have seemed far more objectionable. Whereas Pufendorf had shown that natural law was in fact divine with respect to its source, was universally recognizable as such, and was therefore obligatory, Thomasius had described divine law as a mere *Rathsschlag*, effectively obligatory only on the “wise,” who had the task of inculcating virtue in the “fools” largely by means of fear induced by the threat of punishment attached to human law. This of course undermined the idea that moral education must begin with knowledge of God's will, as a stimulus to the re-examination of one's own corrupt character and the initiation of the *Bußkampf*, and it stood in direct contradiction to the psychological foundation on which Zimmermann, drawing from the published writings and personal advice of Buddeus and Walch, had built his critique of Wolff's ethics. Like Thomasius, Zimmermann considered law, issued by a superior, in most cases a far more effective instrument of moral education than a mere *consilium*. Wolff's maxim, “Do what makes you and your condition more perfect,” could not engage the conscience, because it was not clearly the dictate of a lawgiver. But for Zimmermann, unlike

<sup>172</sup> J. F. Buddeus, *Institutiones theologiae moralis*, Vorrede, [7-8].

<sup>173</sup> J. F. Buddeus, *Institutiones theologiae moralis*, II.Vorbericht.§8.

Thomasius, the effectiveness of law as an instrument of moral education derived primarily from the lawgiver's recognizable possession of the *ius imperandi* or right to command. Divine law was therefore the ultimate source of moral obligation – and not only for the “wise” – because by means of the *notitia dei* all human beings endowed with reason could recognize that God had created the world, was human beings' greatest benefactor, and therefore had the *ius imperandi*. In fact, human law, too, derived its effectiveness as an instrument of moral education from having been pronounced by a human lawgiver with the *ius imperandi*. In no case could force alone, represented by the mere threat of punishments or promise of rewards, suffice. Thomasius' description of divine law as a type of *Rathsschlag* rather than a mode of *Herrschaft*, therefore, and less effective than human law in the moral education of “fools” because its punishments were “natural” rather than artificially instituted by human beings, must have been deeply unpersuasive to Zimmermann, Walch, and Buddeus.<sup>174</sup>

By contrast, Nicolaus Hieronymus Gundling's alleged membership in the “second Thomasian school” – that is, those admirers of Thomasius who, unlike Buddeus, largely approved of Thomasius' *Fundamenta* – would seem to imply that he must have found Thomasius' new view of divine law persuasive. Among the many respects in which Gundling has been identified as having followed the lead of Thomasius' *Fundamenta* are his “Hobbesian” view that human beings can only be made sociable by means of force exerted by a sovereign,<sup>175</sup> and his distinction, allegedly more “decisive” than even Thomasius', between internally and externally enforceable obligations.<sup>176</sup> Gundling is also known to have differed with Buddeus, with whom he undoubtedly had substantial contact during their seven years together in Halle, on several questions relevant to their respective attitudes toward Thomasius. Martin Mulso, taking Gundling and Buddeus as representatives of two kinds of Enlightenment, one “liberal” and “sceptical” (Gundling), the other “conservative” and “theological” (Buddeus), and referring to them as representatives

<sup>174</sup> This conclusion resonates with Gottlieb Stolle's remark in his 1727 *Anleitung zur Historie der Gelahrtheit*, quoted above (n. 51), that Wolff, too, had denied that God promotes human happiness by means of *Herrschaft* – a position, Stolle notes, “which the Herr Privy-counselor Thomasius, in accordance with his insight into this kind of truth, pointed out long ago [*welches der Herr Geheimde Rath Thomasius nach seiner Einsicht in diese Art der Wahrheiten längst erinnert*].”

<sup>175</sup> Martin Mulso, *Moderne aus dem Untergrund* (Hamburg: Meiner, 2002), 346-7.

<sup>176</sup> H. Rüping, “Budde und die Thomasianer,” in *Grundriß der Geschichte der Philosophie: die Philosophie des 17. Jahrhunderts*, v. 4, *Das heilige Römische Reich*, ed. H. Holzhey and W. Schmidt-Biggemann (Basel: Schwabe, 2001), 1203-4, 1213; H. Rüping, “Christian Thomasius und seine Schule,” 130-1, 132n.19.

of “two wings of the Thomasian school that were drifting apart,”<sup>177</sup> has drawn attention to several other distinct but probably interrelated issues on which Gundling and Buddeus differed. These included Gundling’s highly controversial assertion that Plato, among many other ancient philosophers whose conceptions of God Buddeus had defended in print, was an atheist like Spinoza;<sup>178</sup> and Gundling’s insistence, contra Buddeus, (1) that the human intellect in its original, pre-lapsarian form was not substantially different from its present form and had not been radically darkened by the Fall, and (2) that the lost perfection for which human beings ought to strive must therefore reside solely in the will rather than partly in the intellect.<sup>179</sup> That these two controversies between Gundling and Buddeus were publically known is demonstrated by apologetic mention of them in Hempel’s biography of Gundling, as well as the attention drawn to them in a fictional dialogue between Buddeus and Gundling “in the realm of the dead,” published in 1731, two years after their deaths.<sup>180</sup>

On the other hand, even in the absence of a comparative systematic reconstruction of Gundling’s and Buddeus’ moral and political philosophies, there is good reason to believe that what has come to pass for conventional wisdom about the two men’s adversarial relationship overschematizes a more complicated reality. Signs that Gundling and Buddeus had a great deal in common, as well as great respect for each other, abound. Hempel, for example, includes Buddeus among seven named people whom Gundling considered his close friends (*seine besondere Freunde*), and he remarks that upon arriving in Halle, Gundling “seemed to hear his [Buddeus’] philosophical and historical *collegia* with contentment.”<sup>181</sup> Given Hempel’s obvious desire to paint as positive a picture of the two men’s relationship as possible, unsubstantiated assertions such as these cannot be accepted at face value, but other assertions by Hempel to the same effect can be substantiated. Hempel correctly points out, for example, that Gundling used the third book of Buddeus’ *Institutiones theologiae moralis* as the basis for his own lectures on politics, calling it the

<sup>177</sup> M. Mulsow, *Moderne aus dem Untergrund*, 35, 309, 311, 348.

<sup>178</sup> M. Mulsow, *Moderne aus dem Untergrund*, 289-97; cf. C. F. Hempel, *Nicolai Hieronymi Gundlings Umständliches Leben und Schriften*, 7597-9.

<sup>179</sup> M. Mulsow, *Moderne aus dem Untergrund*, 315-24; M. Mulsow, “Gundling vs. Buddeus,” in *History and the Disciplines*, ed. D. Kelley (Rochester: U Rochester P, 1997), 105-15. This quarrel is explained similarly by C. F. Hempel, in *Nicolai Hieronymi Gundlings Umständliches Leben und Schriften*, 7563.

<sup>180</sup> [Anonymous], *Besonders Gespräch in dem Reich derer Todten zwischen N. H. Gundling und J. F. Buddeus* (Frankfurt, 1731).

<sup>181</sup> Christian Friedrich Hempel, *Nicolai Hieronymi Gundlings . . . umständliches Leben und Schriften* (Leipzig, [1736]), 7029, 7650-1.

best book he could find and finding much to praise in it, even if he did not agree with Buddeus on every particular issue.<sup>182</sup> Hempel moreover reports that Gundling's respect for Thomasius did not prevent him from voicing disagreement with him, and the issue Hempel selects as an example of their disagreement is telling. Gundling voiced disagreement with Thomasius, Hempel reports, over the "well-known controversy, that the law of nature is not, strictly speaking a law."<sup>183</sup> This is also an issue in which Gundling and Buddeus had much in common.

Not surprisingly, Gundling's closer proximity to Buddeus on this issue than his alleged membership in the "second Thomasian school" would seem to imply can be discerned in Gundling's long-standing antagonism toward Christian Wolff. In 1713, ten years before Wolff's heated quarrel with members of Halle's theological faculty ended with his departure for Marburg, Gundling had attacked Wolff in print, on the suspicion that either Wolff himself or a student of Wolff's must be the author of an anonymous pamphlet attacking Gundling's recently published textbook of logic, the first volume of his *Via ad veritatem*.<sup>184</sup> Gundling's suspicion was false, but his animosity toward Wolff did not diminish. Eleven years later, shortly after Wolff's expulsion from Halle, Gundling issued a pseudonymous account of the whole quarrel between Wolff and his critics on the theology faculty, entitled, *Unpartheyisches Sendschreiben*, by "Nicolas Veridicus Impartialis Bohemus." Gundling's "impartial" account was hardly flattering to Wolff. Although Wolff's avowed defender, Carl Günther Ludovici, without identifying Gundling, claimed that "the author takes neither Wolff's side nor the side of the Halle theologians, but rather shows himself to be a friend of the now departed Christian Thomasius," in fact Gundling dealt Wolff

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<sup>182</sup> C. F. Hempel, *Nicolai Hieronymi Gundlings ümständliches Leben und Schriften*, 7029; cf. N. H. Gundling, *Discours über Buddei . . . Philosophiae Practicae Pt. III. die Politic* (Leipzig, 1733), Prolegomena.§1; Jacob August Franckenstein, *Vorrede, Discours über Buddei . . . Philosophiae Practicae Pt. III. die Politic*, by N. H. Gundling, 13-14.

<sup>183</sup> C. F. Hempel, *Nicolai Hieronymi Gundlings ümständliches Leben und Schriften*, 7029. Hempel correctly refers the reader to Gundling's *Via ad veritatem iurisprudentiae naturalis* (Halle, 1714), ch. I.

<sup>184</sup> Carl Günther Ludovici, *Ausführlicher Entwurf einer vollständigen Historie der Wolffischen Philosophie*, v.3 (Leipzig, 1738; rept. as v. 1.3, Hildesheim: Olms, 2003), §17; [Nicolaus Hieronymus Gundling], *Aufrichtiges Sendschreiben eines Gundlingischen Zuhörers an Herrn Christoph August Heumann . . . darinnen er den ungezogenen Auctorem Salebrarum nach Verdiensten züchtiget. . .* (Alt-Rannstadt, 1713). The anonymous pamphlet attack to which Gundling reacted was *Salebrae in via ad veritatem* (n.d., n.p.), in fact by Wolff's colleague in the Faculty of Philosophy, Johann Friedemann Schneider.

by far the heavier blows.<sup>185</sup> While admitting that the theologians – represented primarily by Joachim Lange – displayed an exaggerated contempt for philosophy and could not expect to make theologians out of students who lacked intellectual ability or received no training in logic, Gundling at the same time defends Daniel Strähler’s arguments against Wolff and insinuates his own charges.<sup>186</sup> These charges are by no means detailed, but they clearly indicate a view of Wolff’s intellectual heritage that corresponds to Buddeus’, Walch’s, and Zimmermann’s. According to Gundling, Wolff should be considered a faithful revival of “Scholasticism,” above all the teachings of Thomas Aquinas, and he was understandably lauded to no end by the Jesuits.<sup>187</sup> Again and again, Gundling hints at the theme emphasized by Buddeus in his own critical references to Scholasticism: it aims at the cultivation of the intellect to the exclusion of the will. He strategically recalls, as an example, the comment of a “certain distinguished man of learning” (*ein gewisser vornehmer gelehrter Mann*): “Mr. Wolff’s philosophy is so abstract and subtle as to be almost useless.”<sup>188</sup>

In addition to the anti-Scholastic, anti-Wolffian innuendo of the *Unpartheyisches Sendschreiben*, Gundling advanced in other published works a more substantial criticism of Wolff’s theory of natural obligation, and in doing so he clearly adopted essential parts of the position defended by Buddeus, Walch, and Zimmermann. A hint of Gundling’s criticism is to be found in the memorial sermon for Gundling, delivered by Johann Jacob Rambach in 1730. At Gundling’s request, Rambach devoted the sermon to an exposition of Luke 10:21-22 and an explanation of how, as the two verses indicate, “the mystery of the wisdom of the gospel . . . remains hidden to the wise and the prudent of this world,” and “how it will be revealed to the children.”<sup>189</sup> Among the themes that Rambach emphasizes are the insufficiency of *Wissenschaft* as a means of pleasing God. Learning and knowledge

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<sup>185</sup> Carl Günther Ludovici, *Ausführlicher Entwurf einer vollständigen Historie der Wolffischen Philosophie*, v.1, 3rd ed. (Leipzig, 1738; rept. as v. 1.1, Hildesheim: Olms, 2003), §266: “Der Verfasser hält es weder mit Wolff noch mit den Hällischen Gottesgelehrten, sondern zeigt sich als einen Freund des nunmehr seel. Hrn. Christian Thomasius.” Ludovici does not explain his comment further.

<sup>186</sup> Nicolas Veridicus Impartialis Bohemus [=Nicolaus Hieronymus Gundling], *Unpartheyisches Sendschreiben* (Wittenberg [=Halle?], 1724), 16, 19, 21, 23-4.

<sup>187</sup> [N. H. Gundling], *Unpartheyisches Sendschreiben*, 10, 20-3.

<sup>188</sup> [N. H. Gundling], *Unpartheyisches Sendschreiben*, 21: “Des Herrn Wolffens Philosophie wäre schon so abstract und subtil, daß sie fast nicht zu brauchen.”

<sup>189</sup> Johann Jacob Rambach, *Gedächtniß-Rede von dem Geheimniß der Evangelischen Weisheit*, 2nd ed. (Halle, 1732), 12, 54. Rambach proposes to consider “Das Geheimniß der Evangelischen Weisheit. I. Wie solches den Weisen und Klugen dieser Welt verborgen bleibe. II. Wie es den Unmündigen offenbaret werde.” (12).

are a gift of God and have many important uses, he explains,

But at the same time one has to keep in mind that human knowledge makes no one better and more pleasing to God; a simple farmer, who fears him and goes about with humility, pleases him much more than a proud and inflated man of learning.<sup>190</sup>

It is no accident that Rambach mentions fear, the motivation behind the *Bußkampf*, as one of the two identifying characteristics of the man pleasing to God. As he explains later in the sermon, there is only a single correct order of stages through which one must pass in preparation for escaping the corruption of the will by means of God's grace, and the painful recognition of one's own sinfulness cannot be circumvented:

There is simply no other way to heaven than this one: that one humbly recognize and painfully feel one's own sinful misery, one's inborn blindness and foolishness, and one's incapacity for everything good, that one come to Jesus Christ like a small child, seek from him forgiveness of one's sins, clothe oneself in his justice, and let oneself be illuminated, transformed, and sanctified.<sup>191</sup>

This is one of the central lessons Rambach draws from Gundling's verses, and if it does not necessarily reflect Gundling's own understanding of the verses, it certainly resonates with Gundling's public reasons for finding fault with Wolff's moral philosophy.

Gundling made those reasons clear in the pages of *Gundlingiana*, a learned

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<sup>190</sup> J. J. Rambach, *Gedächtniß-Rede von dem Geheimniß der Evangelischen Weisheit*, 20-1:

*Allein man muß dabey gleichwol bedencken, daß die menschlichen Wissenschaften vor GOTT niemand besser und angenehmer machen; dem vielmehr ein einfältiger Bauer, den ihn fürchtet, und in der Demuth wandelt, besser gefällt, als ein stoltzer und aufgeblasener Gelehrter.*

Rambach cites here Thomas à Kempis' *De imitatione Christi*, I.ii.

<sup>191</sup> J. J. Rambach, *Gedächtniß-Rede von dem Geheimniß der Evangelischen Weisheit*, 69:

*Es ist einmal . . . kein anderer Weg zum Himmel als dieser, daß man sein sündlich Elend, seine angebohrne Blindheit und Thorheit, und sein tiefes Unvermögen zu allem guten demüthig erkenne, schmerzlich fühle, als ein kleines Kind zu JESU Christo komme, bey ihm Vergebung der Sünden suche, sich in seine Gerechtigkeit einkleiden, und durch seinen Geist erleuchten, verändern und heiligen lasse.*

journal he founded in 1715 as an organ for the publication of his own essays.<sup>192</sup> In 1724, one year after Wolff's departure from Halle, Gundling decided to add his own voice to the controversy over the foundation of morality in the form of an essay on the question, "Whether natural laws arise from the essence of human nature or from the will of God."<sup>193</sup> His answer is very much like Walch's response to Wolff in the same year: the key issue is not whether divine law originates ultimately from God's will or God's intellect and wisdom, since God's will cannot be separated from his intellect and wisdom.<sup>194</sup> Like Walch, Gundling dismisses as obviously untenable the position that Wolff attributes to Buddeus, and he instead adopts the position that Walch attributes to Buddeus: moral obligation derives from the will of God, but God exercises his will in conformity with the nature of human beings and the world, which he himself created.<sup>195</sup> The real debate, Gundling continues, is therefore not about the source of moral obligation, but rather about how human beings can learn God's will by examining human nature, and equally importantly, how human beings can be reliably induced to act on what they learn. On the first of these questions, Gundling grants that Grotius and Pufendorf, in specifying the necessity of sociability as the essential part of human nature from which God's will can be learned, gave a plausible answer to the first question, but he adds that "Grotius and the Scholastics" – which can be taken to include Wolff, given Gundling's association of Wolff with the "Scholastics" in his *Unpartheyisches Sendschreiben* – were wrong to suggest that human beings would be obliged to obey natural law even if there were no God. As Christian Thomasius' father, Jacob Thomasius, correctly pointed out, "If there were no God, there would be nothing, and nothing would endure, including the essences of all things." Gundling continues: "It would therefore be more tolerable if they had said that even if God were ignored, the natural laws would nonetheless produce obligation."<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> N. H. Gundling, *Gundlingiana, darinnen allerhand zur Jurisprudenz, Philosophie, Historie, Critic, Litteratur und übrigen Gelehrsamkeit gehörige Sachen abgehandelt werden* (Halle, 1715-32); C. F. Hempel, *Nicolai Hieronymi Gundlings Umständliches Leben und Schriften*, 7047.

<sup>193</sup> N. H. Gundling, "Ob die natürliche Gesetze von dem Wesen der menschlichen Natur, oder von dem göttlichen Willen entstanden," *Gundlingiana* 33 (1724): 275-92.

<sup>194</sup> N. H. Gundling, "Ob die natürliche Gesetze von dem Wesen der menschlichen Natur, oder von dem göttlichen Willen entstanden," §§1-10.

<sup>195</sup> N. H. Gundling, "Ob die natürliche Gesetze von dem Wesen der menschlichen Natur, oder von dem göttlichen Willen entstanden," §10. Cf. J. G. Walch, above, n. 108, 111-14.

<sup>196</sup> N. H. Gundling, "Ob die natürliche Gesetze von dem Wesen der menschlichen Natur, oder von dem göttlichen Willen entstanden," §16:

*Nur sind die Scholastici samt Grotio zu weit gegangen, wann sie gemeinet, etiam sublato Deo leges*



But even here, Gundling finds fault with “Grotius and the Scholastics” for failing to perceive that the very knowledge that God is the author of natural laws is necessary to induce human beings to obey those laws. It is perhaps “more tolerable” to say that natural law obliges even those who have no knowledge of God than it is to say –obviously falsely – that human nature and the *Zusammenhang der Dinge* would persist even if there were in fact no God, but it is still hardly satisfactory. As in the case of an atheist who learns mathematical principles without having knowledge of the creator of those principles, Gundling explains,

To the same extent it is also undoubtedly possible, that an atheist could grasp moral truths that have a connection with human nature. But here it is important to observe that the truths under consideration in moral philosophy and natural jurisprudence are practical. Theory is not enough, here; practice, too, must be successfully carried out. Carrying it out is opposed to our concupiscence and affections, and therefore there has to be a means available, by which a person is more certainly and powerfully constrained to live according to these truths, so that the most dangerous acts are not undertaken without paying attention to all knowledge and recognition of the truth. In the opposing position, there is nothing left to keep me from stealing, murdering, or insulting someone except *utilitas*, or usefulness.<sup>197</sup>

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*naturae humanae congruentes futuras. Jacobus Thomasius aber antwortet hierauf in seinen dilucidationibus Stahlianis nicht unrecht: Sublato DEO nihil esse nihilque substitutum, eoque nec rerum omnium essentias mansuras. Darum wäre es leidenschaftlicher gewesen, wann sie gesaget, ignorato licet DEO leges naturales nihilominus obligationem producturas.*

But the Scholastics and Grotius went too far, when they asserted that even if there were no God the laws conforming to human nature would persist. Jacob Thomasius correctly answered this claim in his *Dilucidationes Stahlianæ*: If there were no God, there would be nothing, and nothing would endure, including the essences of all things. It would therefore be more tolerable if they had said that even if God were ignored, the natural laws would nonetheless produce obligation.

<sup>197</sup> N. H. Gundling, “Ob die natürliche Gesetze von dem Wesen der menschlichen Natur, oder von dem göttlichen Willen entstanden,” §§17-18:

*Und in so weit ist es wol möglich, daß er auch moralische Wahrheiten, welche mit der menschlichen Natur eine Connexion haben, begreiffe. Aber es ist hier wol zubeobachten. daß es practische Wahrheiten seyn, welche in der Moral und natürlichen Rechts-Gelahrheit fürkommen. Allhier ist die Theorie nicht genug, sondern es muß auch die Ausübung erfolgen. Die Ausübung ist unserer Concupiscenz, und Affecten zuwieder; und darum muß auch ein Mittel fürhanden seyn, wodurch man gewisser und kräftiger constringiret werde, nach solchen Wahrheiten zuleben, daferne nicht, aller*

The problem with insisting that those who have no knowledge of God are obliged to obey natural law, Gundling claims, is that human beings are naturally prone to desire what natural law forbids. Dominated by concupiscence and self-oriented affections, the human will naturally chooses actions that seem to promote one's own utility, and there are all kinds of situations in which utility seems to oppose what the natural law commands. Gundling takes the example of an atheist who encounters Paul, his sworn enemy, on a deserted road. If you are an atheist, Gundling asks, what is to keep you from murdering Paul if you are certain that the crime will not be discovered? Nothing. "To the contrary," Gundling explains,

it is a great advantage for you, if your enemy lies on the ground. You have no fear of God, since God is unknown to you. You are an atheist. What is supposed to hold you back?<sup>198</sup>

The same thought can be applied to kings whose subjects are atheists: only a lack of force prevents their subjects from overthrowing them. "I therefore conclude," Gundling continues, "that if a moral philosophy is to hold up in practice, it is impossible to leave God out of the system. Fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. Without God, all moral philosophy is an empty nothing. . . ."<sup>199</sup>

This criticism of Grotius and the "Scholastics" in the pages of *Gundlingiana*, which later appeared as a criticism of "Grotius and Wolff" in the published text of Gundling's lectures on moral philosophy in Halle,<sup>200</sup> reveals how far Gundling diverged from Thomasius' *Fundamenta*, and how closely he approached Buddeus, Walch, and Zimmermann, on the closely related questions of whether divine law is a

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*Wissenschaft und Erkäntniß der Wahrheit ungeachtet, die allergefährlichsten Thaten sollen fürgenommen werden. In der gegenseitigen Meinung bleibet nichts, als utilitas, oder die Nutzbarkeit übrig; welche mich abhalten soll, daß ich nicht stehle, nicht morde, oder jemand beleidige.*

<sup>198</sup> N. H. Gundling, "Ob die natürliche Gesetze von dem Wesen der menschlichen Natur, oder von dem göttlichen Willen entstanden," §17:

*Hingegen es ist eine grosse Avantage für dich, wann dein Feind zu Boden lieget. Vor GOtt fürchtest du dich nicht. Dann dieser ist dir unbekandt. Du bist ein Atheiste. Was soll dich nun abhalten?*

<sup>199</sup> N. H. Gundling, "Ob die natürliche Gesetze von dem Wesen der menschlichen Natur, oder von dem göttlichen Willen entstanden," §18:

*Darum schliese ich, daß es nicht möglich sey, bey einer Morale, welche die Probe halten soll, GOtt aus dem Systemate heraus zulassen. Die Furcht GOttes ist der Weisheit Anfang. Ohne Gott ist die gantze Morale ein eitles nichts. . . .*

<sup>200</sup> N. H. Gundling, *Philosophischer Discourse . . . oder Academische Vorlesungen über seine Viam ad veritatem moralem und Kulpisii Collegium Grotianum* (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1740), 289-94, here 289.

law in the strict sense of the word, and whether knowledge of God's will is a necessary precondition for successful moral education. Whereas Thomasius had decided in his *Fundamenta* to present human law and the punishments associated with it as the only reliable means of inculcating virtue in "fools," with divine law by contrast a *Rathsschlag* or *consilium* with obligatory force only on the wise, Zimmermann and his teachers in Jena insisted that divine law was in fact a law in the strict sense, that it was universally perceptible as such, and that the perception of it was moreover the only reliable means of convincing human beings to attempt to reform their own desires and thereby begin the process of preparing themselves for the gift of divine grace that could genuinely transform their naturally corrupt wills. They worried that making divine law a mere *consilium*, as Wolff had done, implied that the only motivation to behave virtuously was *utilitas*. But because the human will was naturally corrupt, the search for *utilitas* could only lead one to indulge one's vicious desires. For this reason, Wolff's program for a moral education that relied in its early stages primarily on inculcating an awareness of "natural obligation" could not work. Rather, as Zimmermann insisted, the conscience needed to be engaged by an awareness of divine law. Gundling shared this worry, and he saw it as a reason to take issue with Thomasius' *Fundamenta*. At first, as Gundling remarked in a lecture on moral philosophy, Thomasius had followed his father's lead by refuting Grotius' claim that moral obligation would persist in the absence of God. "Then," Gundling added, "he defended [Grotius] again in the *Fundamenta*, for which reason Wolff praised him."<sup>201</sup> But Gundling thought that in doing so, Thomasius had in fact made moral obligation less "firm." In Gundling's view, "if a rational moral philosophy is not to become contemptible, one has to believe in an immortal soul and in a God who punishes transgressors." Moral education had to begin not with an appeal to *utilitas*, but rather with the "constraint" provided by awareness of God's will and of God's intention to punish those who violate it.<sup>202</sup>

Admittedly, it would be an exaggeration to say that Gundling's position resembled Zimmermann's, Walch's, and Buddeus' in all important respects. Although Gundling does insist that moral education requires an awareness of God's justice, he does not explicitly assert that moral education must begin specifically with an awareness of God's *ius imperandi*; his emphasis is clearly on the importance of

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<sup>201</sup> N. H. Gundling, *Academische Vorlesungen über seine Viam ad veritatem moralem*, 289-90.

<sup>202</sup> N. H. Gundling, "Ob die natürliche Gesetze von dem Wesen der menschlichen Natur, oder von dem göttlichen Willen entstanden," §19; cf. N. H. Gundling, *Philosophischer Discourse . . . oder Academische Vorlesungen über seine Viam ad veritatem moralem*, 293.

constraint. The purpose of this constraint, however, is ultimately the inculcation of genuine virtue, not simply the coercion of external obedience – and in explaining this position, Gundling resembles Zimmermann and Buddeus on a number of important points. Gundling agrees, for example, that the aim of moral philosophy is to help a person achieve genuine happiness by attaining a *lebendige Erkenntnis* of the highest good, namely, God.<sup>203</sup> The moral truths one learns by means of one’s own intellect (*ex ratione*) lead one to inquire into the truths revealed by God in the Bible, which serve as a supplement to what one has learned independently of revelation.<sup>204</sup> Ultimately, attaining the *lebendige Erkenntnis* requires that one perfect one’s nature rather than living in accordance with one’s nature in its current, corrupt state, and perfecting one’s nature means reforming one’s will.<sup>205</sup> This reform must begin with an attempt to control one’s anti-social desires, such that one lives in conformity with the norms of justice, motivated by a fear of punishment. Gundling is careful to point out that since the virtue that moral education ultimately aims to inculcate is love of God, and since love by its very nature cannot be forced, “force makes no one virtuous [*Zwang macht niemanden tugendhaft*]”.<sup>206</sup> Force does, however, serve as an indispensable preparation for becoming virtuous. Perfect virtue is difficult for human beings, Gundling explains, and

one must therefore try at the very least to establish merely external peace, which happens in natural jurisprudence or natural law, such that one recommends and inculcates just actions in human beings on account of external fear.<sup>207</sup>

Only once this “external peace” is achieved can those who enjoy it attempt to attain “internal tranquillity.”<sup>208</sup> The precise relationship between external peace enforced by the threat of punishment and internal tranquillity maintained without any such

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<sup>203</sup> N. H. Gundling, *Philosophischer Discourse . . . oder Academische Vorlesungen uber seine Viam ad veritatem moralem*, 8-11.

<sup>204</sup> N. H. Gundling, *Academische Vorlesungen uber seine Viam ad veritatem moralem*, 9, 18.

<sup>205</sup> N. H. Gundling, *Academische Vorlesungen uber seine Viam ad veritatem moralem*, 18, 280.

<sup>206</sup> N. H. Gundling, *Academische Vorlesungen uber seine Viam ad veritatem moralem*, 32.

<sup>207</sup> N. H. Gundling, *Academische Vorlesungen uber seine Viam ad veritatem moralem*, 26:

*Alle Menschen werden jedoch schwerlich vollkommen tugendhaft werden. Und darum muß man wenigstens doch nur externam pacem zu etabliren suchen, als welches in jurisprudentia naturali, oder dem jure naturae geschieht, so den Menschen die actiones justas ob timorem externum recommendiret und inculciret.*

<sup>208</sup> N. H. Gundling, *Academische Vorlesungen uber seine Viam ad veritatem moralem*, 23-4.

threat, Gundling does not discuss at length in the abstract, but he does suggest that the attainment of internal tranquillity must be indirectly produced by the same “constraint” that he considers indispensable to the external discipline of atheists in situations where human punishment poses no threat: namely, the threat of divine punishment. As far as the means by which this threat ultimately produces internal tranquillity, although Gundling does not invoke the *Bußkampf* explicitly, he does allude to it. In repudiating pastors who make excessive use of punishment, misguidedly claiming God himself to be their model, Gundling points out that

God does not intend to make anyone immediately virtuous by means of his punishments; rather, he intends to give those who have been punished an opportunity to beat themselves on the inside, and, by means of this kind of humiliation, to recognize their own misery of their own free will.<sup>209</sup>

It would seem that Johann Jacob Rambach’s interpretation of the verses chosen by Gundling for the sermon at his funeral was not unfaithful to Gundling’s own perception of the indispensibility of the *Bußkampf* in moral education. Here too, Gundling resembled Buddeus, Walch, and Zimmermann.

It is therefore fair to say, together with Albrecht Beutel and Ferdinand Josef Schneider, that Wolff and several of his most outspoken critics clashed over the question of whether fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, and whether moral education must entail a penitential struggle. Far more brightly than Beutel’s and Schneider’s suggestive assertions, what the comparison between Gundling, Zimmermann, Buddeus, and Walch illuminates is the argumentative contours of that clash. More specifically, it reveals, amidst all their various criticisms of Wolff, their fundamental disagreement with him about the natural capacities of the human will and, therefore, about the best means of reforming it. Wolff had proposed that moral obligation, the motivation to become virtuous, was ultimately a function of the human perceptive faculties. Exercises in making perception as distinct as possible, at the expense of affection-arousing indistinct perception, were the best means of increasing the effectiveness of the conscience, such that even a person with no

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<sup>209</sup> N. H. Gundling, *Academische Vorlesungen über seine Viam ad veritatem moralem*, XI.393:  
... Gott will durch seine Strafen niemand unmittelbar tugendhaft machen, wohl aber den gestraften Gelegenheit geben, daß sie in sich schlagen, und durch dergleichen Demüthigung ihr Elend selbst freywillig erkennen.

knowledge of God could attain a considerable degree of virtue by correctly judging whether any given action conduced to his own perfection or not. Force, whether in the form of the threat of divine punishment or the domination of the intellect by affections, was both unnecessary and in most cases undesirable. Wolff's critics, on the other hand, even Johann Liborius Zimmermann, the critic of his who had obviously learned the most from him, perceived him to have made the same basic mistake that they placed at the center of their polemic against "Scholasticism": he had failed to see that the cultivation of the intellect does not necessarily lead to the reform of the will. The intellect could perhaps be trained to perceive as distinctly as humanly possible, but even the most exact knowledge of how to live in conformity with one's own nature and thereby "perfect" oneself could not on its own persuade the corrupt will to produce genuinely virtuous actions. Instead, what the reform of the will required was a long process of affection-control, and ultimately a deeply felt recognition of the will's intractability, in preparation for the divine grace by which the will could in fact be reformed. But the corruption of the will made even the beginning of this process unlikely; in the absence of an external constraint, the pre-existing, natural desire for one's own *utilitas* would never come into question. The question for Wolff's critics was what this constraint should be. As of 1705, Christian Thomasius had identified human law as the constraint necessary to initiate the process of reforming the human will, given the relative ineffectiveness of the "natural" punishments attached to divine law. His colleagues Buddeus and Gundling, on the other hand, disagreed. They considered Thomasius' abandonment of the view he had once held, that perception of divine law was an effective and even indispensable instrument of moral education, unwarranted. From their perspective, only the perception of divine law and the fear of divine punishment – as well as, in Buddeus' view, the perception of God's justice as conveyed by the *notitia dei* – could effectively engage the conscience to constrain the corrupt will and set in motion the process of re-examining and trying to reform one's own desires. In opposition first to Thomasius and later to Wolff, they therefore insisted that for moral education to succeed, divine law must first be perceived as a law in the strict sense of the word. This perception of divine law was, in their view, the "foundation of morality" that Wolff's program of moral education threatened to undermine. For Alexander Baumgarten, the task of aesthetic theory would be to demonstrate how the threat could be avoided.

## Chapter 5

### Baumgarten's Answer

If Baumgarten called for and then developed what he called an “aesthetic philosophy” at least partly in order to address attacks on Christian Wolff by Johann Liborius Zimmermann, Johann Georg Walch, Johann Franz Buddeus, Nicolaus Hieronymus Gundling and others, it is not immediately obvious from Baumgarten's few statements about his own motives. Baumgarten's least ambiguous comments on the subject, which do not delve deep, project an image that was readily taken up by his biographers, by reviewers of his published works, and by philosophers and historians investigating his life and work in the centuries following his death. It is the image of a young man who loved poetry from an early age; whose encounter with the ideas of Christian Wolff as a student inflamed him with an insatiable craving for unassailable knowledge, the kind that he believed philosophy could supply; who saw that philosophers, even Wolff, had given little serious attention to some of the things he himself most cared about, namely, the rules for constructing good poems and for cultivating the parts of the mind primarily responsible for the creation of good poetry; and who therefore decided to fill that gap himself. To put it more precisely, Baumgarten has long appeared to have been motivated to develop an aesthetic theory by a deep appreciation for the value of *Wissenschaft* or “science”: knowledge whose incontestably high level of certainty derived from its being openly deduced *a priori*, in a rigorous and systematic way, from indubitable first principles, such that every proposition could be defended with reference to an earlier proposition (the so-called principle of sufficient reason or *Satz des zureichenden Grundes*), and such that no proposition contradicted any other (the principle of non-contradiction or *Satz des Widerspruchs*).<sup>1</sup> Christian Wolff had been attempting to

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<sup>1</sup> Baumgarten's definition of *Wissenschaft* or *scientia* can be found in his *Philosophia generalis* (Halle, 1770), §31: “Science is certain cognition derived from things that are certain [*Scientia est certa cognitio ex certis*].” This corresponds to the strictest definition of *Wissenschaft* given by J. G. Walch in his *Philosophisches Lexikon* (Leipzig, 1726), second index (“of things”), s.v. “Wissenschaft”:

*Wissenschaft*, Wird sowohl vor die Erkenntnis, als Lehre genommen, und zwar nach der ersten

create in all fields of knowledge the same kind of certainty that could be found in mathematics, by applying the “mathematical method” of geometric proof,<sup>2</sup> but he had not yet addressed either the so-called *schöne Künste* (the “fine arts”) or the lower cognitive faculties associated with the practice of them.<sup>3</sup> Baumgarten therefore decided, it would seem, to apply Wolff’s “mathematical method” to the arts, above all the art of poetry, and to the lower cognitive faculties.<sup>4</sup>

Comments by the primary witness to Baumgarten’s motives, namely, Baumgarten himself, appear to confirm this picture. He claimed to have written his 1735 *Meditationes* for the purpose of “making it clear that philosophy and the knowledge of how to construct a poem, which are often held to be entirely antithetical, are linked together in the most amiable union,” a formulation that echoes his call for philosophers to inquire into the means of improving the lower cognitive faculties.<sup>5</sup> “[A]nyone who knows our logic,” Baumgarten writes, “is not unaware of how uncultivated this field is.”<sup>6</sup> A similar sentiment appears in Baumgarten’s later writings. In his 1741 *Philosophische Briefe*, he remarks that logic “seems to promise more than it delivers, when it pledges to improve our cognition (*Erkenntnis*) as a whole,” since “we possess far more cognitive faculties of the soul than can simply be placed in the category of reason or intellect.”<sup>7</sup> The two

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*Bedeutung in weiten Verstand vor eine jede Erkenntnis überhaupt; in engern aber nur vor die gantz gewisse Erkenntnis, und in gantz engern vor die so genannte demonstratione a priori. . . .*

*Science*, is taken to be both understanding and a teaching, and according to the first definition in the broad sense it is taken to be any understanding whatsoever; but in a narrower sense it is only taken to be the very certain understanding, and in the very narrow sense it is taken to be the so-called demonstration *a priori*. . . .

<sup>2</sup> Tore Frängsmyr, “Christian Wolff’s Mathematical Method and its Impact on the Eighteenth Century,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36.4 (Oct 1975), 655-7.

<sup>3</sup> Werner Strube, “Die Entstehung der Ästhetik als einer wissenschaftlichen Disziplin,” *Scientia Poetica* 8 (2004), 15; C. Wolff, *Discursus preliminaris de philosophia in genere* (Frankfurt/Main and Leipzig, 1732), §§30, 72. On the lower cognitive faculties of the soul, see above, ch. 3, n. 21.

<sup>4</sup> The most recent interpreter of Baumgarten to see his aesthetics as an attempt to fill a gap left by Wolff is Werner Strube, “Die Entstehung der Ästhetik als einer wissenschaftlichen Disziplin,” 15. Cf. Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, v. 4, Wolff to Kant (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1960), 116.

<sup>5</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, 4: “. . . philosophiam & poematis pangendi scientiam habitas saepe pro dissitissimis amicissimo iunctas connubio ponerem ob oculos. . . .”

<sup>6</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, §115.

<sup>7</sup> [A. G. Baumgarten], *Philosophische Briefe von Aletheophilus II* (Leipzig, 1741), 6:

*Weil wir nun aber weit mehrere Vermögen der Seelen besitzen, die zur Erkenntnis dienen, als die man bloß zum Verstande oder der Vernunft rechnen könne, so scheint ihm die Logik mehr zu versprechen, als sie halte, wenn sie unsere Erkenntnis überhaupt zu verbeßern sich anheischig macht. . . .*



desiderata to which Baumgarten continually referred by way of explaining his motives, in other words, were (1) a philosophically sound account of how to produce poems and other works of art, and (2) a philosophically sound account of how to improve the lower cognitive faculties, which logic could not supply.

This explanation of Baumgarten's motives, suggested by Baumgarten himself, finds unmistakable echoes in observations by Baumgarten's contemporaries. One of the more elaborate of these comes from Thomas Abbt (1738-66), who describes Baumgarten as having been drawn initially to Wolff's writings by a dissatisfaction with the general "lack of philosophical certainty" (*Mangel an philosophischer Gewissheit*) that he felt in Halle. After reading Wolff's mathematical works and practicing filling in the missing terms of Wolff's elliptical syllogisms, thereby "accustoming himself to the unadorned country of the Geometer, where certainty, whose feet are made of bronze, is honored instead of all ornaments," Baumgarten began to study Latin poetry and logic with his brother, Siegmund Jacob. Baumgarten's enthusiasm for poetry and desire for philosophical certainty explain why it then occurred to him to write his *Meditationes*, which Abbt calls a "Metapoetics":

At that time he already saw, as if by the light of dawn, that the rules used by poets had to flow from basic principles that were more general than one had hitherto imagined and that could be proven more rigorously than had hitherto been done. So true is it, that original minds can already imagine entire unknown sciences [*Wissenschaften*] before they have fully traversed the known ones.<sup>8</sup>

Abbt portrays Baumgarten as driven to delineate a new science of poetics – and more generally, a new science of aesthetics – by a desire to endow the rules of artistic production with a certainty that they had hitherto lacked, by applying the method of demonstration that he had learned from Wolff. This portrayal contains elements visible in most other surviving discussions of Baumgarten's motivations, whether in the form of biographical description or mere summaries of Baumgarten's

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<sup>8</sup> T. Abbt, *Leben und Charakter Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens*, 222-3:

*Er sah nemlich damals schon, wie bey einer Dämmerung: daß die Regeln, nach welchen die Dichter arbeiten, aus Grundsätzen herfliessen müsten, die vielleicht allgemeiner wären, als man sich es jetzt noch vorstellte, und daß sie eines schärfern Beweises fähig seyn dürften, als man bishero davon gegeben. So wahr ist es, daß Originalköpfe schon Vorstellungen von ganzen noch unbekanntten Wissenschaften haben, ehe sie noch die bekannten recht durchgewandert. . . .*

achievement. The list of eighteenth-century authors who publically adopted a view essentially like Abbt's includes – in chronological order – Carl Günther Ludovici,<sup>9</sup> Georg Friedrich Meier,<sup>10</sup> Moses Mendelssohn,<sup>11</sup> and Johann Gottfried Herder.<sup>12</sup>

Given all these accounts of Baumgarten's motivations, what seems unquestionable is that Baumgarten wanted to endow the rules for perfecting poetry, other forms of art, and the exercise of the lower cognitive faculties in general with the certainty that he thought a scientific treatment of those rules could provide. Far more questionable is the suggestion that Baumgarten wanted to derive those rules in a scientific way simply because of his general, overriding love of philosophical certainty. In positing a general desire for philosophical certainty as the explanation for a single instance of that same desire, this suggestion bears the marks of implausibly crude psychologizing in the absence of helpful information about

<sup>9</sup> In 1737, Carl Günther Ludovici quoted a reader of Baumgarten's *Meditationes* as having been convinced by it "that the mathematical method is applicable even in things that appeared most foreign to it, like poetry." C. G. Ludovici, *Ausführlicher Entwurf einer vollständigen Historie der Wolffischen Philosophie*, v. 2 (Leipzig, 1737; rept. Hildesheim: Olms, 1977), §509.

<sup>10</sup> Abbt echoes Georg Friedrich Meier's claim that while studying poetry at Francke's orphanage school, Baumgarten began

to wonder whether the so-called "fine sciences" [*schöne Wissenschaften*] could not after all become that which they had long been called [i.e. a science], and whether one could not deduce general, certain basic principles for them.

G. F. Meier, *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens Leben*, 14:

*Sein Unterricht in der Dichtkunst auf dem Waysenhouse gab ihm die erste Gelegenheit, darauf zu denken: ob denn die schon lange so genannten schönen Wissenschaften dasjenige gar nicht werden könnten, was sie heissen, und ob man nicht von ihnen allgemeine gewisse Gründe bündig solte erweisen können.*

<sup>11</sup> In 1757, after Baumgarten had published part of his *Aesthetica*, Moses Mendelssohn claimed that through Baumgarten's and Meier's forays into aesthetics, "philosophy is making a new conquest and is taking possession of an entire part of human perception that one hitherto could not have called a 'science' without abusing the word." Moses Mendelssohn, Review of *Auszug aus den Anfangsgründen aller schönen Künste und Wissenschaften*, by G. F. Meier, in *Ästhetische Schriften*, By M. Mendelssohn, ed. Anne Pollok (Hamburg: Meiner, 2006), 107:

*Die Weltweisheit machet dadurch eine neue Eroberung, und eignet sich einen ganzen Teil der menschlichen Erkenntnis zu, den man vorher den Namen Wissenschaft nicht geben konnte, ohne dieses Wort zu mißbrauchen.*

<sup>12</sup> Herder, who claimed to have been upset by the deaths of Baumgarten and Abbt, borrowed from Abbt in his account of Baumgarten's *Meditationes*. Johann Gottfried Herder, "Entwurf zu einer Denkschrift auf Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, Johann David Heilmann, und Thomas Abbt" and "Von Baumgartens Denkart in seinen Schriften," in *Sämmtliche Werke*, by J. G. Herder, v. 32, ed. Bernhardt Suphan (Berlin, 1899), 175-7 and 178-92. On connections between Herder and Baumgarten: Friedrich Solms, *Disciplina aesthetica: Zur Frühgeschichte der ästhetischen Theorie bei Baumgarten und Herder* (Stuttgart: Klett, 1990); and Hans Adler, *Die Pragnanz des Dunklen: Gnoseologie, Asthetik, Geschichtsphilosophie bei Johann Gottfried Herder* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1990).

genuine, specific motivations, and as an explanation it is patently incomplete. Why Baumgarten chose precisely the subject he chose, and why he developed precisely the theory he did, remain to be explained. Of course, the motivations behind the development of any theory are almost always multiple, often complex, and sometimes incoherent, and the evidence for many of them is almost always too thin to be persuasive, but the basis for conjecture about at least some of Baumgarten's motives is firm. It lies in the systematic connections among Baumgarten's theoretical writings about metaphysics, aesthetics, and ethics, and in the relevance of those writings to the controversies delineated in the two preceding chapters, one of them (chapter 3) about whether moral education should aim at the reform of human affections by means of clear but indistinct ideas or at the suppression of those affections and the inculcation of ideas of good and evil as distinct as possible, and the other (chapter 4) about whether Wolff's ethics undermined the "foundation of morality."

The view that Baumgarten was intervening in a debate between Wolff and some of his critics already has one major proponent: Clemens Schwaiger, a student of the intellectual forerunners of Kant's ethics, who has asserted that Baumgarten meant to defend Wolff from Pietist attacks and thereby "reconcile the traditionally irreconcilable oppositions between Pietism and Wolffianism."<sup>13</sup> Focusing on Baumgarten's ethical writings, Schwaiger summarizes Baumgarten's principal project with an array of metaphors. Baumgarten "tried to take the floor out from under the complaint raised on the Pietist side"; he aimed "to take the sting out of the Pietist accusation"; and he "cleverly took the wind from the sails of the Pietist critique of Wolffian philosophy."<sup>14</sup> As for the substance of the Pietist critique, how Baumgarten neutralized it, and in what ways his "reconciliation" of Pietism and Wolffianism drew on Pietist teachings, Schwaiger makes some observations worth summarizing briefly.

Schwaiger explicitly mentions two examples of the Pietist critique to which he alludes. The first is an argument in Johann Liborius Zimmermann's *De actionum humanarum moralitate* that, in Schwaiger's words,

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<sup>13</sup> C. Schwaiger, "Ein 'missing link' auf dem Weg der Ethik von Wolff zu Kant," *Jahrbuch für Recht und Ethik* 8 (2000), 259. In this formulation of Baumgarten's project, Schwaiger is ostensibly taking a cue from a brief summary of Baumgarten's *Ethica philosophica* by Bernard Poppe, in *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten: seine Bedeutung und Stellung in der Leibniz-Wolffischen Philosophie und seine Beziehungen zu Kant* (Münster, 1907), 32.

<sup>14</sup> C. Schwaiger, "Baumgartens Ansatz einer philosophischen Ethikbegründung," *Aufklärung* 20 (2008), 229, 230; C. Schwaiger, "Ein 'missing link'," 259.

if obligation were detached from its legal roots and consisted simply of the connection between a motivation and an external action, then criminals who take away our goods by force, or wild animals, who force us to flee for our lives, would count as authors of obligations on our part.<sup>15</sup>

The second argument is Joachim Lange's, about Wolff's moral precept, "Do what makes you and your condition or the condition of others more perfect, and avoid what makes it less perfect." According to Schwaiger,

[Wolff's] Pietist opponents, and among them chiefly his great adversary, Joachim Lange, raised the objection that this ultimately meant only the perfection of the actor himself.<sup>16</sup>

Baumgarten's response to these attacks, Schwaiger explains, was both to elucidate and to correct elements of Wolff's ethics: he "sharpened" Wolff's equation of moral obligation with mere motivation by describing "sensitive impulses" (*sinnliche Antriebe*) – and not just distinct ideas of good and bad, as Wolff had done – as motivations, and therefore obligations, to act. Baumgarten moreover defended this "sharpening" by altering Wolff's conception of obligation; in contrast to Wolff, who had described actors motivated by clear and confused ideas as enslaved to their own affections, Baumgarten described their actions as potentially free.<sup>17</sup> In response to Lange's egoism charge, Baumgarten articulated "a more differentiated theory of self-love," distinguishing well-ordered from poorly-ordered self-love, and condemning only the latter as moral egoism and as the kind of "idolatry and self-deification" that Lange thought he had found in Wolff's ethics.<sup>18</sup>

As for the Pietist side of Baumgarten's "reconciliation" of Pietism with Wolffianism, Schwaiger issues a flurry of suggestions. First, he notices a "religious coloring" (*religiöse Färbung*) in Baumgarten's assertion that the lively perception

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<sup>15</sup> C. Schwaiger, "Ein 'missing link'," 253n. This is Schwaiger's summary of a longer passage by Zimmermann in *De actionum humanum moralitate* (Jena, 1728), 28-9.

<sup>16</sup> C. Schwaiger, "Baumgartens Ansatz," 228: "Seine [Wolffs] pietistische Gegner, darunter vor allem sein großer Widersacher Joachim Lange, erhoben den Einwand, letztlich sei dabei nur die Vervollkommnung des Handelnden selbst im Blick."

<sup>17</sup> C. Schwaiger, "Ein 'missing link'," 252-4.

<sup>18</sup> C. Schwaiger, "Baumgartens Ansatz," 229-31.

(*lebendige Erkenntnis*) of God's perfections is an indispensable means of perfecting oneself, in that it leads one to a practically effective perception of all one's other moral obligations and thereby strengthens one's motivation to act morally.<sup>19</sup> The means of arriving at a perception of God's perfections and thereby one's own moral obligations, Baumgarten calls "die Praxis der Erbauung," which Schwaiger identifies as a "Pietist key term."<sup>20</sup> In Schwaiger's words, "One will therefore scarcely go wrong in surmising that Pietist influences continue to be at work in Baumgarten's emphasis on the *Lebendigkeit* of moral perception."<sup>21</sup> Among Schwaiger's other bases for surmising Pietist influence are (1) Baumgarten's reordering of Wolff's discussion of the various kinds of moral obligation, such that in his own textbook on ethics, obligations to God appear before obligations to oneself;<sup>22</sup> (2) his deviation from Wolff's commitment to the idea that lively (*lebendig*) perception derives exclusively from certain (*gewiss*) perception;<sup>23</sup> (3) his emphasis on the distinction between "dead" and lively perception and his warnings against an exaggerated "intellectualism";<sup>24</sup> (4) his "crypto-Pietist" accentuation of the obligation to self-knowledge and his recommendation of journal-keeping as a means to it;<sup>25</sup> and (5) his elucidation of a "sinner-ethic," in which Baumgarten reveals his "double identity" as a Wolffian and a Pietist by using an array of words familiar from Pietist theology and devotional literature.<sup>26</sup>

Schwaiger's suggestions now represent the best scholarship on the immediate context of Baumgarten's philosophical projects, but, as one would expect from a relatively brief foray into a hitherto largely ignored subject, his is merely a suggestive first step down the road to lengthier and more systematic study, and it cannot be accepted in its entirety. The claims about Wolff's "Pietist critics," to begin with, which involve little reference to those critics' texts, pay little attention to their language, and refer to a very small number of individual arguments selected without

<sup>19</sup> C. Schwaiger, "Ein 'missing link'," 255; C. Schwaiger, "Baumgartens Ansatz," 233-4.

<sup>20</sup> C. Schwaiger, "Ein 'missing link'," 255; C. Schwaiger, "Baumgartens Ansatz," 233.

<sup>21</sup> C. Schwaiger, "Ein 'missing link'," 254-5: "Man wird daher schwerlich fehlgehen, in Baumgartens Nachdruck auf die Lebendigkeit gerade moralischer Erkenntnis das Fortwirken pietistischer Einflüsse zu vermuten."

<sup>22</sup> C. Schwaiger, "Ein 'missing link'," 255; C. Schwaiger, "Baumgartens Ansatz," 233.

<sup>23</sup> C. Schwaiger, "Ein 'missing link'," 257.

<sup>24</sup> C. Schwaiger, "Ein 'missing link'," 257-9.

<sup>25</sup> C. Schwaiger, "Baumgartens Ansatz," 235.

<sup>26</sup> C. Schwaiger, "Baumgartens Ansatz," 235. Schwaiger mentions *Versuchung*, *Anfechtung*, *Schuldigwerden*, *Rückfälligwerden*, *sittliche Knechtschaft und Verhärtung*, *Buße*, *Bekehrung*, *moralische Erleuchtung*, and *Wandeln im Lichte*.

explanation from a vast and varied pool, do not inspire confidence. Nor do many of the claims about the Pietist influence under which Baumgarten allegedly deviated from Wolff.<sup>27</sup> For the most part, Schwaiger's broader claim that Baumgarten sought to "reconcile" Pietism with Wolffianism is vague and lacks convincing justification. Nor does it shed direct light on Baumgarten's motives for developing his aesthetic theory.

But two of Schwaiger's observations do point in the right direction: (1) that Baumgarten, unlike Wolff, considered clear and confused ideas, and not just clear and distinct ideas, to be a source of moral obligation; and (2) that Baumgarten voiced concern about an exaggerated "intellectualism" that does not promote *lebendige Erkenntnis*. Explaining these and similar facts at greater length, in more detail, with greater precision, and with attention to Baumgarten's aesthetic as well as his ethical writings will make it possible to understand how Baumgarten's aesthetic theory can and should be construed as part of a systematic response to Wolff's critics. More precisely, it will reveal that Baumgarten's aesthetic theory was the result of his attempt to adjust Wolff's ethics and metaphysics in a way that reflected his acceptance of criticisms like Zimmermann's, Walch's, and Buddeus' that Wolff had undermined the foundation of morality.

### *Aesthetics as an Instrument for the Cultivation of lebendige Erkenntnis*

The most substantial of Baumgarten's adjustments, which is to be found most explicitly in his 1739 *Metaphysics* but which resonates throughout his aesthetic

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<sup>27</sup> Lest these criticisms seem high-handed, a few examples of Schwaiger's less convincing claims deserve explicit scrutiny: (1) Baumgarten's reordering of the three kinds of moral obligation in his *Ethica philosophica*, contra Schwaiger, cannot be taken as a deviation from Wolff, in so far as Wolff himself adopted the same order in his *Philosophia moralis*. (2) Nor does Schwaiger provide convincing evidence either that Baumgarten disagreed with Wolff about whether lively perception (*lebendige Erkenntnis*) was necessarily certain (*gewiss*), or that he placed any "greater weight" on lively perception than Wolff did. It is to Schwaiger's credit that he admits Wolff's use of the term, but his assertion that Baumgarten placed "greater weight" on it – in that he "anchors" it in his discussion of empirical psychology – is too imprecise to be convincing ("Ein 'missing link'," 256). (3) As for Baumgarten's occasional use of an allegedly Pietist vocabulary, this does not indicate a significant deviation from Wolff, who uses similar words in his *Deutsche Ethik*.

writings, is in the concept of *lebendige Erkenntnis* – the very thing that Zimmermann claimed Wolff’s program of moral education could not produce. In his *Deutsche Ethik*, Wolff had openly granted that indistinct perception (*undeutliche Erkenntnis*) of God’s perfections on the part of a “simple person” (*einfältiger Mensch*) could be more certain (*gewiss*), more *lebendig*, and productive of a greater love of God than the distinct (*deutlich*) knowledge of God possessed by an “astute philosopher” (*scharfsinniger Weltweiser*). But this was a special case. Wolff was comparing a simple Christian, helped by the power of the Holy Spirit, to a philosopher bereft of supernatural assistance. Under natural conditions, a *lebendige Erkenntnis* was produced by certainty (*Gewissheit*), and certainty was produced by distinct perception. Even in the case of the simple Christian helped by the Holy Spirit, distinct perception was not to be scoffed at; all other things being equal, greater distinctness of perception produced even greater certainty than the help of the Holy Spirit alone.<sup>28</sup> Baumgarten, however, discarded Wolff’s presupposition that under natural conditions, certain and therefore *lebendige* perception must be distinct. Rather, he proposed that what in fact makes perception *lebendig* is its “quantity” – its *Größe* or *quantitas*. The definition of this term and its central function in Baumgarten’s metaphysics is the key to understanding Baumgarten’s position in the quarrel between Wolff and his critics over the foundation of morality.

Baumgarten deviated from Wolff neither in positing that human desires (generated by the “faculty of desire” or *facultas appetitiva*) arise in response to ideas generated by the human cognitive faculties (*Erkenntnisvermögen* or *facultas cognoscitiva*), nor in positing that the “living force” (*vis viva* or *lebendige Kraft*) of any given idea refers to the power of an idea to alter the state of the human mind enough to cause an action, nor in positing that actions are caused by ideas of perfection (which produce desire) and of imperfection (which produce aversion).<sup>29</sup> What set him apart from Wolff was rather his assertion that the “life” or “liveliness” of an idea of perfection or imperfection depends on its “magnitude” (*magnitudo absoluta, quantitas continua, stetige Größe*), understood as the number of “internal characteristics” that allow the thing it represents to be distinguished from another thing.<sup>30</sup> As in his 1735 *Meditationes*, where he distinguishes between distinct ideas

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<sup>28</sup> C. Wolff, *Deutsche Ethik*, §681.

<sup>29</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Metaphysik*, trans. G. F. Meier (Jena: Dietrich Schleglmann Reprints, 2004), §§499, 146, 234, 478, 491-2.

<sup>30</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Metaphysik*, §§379, 381, 121-2. G. F. Meier translates *continua* here as “stetig,” on which cf. Christian Wolff, *Deutsche Metaphysik*, §23.

and clear but confused ideas according to whether the ideas represent things whose distinguishing characteristics allow them to be classified according to a definition (in the case of distinct ideas) or merely to be perceived as different from one another (in the case of clear but confused ideas), Baumgarten in his *Metaphysics* classifies the internal distinguishing characteristics of a thing according to whether they are perceived clearly and distinctly or are perceived clearly but confusedly.<sup>31</sup> The former characteristics, Baumgarten calls “qualities” (*qualitates*), whereas the latter he calls “quantities” (*quantitates*).<sup>32</sup> Crucially, the magnitude of the idea itself does not depend on whether the distinguishing characteristics of the thing it represents are “quantities” or “qualities” – that is, whether the distinguishing characteristics are perceived confusedly or distinctly. Rather, they must simply be perceived clearly, and the more of them there are, the greater the magnitude of the idea. The distinctly perceived characteristics of a thing, in other words, add no more to the magnitude of the idea of that thing than do the clearly but confusedly perceived characteristics. The greater the magnitude of the idea, in turn, the greater the idea’s “force” (*vis*) or “strength” (*robur*),<sup>33</sup> understood as its power to change the state of mind of the person in whose mind the idea arises.<sup>34</sup> There are many types of force, not all of which are directly related to the “living” power of an idea to cause action,<sup>35</sup> but the same principle applies to each kind: all other things being equal, ideas of greater magnitude have greater force. Ideas capable of “living force” are produced for the most part by the faculty of judgment, which evaluates the degree to which a given thing is perfect or imperfect. Things judged to be perfect cause pleasure (*voluptas*) and therefore desire (*appetitio*) in the person judging. “Living perception” (*cognitio viva*) refers specifically to those perceptions of perfection that have living force: whether they are primarily sensate or primarily distinct, they have enough magnitude to produce a desire great enough to cause the perceiving person to try to bring about the desired thing.<sup>36</sup> It is therefore possible for an idea of perfection perceived clearly but confusedly to have a greater magnitude and a greater degree of

<sup>31</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Metaphysik*, §§31, 52. Baumgarten’s words for what I am calling “characteristics” are *determinationes*, *notae*, and *praedicata* (§31). These characteristics are moreover, without exception, the “distinguishing characteristics” of the things in which they inhere, and as such, Baumgarten refers to them as *discrimines*, *differentiae*, *characteres*, *notae*, and *notae characteristicae* (§52) – the same words he uses for them in his *Meditationes*.

<sup>32</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Metaphysik*, §53.

<sup>33</sup> *Robur* is Baumgarten’s word for a high degree of *vis* in an idea. A. G. Baumgarten, *Metaphysik*, §379.

<sup>34</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Metaphysik*, §379.

<sup>35</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Metaphysik*, §393.

<sup>36</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Metaphysik*, §§489-95.



living force than the idea of perfection perceived distinctly. Because the generation of confused or “sensate” ideas is the task of the so-called “lower faculties” of the mind, according to Baumgarten, the exercise of the lower faculties is essential for the generation of ideas with as great a magnitude and as high a degree of living force as possible.

Explaining how the lower faculties could best be cultivated was, according to Baumgarten, the express purpose of “aesthetic science” (*scientia aesthetica*)<sup>37</sup> and of Baumgarten’s own *Aesthetica*. In the preface to the *Aesthetica*, Baumgarten claims to have been asked, in 1742, to “present, in a new set of lectures, some suggestions about how to direct the lower faculties in apprehending the truth.”<sup>38</sup> He responded dutifully to the request by giving such lectures for several years at Frankfurt/Oder, and eight years later he published the first installment of a heavily revised version of the lectures in the form of a textbook that he then began to use in the classroom.<sup>39</sup> This first volume appeared in 1750. Then, after a delay of eight years – allegedly the result of Baumgarten’s failing health – under pressure from the publisher Baumgarten submitted a manuscript for a second volume, uncertain whether he would live to finish the project.<sup>40</sup> Upon Baumgarten’s death in 1762, a large section of the *Aesthetica* remained unpublished and almost certainly unwritten; he had planned to discuss aesthetic philosophy under two headings, “theoretical aesthetics” (*aesthetica theoretica*) and “practical aesthetics” (*aesthetica practica*), and by the end of the second volume he had not yet concluded his discussion of theoretical aesthetics.<sup>41</sup> But what Baumgarten was able to publish does suggest that his ultimate aim in developing an aesthetic theory was to encourage his readers, by natural, philosophical means, to become skilled at cultivating *lebendige Erkenntnis* in themselves and, more importantly, in the audiences to whom they addressed themselves.

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<sup>37</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Metaphysica*, 7th ed. (Halle, 1779; rept. Hildesheim: Olms, 1963), §533.

<sup>38</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, preface: “. . . quaedam consilia dirigendarum facultatum inferiorum in cognoscendo vero, novam per acroasin, exponere.”

<sup>39</sup> A student’s dictates of lectures Baumgarten gave, apparently on his already-published *Aesthetica* (from which Poppe infers that the dictates correspond to lectures given in the 1750-1 academic year), were transcribed by Bernhard Poppe and published in 1907 as *Kollegium über die Ästhetik*, in *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten: seine Bedeutung und Stellung in der Leibniz-Wolffischen Philosophie und seine Beziehungen zu Kant* (Münster, 1907). In the notes that follow, I shall refer to the lectures preserved in these dictates as Baumgarten’s *Kollegium*.

<sup>40</sup> T. Abbt, *Leben und Character Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens*, 228-9; G. F. Meier, *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens Leben*, 43-4; A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, v. 2, preface.

<sup>41</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, v. 1, synopsis, §13.

According to Baumgarten, the goal of aesthetic philosophy is the “perfection of sensitive cognition as such” (*perfectio cognitionis sensitivae, qua talis*).<sup>42</sup> This perfection, or “beauty” (*pulchritudo*), Baumgarten in turn describes along lines familiar to any reader of Christian Wolff: it is the harmonious relationship (*consensus, Übereinstimmung*) between parts of a whole, functioning together in such a way as to promote the purpose of the whole, or as Wolff sometimes explained it, functioning together in conformity with the nature of the whole.<sup>43</sup> In the case of the lower cognitive faculties, the “whole” is the “entirety” (*complexus*) of ideas<sup>44</sup> that are clear but not distinct, and its “parts” are the individual ideas themselves.<sup>45</sup> The harmonious relationship among the parts, which Baumgarten himself demonstrates can be perceived and described distinctly, can also be called *beauty* in so far as the parts themselves and their relationships to each other are not perceived distinctly.<sup>46</sup> Baumgarten specifies three kinds of beauty, or indistinctly perceived harmonious order, that these individual ideas must have in order for sensitive cognition itself to be beautiful: the beauty of each individual idea, the beauty of the sequence in which the individual ideas are arranged, and the beauty of the signs (e.g. words, images, or sounds) used to express the ideas.<sup>47</sup> In the case of both sensitive cognition as a whole

<sup>42</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §14.

<sup>43</sup> See above, ch. 4, n. 33.

<sup>44</sup> The words Baumgarten uses, all of which in various contexts appear to denote the same thing, include *repraesentatio, perceptio, cogitatio, Vorstellung, Gedanke, and Erfindung*.

<sup>45</sup> The purpose or nature of this whole, referred to by Baumgarten as the “focus of perfection” (*focus perfectionis, ratio perfectionis determinans*) (*Metaphysica* §94), is difficult to identify. Baumgarten says virtually nothing about it in his *Aesthetica*, which has led H. G. Peters to identify it, on the strength of Baumgarten’s *Meditationes*, as the sensate representation of a “theme.” One alternative to this view would be to see the perfection of the lower faculties not as a measure of their fulfillment of a particular goal, but as a “heightening” of their powers. Peters calls this a “functional” as opposed to a “purposive” definition of *perfection*. H. G. Peters, *Die Ästhetik Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens* (Berlin: Junker, 1934), 17-18, 30; A. Bäumler, *Das Irrationalitätsproblem in der Ästhetik und Logik des 18. Jahrhunderts bis zur Kritik der Urteilskraft*, 2nd ed. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1967; rept. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1975), 227.

<sup>46</sup> The clearest indication of this comes from Baumgarten’s *Metaphysica*, §662: “Beauty is perfection as a phenomenon, [i.e. perfection] observable by ‘taste’ in the broad sense of the word [*Perfectio phenomenon, s[eu] gustui latius dicto observabilis, est PULCHRITUDO*].” Cf. H. G. Peters, *Die Ästhetik Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens*, 17, 23-5.

<sup>47</sup> For discussion of the correspondence of these three types of beauty with the ancient Roman classification of rhetoric into three parts, *inventio, dispositio, and elocutio*, as explained by Quintilian: Marie-Luise Linn, “A. G. Baumgartens ‘Aesthetica’ und die antike Rhetorik,” *Deutsche vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Gesitesgeschichte* 41.3 (Aug 1967), 427; and Paul Guyer, “18th Century German Aesthetics,” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Fall 2008 ed., ed. Edward N. Zalta, URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/aesthetics-18th-german/>>, cited

and the individual ideas that constitute its parts, the beauty arises from the presence of six ideal qualities: richness (*ubertas* or *Reichtum*), greatness (*magnitudo* or *Adel*), truth (*veritas* or *Wahrheit*), clarity (*lux, claritas, or Licht*), certainty (*certitudo, Gewissheit, or Gründlichkeit*), and liveliness (*vita, Lebendigkeit, or Leben*).<sup>48</sup>

The means by which the lower cognitive faculties and the ideas they generate can and should be made more beautiful are two-fold: performing practical exercises and acquiring theoretical knowledge. On the one hand, Baumgarten prescribes a regimen of “*askesis, or aesthetic exercise*” (*askesis et exercitatio aesthetica*). He readily grants that the successful cultivation of the lower cognitive faculties requires a “natural disposition of the whole mind to think beautifully,” which he describes as *connate* or *inborn*.<sup>49</sup> The two components of this general inborn disposition, Baumgarten identifies as “a good head and a good heart”<sup>50</sup>: (1) a talent for exercising the various lower and higher faculties of the mind, and (2) an inborn eagerness to “strive for worthy and moving perception” and to attain the highest degrees of virtue – which Baumgarten calls an “inborn aesthetic temperament” (*temperamentum aestheticum connatum*).<sup>51</sup> But these two components need to be maintained, enlarged, and trained, such that their possessor actually becomes able to “think beautifully” and does not allow his inborn predispositions to wither.<sup>52</sup> Nor can the head be trained at the expense of the heart, or vice versa. Anyone without trained cognitive faculties – both sensitive and rational – will be unable to avoid “errors” in the operation of his sensitive perception and expression. Likewise, anyone who has trained only his cognitive faculties, i.e. only his “head,” may be able to produce beautiful expressions, but without a convincing display of the beautiful thoughts that he has purported to express. Like the hypocrite, who “can perhaps give a prayer that is beautiful as far as the words are concerned” but that will never be beautiful to

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29 June 2009. On the two sets of things that Baumgarten describes as capable of harmony, i.e. (1) *inventio, dispositio, and elocutio*, and (2) the six qualities of ideas, cf. H. G. Peters, *Die Ästhetik Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens*, 25.

<sup>48</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §22.

<sup>49</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §28:

*Ad characterem felicitatis aethetici generalem supponendo generaliora, §27, requiritur I) AESTHETICA NATURALIS CONNATA, §2 (φύσις, natura, εὐφύια, ἀρχέτυπα, στοικεία γενέσεως), dispositio naturalis animae totius ad pulcre cogitandum, quacum nascitur.*

C.f. Baumgarten’s reference to some children’s natural disposition to seek harmonious order in their games, in *Kollegium*, §55.

<sup>50</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium*, §44.

<sup>51</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §§44-5; A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium*, §45.

<sup>52</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §§47-8; A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium*, §§47-8.

those who know the person saying the words and who therefore “detect an inner bitterness,” anyone who neglects his heart in favor of training his cognitive faculties will display “very many pseudo-virtues” (*Scheintugenden*). Pseudo-virtues, when they are detected as such, betray “an ignoble heart” and cannot be considered beautiful.<sup>53</sup> Perfecting one’s lower cognitive faculties therefore requires developing a genuine love of the perfection of those faculties, which is to say, a love of the beautiful mind, referred to by Baumgarten as “greatness of heart” (*Größe des Herzens, magnitudo pectoris*).<sup>54</sup>

So the cognitive faculties and the desire for their perfection must be cultivated in tandem, and to this end Baumgarten proposes a set of exercises that he says must be performed repetitively and continually so that the cognitive abilities and desires they foster become habitual. The cognitive faculties, on the one hand, are to be trained by exercises in creating things, whereby a teacher points out the ways in which each attempt at creation has or has not achieved the kind of harmonious order that, when it is perceived indistinctly, constitutes beauty.<sup>55</sup> The love of beauty, on the other hand, is to be cultivated by the repeated, guided observation of actions whose virtue makes them beautiful:

The one who is supposed to train the beautiful mind must lead him, right at the very beginning, so that he learns to identify and, as it were, add up the beauty and ugliness in actions. In the depths of the soul, all ideas that can later become desires must be directed immediately toward what is beautiful with respect to the heart, and all the similar cases that [the beautiful mind] sees must be shown to him as they are.<sup>56</sup>

What these types of exercises rely on, both the exercises meant to cultivate the perception of beauty by the lower cognitive faculties and the exercises meant to cultivate a love of that beauty, is the repeated observation and imitation of examples

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<sup>53</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium*, §§50-1.

<sup>54</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §§46, 59.

<sup>55</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium*, §49.

<sup>56</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium*, §54:

*Wer den schönen Geist bilden soll, muß ihn gleich anfangs darauf führen, daß er das Schöne und Häßliche in den Handlungen wahrnehmen und gleichsam abzählen lerne. Im Grunde der Seele müssen alle Vorstellungen, die hernach zu Begierden werden können, sogleich auf das Schöne in Ansehung des Herzens gerichtet werden, und alle ähnlichen Fälle, die er siehet, müssen ihm gezeigt werden, wie sie sind.*

of beauty. “[W]hen I read beautiful writings, see beautiful paintings, and convincingly think, ‘that is beautiful, that is pleasing,’ ” Baumgarten explains, “I am already training myself.”<sup>57</sup> The training is still more useful when the observations are immediately accompanied by closer consideration of what exactly makes this or that beautiful and pleasing. The same advice applies to the more difficult exercises of writing, painting, or otherwise giving expression to thoughts of one’s own.<sup>58</sup> The result of undertaking such exercises, which in conjunction with careful observation should reveal one’s own natural limits and thereby reveal where more exercise would be most beneficial, is that thinking beautifully becomes ever more habitual.<sup>59</sup>

But exercises alone do not suffice to produce good habits. Baumgarten insists that if one’s lower cognitive faculties and the love of indistinctly perceived harmony are to reach the highest degree of perfection they are naturally capable of, the *askesis* or exercises he prescribes must be accompanied by “*mathesis*, or aesthetic teaching.”<sup>60</sup> This *mathesis* has two parts: (1) careful study of the things about which one intends to think beautifully, in order to develop a knowledge that Baumgarten calls “beautiful learning” (*pulcra eruditio, schöne Gelehrsamkeit*);<sup>61</sup> and (2) an orderly demonstration of the “rules of thinking beautifully” (*regulae pulcre cogitandi*). The latter is what Baumgarten proposes to undertake in the remainder of his textbook:

Before calling for a theory of this kind, I showed the importance of nature, the mind, temperament, exercises, and the cultivation of the mind – which nonetheless without any learning can hardly be sufficiently pursued – as well as practical knowledge [*peritia*] of the rules of beautiful thinking. And as I have proven, this [practical knowledge] can only be truly excellent if it is, at the very least in its most important and best part, a science [*scientia*]. Now once again I call for more correct and more certain exercises, as discussed [earlier]:<sup>62</sup> exercises in which no day passes without a line of text, exercises without which – so I claim – the rules, which are said to be lifeless and speculative but are indeed useful even though you may in fact not use

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<sup>57</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium*, §56: [W]ann ich schöne Schriften lese, schöne Gemälde sehe und dabei überzeugend denke: das ist schön, das gefällt, so übe ich mich schon.

<sup>58</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium*, §§57-8.

<sup>59</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §§60-1; A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium*, §§60-1.

<sup>60</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §62.

<sup>61</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §63; A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium*, §§63, 68.

<sup>62</sup> Baumgarten is referring to *Aesthetica*, §58. See above, n. 55-9.

them, will never be beneficial in the way in which they ought most to be. And I will not call for much more than this.<sup>63</sup>

In this valuable but elliptical statement of purpose, Baumgarten explains the importance of the rules to whose description he devotes most of his *Aesthetica*. Alone, they are “lifeless and speculative”; no one who merely knows the rules will be able to think beautifully. The rules are beneficial only when they are applied in a regimen of aesthetic exercises, without which the natural cognitive abilities and desire to perfect those abilities tend to wither away. But by explaining the fundamental, general rules of beautiful thinking, Baumgarten purports to make those exercises more beneficial. The rules, as Baumgarten puts it in his lectures on aesthetics, are meant to “support” (*unterstützen*) the exercises.<sup>64</sup> They do this by virtue of being a *Wissenschaft* or *scientia*, which is to say, by virtue of being known distinctly and therefore with certainty. Their “support” for the exercises appears to rely on a mechanism that many readers of Wolff would have inferred: the creation of a natural obligation to seek perfection, by presenting that perfection as distinctly as possible. The rules for perfecting the lower cognitive faculties, when perceived distinctly and with certainty, are like the ethical maxims described in Wolff’s *German Ethics*. They stimulate the *appetitus rationalis* in proportion to the distinctness with which they are perceived, and they thereby engage the will to seek the perfection of the lower faculties by the means they prescribe, namely, aesthetic exercises. Baumgarten does not spell this argument out for readers of his textbook, but he gives compelling hints that it is what he has in mind. He frequently refers to the rules he is about to lay out as “laws” (*leges*), and he explicitly states that the purpose of laying out the general “laws” of beautiful thinking, even if they do not give specific guidance about specific genres of beautiful thinking – that is, about “rhetoric, poetry, music, etc.”<sup>65</sup> – is to reveal the “essence” (*Inbegriff*) from which the more specific laws of each genre can be derived, and thereby to “place the strength of those same [more

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<sup>63</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §77:

*Iam postulavi, ante theoriam eiusmodi, natural, ingenium, indolem, exercitia, culturam ingenii nunc sine aliqua eruditione vix satis impetrandam, regularum pulcre cogitandi pritiā, quam unice probavi vere praestare, si sit prima saltem et primaria sua ex parte scientia. Nunc denuo postulo correctiora ac certiora illa exercitia, de quibus §58, in quibus nulla dies sine linea, sine quibus mortuas ipse speculativasque, quas vocant, regulas, utiles quidem, quibus tamen non utaris, nunquam edico profuturas, eo, quo maxime debent. Nec ita multa post plura postulabo.*

<sup>64</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium*, §62.

<sup>65</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §53.

specific laws] manifestly enough before one's eyes."<sup>66</sup> As a result, Baumgarten predicts, aesthetic exercises will no longer be seen as primarily an activity for children; they will seem "worthy of men, and will even move them either to dare something new and excellent in their aesthetic exercises" or at least to be "more competent judges" of the application of aesthetic rules.<sup>67</sup> For Baumgarten, in other words, laying out the general rules or "laws" of thinking beautifully in the form of a science could not only help his audience improve their judgment of the beauty of the ideas of the lower cognitive faculties, but also could engage their wills, such that they would attempt to improve their own lower cognitive faculties by engaging in aesthetic exercises. As Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten explained more directly in a summary of the main achievements of his brother's *Meditationes* in 1735, "every art can be joined to a science if its rules are demonstrated so as to avoid exception," and the purpose of demonstrating the rules of an art is to help that art "form an effective *habitus* by means of reason."<sup>68</sup> The exposition and demonstration of the general rules of thinking beautifully, which appears to have been Baumgarten's plan for the remainder of his textbook, should therefore be considered an aid to the *mathesis* that Baumgarten hoped would encourage and perfect the *askesis* from which the habit of thinking beautifully would ultimately derive its strength. This, in general terms, was the ostensible purpose of his *Aesthetica*.

The sections of the textbook that Baumgarten managed to complete, unfortunately, included only the set of rules for judging the beauty of the ideas themselves, not the rules for judging the beauty of their sequence or the signs used to express them, and even this first set of rules remained incomplete; of the six qualities of beautiful ideas, Baumgarten finished his accounts of richness, greatness, truth, clarity, and certainty, but not the final quality, the essential quality of *lebendige Erkenntnis* and the quality that denotes an idea's power to move the human will, namely, life (*vita*). He nonetheless gives indications that of all the six qualities, life was in several respects the most important, and its cultivation the ultimate aim of aesthetic philosophy. Not only does Baumgarten refer to life (*vita*) as "the chief gift of beautiful cognition" (*pulchrae cognitionis dos primaria*)<sup>69</sup> and "the sweetest beauty of beautiful cognition" (*venustae cognitionis dulcissima pulchritudo*),<sup>70</sup> but he even

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<sup>66</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §56.

<sup>67</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §76.

<sup>68</sup> Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten, *Programmata*, ed. G. C. Bakius (Halle, 1740), 302-3.

<sup>69</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §188.

<sup>70</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, v. 2, preface.

suggests that the production of life is the ultimate function of the other five qualities. Perception is perfect, Baumgarten explains, when richness and greatness together produce clarity, when clarity and truth produce certainty, and when all the qualities together produce life.<sup>71</sup>

The priority that Baumgarten gives to life also makes itself felt in Baumgarten's continual assertions that a human being who has perfected his lower cognitive faculties and thereby developed a "beautiful mind" aims to generate ideas that move the will. In explaining why sensitive perception can only be beautiful if its possessor has a powerful imagination and uses it to envision future events, for example, Baumgarten notes that

something that is supposed to be beautiful must be moving; this is a characteristic of beautiful perception. Anything meant to move me has to generate desires in me. But desires can arise in no other way than on account of a future good, and so because a beautiful mind [*schöner Geist*] has to cause movement [*bewegen soll*] it must also see into the future.<sup>72</sup>

What Baumgarten here postulates the beautiful mind must do, namely, "cause movement," depends on generating desires by generating the idea of a future good, which is to say, the judgment that something attainable in the future has a high degree of perfection.<sup>73</sup> This is what Baumgarten later in the same lecture calls "speaking the language of the heart," a metaphor for "being stirring" (*rühren*), which requires "arousing desires" in oneself and in those to whom one presents one's

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<sup>71</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §§17-22; A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium*, §§14-22. Compare the discussion of "the practical utility of philosophy" in Baumgarten's posthumously published lectures on "general philosophy," *Philosophia generalis* (Halle, 1770; rept. Hildesheim: Olms, 1968), §232:

*Quo verior, clarior, certior cognitio, hoc ardentior est philosophia, ergo movet etiam cognitionis omnis vitam. . . . Ergo volitiones et nolitiones etiam cum reliquis appetitibus et aversionibus emendat, in aliis praeter cognitionem actionibus utilis. . . .*

On the supreme importance of *vita* in Baumgarten's *Aesthetics*, though without supporting details, cf. Francesco Piselli, "Ästhetik und Metaphysik bei Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten" *Aufklärung* 20 (2008), 111.

<sup>72</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium*, §31:

*Denn, was schön sein soll, muß bewegen, dies ist eine Eigenschaft der schönen Erkenntnis. Was mich bewegen soll, muß Begierden in mir hervorbringen, Begierden aber können nicht anders als wegen eines zukünftigen Gutes entstehen, da nun ein schöner Geist bewegen soll, so muß er auch in die Zukunft sehen.*

<sup>73</sup> Cf. A. G. Baumgarten, *Metaphysics*, §§489-95.



thoughts.<sup>74</sup> The utterances of a beautiful mind must be “strong enough to set us into motion, into sorrow and sympathy.”<sup>75</sup>

Nor does Baumgarten argue that the mind is most beautiful simply when its “life” allows it to move the will in any way at all; rather, he suggests that it must move the will in the direction of virtue rather than vice. Admittedly, his suggestions to this effect are ambiguous and indirect. On the one hand, he issues repeated reminders that a beautiful mind necessarily adopts a morally virtuous persona. It must present itself as “virtuous, well-brought-up, engaged in noble thoughts” (*tugendhaft, wohlerzogen, edeldenkend*); must “choose subjects that only a virtuous person would come up with”;<sup>76</sup> and must present things in a way that does not violate moral laws.<sup>77</sup> A poem in praise of money, for example, could never be considered beautiful because it would seem to betray “an ignoble heart.”<sup>78</sup> Just as a mind cannot be beautiful unless the character of its possessor appears to be virtuous, so a work of art cannot be beautiful unless it displays things in the way that someone with a virtuous character would want to display them. That is to say, things a virtuous person would desire must be presented as admirable, and things a virtuous person would avoid or condemn must be presented as worthy of aversion.

On the other hand, Baumgarten does not clearly indicate that improving one’s own will and becoming more virtuous is a necessary precondition for successfully cultivating the morally virtuous persona requisite for a beautiful mind. Admittedly, he does assert that aesthetic exercises meant to “train the heart” should cultivate the desire for “beautiful and fine” things, and above all, the “virtues most worthy of

<sup>74</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium*, §36:

*Soviel ist gewiß, ein schöner Geist muß in die Zukunft sehn: Er muß die Sprache des Herzens reden, das ist rühren, soll er andere rühren, so muß er selbst zuvor gerührt sein. Er kann nicht rühren, wann er nicht Begierden erregt, und er kann nicht Begierden erregen, wenn der Gegenstand derselben nicht zukünftig ist.*

He must speak the language of the heart, which is to say, he must be stirring. If he is to stir others, he himself must be stirred beforehand. He can’t be stirring unless he arouses desires, and he can’t arouse desires unless the object of those desires is in the future.

<sup>75</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium*, §39: “Seine Erdichtungen müssen z.B. so stark werden, daß sie uns in Bewegung, in Trauer und Mitleid setzen.” Cf. A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §26.

<sup>76</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium*, §195; cf. A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium*, §435.

<sup>77</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium*, §433. Baumgarten cannot mean this as simply as it may seem. His assertion that a beautiful mind can think beautifully about vicious and otherwise evil things (*Kollegium*, §§203-4) suggests that the beautiful mind may present things that themselves violate moral laws, but it cannot present them in a *manner* that violates a moral law. Vice and virtue, it would seem, must be presented in such a way as to communicate love of the former and aversion to the latter. Cf. A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium*, §§193, 397.

<sup>78</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium*, §51.

honor.”<sup>79</sup> But it is nonetheless conceivable, he admits, that one could lack these desires and nonetheless have a beautiful mind. Horace, Baumgarten asserts, was wrong to think that “wisdom is the source of good writing,” just as Cicero and Quintilian were mistaken in their assertion that only an upright, virtuous man can be a good orator. Indeed, just as in the example of the hypocrite whose prayers are not beautiful to anyone aware that his apparent virtuousness is in fact a façade,

as soon as a bit of lazy ignorance, a bit of the unseemly morals hidden behind the mask, show through here and there, then it’s all over, and you will be condemned by the opinion of the most competent judges for covering up the ugliness in a still uglier way.<sup>80</sup>

But if the façade of virtue is impenetrable, even if vice in fact lies behind it, then there is no valid criterion by which the beauty of the mind in question can be judged to be anything but beautiful:

And so if there should be someone who by means of a powerful capacity for dissimulation can portray himself as a good man, such that not the slightest defect of mind or character shows through in the manner of his thinking, who can forbid him from being called an aesthetically and, in all probability, truly good man until the opposite is proven?<sup>81</sup>

It may not be not immediately clear here, why the vicious impersonator of virtue would have to be called an aesthetically good man. Baumgarten may seem to mean that a vicious man, by virtue of the ugliness of vice, necessarily lacks a beautiful mind but may be so competent an impersonator that no one, judging by the signs he presents in his “manner of thinking” (*ratio cogitandi*), can possibly see his mind’s

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<sup>79</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §§44-5; Dagmar Mirbach, “*Ingenium venustum und magnitudo pectoris: Ethische Aspekte von Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens Aesthetica*,” *Aufklärung* 20 (2008), 204.

<sup>80</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §362: “*Quam primum ibi non nihil supinae ignorantiae, hic inconditorum morum sub vulpe latentium pellucet: peracta res est, et ex iudicum maxime competentium sententia turpitudinem turpius tegens condemnaris.*”

<sup>81</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §362:

[S]i detur aliquem, ingentem simulandi per habitum, posse virum bonum ita mentiri, ut ne minima quidem in eius cogitandi ratione transpareat mentis animique pravitas, quis vetat, eum virum bonum aesthetice verisimiliterque dicere, donec constet contrarium?

genuine ugliness. In this case, beauty is a quality of a virtuous character, and the dissemblance resides in the signs of that character; the dissembler's mind is ugly, the dissembler himself is in fact not an aesthetically good man, and those who say otherwise have made an error that is justified only because it is humanly impossible to avoid passing judgment in accordance with the signs at hand. But Baumgarten's disagreement with Horace, Cicero, and Quintillian – who he alleges were wrong to assert that only a morally good man could be aesthetically good – contradicts this interpretation of the passage. Baumgarten must mean that for someone with a vicious character it is possible, though admittedly very difficult and therefore unlikely,<sup>82</sup> to cultivate a mind that doesn't betray its possessor's vicious character and is therefore genuinely beautiful. The morally bad man, in other words, can be aesthetically good.<sup>83</sup> In this case, beauty of mind is a quality not of a virtuous character itself, but rather of the "manner of thinking" that constitutes the sign of a virtuous character. In light of this fact, it is difficult to imagine that Baumgarten considered the cultivation of beauty in the minds of his readers – ostensibly the aim in whose service he developed his aesthetic theory – to be a means of helping them cultivate their own *lebendige Erkenntnis* in the moral sense of that term as Zimmermann, Wolff, and many others used it.

It is far easier to imagine that Baumgarten considered the cultivation of beauty in the minds of his readers a means of helping them cultivate a morally edifying *lebendige Erkenntnis* in their own audiences – that is, the audiences to whom they themselves would present their minds in verbal or otherwise artistic form. One part of the evidence for this comes from Baumgarten's largely complete discussion of persuasion (*persuasio*), the quality that he calls the precondition (*conditio antecedens*) of an idea's life.<sup>84</sup> The crucial point is this: by *persuasion*, Baumgarten does not mean simply the success of an idea in creating certainty about something – and therefore perhaps a willingness to do something – in an audience. Rather, he means only "true persuasion" (*persuasio vera*), the success of an idea in creating certainty by giving an

<sup>82</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §361.

<sup>83</sup> Contra one of the theses in D. Mirbach, "*Ingenium venustum und magnitudo pectoris*," 203, i.e. that for Baumgarten, "the perfection of one's desiring faculties and the direction of those faculties toward moral goodness is indispensable for the perfection of sensitive perception and its representation in art." In this article, Mirbach does not address Baumgarten's discussion of the morally vicious but nonetheless successful cultivator of beautiful cognition. On Baumgarten's reluctance to concede the point of this discussion: Hans Rudolf Schweizer, *Ästhetik als Philosophie der Sinnlichen Erkenntnis* (Basel: Schwabe & Co., 1973), 29-32; and, in reference to Schweizer, D. Mirbach, ed., *Aesthetica*, by A. G. Baumgarten, v. 2, 968.

<sup>84</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §829.

audience “indistinct knowledge of the truth” (*indistincta veritatis conscientia*) rather than by presenting falsehoods.<sup>85</sup> The implication, of course, is that an oration that aims at persuading an audience to violate a moral law cannot be beautiful, because in presenting such a violation as praiseworthy it would be presenting a falsehood. Only virtue, after all, can accurately be presented as praiseworthy.

Another part of the evidence comes from Baumgarten’s discussion of another crucial quality of beautiful ideas, namely, their aesthetic “magnitude” or “greatness” (*magnitudo*). Here, Baumgarten indicates that in the case of presenting virtue and vice, giving audiences knowledge of the “truth” means creating a desire for the former and an aversion to the latter. The very fact that Baumgarten calls “praise of the divinity” (*Lob der Gottheit*) the greatest subject of a poem, rather than merely divinity itself, suggests this.<sup>86</sup> Baumgarten makes the point still more explicitly in addressing the question of whether vice and evil can be a great subject for a work of art. His answer is that they can, but only if they are presented in such a way as to excite an audience’s aversion to them and affection for virtue:

There has been controversy over whether evil, vices, and malice can belong to greatness. . . . This much we can state with certainty: malice as such can never be great, and vices always remain small, when one considers their inner composition. But we are considering evil from another perspective, namely in so far as it provides an opportunity for greatness in thinking, for portraying virtue as its opposite in a great way and producing no enthusiasm about vice. To this extent, vice and malice belong to greatness. The vice of a tyrant who represses people is great, in so far as I can think in a great way about the juxtaposed gentleness of a king.<sup>87</sup>

Baumgarten may be stating unambiguously that beauty requires greatness and that

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<sup>85</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §§832, 835.

<sup>86</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium*, §183.

<sup>87</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium*, §203:

*Man hat darüber gestritten, ob das Böse, die Laster und die Bosheit mit zu dem Großen gehören könnten. . . . So viel können wir gewiß bestimmen, Bosheit als Bosheit kann nie groß sein und die Laster bleiben allezeit klein, wann man auf ihre innere Beschaffenheit siehet; allein betrachten wir das Böse aus einem anderen Gesichtspunkte, nämlich insofern es Gelegenheit geben kann groß zu denken, die Tugend als das Gegenteil groß zu schildern und vom Laster keine Begeisterung zu geben, insofern gehören Laster und Bosheiten auch mit zum Großen. Das Laster eines Tyrannen, der Menschen würgt, ist groß, insofern ich von der entgegengesetzten Sanftmut eines Regnaten groß denken kann.*

greatness requires portraying virtue and vice as such, but, as has been convincingly pointed out, Baumgarten is conflating criteria of beauty with criteria of moral goodness neither in this passage nor in similar ones elsewhere,<sup>88</sup> and Baumgarten himself asserts as much. He reminds his readers that he does not want to deduce the necessity of aesthetic greatness “from the more severe and higher laws of the blessed life or entirely from the holiest revelations of true Christianity,” as if he were “crossing into another genre” or as if his “sickel were being sent into someone else’s field.”<sup>89</sup> Baumgarten does not, in other words, want to derive the rules of thinking beautifully from the principles of moral theology, nor, it would seem, from the principles of ethics. But this concern does not bar him from making moral demands on orators, poets, and other artists on the basis of purely aesthetic principles. That is to say, Baumgarten can – and does – make some degree of moral edification a criterion of beauty, (1) without deriving the criteria of beauty from the criteria of moral perfection, (2) without deriving the obligation to perfect the lower cognitive faculties from any other moral obligation, and (3) without eliding the distinction between moral and aesthetic judgment.

Now, if all these indications that Baumgarten conceived of his aesthetic theory in large part as a means of helping his readers and auditors learn how to instill *lebendige Erkenntnis* in their own audiences seem relatively sparse, indirect, and therefore inconclusive, the blame should almost certainly fall not on Baumgarten’s own lack of interest in cultivating *lebendige Erkenntnis*, but rather on the unavoidable circumstances that prevented Baumgarten from finishing the sections of his *Aesthetica* in which he planned to discuss the “life” of a beautiful idea and “practical aesthetics.” The confirmation of this conclusion can be found in one surviving text by Baumgarten that foreshadows his *Aesthetica* in significant ways, probably because in composing it, as in composing his *Aesthetica*, Baumgarten was drawing on ideas about aesthetic philosophy that he had been developing at least since 1735. The text, whose discussion of the importance of instilling *lebendige Erkenntnis* in one’s audience makes the *Aesthetica*’s suggestions along the same lines seem pale by comparison, is the published version of the inaugural lecture Baumgarten delivered in May 1740, shortly after arriving in Frankfurt/Oder to take up his *ordinarius* professorship.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Cf. H. G. Peters, *Die Ästhetik Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens*, 55-6.

<sup>89</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica* §183.

<sup>90</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Gedancken vom Vernünfftigen Beyfall auf Academien*, 2nd ed. (Halle, 1741). In this second edition, Baumgarten apparently expanded the original lecture to almost three times its original length, from sixteen to forty-five pages. Cf. Alexander Aichele, Introduction, *Gedancken vom*

One of the central arguments in the lecture is that everyone who speaks before an audience is obliged to engage the audience's lower cognitive faculties, and not only their intellects. Beginning the lecture with the observation that he has been officially charged with the task of doing all he can to help the university flourish and improve its reputation, Baumgarten purports to devote his lecture to explaining the most appropriate means to that end. Within a couple of minutes, Baumgarten has brought himself by means of several rapid logical maneuvers to familiar aesthetic terrain: (1) "observant and rational applause" (*sehender und vernünftiger Beyfall*) contributes at least a small amount to the well-being of an academic institution,<sup>91</sup> (2) this "applause" consists of the pleasure students take in attending a professor's lectures,<sup>92</sup> and (3) the applause is "observant and rational" when it is the result of the students having correctly perceived the good qualities of the lecture.<sup>93</sup> In anticipation of the basic structure of his *Aesthetica*, Baumgarten describes these good qualities, or perfections, with reference to the standard rhetorical division of the orator's tasks into three parts: (1) *inventio*, (2) *dispositio*, and (3) *elocutio*. The most perfect lecture, according to Baumgarten, communicates (1) "the best things, in the most proper order, by means of the most fitting words," (2) "joined together in the most exquisite ways," (3) "with a most beautifully harmonious eloquence of the body."<sup>94</sup> The moral significance of this description of a lecture's perfections is presumably so obvious that Baumgarten hardly needs to explain his next assertion: given his duty to promote the well-being and reputation of his university by producing "observant and rational applause," a lecturer is morally obliged to deliver as perfect lectures as he can. In the case of the first and most important of a lecture's perfections, the communication of "the best things," this means choosing and verbalizing the contents of the lecture in such a way as to produce perceptions in the audience that are "true, clear, certain, and living or practical" (*wahr, klar, gewiss und lebendig oder*

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*Vernünftigen Beyfall auf Academien*, by A. G. Baumgarten, ed. A. Aichele, in *Aufklärung* 20 (2008), 282; Ursula Niggli, ed., *Die Vorreden zur Metaphysik*, by A. G. Baumgarten (Frankfurt/Main: Klostermann, 1998), 226.

<sup>91</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Gedancken vom Vernünftigen Beyfall auf Academien*, §1.

<sup>92</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Gedancken vom Vernünftigen Beyfall auf Academien*, §2.

<sup>93</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Gedancken vom Vernünftigen Beyfall auf Academien*, §3.

<sup>94</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Gedancken vom Vernünftigen Beyfall auf Academien*, §4:

*Folglich wäre der vollkommenste mündliche Vortrag, der die besten Sachen in der geschicktesten Ordnung durch die bequemsten Worte, nach ihren auserlesensten Zusammenfügungen, mit einer schönstens harmonisierenden Beredsamkeit des Leibes andern beybrächte.*

*practisch*).<sup>95</sup> In his choice of the contents of this list, and in his definition of certainty (*Gewissheit*) as “the clear perception of the truth,”<sup>96</sup> Baumgarten reveals that he has brought the systematic, polemical thrust of his metaphysics to bear on the subject of university lecturing, just as he would later bring it to bear on his *Aesthetica*. As in the *Metaphysics*, Baumgarten here portrays the obligation to distinctness of perception as secondary to the more general obligation to clarity.

This is not to say that in omitting *deutlich* from his list of a lecture’s perfections and subsuming it under the term, *klar*, Baumgarten disparages distinct ideas as inappropriate to a perfect lecture; quite to the contrary. There are certain things, Baumgarten reminds his audience, whose importance demands that we try to think of them distinctly and with as little confusion as possible. “Therefore,” he explains,

when an academic teacher has things of this kind, like those that arise in the sciences, the most vivid sensory treatment will not suffice. Not only sensitivity, imagination, and everything else we associate with the lower cognitive faculties of souls should be engaged, but the intellect should be occupied, and reason soothed and convinced.<sup>97</sup>

At the same time, Baumgarten by no means urges that a lecturer, obliged though he is to avoid the seductively easy path of presenting difficult things simplistically, omit all use of examples and other sensory devices in his discussions of things that need to be treated distinctly; the use of sensory perceptions alone simply “does not suffice.”

In fact, Baumgarten emphasizes the danger of omitting sensory ideas from a lecture. Even in the case of a lecture whose chief aim is to communicate distinct perceptions, “a good lecturer cannot completely forget about vividness.” Presenting the multiplicity of distinguishing characteristics that allow an audience to identify sensory objects is what keeps an audience alert and awake, makes the time seem short, and gives the audience pleasure. “A thousand little touches, even cheerfulness

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<sup>95</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Gedancken vom Vernünfftigen Beyfall auf Academien*, §5.

<sup>96</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Gedancken vom Vernünfftigen Beyfall auf Academien*, §8.

<sup>97</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Gedancken vom Vernünfftigen Beyfall auf Academien*, §7:

*Je wichtiger, je gemeiner und unentbehrlicher das ist, wovon wir denken, je mehr bemühen wir uns davon deutlich und ohne Verwirrung zu denken, von Rechts wegen. Hat demnach ein academischer Lehrer Dinge von dieser Art, wie in Wissenschaften vorkommen, zu erklären, so will die lebhafteste Sinnlichkeit noch nicht hinreichen. Nicht nur Empfindung, Einbildung, und was wir sonst zu denen untern Erkenntnis-Vermögen der Seelen zählen, soll unterhalten, sondern auch der Verstand beschäftigt, die Vernunft beruhigt und überzeugt werden.*

in the eyes, a lit-up face, and appropriate modulations of the voice all work together," Baumgarten explains, "to combine solidity with beauty as well as possible."<sup>98</sup>

Nor should a lecturer restrict himself to vividness. Just as Baumgarten would suggest in his *Aesthetica* that the most important criterion of beauty in an idea is its capacity to instill *lebendige Erkenntnis* in an audience, so in his inaugural lecture he asserts that the ultimate aim of a lecturer, like the aim of a theologian, should be to exert a positive moral influence on the audience and move them to action. Baumgarten makes the point so forcefully, and so suggestively of the rhetorical landscape in which he was moving, that his remarks deserve to be quoted in full:

But now, how is life supposed to be a general attribute of every desirable perception and of every good lecture? Do we no longer want to consider the difference between theoretical and practical truths to be genuine? Is it not enough that we finally grant theologians that all theology must be practical? Are we going to let ourselves be told about a practical metaphysics and living [i.e. practical] natural science? I answer: among rational people in theology as well as in other parts of learning, principles for contemplation and principles for exercise should and will always be distinguished from one another. But even a beginner in logic is able to understand how, nonetheless, all our knowledge and perception could ultimately lead to action. Unless I am very mistaken, it will soon be time to put entirely aside the ridiculous delusion – which has its origin, perhaps, in some false or misunderstood sayings of the otherwise honorable Aristotle – that some things should be learned only for the purpose of knowing them. I have always preferred, in its broadest sense, a saying worthy of everyone's acceptance: *If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.*<sup>99</sup> For rational people, no truth should lie completely fallow. . . . Whatever we learn must be useful. Whatever is supposed to be useful must be used. Whatever is used has influence in action. A good lecture is not only vivid, but also stirring, stimulating, moving, living – this one more, that one less, this one more presently, that one farther off, but always practical.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Gedancken vom Vernünfftigen Beyfall auf Academien*, §6.

<sup>99</sup> John 13:17 New Revised Standard Version.

<sup>100</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Gedancken vom Vernünfftigen Beyfall auf Academien*, §9:



It can be no accident that Baumgarten's insistence that all perception has an influence over action, in opposition to the "ridiculous delusion" that knowledge should ever be an ultimate aim, resembles the anti-Scholastic polemics of Johann Franz Buddeus and Johann Liborius Zimmermann, among others. It is from theologians, after all, that Baumgarten claims to take his lead, and Buddeus and Zimmermann could easily belong to the theologians to whom Baumgarten is ready to grant that all theology must be practical. Baumgarten's obvious sympathy for their general position – on display in his quotation of a verse from the Book of John – makes it seem all the more reasonable that he should have hoped his aesthetics would ultimately have a morally edifying effect, and it is the key to understanding how his aesthetics represented a foray into contemporary discussions connected with the controversy over Christian Wolff's alleged undermining of the foundation of morality.

*Aesthetics and Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten's "Wolffian" Pedagogical Style*

It would of course require severely selective reading of Baumgarten's long and detailed aesthetic writings to insist that he had only a single rhetorical purpose in

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*Wie aber, soll nun auch das Leben eine allgemeine Eigenschaft einer jeden zu wünschenden Erkenntniß, eines jeden guten Vortrages seyn? Will man nun nicht mehr den Unterschied theoretischer und practischer Wahrheiten für wahr halten? Ist es nicht genug, daß man denen Herren Gottesgelehrten endlich einräumt, alle Theologie müsse practisch seyn? Wird man sich auch hinkünfftig von einer practischen Metaphysik und lebendigen Natur-Lehre was verlauten lassen? Ich antworte: Betrachtungs und Übungs-Sätze sollen und werden von Verständigen in der Gottesgelahrtheit [sic] sowohl, als in andern Theilen der Gelehrsamkeit allezeit unterschieden werden. Doch kan auch ein Anfänger der Logik wissen, wie dem ohngeachtet all unser Wissen und Erkenntnis auf Thun und Lassen endlich abzwecken könne. Wo mich nicht sehr irre, so wird es bald Zeit seyn, den lächerlichen Wahn gänzlich abzulegen, der vielleicht aus einigen irrigen oder übelverstandenen Redens-Arten des sonst ehrwürdigen Aristoteles seinen Ursprung genommen, als sey manches bloß darum zu erlernen, damit wirs wissen. Mir hat immer der aller Annehmung würdige Spruch in seiner weitesten Bedeutung besser gefallen: So ihr dieses wisset, selig seyd ihr, die ihrs thut. Keine Wahrheit darff bey Vernünfftigen gänzlich Brache liegen. . . . Was wir lernen, muß nützlich seyn. Was nützlich seyn soll, muß gebraucht werden. Was gebraucht wird, hat in Thun und Lassen seinen Einfluß. Ein guter Vortrag ist nicht nur lebhaft, sondern auch rührend, reizend, bewegend, lebendig, der mehr, jener weniger, der näher, jener entfernter, aber allezeit practisch.*

composing them.<sup>101</sup> Yet the importance that Baumgarten laid on the use of aesthetic theory as an instrument for the cultivation of *lebendige Erkenntnis* makes two contemporary discussions seem likely to have been among those to which Baumgarten intended his aesthetic theory to contribute.

On the one hand, it is difficult to ignore the usefulness of Baumgarten's aesthetic theory as a solution to a pedagogical problem whose intrusion into discussions within the Halle theology faculty Baumgarten himself must have become aware of by 1736. That was the year in which Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten's colleagues on the theology faculty politely but firmly brought to his attention their disapproval of his "Wolffian teaching style."<sup>102</sup> On the evening March 11, a letter signed by Christian Benedict Michaelis, Johann Heinrich Michaelis, Joachim Lange, and Gotthilf August Francke was delivered to Siegmund Jacob, presenting him with a series of concerns that reflected – as he must have known – several weeks of work on their part, deciding among themselves what to focus on and how to present it. The first of the concerns raised in the letter was Baumgarten's failure to submit various dissertations by his students, as well as his own textbook on moral theology, to the faculty censor before publication, and this concern Baumgarten quickly put to rest by agreeing to comply in the future.<sup>103</sup> The rest of the faculty's concerns – above all that Baumgarten had based his textbook of moral theology on "the Wolffian philosophy" and had thereby rendered his own teaching less effective and in some respects disadvantageous to his students – were more difficult to address.

The principal worry was not that Baumgarten had deviated in any way from the Lutheran orthodoxy; on this issue, the faculty implicitly accepted the verdict of Johann Heinrich Michaelis, who claimed to have "found no heterodoxy" in

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<sup>101</sup> As observed by Egbert Witte, *Logik ohne Dornen* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2000), 15-17.

<sup>102</sup> The most direct evidence of the investigation of Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten's teaching by the other members of the theology faculty in Halle is contained in a file entitled, "Einige Scripturae, des Hn. Prof. Baumgartens philosophische Lehrart betreffend / de anno 1736. d. 19 Febr. bis 29 April" and preserved in the archive of the Franckesche Stiftungen in Halle, AFSt / H E7. (The pages are unnumbered, and in the references that follow, I have begun numbering with the folio after the cover sheet.) The title on the cover is in the hand of Christian Benedict Michaelis, who was *Exdecamus* of the theological faculty in 1736 and appears to have assembled the file. The most detailed and illuminating recent discussion of the affair is Martin Schloemann's, in *Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten*, 38-5. Less illuminating but still useful, in part because of the documents they preserve, are F. August Tholuck, *Geschichte des Rationalismus*, v. 1 of 2 (Berlin, 1865, rept. Aalen: Scientia, 1990), I.31, I.135ff.; and F. Schrader, *Geschichte der Universität Halle*, I.293, II.462f.

<sup>103</sup> "Einige Scripturae," AFSt / H E7, fols. 1v, 2r, 18r.

Baumgarten's textbook.<sup>104</sup> Rather, the faculty worried that Baumgarten's method of teaching theology was, in Christian Benedict Michaelis' words, "overly philosophical," and made excessive reference to the principles of "Wolffian philosophy."<sup>105</sup> Vaguely invoking "the objections of our predecessors" – by which they almost certainly meant those colleagues of theirs who had criticized Wolff in the previous decade but had since died, including August Hermann Francke, Joachim Justus Breithaupt, and Johann Liborius Zimmermann<sup>106</sup> – the faculty explained their objection to an "overly philosophical" teaching method in terms of the order in which theology students should be presented with various ways of communicating divine truths.

In several key respects, it was a problem familiar from the older conflict with Wolff. Buddeus and Zimmermann had happily granted that philosophical principles could reveal truths about God to those who had never seen the text of the Bible, but they had also insisted that the persuasive force of those principles alone could not carry anyone all the way through the entire process of moral development. Moral reform ultimately required that two conditions be met. First, only knowledge of God's will as such could facilitate the necessary transition from "Welt-mensch" to life under the law and the earnest attempt to reform one's own corrupt will. Second, the transition from life under the law to life according to the Gospel required the kind of exercises that led to *aisthesis*: hymn-singing, meditation on the wounds of Christ, and above all, meditation on the text of the Bible, in the hope of "experiencing" the presence of the Holy Spirit.<sup>107</sup>

In their letter to Baumgarten, the Halle theological faculty emphasized the second of these two conditions. On the one hand, they allowed that logical deduction, an essential part of the method appropriate to philosophical instruction, was by no means to be shunned. "Philosophical principles," the faculty noted, "are a

<sup>104</sup> "Einige Scripturae," AFSt /H E7, fols. 10v-11r.

<sup>105</sup> "Einige Scripturae," AFSt /H E7, fol. 2r.

<sup>106</sup> "Einige Scripturae," AFSt /H E7, fols. 2r-2v:

Ob ~~nun~~ aber die Wolffische Philosophie, welche in ~~der~~ Ihrer Theol. Moral allenthalben durchscheinet, eine [2v] so unanstössige Philosophie sey, worauf <sup>^</sup>daß man eine theologische Moral darauff bauen könne, müssen wir so viel mehr zweifeln, als unsere Facultät, unter Einstimmung unserer gottseligen und nunmehr im Herrn ruhenden Vorfahren, dagegen <sup>^</sup>vormals gezeuget gewarnet hat.

In this as in other quotations of handwritten drafts, underlining preceded by a caret indicates that the underlined words were inserted later.

<sup>107</sup> See above, ch. 4, n. 64-71.

gift from God.”<sup>108</sup> But they worried that the excessive use of Wolffian philosophical principles in theological instruction was causing theology students to “make this philosophy their chief task” and “lose their taste [*Geschmack*] for God’s word”:

Of course we have to start getting concerned about our students, when we see that they formerly attended lectures [*Collegia*] on the holy text of the Old and New Testaments so eagerly and often, but that by contrast, from the moment one got so strongly involved in philosophizing, [. . .] they were disgusted [*eckelt*] by the dear word of God (from which they should in fact be taught exclusively and at some point should instruct others in holiness through faith in Jesus Christ) as though it were a defective text.<sup>109</sup>

What made this contempt for the language of the Bible dangerous among theology students, the faculty continued, was in large part its deleterious consequences for the instruction of the laity:

No wonder, then, that our students (examples of whom have unfortunately become known both here and in other places), when they step into the pulpit, instead of using the simple, clear [*lauter*] and pure word of God, philosophize – devoid of zest and power [*safftlos und kraftlos*], giving offense and irritation to their consciences – and speak of possible, coincidental, simple things, of specification of one’s behavior, of distinct ideas, of concepts, of a later condition based on a prior one, and of other things like this, which to the common man and to children come across like the names of Bohemian villages [*Böhmische Dörffer*]<sup>110</sup> –

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<sup>108</sup> “Einige Scripturae,” AFSt /H E7, fol. 4r.

<sup>109</sup> “Einige Scripturae,” AFSt /H E7, fols. 3r-3v:

Es muß uns billich wegen unserer Studiosorum ein Kummer ankommen, ^wenn wir sehen, daß da ^sie ehemed die Collegia über die h. Schrift A.[?] und N. Testaments mit solcher Begierde und Frequenz besucht haben, ~~wir~~ sie hingegen von der Zeit an, da man in das Philosophiren so starck eingegangen ^ist haben wahrnehmen müssen, wie wir [3v] ^uns guten Theils in solchen Collegiis ^guten theils denen lernen[herren?] R[B?]äncken haben ^haben gelesen müssen ^haben lassen, und ~~denen Studiosis~~ ^ihnen vor dem lieben Wort Gottes (~~vor~~ aus ^welchem sie doch ^allein sie sollen unterrichtet werden, und ~~auch~~ andere ^mal dereinst ^wieder unterweisen ~~wol sollen~~ zur Seligkeit, durch den Glauben an Christo Jesu) als vor einer losen Schrift eckelt.

<sup>110</sup> That is, things no one has heard of or can identify.

and after their characters [*Gemüther*] have been filled solely with ideas like this, they can hardly do otherwise – and they thereby enervate the Gospel rather than planting it in the heart with proof of the Spirit and its power [*Krafft*].<sup>111</sup>

In asserting that Baumgarten's excessive use of a Wolffian vocabulary in the auditorium was contributing to a real problem in the pulpit, the faculty was drawing on presuppositions familiar from the arguments that Buddeus and Zimmermann had advanced against Wolff. A human being's transition to "holiness" required "faith in Jesus Christ," and only the language of the Bible, by virtue of its having been inspired by the Holy Spirit, had the force sufficient to effect that transition. Nor did it derive its force from its appeal to the intellect; inculcating "distinct ideas" about the *nexus rerum* by means of a philosophically precise vocabulary was likely to leave the "common man" and children unmoved. A good preacher was therefore well-advised to rely on the power of the biblical text in his sermons, which meant that Halle's professors – who had evidently become known for "dressing up the clear Bible with unclear Wolffian language"<sup>112</sup> – should be inculcating theology students with a "taste" (*Geschmack* or *Gout*) for God's word and, in an attempt to facilitate their students' conversion, should appeal to the power of the examples of Christ and the apostles rather than the power of "human wisdom." In reference to the anti-Wolffian history of philosophy drawn on by Buddeus and Zimmermann, the theology faculty referred to the former as the "ancient method" of education revived by Johann Arndt and championed by Pietism, and the latter, by contrast, as a return to "Scholasticism."<sup>113</sup>

Upon receiving his colleagues' letter and reading their concerns about his use

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<sup>111</sup> "Einige Scripturae," AFSt / H E7, fol. 3v:

Wunder ist es denn nicht, daß unsere Studiosi, (wie ~~uns~~ dergleichen Exempel, so wol an hiesigen, als an andered Orten leider! bekant worden sind) wenn sie auff die Kanzel kommen, statt des einfaltigen, lauterer und reinen Worts Gottes, safft- und krafftloß, zum Anstoß und Ärgerniß derer Gewissen, philosophiren, und von möglichen, zufälligen, einfachen ^Dingen, von Bestimmung des Verhaltens, deutlichen Vorstellungen, ^Begriffen, folgendem Zustand in den vorhergehenden gegründet, und anderen dergleichen Sachen, welche dem ~~armen~~ gemeinen Mann und den Kindern als Böhmische Dörffer vorkommen, zu reden wissen, ^ auch nachdem ihre Gemüther mit lauter solchen Ideen angefüllet werden, kaum anders können; dadurch aber das ~~andere~~ [?] herrliche Evangelium vielmehr enerviren, als mit ~~Krafft~~ Beweisung des Geistes und der Krafft an die Hertzen legen.

<sup>112</sup> "Einige Scripturae," AFSt / H E7, fol. 8r.

<sup>113</sup> "Einige Scripturae," AFSt / H E7, fols. 4v-5r.

of Wolffian philosophical terms in his teaching, Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten offered a set of responses which, while appropriate and correct, did not squarely address the faculty's worry about the deleterious consequences his teaching might have on Halle theology students' conversion and their effectiveness as preachers. On the one hand, he contested his colleagues' portrayal of the facts; there were many parts of his teaching, he asserted, in which he did not rely heavily on Wolff's philosophical vocabulary. On the other hand, Baumgarten claimed that in the limited number of places where he did make use of Wolffian terms, he did so because philosophical terms were necessary for the purposes of giving a coherent lecture.<sup>114</sup> It was a prudent response. In offering this second answer, Baumgarten was evidently appealing to a division in the faculty on precisely the question of whether philosophical terminology should be entirely excluded from theological lectures. In the deliberations over what concerns should be brought to Baumgarten's attention, Johann Heinrich Michaelis had declined to endorse Baumgarten's pedagogical method in its entirety, but he had clearly defended Baumgarten's use of Wolffian philosophical terms, especially since Baumgarten had been using them selectively rather than ubiquitously. It was Joachim Lange, the member of the faculty who had for years expressed private irritation about the popularity of Baumgarten's lectures among students, and who had in fact already brought formal complaints against Baumgarten before the Theology Faculty three times between 1733 and 1736,<sup>115</sup> who took a more radical position, insisting that theological lectures exclude all philosophical terminology.<sup>116</sup> In flatly disagreeing with Lange on this point, Baumgarten did not risk alienating his other colleagues. But to the question of whether theology students who attended university lectures laced with philosophical terms were likely to adopt similar terms while preaching in a parish church, Baumgarten gave no direct answer.

He must have felt some pressure to do so, though, since King Frederick Wilhelm III, in his answers to Lange's and Baumgarten's appeals for royal support in the conflict, made it clear that the question was important to him. Though the King urged Lange to refashion himself into a "useful example of Christian calmness" (*ein nützliches Exempel einer Christlichen Gelassenheit*) and expressed a scepticism that Wolff's ideas could be suppressed either by force or by refutation, he also reaffirmed his hope that the theological faculty would work harmoniously toward the goal that

<sup>114</sup> "Einige Scripturae," AFSt / H E7, fols. 28r-29r.

<sup>115</sup> F. A. Tholuck, *Geschichte des Rationalismus*, I.135.

<sup>116</sup> "Einige Scripturae," AFSt / H E7, fols. 32r-35v.

Lange and his colleagues had worried was being endangered by Baumgarten's pedagogical method:

that theology students be led to true, living Christianity and to genuine competence in serving God usefully as preachers, so that many upright preachers may arise from them.<sup>117</sup>

To Baumgarten, the King expressed a similar hope, if in different terms. He reminded Baumgarten

that you will do well by your own conscience, and will recommend yourself to me, if you withdraw from all incomprehensible philosophical absurdities, which neither improve nor edify and only give innocent and simple characters opportunities for error, and instead stick with what is real in theology, and teach it in the same way that it was taught by the blessed Breithaupt and Francke, and lead your listeners to a true, active Christianity.<sup>118</sup>

Unsurprisingly, given the king's explicit concern, Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten did not wait very long to address directly the alleged danger of his lectures to the spiritual development and homiletic skill of his students. In printed form, Baumgarten's response survives in his introduction to the 1738 edition – probably the first complete edition – of the moral theology textbook that had worried his colleagues on the Theology Faculty in 1736, when it had not yet been printed in its

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<sup>117</sup> Frederick Wilhelm III to Joachim Lange, 22 Sept. 1736, in F. W. Schrader, *Geschichte der Universität Halle*, II.462:

*dass die Studiosi Theologiae zum wahren lebendigen Christenthum und r<i?>chtigen Tüchtigkeit Gott in Predigt Amt nützlich zu dienen, angeführet werden, damit ferner viele rechtschaffene Prediger aus ihnen werden mögen.*

<sup>118</sup> Frederick Wilhelm III to S. J. Baumgarten, 22 Sept. 1736, in F. W. Schrader, *Geschichte der Universität Halle*, II.463:

*Wie Mich nun dieses Euer Verfahren allerdings befremden muss, so will Ich Eure Verantwortung darüber gewärtigen, Euch aber hierbei wohlmeint erinnern, dass Ihr sowohl vor Euer Gewissen wohl thun, als auch Euch bei Mir recommendiren werdet, wann Ihr von allen dergleichen unverständlichen Philosophischen Fratzen, so weder bessern noch erbauen, unschuldigen und einfeltigen Gemüthern aber nur Gelegenheit zu Irwegen geben, hinführo abstrahiret, dagegen bei dem reellen in der Theologie bleibet, und solche auf gleiche Arth, als sie von den Seel. Breithaupt und Francken dociret worden, lehret, auch Eure Zuhörer auf ein wahres thätiges Christenthum führet.*

entirety.<sup>119</sup> According to Baumgarten, three of the four criticisms that have been raised against the book relate in some way to its exaggerated appeal to the human intellect. His critics claim (1) that he considers arguments derived from naturally perceived truths to be indispensable to a correct understanding of revealed truths; (2) that he thinks the truths contained in Scripture should be accepted only insofar as they are “rational” (*vernünftig*); and (3) that he claims that spiritual improvement and conversion depend on the human intellect and the “sharpness of proof,” and are within the power of humans themselves.<sup>120</sup> But the criticism that Baumgarten describes first, and the criticism that he addresses first and at greatest length, is the one his colleagues in fact dwell on in their discussion of his lectures: that his moral theology textbook is uncondusive to the spiritual edification of his students and leads them to give dry sermons. In response, Baumgarten appeals to the intended purpose of the book. “If edification depends on a vivid presentation,” he explains, “then I admit that it cannot be found here.” But such edification is not his purpose; rather, he intends “to teach and convince the reader,” which should not be dismissed as irrelevant to spiritual edification. Rational persuasion of theological truths may not suffice on its own, but neither do the non-rational means that Francke and Breithaupt had stressed. In Baumgarten’s words, “The mere awakening of sensate emotions in the soul, if it is detached from adequate persuasion, is just as insufficient for fundamental and long-lasting improvement.”<sup>121</sup> As for the alleged danger that the rational persuasion of theology students in the classroom will lead them to use the same, dry pedagogical technique in the pulpit, Baumgarten calls it “an unnecessary misuse” (*zufälliger Misbrauch*) of his textbook, which contradicts the very rules of good preaching asserted in the textbook.<sup>122</sup> In Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten’s view, the rational persuasion aided by his allegedly “Wolffian” teaching style could be an effective means of teaching students to give vivid, spiritually edifying sermons in a less “philosophical” style. This was also the position that his brother, Alexander would take.

That Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten saw the applicability of his development

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<sup>119</sup> S. J. Baumgarten, Introduction, *Unterricht vom rechtmässigen Verhalten eines Christen oder Theologische Moral* (Halle, 1738). According to Ludovici, sections of the work had already been printed in February of 1736 and formed the basis for a review in the fourteenth installment of the *Hamburgische Berichte von Gelehrten Sachen* of that year. Ludovici claimed in 1736 to have seen “only ten pages” (*nur 10. Bogen*). C. G. Ludovici, *Ausführlicher Entwurf einer vollständigen Historie der Wolffischen Philosophie*, v. 2, §472.

<sup>120</sup> S. J. Baumgarten, Introduction, *Unterricht vom rechtmässigen Verhalten eines Christen*, [4-5].

<sup>121</sup> S. J. Baumgarten, Introduction, *Unterricht vom rechtmässigen Verhalten eines Christen*, [v].

<sup>122</sup> S. J. Baumgarten, Introduction, *Unterricht vom rechtmässigen Verhalten eines Christen*, [v].



of an aesthetic theory to the controversy that had ensnared his brother is hard to doubt. Thomas Abbt, in his biography of Baumgarten, even presents Baumgarten's formative years as a student in Halle as if the controversy were one of his most pressing concerns:

Even after Wolff had left Halle, the rage of his enemies there continued. The pulpits resounded not only with continual refutations but also with continual malicious accusations against his philosophy. Above all, the mathematical method of demonstration, which Wolff employed, was condemned, and therewith almost all rational demonstrations. Young people were scared away from that which is above all peculiar to philosophy, namely, the precise delineation and correct specification of concepts; and they became accustomed to prove with biblical sayings principles that are perceived by reason, and to condemn whatever cannot be proven that way as unnecessary, useless, or even harmful. . . . Baumgarten, as he himself once affirmed to me, never looked back at those days without a special sentiment. For perhaps he simply had to thank this peculiar confluence of circumstances for the fact that his genius broke through all the more powerfully for having encountered resistance. . . .<sup>123</sup>

Abbt added this tendentious account of the post-1723 controversy over Wolff in Halle to a second edition of his biography of Baumgarten only after the danger of censorship in Halle had passed, and hardly any of its contents can be accepted at face value. The faculty's deliberations over Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten's teaching clearly show that Abbt has painted Wolff's enemies with an overly broad brush, one

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<sup>123</sup> T. Abbt, *Leben und Charakter Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens*, 219:

*[A]uch nachdem Wolf Halle verlassen hatte, währte das Wüten seiner Feinde daselbst fort. Die Katheder erschallten, nicht allein von beständigen Widerlegungen, sondern auch von beständigen gehässigen Beschuldigungen wider seine Philosophie. Besonders ward die mathematische Methode im Demonstriren, der sich Wolf bediente, und mit derselben beynahe alle vernünftige Demonstration verworfen. Die jungen Leute wurden von dem, was der ächten Philosophie vorzüglich eigen ist, von der genauen Zergliederung und richtigen Bestimmung der Begriffe abgeschreckt; und gewöhnt, Sätze welche die Vernunft erkennt, durch biblische Sprüche zu beweisen, und was daraus nicht bewiesen werden kann, als unnöthig, oder unnütz, oder gar als schädlich zu verwerfen. . . . Baumgarten sah niemals, ohne eine besondere Empfindung, wie er mich ehemals selbst versichert hat, auf diese Zeiten zurück. Denn vielleicht hatte er es bloß diesem seltsamen Zusammenlaufe von Umständen zu danken, daß sein Genie, welches nunmehr Widerstand fand, desto mächtiger durchbrach. . . .*

whose colors would have been appropriate only for Joachim Lange in a fit of bile. As for the question of Alexander Baumgarten's involvement in the controversy, Baumgarten's own writings confirm his awareness of it, but they also suggest that Baumgarten himself, even after the moment when Abbt claims he "broke free" of the restraints against which he had chafed as a student, did not entirely reject the position actually taken by his brother's more moderate critics on the Theology Faculty.

In fact, Baumgarten shared the theology faculty's concern about philosophizing in the pulpit. In his lectures on aesthetics, Baumgarten explicitly recommended to aspiring homiletes the study of aesthetic philosophy, with its explanation of how to develop and appeal to the lower cognitive faculties of one's audience by employing clear and confused ideas to describe things that the "common man" would not understand if they were expressed distinctly. By means of aesthetics, Baumgarten says, "a theologian will become a good homilete."<sup>124</sup> In fact, Baumgarten later notes, the very word *theology* once denoted "nothing more than thinking about God and godly things in a beautiful [*schön*] way," and this aspect of theology must be preserved for "the great mass" of people who depend on it. "One can prove God's existence philosophically, but one can also do it beautifully."<sup>125</sup> Still more telling is a footnote that Baumgarten inserted in the 1741 edition of his inaugural lecture at Frankfurt/Oder, after mentioning a lecturer's obligation to clarity (*Klarheit*):

It would be good if pedagogy were in general somewhat more commonly known, and still better if it were more commonly put into practice. Several parts of it, known as catachism and homiletics, have to allow themselves to be abused frequently, yet they have finally also had the luck to be treated in a solid way by learned people who understand art. But when it comes to how adults are to be instructed in all fields of learning, most logicians are completely silent, and a few say a little and don't have a firm grasp [*sind wenig in Händen*].<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium* §3.

<sup>125</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium*, §126.

<sup>126</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Gedanken vom Vernünftigen Beyfall auf Academien*, §4:

*Es wäre guth, wenn die Didaktik oder Lehr-Kunst überhaupt etwas gemeiner bekannt, und noch besser, wenn sie häuffiger ausgeübet würde. Einige Theile derselben haben unter dem Nahmen der Catachetik und Homiletik sich zwar öffters höchlich mißhandeln lassen müssen, doch auch endlich das Glück gehabt, von kunstverständigen Gelehrten gründlich abgehandelt zu werden. Wie aber Erwachsene in*

Poor or absent instruction in homiletics, in Baumgarten's view, was a problem that teachers of logic had not solved and could not solve. Even a professor of philosophy had to give lectures that, for all the necessity of occasionally using distinct ideas to treat especially difficult and important subjects, were "not only vivid [*lebhaft*] but also stirring, stimulating, moving, living":

Even the doctrine of fear of God, which is useful in all things, can be propounded in a dead and lifeless way, and although it is easier [to do so] in other truths, it is nonetheless not for that reason more proper.<sup>127</sup>

The Halle Theology Faculty's self-proclaimed dismay at the spread of preaching "devoid of zest and power" finds an unmistakable echo in Baumgarten's evocation of the danger of dry lectures – even on subjects as obviously stirring as the fear of God – as a warning to lecturers to make their lectures on all subjects vivid, moving, and of practical consequence.

On the other hand, of course, although Baumgarten deplored dry and overly theoretical preaching, he clearly did not entirely share his brothers' colleagues' fear of the deleterious effects of a "Wolffian" lecture style; his own lectures were by no account the least bit dry, but his Latin textbooks were notoriously turgid,<sup>128</sup> and both his textbooks and lectures on aesthetics made full use of the conceptual vocabulary and method of demonstration that Wolff had championed. Baumgarten himself was thereby implicitly demonstrating that the use of philosophical language in textbooks and in the auditorium – albeit in lectures on philosophy, not theology – could in fact be a powerful means of discouraging the exclusive use of such language in the pulpit. The logical force of his words, he hoped, would help convince students to undertake the exercises necessary for them to refine their taste – that is, their ability

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*jeden Theilen der Gelehrsamkeit zu unterrichten seyen, davon schweigen die meisten Logiken gantz, wenige sagen wenig, und sind wenig in Händen.*

<sup>127</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Gedancken vom Vernünfftigen Beyfall auf Academien*, §9: "Da selbst die Lehre der zu allen Dingen nützlichen Gottesfurcht todt und leblos vorgetragen werden kan: so ist es noch leichter in andern Wahrheiten, aber deswegen eben nicht rechtmäßiger."

<sup>128</sup> On the difficulty of Baumgarten's Latin: Carlo Denina, *La Prusse littéraire sous Frederic II*, v. 1 of 3 (1790), s.v. "Baumgarten (Alexandre Théophile)," rept. in *DBA*; and G. F. Meier, Introduction, *Metaphysik*, by A. G. Baumgarten, trans. G. F. Meier (Halle, 1783), ed. Dagmar Mirbach (Jena: Dietrich Schleglmann Reprints, 2004), 3.

to use their lower cognitive faculties to judge whether a given thing is beautiful<sup>129</sup> – and thereby become good preachers, moving an audience to action by the beauty of their ideas and their words. Put more generally, in developing and teaching his aesthetic philosophy, Baumgarten was attempting to employ pedagogical techniques whose excessive use in theological instruction concerned the Halle Theology Faculty, but he was doing so in order to persuade students to develop the kind of taste the faculty feared was lacking in its graduates and urgently wanted to inculcate in them primarily by other means, namely, meditation on the text of the Bible. Moreover, like the members of the theology faculty who had criticized his brother, and like those who had criticized Wolff, Baumgarten saw the development of taste as crucial not only to instruction in homiletics but also to students' moral and spiritual education more generally. His aesthetic theory therefore offered a solution not only to the problem of poor instruction of Halle theology students in homiletics, but also to a problem much broader in its scope and its immediate social significance: the alleged undermining of the foundation of morality by Christian Wolff.

### *Aesthetics and the Foundation of Morality*

On the one hand, Baumgarten clearly disagreed with Wolff's critics about the question at the heart of their debate, namely, whether people who have neither encountered the Bible nor developed any awareness of the will of God are capable of genuine moral improvement, or whether moral improvement necessarily begins with an awareness of divine law and a fear of divine punishment. Like Wolff, Baumgarten consistently asserted that there is such a thing as *natural* moral obligation, and that this obligation arises from the perception of perfection – not the perception of a law in the strict sense – by the human conscience. On the other hand, although Baumgarten did not concede that the reform of the will needed to begin with fear of God, he not only conceded but even insisted that moral obligation necessarily arose in part from clear and confused ideas, and not in fact or even ideally from distinct ideas alone. Baumgarten wanted to preserve, in other words, the sensory part of moral education that Wolff's critics regarded as essential, and whose absence in

<sup>129</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Metaphysica*, §§606-9.

Wolff's program of moral education they had taken as grounds for accusing him of Scholasticism. In terms of the divisions of university education, this project by Baumgarten belonged to the realm of moral philosophy, but it left marks on most of Baumgarten's writings, including his aesthetic writings, which described for the benefit of writers, orators, homiletes, and other practitioners of the "fine arts" the rules for cultivating the kind of perception that needed to be applied in the specific area of moral education.

The abundant and incontrovertible evidence that Baumgarten fundamentally agreed with Wolff about the existence and effectiveness of natural obligation can be found primarily in his writings on moral philosophy. Pride of place belongs to his *Initia philosophiae practicae primae*, or *The Elements of Basic Practical Philosophy*, a textbook he began writing long before 1760, the year he finally published it after considerable delays owing primarily to poor health.<sup>130</sup> The book's very purpose, as Baumgarten's explication of its title reveals, was to explain how to acquire, without faith, a fundamental knowledge of human obligations, which is to say, a knowledge of those general principles of obligation that are "fundamental" in the sense that from them one can deduce the more specific principles of obligation relevant to every other, more specialized "practical discipline."<sup>131</sup> Baumgarten's agreement with Wolff remains clear in the book's most basic principles. Obligation, Baumgarten explains, can be distinguished according to how it arises: whereas *positive* or *external* obligation has its source in the will of someone other than the obligated actor, *natural* or *internal* obligation has its source in the nature of an actor or an action.<sup>132</sup> Like Wolff, Baumgarten describes the actions from which internal obligation arises as morally good or bad in themselves (*per se*), in so far as they have good or bad consequences – which is to say, in so far as they tend to promote or diminish perfection.<sup>133</sup> As a consequence, human beings, including atheists, are naturally obliged to live as closely in accordance with their own nature as possible, which is to say, to seek their own perfection to as great an extent as they can.<sup>134</sup>

Baumgarten's agreement with Wolff about the subjection of atheists to natural

<sup>130</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Initia philosophiae practicae primae* (Halle, 1760; rept. Leiden: IDC, 2002), Praefatio; G. F. Meier, *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens Leben*, 44.

<sup>131</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Initia philosophiae practicae primae*, §§1-6.

<sup>132</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Initia philosophiae practicae primae*, §29.

<sup>133</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Initia philosophiae practicae primae*, §§33, 36: "Actiones liberae bonae se habent ad perfectionem, uti remedia M. §. 100, 341. malae, ut impedimenta, M. §. 221, 146." Baumgarten does not specify whose or what perfection a morally good action must tend to promote.

<sup>134</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Initia philosophiae practicae primae*, §§43-8.

moral obligation, unsurprisingly, can be traced to his agreement with Wolff about the activity of the human conscience. Moral obligation, he explains, actually exerts force on the human will when the human conscience subsumes the idea of a particular action under a “moral law,” and this law need not be a law in the strict sense (*lex stricte dicta*). Law in the strict sense – also called positive law (*lex positiva*) or external law (*lex externa*) – is the law whose application by the conscience creates external or positive obligation, whereas the law whose application creates internal or natural obligation is natural law (*lex naturalis*), otherwise known as a counsel (*consilium*), internal law (*lex interna*), or law in the loose sense (*lex late dicta*).<sup>135</sup> Baumgarten does not deny that all natural laws are in fact also divine positive laws, with their origin in the will of God, but he insists that their application by the conscience can create internal moral obligation even in people who are unaware of that origin:

Natural laws must be acknowledged by the theoretical atheists themselves,<sup>136</sup> if, by separating themselves from their error about God’s existence, they otherwise wish to conform to sound reason. Therefore, if the law of nature is asserted by an atheist in this sense, the kind who denies God’s existence, then it must be granted that he can be nonetheless convinced by many of the claims of natural law in the loose sense – or rather, of practical philosophy – independently of his atheism or of those premises that he, as an atheist, denies. Granting this, however, it is not admitted (1) that natural law in the loose sense, or practical philosophy, would exist even if there were no God, (2) that it is entirely independent from God, (3) that it can be derived from the will of God entirely without reason, or (4) that it can be understood equally well by the atheist and by one who is agnostic about God’s existence. For, the natural law of the atheist – or practical philosophy – that can be understood by one who persists in error is devoid of the (1) breadth and fullness, (2) dignity of substance, (3) truth, (4) clarity, (5) certainty, and (6) life that natural law in the loose sense, or practical philosophy,

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<sup>135</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Initia philosophiae practicae primae*, §§60-6. Baumgarten introduces parallel sets of terms for almost every important element of his textbook – e.g. he notes that “norm” (*norma*) is another word for *law* – but for the sake of clarity and concision I am confining my summary to only a single set of terms.

<sup>136</sup> That is, atheists who display their disbelief in God’s existence through what they teach, as distinct from “practical atheists,” those who display their disbelief through how they live. Cf. J. G. Walch, *Philosophisches Lexikon*, s.v. “Atheisterey,” 136.

is capable of, among those who acknowledge God's existence.<sup>137</sup>

In this discussion of the obligation of atheists to obey the precepts of natural law, Baumgarten explains his position somewhat elliptically but with a care that reveals his awareness of the state of the debate in which he is implicitly engaging. That atheists would be obliged to obey natural law even if God did not exist was an assertion of Wolff's that had drawn criticism from Gundling, and Baumgarten explicitly avoids it. Like Walch, he moreover steers clear of the view that natural law, whose continuing existence he agrees depends on the will of God, is the product of God's arbitrary will, uninformed by reason.<sup>138</sup> Like Wolff, though perhaps more obviously than Wolff, he also grants that a denier of God's existence – a “theoretical” atheist – cannot be obliged by the natural law to the extent that a believer can, since the natural law's scope, dignity, truth, clarity, and life are diminished for him. But Baumgarten nonetheless asserts the obligatory force of the reasoning that an atheist can engage in. The capacity for reasoning that the atheist shares with all other human beings, believers or not, is presumably the capacity to reason about which actions best contribute to his own perfection, and this capacity is what allows natural law to exert the force of moral obligation on him.

Baumgarten advances the same view in his *Ethica philosophica*, a textbook on ethics that he first published in 1740.<sup>139</sup> The first significant indication of his agreement with Wolff about the effectiveness of natural, internal moral obligation on atheists comes in the preface and synopsis of the first edition, where we learn that, like many authors of textbooks on ethics, Baumgarten will devote the vast majority of his textbook to discussing the three types of obligations: obligations to oneself, to

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<sup>137</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Initia philosophiae practicae primae*, §71:

*Leges naturae . . . concedendae sunt ab ipsis atheis theoreticis, si, abstrahendo ab ipsorum errore circa existentiam divinam, caeterum sanam rationem metitando sequi voluerint. . . . Hinc si ius naturae athei asseritur hoc sensu, existentiam divinam qui neget, eum tamen de bene multis assertis iuris naturae late dicti, s[eu] potius philosophiae practicae . . . convinci posse, independenter ab eius atheismo, aut illis praemissis, quas negat, qua atheus, utique ponendum est. Neque tamen hoc posito admittitur: 1) ius naturae late dictum s[eu] philosophia practica esset, etiam si non daretur deus. . . . 2) prorsus est independens a deo. . . . 3) ex voluntate dei nulla ratione omnino derivari potest. . . . 4) aequae bene cognosci potest ab atheo, ac ab agnoscente divinam existentiam. Nam ius naturae athei s[eu] philosophia practica, quam in suo errore perseverans cognoscere potest, destituitur ea 1) latitudine et copia, 2) dignitate materiae<, > 3) veritate, 4) luce, 5) certitudine<, > 6) vita, cuius capax est ius naturae late dictum s[eu] philosophia practica existentiam divinam admittentis. . . .*

<sup>138</sup> Cf. A. G. Baumgarten, *Initia philosophiae practicae primae*, §69. Cf. above, ch. 4, n. 108-14.

<sup>139</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Ethica philosophica*, 3rd ed. (Halle, 1763; rept. Hildesheim: Olms, 1969); G. F. Meier, *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens Leben*, 41-3.

others, and to God.<sup>140</sup> Baumgarten places the obligations to God first, which represents a reversal of the order of obligations in Wolff's *Deutsche Ethik*. Two recent commentators have seen in this reversal an attempt by Baumgarten to distance himself from the kind of accusations leveled against Wolff by Joachim Lange and Johann Liborius Zimmermann, among others; but Wolff himself – whom Baumgarten claims in his 1740 preface “to owe so much in philosophizing” – made the same reversal in his own Latin ethics textbook twelve years later.<sup>141</sup> It therefore comes as no surprise that in his preface, Baumgarten explains his decision to reverse the order by appealing to an argument made by Wolff himself in the *Deutsche Ethik*: the obligations to God come first “not so much on account of the excellence of the most perfect [being],” but rather “because they contain the most majestic bonds of the remaining obligations.”<sup>142</sup> Wolff, too, had indicated that the obligation to obey the natural law can be deduced from the obligation to further God's honor (which includes the obligation to piety),<sup>143</sup> an apparently apologetic point around which Baumgarten now purports to shape his whole book. Meanwhile, while emphasizing this apologetic argument in his preface, Baumgarten unsurprisingly refrains from drawing explicit attention to his still more substantive agreement with Wolff on the point that had drawn criticism from Lange and Zimmermann in the first place: namely, that the natural obligation to piety can itself be deduced from the obligation to perfect oneself. *This* chain of reasoning is in fact what occupies Baumgarten's seventy-four-page discussion of the obligations to God. Having unabashedly ended the book's prolegomena by declaring a moral maxim much like the one in Wolff's *Deutsche Ethik* (“Perfect yourself in your natural state, as much as you can”), Baumgarten proceeds to argue systematically that as human beings, we are naturally obliged to acts of piety and to true knowledge of God's perfections because they

<sup>140</sup> Cf. C. Wolff, *Deutsche Ethik*. Baumgarten calls the treatment of the three categories of obligation *ethica generalis*, leaving only the last sixty pages of his three-hundred-and-twenty-six page book to *ethica specialis*, an outline of obligations not shared by all human beings as such. A. G. Baumgarten, *Ethica philosophica*, §§400-500.

<sup>141</sup> C. Wolff, *Philosophia moralis sive ethica* (Halle, 1753). The commentators who see Baumgarten's reversal of the order of obligations as a sign of anti-Wolffian Pietist influence include Bernard Poppe and Clemens Schwaiger. See above, n. 13, 27.

<sup>142</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Ethica philosophica*, preface [3]:

*Principium primum, ut decet, restrictum et intellectum, acceptum illustri Wolfio fero, cui quantum in philosophando debeam, et haec qualia mea cumque declarabunt, et utinam luculentioribus animi grati signis testari liceret! Quae deo praestanda sunt, praemisi reliquis, non tam ob excellentiam perfectissimi, quis enim ignorat, praestantissima quaevis non raro tamen agmen claudere? quam quia reliquarum obligationum augustissima vincula continent.*

<sup>143</sup> C. Wolff, *Deutsche Ethik*, §§654-5, 670-1.



perfect us.<sup>144</sup>

Baumgarten was aware of the offense this argument could cause, and he included in his 1740 preface a gesture of self-defense:

If there is any philosophical cognition within me, the most pleasant fruit of this same cognition has always been to perceive that whatever especially burdensome or annoying thing in the narrow path of a good mind frightens tender people but is enjoined in the sacred prophecies of our saviour – this was all established not by some blind will, and much less so that it might be bad for good men, but rather conforms so closely with a truly blessed life, is entwined with such beautiful *nexes* of our salvation, that even the type of weak reason possessed by human beings, however much of it there may be, when it sees into the wonderous intertwining of these things voluntarily takes comfort in the will of the very indulgent father. For this reason, although [it is] for the most part passed over in silence, it is a particularly bitter grief for me, when I see that even upright men, the kind of men from whom a more exact consideration of things is to be expected, oppose themselves to the philosophy of morals because they believe that it fosters the error named after Pelagius: that as much religion as the most sacred deity demands from us must be accomplished by the powers of our corrupt nature, that philosophers famously promise to lead themselves to this by the hand, as it were, solely by way of their own demonstrations, and that they take pride in themselves for arriving at this without faith.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Ethica philosophica*, §§10-149.

<sup>145</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Ethica philosophica*, 1740 Preface:

*Lucundissimus mihi semper, cognitionis si quid est in me philosophicae, fructus eiusdem ille fuit, perspicere, quicquid onerosius aut molestius in angusto bonae mentis tramite horrent delicatuli, quod injungitur tamen in sacris nostri sospitatoris oraculis, illud omne, non caeco quodam arbitrio stabilitum, multo minus, ut male sit viris bonis, excogitatum esse, sed tam arcte cum vita vere beata cohaerere, tam pulcris insinuari saluti nostrae nexibus, ut satis etiam infirma ratio, qualis est hominum, quanta quanta [sic] sit, possit tamen mirabilem eorum concatenationem penetrans hoc lubentius in indulgentissimi patris voluntate conquiescere. Quam ob rationem licet tacitum plerumque, tamen amarius est mihi cordolium, ubi video, probos etiam viros, a quibus tamen accuratior esset exspectantanda rerum ponderatio, philosophiae morum sese opponere propter hanc causam, quia fovere credunt eum errorem, quem a Pelagio dicunt, quantam sanctissimum numen a nobis religionem postulat, tantam corruptae naturae viribus esse praestandam, ad hanc se manu quasi ducturos omnino per suas demonstrationes unice polliceri philosophos, ad hanc eos sine fide se perventuros gloriari.*

This is an extraordinary passage, one of the relatively few statements in Baumgarten's published work that sheds more than a faint glimmer of direct light on a contemporary polemic in which he must have imagined he was engaged. Without naming names, Baumgarten alludes to the foundation-of-morality controversy, just as he would twenty years later in his *Initia philosophiae practicae primae*, and clearly indicates his side. As in the *Initia*, Baumgarten expresses dissatisfaction with the view that moral principles are decreed by God's "blind will" rather than by his reason, a view that Wolff had attributed to Buddeus and that Walch, in reply, had dismissed as an unfair caricature.<sup>146</sup> He also takes issue with the criticism of philosophers for purporting to inculcate moral obligation, including obligations to God, without taking any steps to secure their students' faith by introducing the revealed word of God and the *Bußkampf*; this of course was the general charge that Zimmermann and Buddeus had leveled against Wolff. Baumgarten's description of his own, alternative position is also reminiscent of Wolff's. Human beings are naturally capable, by virtue of their own reason, of insight into the "wonderous intertwining" of things: that is, the decree by God, the "indulgent father," that the behavior he enjoins in scripture for the sake of salvation does not contradict the behavior whose goodness can be naturally observed without scripture's help.

That Baumgarten was directing his comments specifically at Wolff's critics in the foundation-of-morality controversy becomes still clearer – uncannily so – in his defense against the charge that the philosophical exposition of moral obligations fosters Pelagianism. The defense consists primarily of an illustrative example of a very similar type of educational exposition, conducted by the critics themselves, in which the charge of Pelagianism is patently unfair. The example Baumgarten chooses is biblical exegesis:

Suppose that in theology, which we call *revealed*, someone has taught the most weighty chapters of the law, in which it is distinguished from the gospel; has inserted above all the sense of it [i.e. the Gospel] that they call *spiritual*, and has related the entire compass of the ten statements richly and sternly enough. Suppose that while the same person is in the part where he crosses over to the interpretation of the power-giving gospel, the things that I noted above have been imputed to philosophers as a vice are raised as an objection. What do you think he will reply, or what would you yourself reply if you had to take up

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<sup>146</sup> See above, ch. 4, n. 111-13.

his case?<sup>147</sup>

This final question – Baumgarten takes his response no further – is of course rhetorical, and inferring what Baumgarten expected the answer to be requires filling in some ellipses in his train of thought. Baumgarten clearly takes biblical exegesis to be similar to moral philosophy, and the key to understanding why is supplied by August Hermann Francke's handbook on biblical exegesis, the *Manuductio* that Baumgarten almost certainly encountered either directly or indirectly as a student in Francke's schools. The charge of Pelagianism that Baumgarten says has been raised against teachers of moral philosophy could equally be raised against theologians expounding upon the Bible, in so far as a theologian routinely explains the spiritual meaning of the text of the law – that is, the meaning that Francke says refers to a moral *habitus* that only those whom the Holy Spirit has inspired have experienced, and that therefore only those whom the Holy Spirit has inspired can understand – to people who have not had the experience, or *aisthesis*, requisite for a full understanding of that spiritual meaning. If moral philosophers are guilty of believing, falsely, that the demonstrations they use to teach moral principles to their students can lead those students, without the help of faith, to reach the highest degree of piety and general moral rectitude that God requires, then theologians must be guilty of believing, equally falsely, that the rhetorical means they use to convince their audience of the spiritual meaning of the text of the law can lead that audience to adopt a spiritual moral *habitus* without intervention by the Holy Spirit. But since theologians are presumably innocent of this charge – so Baumgarten's example implies – then the same must be true of moral philosophers; to accuse them of Pelagianism is unfair.

The actual proof of the theologians' innocence, which supplies by analogy a defense of moral philosophers, Baumgarten leaves to his reader's imagination, but Francke's descriptions of biblical exegesis and moral education offer a clue. *Aisthesis* may have been ultimately unavailable to anyone who lacked the experience of inspiration by the Holy Spirit, in Francke's view, but this did not mean that

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<sup>147</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Ethica philosophica*, Preface [1740]:

*Tentabo suppeditare responsionem ex notioribus forsitan per similitudinem. Fac in theologia, quam revelatam nuncupamus, docuisse non neminem gravissima capita legis, qua distinguitur ab evangelio, sensum illius, quem spiritualem appellant, inculcasse praecipue, totumque decem verborum ambitum satis ubertim absolvisse, satis rigide: fac eidem, dum est in procinctu, quo transeat ad evangelii vires largientis interpretationem, obiici, quae philosophis vitio verti supra notavi: quid regesturum eum opinaris, aut quid ipse caussam ipsius suscepturus regereres?*

discussing the spiritual meaning of the law among such people was pointless; quite to the contrary. An awareness of the law's spiritual meaning, even without any corresponding change in one's own character, was presumably a useful preparation for such a change. On Francke's account, one could affirm the usefulness of human theological education while at the same time, without inconsistency, affirming that moral regeneration was impossible without faith, and that faith required the collaboration of the Holy Spirit. By analogy, one could affirm the usefulness of a philosophical education in the principles of ethics while at the same time denying that the highest degree of moral obligation could arise in the absence of the "supernatural knowledge" of moral obligation that only the faithful could acquire. It was therefore not "Pelagian" of Baumgarten to describe the aim of philosophical ethics as "certainty of internal obligations in a natural state"<sup>148</sup> and thereby to affirm both that atheists were capable of the certainty that philosophical ethics could provide, and that natural, internal moral obligation could have an effect on them. Francke's own method of instruction, Baumgarten implied, gave the lie to Wolff's critics' attack.

But Baumgarten did not simply repeat Wolff's arguments; he followed neither Wolff's defense of natural obligation as a function exclusively of the *appetitus rationalis* nor Wolff's program for moral education, with its warning against engaging the human affections and its heavy emphasis on training the human conscience to construct syllogisms whose terms are as distinct as possible. The most pervasive suggestion of Baumgarten's deviation from Wolff can be found in his style of teaching ethics, which corresponded to his public declaration, in Frankfurt/Oder in 1740, that a good lecturer is obliged to engage an audience's lower cognitive faculties. Admittedly, the textbook he had written for the use of his students was little more than an outline, dry, terse, and brief. Baumgarten intended it to be a strictly logical treatment of the subject, appealing exclusively to his students' intellects.<sup>149</sup> The aesthetic treatment of the subject, on the other hand, which would appeal to students' imaginations and sensory faculties, Baumgarten included in his lectures,

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<sup>148</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Ethica philosophica*, §3.

<sup>149</sup> Baumgarten clearly intended the book to be used by students listening to his lectures on ethics, which he began giving at the University of Halle in Spring 1738 and Winter 1739, the semester in which he received the call to Frankfurt/Oder. It superseded the handwritten outlines of Baumgarten's ethics that appear to have been in use among Halle students already in 1738. (The mention of a "very brief" text in the advertisements for Baumgarten's 1738 and 1739 lectures on ethics in Halle suggests that his textbook or something like it was already available before 1740 in handwritten form. *Catalogi lectionum . . . publicati in Academia Fridericiana*, Spring 1738, Winter 1739.)

where he promised to “expound more copiously” on the topics in the book.<sup>150</sup> As Baumgarten explained to prospective auditors, he did not want his lectures to be simply an exercise in transcription:

Would that in expounding upon ethics one didn't have to take refuge in your hands and pens! It is a sweet burden for me to exercise the minds, bind together the cognitive nerves, and to hold captive the reason of those who listen to me. To wear out their hands and fill their paper is something that I not only do not strive for but in fact avoid as much as I can.<sup>151</sup>

What Baumgarten hoped to engage was not solely his auditors' reason, but their minds more generally and their “cognitive nerves” (*nervi cogitandi*). He meant “to place the beauty of [the virtues] before their eyes.”<sup>152</sup> Nor could this aesthetic treatment of ethics be dispensed with: “A book of this kind,” Baumgarten explained in reference to his *Ethica philosophica*, “is never really a complete and entirely perfect work; rather, it only attains perfect wholeness when the live voice and more expansive speech of a commentator has joined it.”<sup>153</sup>

Given these indications that Baumgarten followed his own aesthetic precepts in lecturing on ethics, it comes as no surprise that in the arguments themselves, Baumgarten asserts that human beings are naturally obliged to cultivate their lower cognitive faculties; that natural moral obligation itself arises in part from the exercise of those faculties; and that inculcating clear ideas of perfection, rather than necessarily distinct ideas, is the overriding concern of moral education. These assertions, all of which represented deviations from Wolff's *Deutsche Ethik*, depended on Baumgarten's redefinition of *lebendige Erkenntnis* in his *Metaphysics*. One sign of this comes from Baumgarten's account of his reasons for beginning to lecture on

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<sup>150</sup> *Catalogi lectionum*, Spring 1738, Winter 1739.

<sup>151</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *De ordine in audiendis philosophicis per triennium academicum*. . . (Halle, 1738), §XXIII:

*Utinam in ethica pertractanda non iterum confugiendum esset ad manus vestras et calamos! Animos exercere, cogitandi nervos adstringere, occupatam tenere rationem eorum, qui me audiunt, oppido mihi dulce est: fatigare dextras et chartas implere non solum non laboro, sed et fugio, quantum possum.*

<sup>152</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *De ordine*, §XXIII.

<sup>153</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Ethica philosophica*, 3rd ed., new preface, [5]:

*Liber eiusmodi nunquam recte completum et suis numeris iam omnibus absolutum opus est, sed tunc demum perfectam unitatem nanciscitur, quando viva vox et sermo commentantis in eundem liberior accesserit.*

ethics at all, published in an essay containing an extended advertisement of his lectures during the coming semester – Summer 1738 – in Halle:

I recall that I have long been pressed by my friends – so that I might treat ethics at some point in my teaching – (1) to wipe away the enduring stain that some murmurings of ill-inclined people have emblazoned in lovers of metaphysics while asserting that [this] type of inquiry [i.e. metaphysics], which seems subtle and thorny to them, carries with it an aversion to the practical sciences; and thereby, [my friends] maintain, (2) to make it happen that – extraordinarily – someone from the family they condemn set right the teaching of the virtues and place their beauty before their eyes.<sup>154</sup>

Baumgarten claims that “his friends” hoped he would be the one to show that metaphysics need not be kept separate from the teaching of ethics, and that a metaphysician, too, could convey the beauty of the virtues to his auditors. The identity of the “ill-inclined people” whom Baumgarten’s friends purportedly encouraged him to contradict is not obvious; they may have included those members of the Halle Theology Faculty who two years earlier had voiced concern that his brother was ruining theology students’ “taste” for the morally edifying word of God by basing his moral theology on “Wolffian philosophy,” particularly Wolff’s German ethics and the metaphysics on which the ethics were based. In any case, Baumgarten did not disregard his friends’ expectations. His *Ethics* makes frequent and regular reference to his *Metaphysics*, and in fact the very structure of most arguments in his *Ethics* derives from the contents of his *Metaphysics*; Baumgarten consistently explains how human beings are obliged to perfect the various parts of themselves, for example, with reference to the *Metaphysics*’ more specific descriptions of what precisely those parts of the self are. The essential attributes of things, as described in the *Metaphysics*, become in the *Ethics* the attributes that human beings are obliged to

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<sup>154</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *De ordine*, §XXIII:

*Dudum est, ex quo sollicitari me ab amicis memini, ut ethicam etiam doctrinam aliquando docendo tangam, et meo quoque facto tentem abstergere maculam, quam metaphysices amatoribus inustum eunt, nescio quae malevolorum admurmurationes, dum, subtile et spinosum speculandi genus quod illis videtur, fastidium practicarum scientiarum secum ferre autumant, et inde contendunt evenire, ut raro quis ex ea, quam contemnunt, familia doctrinam virtutum expediat, earumque pulchritudinem ponat ob oculos.*

cultivate or “heighten” in order to perfect the things themselves.<sup>155</sup> We learn in Baumgarten’s *Metaphysics*, for example, that “intellect” (*intellectus*) refers to the human mental capacity for “attention” (*attentio*), “abstraction” (*abstractio*), “reflection” (*reflexio*), and “comparison” (*comparatio*), among other things. These are therefore the powers that, under the heading of “cultivation of the intellect” (*cura intellectus*) in his *Ethics*, Baumgarten specifically asserts human beings are morally obliged to cultivate.<sup>156</sup> Likewise, in accordance with Baumgarten’s conclusion in the *Metaphysics* that perceptions are perfected by being made *lebendig*, which requires clarity rather than necessarily distinctness, Baumgarten argues in the *Ethics* that human beings are obliged to cultivate the clarity of their perceptions, and not solely the distinctness.

In the specific case of the conscience, so central to the dispute between Wolff and Zimmermann, Baumgarten therefore avoids Wolff’s insistence that distinctness of perception is the highest aim:

Because you are obliged to the highest degree of clarity that you can attain, [you are obliged] therefore to put before your eyes as vividly and distinctly as possible the conclusions of the conscience – i.e. examining laws, examining your deeds, and examining the connection between them. Therefore, cultivate your intellect and reason through conscience itself – but without neglecting the analog of the latter, if distinctness should ever be lacking.<sup>157</sup>

Baumgarten proceeds to declare that “love of distinctness in the conscience’s arguments will be much increased if confusion is thought of as the mother and the

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<sup>155</sup> This is also precisely the argument that Baumgarten uses in his *Meditationes*: a poem is defined as “perfect sensate discourse” (*oratio sensitiva perfecta*), and from this definition Baumgarten deduces the obligation to make the poem as “sensate” as possible. On the basic concept of perfection as a “heightening” (*Steigerung*) of a thing’s essential attributes, see above, n. 45.

<sup>156</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Metaphysica*, §§625-6; A. G. Baumgarten, *Ethica*, §221.

<sup>157</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Ethica*, §182:

*Ad summum claritatis gradum, quem assequi poteris, quia obligaris, qua ratiocinia conscientiae, §. 176, quaere leges, quaere facta tua, quaere nexum inter ea tibi tam vivide, tam distincte ob oculos ponere, quam potes, §. 177. M §. 531. Ergo per ipsam conscientiam cole intellectum et rationem, M. §. 646, non neglecto tamen posterioris analogo, si quando defecerit distinctio, M. §. 640. P.P.P. §. 95.*

unhappiness of an erring conscience,"<sup>158</sup> but unlike Wolff, he confines himself to observing how best to inculcate a love of distinctness; he does not state that confusion is *in fact* necessarily "the mother of an erring conscience." Rather, he indicates that distinctness is sometimes lacking, and that in such a situation, the *analogon rationis* or "analog of reason" – a label for the lower cognitive faculties – needs to be employed.

One reason why the lower cognitive faculties need to be employed in the judgments of the conscience, especially when distinctness is lacking, is that the lower cognitive faculties' perceptions of good and bad generate desires and aversions that Baumgarten – unlike Wolff – asserts can be morally salutary. For one thing, they strengthen the bonds of moral obligation, which Baumgarten says is "stronger when cognitions are truer, clearer, more certain, and more ardent," and not only when cognitions are more distinct.<sup>159</sup> The "ardor" of the ideas that generate moral obligation, which Baumgarten consistently uses as a synonym for "life" in his list of ideas' ideal qualities, is a measure of the degree of pleasure or pain associated with imagining a given thing to be good or bad, perfect or imperfect. Because sensate ideas of perfection and imperfection, and not just distinct ideas, generate such pleasure, they should be cultivated rather than avoided.<sup>160</sup> Moreover, the desires and aversions generated by the lower cognitive faculties – which Baumgarten classifies as instincts and appetites rather than volitions, or acts of the will – are necessary to supply motivation to behave virtuously when the will cannot be rationally engaged. This means that to one degree or another, they are always necessary. "Since willing and not willing are consequences of a more perfect cognition than instincts and affections," Baumgarten writes, "seek them as much as possible in your attractions and aversions. . . ." But, he continues,

because you are not obliged to impossible things, you are not obliged  
(1) to will or not will anything purely. Aether is purer, but here one will

<sup>158</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Ethica*, §182: "Distinctionis in argumentis conscientiae multum augebitur amor, si confusio mater conscientiae errantis, M. §. 578. et conscientiae errantis cogitetur infelicitas, M, §. 788."

<sup>159</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Initia philosophiae practicae primae* (Halle, 1760), §17.

<sup>160</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Ethica*, §226:

*Quum ad perfectissimam tibi possibilem perfectionum imperfectionumque diiudicationem, eamque adeo ardentissimam obligeris, §220. obligaris ad voluptatem et taedium, M. §651, 655. Teneris ad tot bona ut mala, intuenda, quot potes, §220. . . . Quia intuitus perfectionis et imperfectionis a te poscuntur tam sensitivi quam rationales, §220, nec omnes voluptates sensitivae, nec omnia taedia sensitiva tibi fugienda sunt, M. §656.*



have to consume air. [Nor are you obliged] (2) to will all things that you should desire, nor to not will all things to which you should be averse.<sup>161</sup>

Desiring and avoiding things in a “sensate” way (*appetere vel aversari sensitive*) is almost always necessary, and sometimes it suffices on its own.<sup>162</sup>

The consequences of these claims for Baumgarten’s program of moral education are not especially clear in Baumgarten’s *Ethics*, since Baumgarten focuses his attention there on logically deducing the moral obligations, rather than explaining the more sensate means by which students ought to increase the force of those obligations in themselves. The closest he comes to this is in his description of the obligations to perfect one’s lower cognitive faculties, the “*officia erga analogon rationis*.”<sup>163</sup> There, he makes it clear that one ought to repeat various kinds of mental manipulations of ideas as much as possible, as appropriate to the functions of the particular lower cognitive faculty in question – whether the external or internal senses, the imagination, the powers of discerning similarities and differences, the memory, or the power of judgment. The specifically moral-educational aspects of these exercises, and above all the fact they they can contribute to the strengthening of internal moral obligation in their practitioners, Baumgarten does not make explicit.

To find a more explicit indication of the moral-educational importance of exercising the lower cognitive faculties, we must return to Samuel Wilhelm Spalding’s 1741 dissertation, *De vi et efficacia ethices philosophiae*.<sup>164</sup> Drawing from Baumgarten’s *Ethics* and *Metaphysics*, Spalding explicitly argues what Baumgarten’s *Ethics* leaves implicit: when we perceive in a confused way that our perfection is promoted by the kind of virtuous actions to which Baumgarten’s *Ethics* demonstrates we are naturally obliged, we acquire a “sufficient reason” for the various appetites

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<sup>161</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Ethica*, §246:

*Quum volitiones nolitionesque perfectiorem cognitionem sequantur, quam instinctus et affectus, M.§690. eas potissimum in omnibus tuis appetitionibus aversationibus appete, §237. sicut in elateribus animi motiva prae stimulis, M.§690. Quia tamen non obligaris ad impossibilia, §7, non obligaris 1) ad quicquam pure volendum nolendumve. Aether purior est, tamen aëre vescendum heic erit. 2) ad omnia, quae appetenda tibi sunt, volenda, omnia aversanda tibi nolenda M.§692.*

<sup>162</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Ethica*, §246.

<sup>163</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Ethica*, §§201-20.

<sup>164</sup> Samuel Wilhelm Spalding, resp., *De vi et efficacia ethices philosophiae*, praes. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (Frankfurt/Oder, 1741). See above, ch. 3, n. 103-10.

and aversions, or “instincts,” that prompt us to perform those actions.<sup>165</sup> This fact implies that moral education has to involve more than just training the conscience to construct syllogisms whose terms are distinct as possible. According to Spalding, morally edifying “stories, histories, comedies, tragedies, rules, proverbs, homilies, and so on” help us develop “good instinctive desires and aversions.” By producing in us ideas that are clear and vivid but not distinct, these stories increase the “magnitude” and “force” of our cognition and impel us to act in a way that conduces to our own perfection.<sup>166</sup>

Spalding’s defense of the importance of indistinct ideas in moral education brings the connection between Baumgarten’s aesthetic theory and the controversies over homiletics and the foundation of morality, at last, into focus. In developing his aesthetic theory, Baumgarten was trying to incorporate into the philosophical curriculum of the university a science that could help students cultivate in themselves and in others a *lebendige Erkenntnis* of good and evil – *aisthesis*, in other words<sup>167</sup> – by natural means, and that did not fall afoul of the anti-Scholastic polemic that Zimmermann, Buddeus, and Gundling, among others, had directed against Wolff in the dispute over the foundation of morality. Baumgarten unambiguously took Wolff’s side on the question of whether natural obligation, generated by the judgment of whether a particular action tended toward the perfection of the actor, was an effective instrument of moral education, but he insisted that this judgment could and should be at least partly sensate. Moral education required not only the cultivation of the higher cognitive faculties, as taught by logic, but also the cultivation of the lower cognitive faculties, as taught by aesthetics. The reform of the will, in other words, depended not only on the reform of the intellect, but also on the reform of the cognitive faculties associated with the experience of good and evil. If this adjustment of Wolff’s ethics did not represent a capitulation by Baumgarten to the insistence by Wolff’s critics that wisdom must begin with fear of God and that philosophy should therefore aim primarily to inculcate such fear, it nonetheless represented an acceptance of those critics’ underlying view that moral regeneration depended ultimately on experience and, speaking more broadly, on the exercise of the senses and the sense-related faculties of the mind. Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten’s critics could rest assured that teaching students the basic principles of Wolffian

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<sup>165</sup> S. W. Spalding, *De vi et efficacia ethices philosophiae*, §19.

<sup>166</sup> S. W. Spalding, *De vi et efficacia ethices philosophiae*, §23. On the source of these concepts in Baumgarten’s *Metaphysics*, see above, n. 29-37.

<sup>167</sup> See Salomon Glassius’ definition of the word, above, ch. 3, n. 28.

philosophy would not necessarily diminish their homiletic skill, and Wolff's critics could rest assured that philosophical instruction in ethics, even instruction that drew on some of Wolff's basic principles, would not necessarily undermine the foundation of morality.

### Coda

This assessment of the argumentative force of Baumgarten's aesthetics, admittedly, does not find support in the kind of specific evidence that one might most hope to find: personal testimony by Baumgarten himself that he had a high opinion of any of the arguments advanced against Wolff by Buddeus, Zimmermann, Gundling, or anyone else. The assessment does find support, however, in Baumgarten's obvious sensitivity to the anti-Scholastic polemic that echoes throughout their attacks on Wolff. This sensitivity is worth a moment of attention, if only as a suggestive coda to the argument that has preceded it here.

Baumgarten was intimately familiar with Buddeus' anti-Scholastic schema of the history of philosophy. He used Buddeus' *Compendium of the History of Philosophy* as the textbook for his own lectures on the history of philosophy in the Summer and Winter semesters of 1738 in Halle.<sup>168</sup> Of course, this alone cannot be taken as evidence that Baumgarten agreed with Buddeus about any essential point. One student attending Baumgarten's lectures in Frankfurt/Oder eleven years later recalled that in correcting the authors of the textbooks on which he based his lectures, Baumgarten showed no mercy.<sup>169</sup> But Baumgarten's own surviving sketch of the history of philosophy indicates that if he did not agree with Buddeus in every respect, he nonetheless did not engage in wholesale revision; quite to the contrary.

At the start of his lectures on aesthetics, as the one surviving set of student dictates indicates, Baumgarten presented a brief history of philosophy whose aim, he

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<sup>168</sup> J. F. Buddeus, *Compendium historiae philosophicae*, ed. J. G. Walch (Halle, 1731); *Catalogi lectionum . . . publicati in Academia Fridericiana* (Halle, Summer 1738 and Winter 1738).

<sup>169</sup> Martin Frontius, "Baumgarten und die *Literaturbriefe*: Ein Brief aus Frankfurt/Oder an Louis de Beausobre in Berlin," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 80.4 (Dec 2006), 571-2.

explained, was to prove that explaining aesthetics as a science might be new, but that thinking beautifully was not new at all. From its very beginnings, philosophical thinking had made use of clear and confused ideas, rather than restricting itself to the clear and distinct. Baumgarten's parade of aesthetically inclined philosophers, beginning with Egyptian philosophers who had communicated their thoughts with "hieroglyphic pictures" and proceeding through the Greeks and Romans, came to a halt with Seneca, who, like Cicero, was "a better *Aestheticus* than philosopher." Next came an interruption:

In the Scholastic times, when all sciences were in a state of barbarism, none was as neglected as aesthetics. This is now the only period where one saw only thick theologies and legal tracts, and it completely cast aside – and also had no knowledge of – the aesthetic.<sup>170</sup>

In this passage, Baumgarten's agreement with Buddeus appears not simply in his use of the word, *Scholastic* to describe a defective period in the history of philosophy, but in his singling out as a notable defect the Scholastics' inattention to the aesthetic rules of thinking and writing, and by extension their inattention to the beauty of what they thought and wrote – a problem closely akin to the one to which Buddeus had devoted his essay, *De eo, quod in theologia pulchrum est*.<sup>171</sup> Where Baumgarten departs from Buddeus is in the next phase of his history; for him, "Scholastic times" had not persisted into the eighteenth century in the person of Christian Wolff. According to Baumgarten, Peter Ramus inaugurated the return of aesthetic thinking, which found noteworthy practitioners in Descartes, Leibniz, Georg Eberhard Bilfinger, and Wolff. In comparison with Leibniz ("ein ästhetisch großer Kopf"), Bilfinger and Wolff "are no less aesthetically beautiful."<sup>172</sup> Buddeus had attacked Wolff by revealing in him the same emphasis on the perfection of the higher cognitive faculties that Buddeus found offensive among the Scholastics. That Baumgarten expresses his esteem for Wolff not by rehabilitating Scholasticism, but rather by presenting Wolff as having departed from it, reflects Baumgarten's appreciation of Scholasticism's dangers.

That Baumgarten's attempt to save Wolff from the charge of Scholasticism

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<sup>170</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium*, §1 (p. 69):

*In den scholastischen Zeiten, wo alle Wissenschaften in der Barbarei lagen, wurde keine einzige so sehr verabsäumt als die Ästhetik. Dies jetzt ist der einzige Punkt, wo man nur dicke Theologien und Traktate von Jure sah, das Ästhetische aber gänzlich verwarf und auch gar nicht kannte.*

<sup>171</sup> See above, ch. 4, n. 128-32.

<sup>172</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium*, §1 (p. 70).

moreover involved modifying Wolff's moral psychology and program of moral education in light of that charge, rather than simply refuting the charge and reasserting Wolff's position, is reflected by the quarrels that arose between Baumgarten and Wolff's other admirers in the wake of Baumgarten's forays into aesthetic philosophy. The earliest explicit, printed attack on Baumgarten is to be found in an essay by Theodor Johann Quistorp, whose admiration for Wolff, unlike Baumgarten's, involved no soft-pedaling of those principles that had drawn anti-Scholastic criticism. Quistorp was a former student of an admirer of Wolff at the University of Leipzig, Johann Christoph Gottsched, who had published several philosophy textbooks in use in Halle. Quistorp's essay, an early salvo in a controversy that would come to be known as the "little war of poets" (*kleiner Dichterkrieg*) between friends of Baumgarten and Georg Friedrich Meier in Halle on the one side and friends and students of Gottsched in Leipzig on the other side, appeared in Gottsched's journal, *Neuer Büchersaal der schönen Wissenschaften und freien Künste*, in 1745.<sup>173</sup> The question most fundamentally at issue for Quistorp, reminiscent of the controversy addressed by August Hermann Francke and Johann Jacob Rambach in their discussions of *aisthesis*, was whether moral education and, ultimately, human happiness requires the suppression of human affections. Quistorp assumed that it did, and by way of explaining the consequences of this assumption for the happiness of poets, he set his sights on Baumgarten's *Meditationes*, which he had probably encountered for the first time in a complimentary review of it in 1742.<sup>174</sup> Baumgarten's definition of a poem as *oratio sensitiva perfecta*, he explains, implies that a poet is obliged to "enslave" his will to the whims of his "fleshly desires" (*sinnliche Lüste*) and affections.<sup>175</sup> As has often been pointed out, Quistorp misunderstood or deliberately misrepresented Baumgarten's position in many respects. He translates Baumgarten's definition of a poem as "vollkommen sinnliche Rede" (perfectly sensate discourse) rather than "vollkommene sinnliche Rede" (perfect sensate discourse), and he unfairly attributes to Baumgarten the view that the words and

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<sup>173</sup> Theodor Johann Quistorp, "Erweiß, daß die Poesie schon für sich selbst ihre Liebhaber leichtlich unglücklich machen könne," rept. in *Frühe Schriften zur ästhetischen Erziehung der Deutschen*, v. 2 of 3, ed. Hans-Joachim Kertscher and Günter Schenk (Halle/Saale: Hallescher Verlag, 1999), 20-32. On the *Kleiner Dichterkrieg* and the background of Quistorp's text: H.-J. Kertscher and G. Schenk, *Frühe Schriften*, v. 2 of 3, 173-83, 195-7.

<sup>174</sup> Hermann Jacob Lasius, Review of *Meditationes*, by A. G. Baumgarten, in *Critischer Versuch zur Aufnahme der Deutschen Sprache* 6 (Greifswald, 1742): 573-604. Cf. H.-J. Kertscher and G. Schenk, *Frühe Schriften*, v. 2 of 3, 14, 190-1.

<sup>175</sup> T. J. Quistorp, "Erweiß," 28-9, 31-2.

ideas in a poem should be as obscure as possible, rather than as “extensively clear” as possible.<sup>176</sup> Quistorp was nonetheless correct in recognizing Baumgarten’s argument that poets are obliged to employ words and ideas that tend to arouse human affections as strongly as possible. Baumgarten may not have specified, as Quistorp did, that the affections of poets themselves were among those that needed to be aroused, but Quistorp’s interpretation was not obviously outside the realm of possibility, and his objection did apply to the argument Baumgarten had in fact made.

What Quistorp objected to was precisely the position that appears most obviously to distinguish Baumgarten from Christian Wolff: Baumgarten’s insistence that clear but confused ideas of good and bad, conceived and presented in perfect accord with the rules laid out in his *Aesthetica*, operate on the will in a salutary way, motivating virtuous action by arousing the affections rather than by stimulating the *appetitus rationalis*. In Quistorp’s view, the danger of arousing affections is that they deprive the human will of freedom. Taking Wolff as his authority on this point, Quistorp writes,

Everyone will willingly grant that the moral or spiritual slavery, as I shall describe – or the dominion of the senses, the imagination, and the affections, which put the soul, with its will and freedom, into a state of slavery – is both a source and the most essential part of human unhappiness. For, our excellent philosopher, Herr Chancellor Wolff, with whom alone our Germany can stand up to all her neighbors, demonstrated in his [*Deutsche Metaphysik*] . . . that because a human being in a state of affection doesn’t consider what he is doing and accordingly no longer has power over his own actions, he is forced to do what he otherwise would not do if he understood distinctly what it was. . . . This great philosopher of ours demonstrates still more distinctly in his [*Deutsche Ethik*] that this slavery of the will is an obstacle, such that a human being doesn’t obey the law of nature (nor divine and human laws, for the same reason), and consequently neglects his own happiness – and, on the contrary, makes himself unhappy.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> On Quistorp’s errors: Gustav Waniek, *Gottsched und die deutsche Litteratur seiner Zeit* (Leipzig, 1897), 516; H.-J. Kertscher and G. Schenk, *Frühe Schriften*, v. 2 of 3, 191, 195-7.

<sup>177</sup> T. J. Quistorp, “Erweiß,” 22:

Quistorp's choice of passages from Wolff's ethics and metaphysics could not have indicated more aptly the position of Wolff's that Baumgarten had sought to modify.

Baumgarten's responses to criticisms like Quistorp's, which appear at the beginning of his *Aesthetica*, reaffirm his repudiation of the fear, discernible in Wolff and Quistorp, that the affections are almost invariably an obstacle to the effectiveness of natural obligation. In response to the objection that "the inferior faculties, [i.e.] the flesh, should be suppressed rather than excited and strengthened," Baumgarten writes,

(1) Dominion over the inferior faculties, not tyranny, is required. (2) In so far as this can be accomplished by natural means, aesthetics leads to it, as it were, by the hand. (3) In so far as they are corrupt, the inferior faculties should not be excited and strengthened by the *aesthetici*,<sup>178</sup> but rather should be directed by them, so that they are not further corrupted by the wrong exercises, and so that the use of a gift granted by God is not taken away, with the lame excuse of avoiding its misuse.<sup>179</sup>

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*Genug, daß ein jeder mir willig einräumen wird, daß die sittliche oder geistliche Sklaverey, wie ich schreiben soll; oder die Herrschaft der Sinnen, der Einbildungskraft, und der Affecten, welche die Seele mit ihrer Freyheit und ihrem Willen in eine Sklaverey setzen; so wohl eine Quelle, als auch der wesentlichste Theil der menschlichen Unglückseligkeit ist. Denn so beweiset unser vortrefflicher Weltweiser, der Herr Kanzler Wolf, mit dem unser Deutschland schon allein allen seinen Nachbarn Trutz biethen kann, bereits in seinen Vernünfftigen Gedanken von Gott, der Welt, und der Seele des Menschen, im 491sten §. daß, weil der Mensch bey den Affecten nicht bedenket, was er thut; und er demnach seine Handlungen nicht mehr in seiner Gewalt hat; er gleichsam gezwungen wird, zu thun und zu lassen, was er sonst nicht thun und lassen würde, wenn er deutlich begriffe, was es wäre. . . . Noch deutlicher aber beweist eben dieser unser großer Weltweiser in seinen Vernünfftigen Gedanken von der Menschen Thun und Lassen, im 183. §. daß diese Sklaverey des Willens eine Hinderniß sey, daß der Mensch das Gesetz der Natur, (und aus eben dem Grunde so, wie dieses, auch die göttlichen und weltlichen Gesetze) nicht beobachtet, und folgendes seine Glückseligkeit verabsäümet; dahingegen sich unglücklich machet.*

<sup>178</sup> That is, those who are accomplished in thinking beautifully, as instructed by aesthetics.

<sup>179</sup> A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §12:

*Obi. 10) Facultates inferiores, caro, debellandae potius sunt, quam excitandae et confirmandae. Rsp. a) Imperium in facultates inferiores poscitur, non tyrannis. b) Ad hoc, quatenus naturaliter impetrari potest, manu quasi ducet aethetica. c) Facultates inferiores non, quatenus corruptae sunt, excitandae confirmandaeque sunt aetheticis, sed iisdem dirigendae, ne sinisteris exercitiis magis corrumpantur, aut pigro vitandi abusus praetextu tollatur usus concessi divinitus talenti.*

Baumgarten's reminder that the inferior faculties and their capacity to produce affections are a "gift granted by God" recall unmistakably August Hermann Francke's and Johann Jacob Rambach's defense of poetry as a means by which God communicates with human beings and stirs their wills. That the suppression of the affections is not the prerequisite of moral improvement, and that the affections *per se* do not stand in the way of obedience to divine and human laws, was precisely what Francke and Rambach had argued, what Wolff had denied, and what Baumgarten aimed, in defending Wolff from the charge that he had undermined the foundation of morality, to reassert.



## Conclusion

An explicit comparison of Alexander Baumgarten's aesthetic theory with the theories of contemporary Scottish admirers of Shaftesbury might have made Baumgarten's older brother blush. In a pair of book reviews from 1755 and 1756, Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten expressed unequivocal disapproval of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. Endorsing contemporary polemics issued by two of Hutcheson's more outspoken English-speaking critics, Baumgarten noted that Shaftesbury's philosophical system was clearly Deistic, and that Hutcheson had simply added ornament to Shaftesbury's ideas.<sup>1</sup>

Nonetheless, if Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten's negative attitude toward Shaftesbury was hardly unusual for its time, it should not be taken as a sign that his younger brother must have had little in common with Shaftesbury's Scottish admirers. Between the 1730s and the 1750s, when Alexander was developing his aesthetic theory, some of the attention Shaftesbury received in the German-speaking world was positive. Shaftesbury had received high public praise from Jean Le Clerc and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz in the early 1710s and Johann Christoph Gottsched at the end of the 1720s. He appears to have had a readership in Halle by the mid-1730s.<sup>2</sup> The first published German translation of parts of Shaftesbury's *Characteristics* appeared in 1738,<sup>3</sup> and a decisive "theological rehabilitation" of Shaftesbury, to quote Mark-Georg Dehrmann, came in the 1740s at the hands of Johann Joachim Spalding (1714-1804).<sup>4</sup> By the 1750s, Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten's printed critique of Shaftesbury represented only one of several mainstream views, some of which were admiring.

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<sup>1</sup> S. J. Baumgarten, Review of *Characteristics* [sic], by Shaftesbury, *Nachrichten von merkwürdigen Büchern* 40 (Apr 1755), 336; S. J. Baumgarten, Review of *Inquiry*, by Hutcheson, *Nachrichten von merkwürdigen Büchern* 59 (Nov 1756), 440. Baumgarten quotes attacks on Shaftesbury and Hutcheson by John Leland (1691-1766) and Philip Skelton (1707-87).

<sup>2</sup> The definitive account of Shaftesbury's German reception is Mark-Georg Dehrmann's *Das Orakel der Deisten: Shaftesbury und die deutsche Aufklärung* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2008). On the early reception, see ch. 1 and 2, and on antagonism toward Shaftesbury's alleged Deism, ch. 3. Evidence of attention to Shaftesbury in Halle, not mentioned by Dehrmann, can be found in Ludwig Martin Kahle, praes., *Dissertatio philosophica de decoro* (Halle, 1735), ix-x.

<sup>3</sup> M. Dehrmann, *Orakel der Deisten*, 394.

<sup>4</sup> M. Dehrmann, *Orakel der Deisten*, 154.

Whichever view Alexander took – and his published works provide no explicit evidence either way – differences between the intellectual contexts of his and his Scottish contemporaries’ work, as I have described them, certainly appear to pose obstacles to comparison. The most obvious of these is the well-known moral-philosophical distinction between the rationalism of Christian Wolff, on the one hand, and the sentimentalism of Hutcheson and David Hume. The conflict between Hume and Hutcheson over the foundation of morality challenges the contemporary significance of the rationalism-sentimentalism distinction in the Scottish context, but it is hardly clear whether the significance of the distinction can be challenged on an international scale.<sup>5</sup> On the more microscopic scale, many details from one side of the comparison find no obvious parallel on the other side. The German, anti-Wolffian polemic against “Scholasticism” finds no obvious Scottish parallel, just as William Cleghorn’s invocation of Platonists and Stoics echoes virtually nothing among his German contemporaries. Neither the issue of biblical exegesis, so important to Baumgarten and his Pietist teachers, nor the emphasis on the moral pedagogical value of meditating on the wounds of Christ and seeking the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, finds clear parallels in the contemporary intra-Presbyterian debates I have described. Locke and Mandeville hardly emerge, in my portrayal of the German context, as the bugbears they clearly were for Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, respectively. Nor do German discussions of “virtue” involve an almost exclusive attention, like Hutcheson’s, to the concept of unadulterated benevolence toward others.<sup>6</sup> The list of such mismatches, real and apparent, is endless.

But comparison is not futile. Beneath the blur of differences is a pattern of broader similarities. Between the 1720s and the 1750s, similar positions were forming in similar debates over the foundation of morality, and several theories we now regard as aesthetic emerged in close connection with these debates. This fact runs like a thread through the canonically pre-Kantian theories of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Baumgarten, as well as the little-known theory of Cleghorn. The thread’s presence is clear even without extensive comparative analysis of the theories and the debates. But even a brief comparative analysis reveals far more than this

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<sup>5</sup> On the sentimentalism-rationalism dichotomy in Scotland, see above, ch. 2, n. 5-7. For evidence that Wolff’s “rationalism” remains a commonplace, compare an older survey of the history of philosophy with a more specialized discussion closer to the state of the art: Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, v. 4, Wolff to Kant (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1960), 105; and Ian Hunter, *Rival Enlightenments* (Cambridge: UP, 2001), 266.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. S. J. Baumgarten’s observation that duties to God, for example, are extraneous to Hutcheson’s moral philosophical system: Review of *Inquiry*, 449.

single thread. It reveals that the debates themselves and the aesthetic theories that emerged from them unfolded in parallel, almost as if a single path had been laid for them by the inner logic of philosophical and psychological concepts they had in common. In both German and Scottish contexts, we can find a distinction between two types of moral obligation: *external* and *internal*. Broadly speaking, whereas the former referred to the obligation to obey a moral principle stipulated by a lawgiver with the power to reward obedience and punish disobedience, the latter referred to an obligation generated by a human being's own perception that a moral principle merits obedience independent of any externally imposed rewards or punishments. We can also find in both contexts a conception of *perfection* as the order or harmony with which parts function together for the purpose of the whole, as well as a conception of *beauty* as the affection-arousing aspect of perfection. Finally, we find in both contexts an assertion that the contemplation of beauty with the sense-related perceptive faculties of the human mind can produce a motivation to act that functions as a support or complement to internal obligation.

Of these three shared ideas – (1) the distinction between internal and external obligation, (2) the concepts of perfection and beauty, and (3) the assertion that contemplating beauty can produce a motivation complementary to internal obligation – the first is the most difficult to define precisely and produces the muddiest comparison. On the Scottish side, Shaftesbury and Hutcheson hardly use the terms, *internal* and *external obligation* at all. On the German side, where the terms appear more frequently, the question of how to define the terms appears to have been itself a subject of controversy. Several historians consider Christian Wolff's definition of obligation as simply motivation, for example, to be a pointed repudiation of Pufendorf's association of obligation with the right of a lawgiver to command.<sup>7</sup> An illustration of a related controversy comes from the notion, employed by Johann Liborius Zimmermann in his critique of Wolff, that lawgivers with the right to command do not obligate in the same way that lawgivers without that right do.<sup>8</sup> These examples suffice to show that asserting a shared conception of the distinction between internal and external obligation among all the protagonists in the preceding chapters requires ignoring important details of those protagonists' actual positions.

But at a high level of generality, the assertion does hold. In the background of the development of aesthetic theories in both Germany and Scotland stood a debate at the center of simultaneous disturbances within German Lutheranism and Scottish

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<sup>7</sup> See above, ch. 4, n. 31.

<sup>8</sup> See above, ch. 4, n. 85-6.

Presbyterianism in the early eighteenth century. At issue in both places was the degree to which, and the ways in which, human beings can become genuinely virtuous without being aware of the presence of a legislator, external to the human mind, who defines moral principles and attaches rewards and punishments to them in the form of pleasure and pain. Shaftesbury, in texts that immediately became central to Scottish intellectual life, defended the existence of moral principles antecedent to any divine or human act of legislation, as well the motivational effectiveness of virtue's "natural advantages," against the view allegedly espoused by Hobbes and Locke, that moral principles are created by a lawgiver and that the motivation to obey them must be supplied by external rewards and punishments.<sup>9</sup> Hutcheson, taking as his explicit targets not only Hobbes but also Mandeville, Pufendorf, and even Shaftesbury, equated rewards and punishments with pleasure and pain and ultimately denied that even the desire for pleasure could motivate genuinely virtuous actions.<sup>10</sup> Like his fellow Shaftesburian reformers of Presbyterianism, he denied that in their natural state, human beings can be motivated only to external acts of virtue and only by divine law.<sup>11</sup> William Cleghorn, who made explicit reference to the distinction between internal and external obligation, took as his ultimate targets Hobbes, Pufendorf, Selden, and Heineccius, who he alleged had taken moral obligation to be merely external, flowing "only from positive law from a superior."<sup>12</sup> On the German side, Christian Wolff and Alexander Baumgarten argued against Pufendorf, Buddeus, Zimmermann, Gundling, and Johann Georg Walch, among others, that human beings in their natural state could become genuinely virtuous by means of internal obligation, without relying upon the promises of reward or threats of punishment by any lawgiver, human or divine.<sup>13</sup> These are all instances of a general debate over the foundation of morality, in which defenders of the possibility of natural virtue rejected the overriding importance of external rewards and punishments, as it had been asserted by natural jurists (the most obvious texts common to Germany and Scotland were Pufendorf's) and theologians, whether Presbyterian or Lutheran, who presupposed the natural depravity of man.

In both Germany and Scotland between the 1720s and the 1750s, defenders of

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<sup>9</sup> See above, ch. 1, n. 8-20.

<sup>10</sup> See above, ch. 1, n. 115-23.

<sup>11</sup> See above, ch. 1, n. 36-59.

<sup>12</sup> See above, ch. 2, n. 183-4.

<sup>13</sup> As described above in ch. 4 and 5.

natural virtue of course did not appear all at once, and to understand the parallel emergence of aesthetic theory in connection with their arguments, it helps to divide them into two phases. Francis Hutcheson and Christian Wolff constitute the first phase. What unites them is the simplicity of the natural mental faculty each of them championed as the essential and exclusive source of motivation to act virtuously. For Hutcheson, as for Wolff, virtue could only be motivated by a single, irreducible desire, and the object of moral education was to ensure that this desire motivated one's actions as exclusively as possible. Hutcheson proposed an instinctive benevolence, which prompts human beings to prefer, as if by instinct, a course of action that aims at benevolence toward other human beings. Wolff proposed the so-called *appetitus rationalis*, which prompts human beings to prefer a course of action that experience has shown conduces to the perfection of themselves and others. Of course, benevolence is not the same as conducing to one's own or others' perfection, and Hutcheson's "instinct of benevolence" cannot be conflated with Wolff's "rational appetite." But both are irreducible, natural faculties of the human mind, which have an ineradicable influence on the will, and both Hutcheson and Wolff conceived of moral education as a process of re-ordering the human mind such that the influence of these faculties would outweigh the influence of other desires. Just as Wolff proposed minimizing the influence of the human affections, Hutcheson proposed minimizing the influence of the violent passions, which he thought almost invariably involved self-interest.<sup>14</sup> Both Hutcheson and Wolff accepted that the threat of punishments could be used in moral education to engender salutary aversions to vice, which could then be pitted against one's older vicious desires,<sup>15</sup> but they also insisted that the motivation to virtue had by nature only a single, simple psychological source.

The critics of Hutcheson and Wolff had far less in common, but their criticisms nonetheless shared a central theme: moral education needed to make use of self-interest to a far greater extent than Hutcheson and Wolff had admitted, and it had to engage human mental faculties that Wolff and Hutcheson had wanted to suppress. Most of Hutcheson's critics emphasized the limits of unadulterated benevolence. David Hume, unlike John Brown and Hutcheson's most outspoken enemies within the Presbyterian clergy, happily granted that such benevolence could be observed in families, but even Hume denied that benevolence could also explain natural sociability on a larger scale; human beings' moral approval of justice, which

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<sup>14</sup> See above, ch. 1, n. 125, 128.

<sup>15</sup> See above, ch. 4, n. 50.

contributed substantially to the cohesion of large societies, had to be explained as the product of a fundamentally self-interested sympathy.<sup>16</sup> Recalling the Stoic error relayed by Cicero's *De officiis*, Hume reminded Hutcheson still more fundamentally that "Virtue can never be the sole motive to any action."<sup>17</sup> Likewise, Wolff's critics denied the effectiveness of the alleged rational appetite. In the view of Johann Liborius Zimmermann, Johann Franz Buddeus, and Johann Georg Walch, Wolff had failed to recognize not only that human beings can only be purified of their vicious desires by God's grace after a period of striving to conform to divine law under the threat of punishments and the promise of rewards, but also that the preparation for this act of grace must involve arousing the affections through sensory experiences.<sup>18</sup> As August Hermann Francke and Johann Jacob Rambach had insisted in connection with biblical hermeneutics, at no stage were the affections to be simply extirpated.<sup>19</sup>

The next generation – or second phase – of defenders of natural virtue responded to these critiques not simply by restating the cases made by Hutcheson and Wolff, but by accepting the force of the arguments leveled against them, and by allowing an important place in moral education for motives that, by the standards defined by Hutcheson and Wolff, were impure. Moral education did not necessarily need to begin with a discovery of God and of divine law, the second generation maintained, but it nonetheless did need to enlist parts of the mind that exerted influence over human actions independently of the rational appetite and the instinct of benevolence. William Cleghorn and Alexander Baumgarten, representatives of this point of view, advanced aesthetic theories in order to make their respective cases.

Cleghorn devoted sustained attention to beauty and human beings' perception of it, in the course of describing an alternative to Hutcheson's program of moral education. More specifically, he delivered an account of the imagination's role in the formation of ideas of moral good and evil, as well as an account of the *oikeiosis*-like process by which human beings gradually come to perceive the beauty of ever greater communities around them, all under the pretense of refuting the Stoics' misguided insistence that moral education employ neither of sense-images nor any self-interested desire for external goods.<sup>20</sup> Like Hutcheson, Cleghorn happily asserted that the very highest degree of moral obligation, the point where moral

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<sup>16</sup> See above, ch. 2, n. 73-6.

<sup>17</sup> See above, ch. 2, n. 86-8.

<sup>18</sup> See above, ch. 4, n. 64-70, 123-8.

<sup>19</sup> See above, ch. 3, e.g. n. 29-61.

<sup>20</sup> See above, ch. 2, n. 144-65, 175-82.

education could go no further, involved no mixed motives. But he also accepted Hume's claim that self-interest was largely responsible for large-scale human sociability.<sup>21</sup> Cleghorn's anti-Stoic rhetoric and his continual reminders that human beings are "mixed" creatures,<sup>22</sup> possessed not only of minds but also of bodies and the self-interested desires inherent in bodies, represented a reinstatement of Shaftesbury's scheme of an aesthetic moral education and an attempt to salvage Hutcheson's defense of natural virtue by diverging pointedly from the unrealistic elements of Hutcheson's moral theory.

Baumgarten, similarly, diverged from Wolff's insistence that moral education required training the human conscience to found its judgments of moral good and evil on syllogisms whose terms were as distinct as possible. His aesthetic theory, which he conceived as one of several tools for training people to use sense-related images (which is to say, clear and not necessarily distinct ideas) to move an audience to moral virtue, reflected his assumption that indistinct ideas can have a salutary effect on the will. In conformity with the explicitly anti-Scholastic rhetoric wielded by Wolff's critics, Baumgarten allowed that the rational appetite was not the only source of natural moral obligation, and that the affections, which Wolff had disparaged as inimical to the freedom of the will, could and should play a role. "Aether is purer," in Baumgarten's memorable words, "but here one will have to consume air."<sup>23</sup>

To these similar argumentative ends, Cleghorn and Baumgarten employed similar conceptual means, namely, the second and third of the three aforementioned ideas common to the German and Scottish contexts. They both understood *perfection* to refer to the order or harmony with which parts function together for the purpose of the whole, with *beauty* referring to the affection-arousing aspect of perfection. They both also maintained that the contemplation of beauty with the sense-related perceptive faculties of the human mind can produce a type of motivation complementary to internal moral obligation.<sup>24</sup> According to Cleghorn, internal moral obligation necessarily arises from "reason's anticipation of the supreme end" of the universe. These "anticipations" depend on the discovery of the universe's perfection; they comprise, in essence, inferences about the purpose of the largest possible whole,

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<sup>21</sup> See above, ch. 2, n. 167-82.

<sup>22</sup> See above, ch. 2, n. 144 and 148.

<sup>23</sup> See above, ch. 5, n. 161.

<sup>24</sup> Cleghorn evidently derived his conception of perfection from Shaftesbury, and Baumgarten derived his from Wolff. On Cleghorn and Shaftesbury, see above, ch. 2, n. 155-65; cf. ch. 1, n. 81-6. On Baumgarten and Wolff, see above, ch. 5, e.g. n. 29-36, 130-66; cf. ch. 4, n. 33-6.

from an examination of its harmoniously functioning parts.<sup>25</sup> But until the final stages of moral development, these anticipations remain faint, and the motivation they supply remains weak. Human beings' "compound frame" requires that reason be assisted by the imagination, which enlists the affections in the cause of virtue by attaching ideas of beauty and ugliness to our sense-impressions of material objects.<sup>26</sup> Baumgarten's position resembled Cleghorn's. According to Baumgarten, internal moral obligation naturally arises from rational judgments of what will best conduce to perfection,<sup>27</sup> judgments that rely on syllogisms whose terms are as distinct as possible.<sup>28</sup> But Baumgarten also held that sensate ideas of perfection, ideas that are clear but not distinct and are therefore capable of *beauty*, or indistinctly perceived harmonious order among their parts, can by virtue of their "magnitude" and "living force" produce salutary desires whose influence over human actions exceeds the influence exerted by distinct ideas of perfection.<sup>29</sup> Because these sensate ideas of perfection can have a morally beneficial effect, we are obliged to cultivate them in ourselves and others as a supplement to the distinct ideas that generate internal moral obligation.<sup>30</sup> Both Cleghorn and Baumgarten asserted that contemplating beauty, or sensate perfection, produces a motivation to be virtuous that their predecessors in the debate over the natural foundation of morality, Hutcheson and Wolff, would have regarded with suspicion. They nonetheless enlisted the contemplation of beauty as an instrument of moral education, in order to protect Wolff's and Hutcheson's essential project, the promotion of natural morality, from telling criticisms.

In light of this comparison of Baumgarten with Cleghorn, the simple parade of early-eighteenth-century stars, so common in the historiography of modern aesthetic theory, resolves itself into a double portrait that captures a more complex historical reality. In place of three big names – Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Baumgarten – appear two full scenes, each displaying an aesthetic theorist before a lively background of older interlocutors engaged in discussions of the foundation of morality. Behind William Cleghorn appear Hume and Hutcheson, together with other Shaftesburian Presbyterian reformers and their critics. A portrait of Shaftesbury graces the wall

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<sup>25</sup> See above, ch. 2, n. 133-6.

<sup>26</sup> See above, ch. 2, n. 145-65.

<sup>27</sup> This formulation echoes Baumgarten's reticence about which or whose perfection is in question. See above, ch. 5, n. 133.

<sup>28</sup> See above, ch. 4, n. 37-45.

<sup>29</sup> See above, ch. 5, n. 29-48.

<sup>30</sup> See above, ch. 5, n. 157-63.



behind them. In the other scene, Alexander Baumgarten stands before a crowd comprised of his older brother, Wolff, Christian Thomasius, Gundling, and groups of theologians from Jena and Halle – including Buddeus, Zimmermann, and August Hermann Francke. The portraits behind them include Pufendorf's. Kant is nowhere to be seen.

The backgrounds of both these scenes have been arranged by the artist with care, but as in most paintings, not all the figures are equally detailed. Some have their heads turned away from the light, some are partly obscured by the odd table or chair, and some are so far in the background that a few brush-strokes have had to suffice to give the impression of a face. The two scenes themselves could have been made far fuller than they are. Figures barely visible in the shadows could have been pulled into the brightest parts of the room. The rooms themselves could have been filled with more or different furniture, the walls hung with more paintings. Any number of alterations could have enhanced the paintings by bringing out aspects of each scene that now draw too little attention, or suppressing parts of each scene that draw too much.

That fact notwithstanding, the value of this double portrait – Cleghorn and his intellectual milieu opposite Baumgarten and his – is that it allows the development of aesthetic theory in the early eighteenth century to be re-imagined without reference to Kant. Reconstructing and connecting several hitherto little-known theological and philosophical debates about moral education, together with bringing hitherto obscure figures like William Cleghorn into the light, is what allows the two scenes to cohere within themselves and reward close comparison with one another even without the traditionally unifying effect of Kant's presence. If the next survey of the history of aesthetics in the eighteenth century presents itself as a story about early Enlightenment theology, moral philosophy, and natural jurisprudence, this double portrait will have served its purpose.

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