

Makale Geliş | Received: 04.08.2018
Makale Kabul | Accepted: 10.09.2018
Yayın Tarihi | Publication Date: 30.10.2018
DOI: 10.20981/kaygi.479380

Coşkun ŞENKAYA

Res. Assist. | Arş. Gör.
Kırklareli University, Faculty of Art and Sciences, Department of Philosophy, Kırklareli, TR
Kırklareli Üniversitesi, Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi, Felsefe Bölümü, Kırklareli, TR
ORCID: 0000-0003-0840-3237
coskunsenkaya@gmail.com

Between Form and Sentiment: Hume's Standard of Taste

Abstract

In this article, our aim is to give an account of Hume's way of establishing the conformity between objective and subjective aspects of judgments of taste. In this respect, we give a reading of his "On the standard of Taste" that is based on his more general theory of objectivity. We argue that his account of the relation between the sentiment of beauty and general rules of aesthetic evaluation is an extension of his association-based account of cognition and that he relies on the threefold structure of it to relate and combine the considerations of subjective sentiment with those of objective standards of beauty and that it is only because he allows a kind of sensible reflection that he can argue for the possibility of such a relation and combination.

Keywords: Taste, Causality, Reflection, Sentiment, General Rules.

Biçim ile Duygu Arasında: Hume'un Beğeni Standardı

Öz

Bu makalede amacımız Hume'un beğeni yargılarının nesnel ve öznel yanlarının birbirine uygunluğunu kurma biçiminin bir açıklamasını vermektir. Bu bağlamda, "Beğeni'nin Ölçütü Üzerine" adlı makalesinin daha genel nesnellik anlayışı temelinde bir okumasını sunuyoruz. Güzelin duygusu ile estetik değerlendirmenin genel kuralları arasındaki ilişkiye dair açıklamasının, çağrışıma dayalı bilme açıklamasının bir uzantısı olduğunu ve öznel duyguyla ilgili düşüncelerle güzelliğin nesnel standartlarına dönük düşünceleri bağlamak ve birleştirmek için çağrışımın üçlü yapısına yaslandığını ve yalnızca, bir tür hissi refleksiyona izin verdiği için bu tür bir bağlama ve birleştirmenin olanağını ileri sürebildiğini savunuyoruz.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Beğeni, Nedensellik, Refleksiyon, Duygu, Genel Kurallar.

In his *On the Standard of Taste* (Hume 1993a)¹, Hume tries to account for the possibility of a reconciliation between two apparently conflicting tenets that characterize judgments of taste: namely, the obvious appeal to sentiment involved in it and the equally explicit reference to certain qualities in the object. Beauty, for Hume, is a type of sentiment, a sentiment of approbation derived from the pleasure felt in the contemplation of the beautiful object and as such, it is as much related to considerations of objective worth as it is to the feeling of pleasure. The aim of the essay is to find a standard by which to judge the conformity between taste and its object. The discussion revolves around this tension between the subjectivistic implications of the reliance on feeling and the need for criteria that refer to the form of the object.

The problem is that, this standard should not be reduced to a matter of agreement concerning the way we talk about beauty. A reflection on the use of language, a clarification of the meaning of relevant concepts can have any bearing on the issue only after one has already carried out an examination of the nature and constitution of the faculties, i.e., their nature and limits, that have a role in the formation of aesthetic judgments. That is, it is the consideration of the relation between the judgment and the sentiment, and to see whether there is a sense in which a judgment of taste can be distinguished from the sentiment without losing its relation to it or whether the sentiment may be conceived as something more than a mere subjective feeling, something that is related to and grounded on the qualities of the object. Only then, a standard can provide the basis for an evaluation of the correspondence between certain forms and sentiments. We will try to examine the possibility of such reconciliation within the framework of Hume’s basic concepts and principles and we will argue that if the limits Hume himself sets for the validity of such standards, viz. the impossibility of exactness and precision, are respected, the general picture that emerges is internally consistent and that it is also an extension of Hume’s overarching theoretical commitments.

¹ Further references to the essay will be given in the following abbreviated form: (SOT, p.n.).

1. The Problem of the Judgment of Taste

The basic problem Hume tries to tackle is twofold. On the one hand, one must explain the action through which what is merely a sentiment and hence an internal impression as such, is regarded as related to some objective quality in things and on the other hand, it is necessary that the divergent pronouncements made on the basis of it should be rendered consonant with each other.² As judgments, these are both grounded on the sentiment and the immediate inferences through the associative relations this sentiment and by extension its object have, but more importantly, they are also influenced and regulated by the general rules derived from causal associations which are, in having become habitual, equally immediate and hence devoid of explicit reflective consideration.³ Then, the problem becomes that of finding a way to reconcile the various judgments that are based on the particularities of situation and custom with those that are given through careful reflection, that is, to find a standard through which these different judgments can be compared and contrasted with each other.

In a judgment of taste that is to serve as a standard both the sentiment and the rules should be at work. Neither of them by themselves can provide the required link between immediate inferences of the imagination and those that are derived from the more general considerations of the understanding.⁴ This is possible only if attention is directed to that act whereby inferences as to the causal efficacy of some object is generated. Where in contexts of customary association, inferences through cause and effect are unreflectively made and what is actually a case of judgment and inference is taken to be a matter of mere perception and a such the problem of the validity of the judgment never arises, in reflectively turning to the activity of thought responsible for

2 This is because “no sentiment represents what is really in the object. It only marks a certain conformity or relation between the object and the organs or faculties of the mind; and if that conformity did not really exist, the sentiment could never possibly have being.” SOT:136.

3 See Hume 2007: 172-175 for the discussion of the effects of custom on inferences based on cause and effect. Further references to the *Treatise* will be given by the standard practice of noting the book, part and section numbers followed by the page number.

4 “Understanding” for Hume denotes nothing but “the more established properties of the imagination” (T,1.4.7: 74). See also Waxman (Waxman 1994: 77-84) for further discussion.

this inference and in countering the effects of custom in this way, one is in a position to review the whole and rethink the conformity of the initial judgment to the more general considerations related to it.⁵ However, if based solely on these general considerations, the connection with the sentiment is lost. (SOT: 137-138). A fiction is necessary to enable the proper balance between these two influences; a fiction capable of reconciling the sentiment with the judgment, that is, of providing the possibility of reconciling what is seen and felt with what is thought whereby a judgment that is at once informed by the object and derived from sentiment becomes possible. This problematic of the judgment of taste is summarized succinctly by Hume in the following passage from the *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*:

Thus the distinct boundaries and offices of reason and of taste are easily ascertained. The former conveys the knowledge of truth and falsehood: The latter gives the sentiment of beauty and deformity, vice and virtue. The one discovers objects, as they really stand in nature, without addition or diminution: The other has a productive faculty, and gilding or staining all natural objects with the colours, borrowed from internal sentiment, raises, in a manner, a new creation. Reason, being cool and disengaged, is no motive to action, and directs only the impulse received from appetite or inclination, by showing us the means of attaining happiness or avoiding misery: Taste, as it gives pleasure or pain, and thereby constitutes happiness or misery, becomes a motive to action, and is the first spring or impulse to desire and volition. From circumstances and relations, known or supposed, the former leads us to the discovery of the concealed and unknown: After all circumstances and relations are laid before us, the latter makes us feel from the whole a new sentiment of blame or approbation. (Hume 1982: 88).

The difference between reason and taste, Hume claims, lies essentially in the productive nature of the latter as opposed to the former. While reason allows us to discover the unknown from the known, taste is concerned not with extending knowledge but with deriving pleasure from what is already known. Taste is dependent

⁵ As general rules are required if mere causal association is not to lead to attribute reality to irrelevant things that are observed to be constantly conjoined with the causes, it is similar with aesthetic rules; they do not replace the sentiment but only serve to correct and sharpen it by informing us of the irrelevant factors in aesthetic experience, that is by telling us not what to consider but what not to. They are negative in this respect; one can be taught about the object of beauty, not about the sentiment. (T,1.3.6: 63) See also; T,1.3.6: 145- 155, T, 1.3.9: 76, T,1.3.14: 111, T,1.3.6: 62 for a discussion causality in general and of its superiority of relations of cause and effect over those of resemblance and contiguity in terms of their belief-promoting quality.

on the internal sentiment felt in response to certain objects but in not being concerned with the real relations holding in between objects and their real causal relations, taste relies on a parallel set of associative principles and hence on an analogical employment of the principle of causal connection in the evaluation of its objects.⁶ That is, judgments of taste are to be distinguished from judgments concerning matters of fact. The impressions taste is concerned with are not those of sensation but of reflection. Impressions of reflection are derived from ideas and as such related as much to imagination as they are to sensation.⁷ Though, these are on a par with sensations in being impressions and in terms of the vivacity that belongs to them, the imagination acts on and relates them in conformity with this priority of vivacity and hence it is as much constrained in its activity of thinking in this case as it is in the case of sensation, still the sentiments concerned with taste are distinguished from other passions and emotions in being calm and in thereby having a different degree of vivacity.⁸ That is, the sentiment of beauty has to be distinguished from other sentiments in that unlike the irreducibly subjective sentiments (i.e. passions in the strict sense), sentiments of beauty and deformity, admit a more sustained and extensive relation to the association of ideas in thought. The relative independence of taste from the factuality pertaining to the associations based on impressions is then to be understood in terms of this relative independence of the imagination.⁹

A man, whose limbs and shape promise strength and activity, is esteem'd handsome, tho' condemn'd to perpetual imprisonment. The imagination has

6 This means for Hume that creative artistic work is constrained by rules of art and if, he says, some inferior works produce a considerable degree of pleasure, this is because they involve other beauties related more to vivacity of conception than to the excellence of order and relation among the parts of the work. See SOT: 138.

7 For the distinction between impressions of sensation and those of reflection see T,1.1.2: 26-27

8 In his essay "The Sceptic" Hume notes that in being among calm sentiments, sentiment of beauty men has a natural tendency to attribute it to the object. He writes: "Who is not sensible that power, and glory, and vengeance, are not desirable of themselves, but derive all their value from the structure of human passions, which begets a desire towards such particular pursuits? But with regard to beauty, either natural or moral, the case is commonly supposed to be different. The agreeable quality is thought to lie in the object, not in the sentiment; and that merely because the sentiment is not so turbulent and violent as to distinguish itself, in an evident manner, from the perception of the object." (Hume 1993b: 100).

9 See T.1.3.7, especially pp. 65-69 for the differences between the free and constrained (in terms of the conditions of the generation of belief) employments of imagination.

a set of passions belonging to it, upon which our sentiments of beauty much depend. These passions are mov'd by degrees of liveliness and strength, which are inferior to *belief*, and independent of the real existence of their objects. Where a character is, in every respect, fitted to be beneficial to society, the imagination passes easily from the cause to the effect, without considering that there are still some circumstances wanting to render the cause a compleat one. *General rules* create a species of probability, which sometimes influences the judgment, and always the imagination. (T,3.3.2: 373-374).

That is, though all ideas are eventually derived from impressions of sensation, imagination, for Hume, is a productive faculty in that the forms in which it relates perceptions belong to its internal structure and in this sense it is free to combine and separate its ideas in a variety of ways that are not constrained by factual relations.¹⁰ Whereas the vivacity with which imagination apprehends the sensation leads it to give much greater import to these in its activity of relating and ordering, once in possession of sufficient bond and uniformity among perceptions, it can go further and relate its ideas in more creative ways.¹¹ This independence on the other hand requires a parallel dependence on sensation as without any dependence on some impression, the activity of imagination would be wholly incapable of generating any belief and judgment and would thereby consist of mere conception.¹² Then, though inferior to belief, the passions belonging to the imagination are still moved by the vivacity of their objects:

'Tis evident, that poets make use of this artifice of borrowing the names of their persons, and the chief events of their poems, from history, in order to procure a more easy reception for the whole, and cause it to make a deeper impression on the fancy and affections. The several incidents of the piece acquire a kind of relation by being united into one poem or representation; and if any of these incidents be an object of belief, it bestows a force and vivacity on the others, which are related to it. The vividness of the first conception diffuses itself along the relations, and is convey'd, as by so many

10 See T,1.3.9: 75 for Hume's crucial distinction between systems of sense/memory and judgment. See also Waxman (Waxman 1994, especially pp. 141-150) for an excellent account of Hume's understanding of the causal maxim and its constitutive role in experience and reasoning.

11 See T,1.3.9: 74, T,1.3.6: 64 and T,1.4.6: 169-170 for the role of associative relations in judgment; T,1.4.6: 169-170 and T, 1.1.5: 35 for the role of the feeling of facility in association and See T,1.1.1 and T,1.3.10 for the distinction between impressions and ideas.

12 See T,1.3.7: 66, where he writes that the difference between conceiving the existence of an object and believing it, lies in the difference of our manner of conception. See also T,1.3.5: 61 for the equation of belief with vivacity.

pipes or canals, to every idea that has any communication with the primary one. This, indeed, can never amount to a perfect assurance; and that because the union among the ideas is, in a manner, accidental: But still it approaches so near, in its influence, as may convince us, that they are deriv’d from the same origin. Belief must please the imagination by means of the force and vivacity which attends it; since every idea, which has force and vivacity, is found to be agreeable to that faculty.¹³ (T,1.3.10: 84).

2. Sentiment of Beauty and its Ground in the Object

The objectification of what is a mere feeling of necessity attending a transition of thought, which is characteristic of associations through cause and effect, is also responsible for taking beauty as some quality present in things.¹⁴ The problem this generates is that in this fashion anything that is found to be suitably related to the subject in her immediate circumstances can be thought of as the proper object of the

13 See also the following passage from the *Treatise*: “Where the vivacity arises from a customary conjunction with a present impression; tho’ the imagination may not, in appearance, be so much mov’d; yet there is always something more forcible and real in its actions, than in the fervours of poetry and eloquence. (...) There is something weak and imperfect amidst all that seeming vehemence of thought and sentiment, which attends the fictions of poetry.” (T,1.3.10: 203).

14 Kulenkampff’s approach, in his “The Objectivity of Taste: Hume and Kant”, is similar to the one presented in this paper. In taking sentiments to be non-reflective judgments and in putting the problem of taste in terms of the contrast between a causal-objective and sentimental-subjective approaches to the question of beauty, he points, we believe, towards the way one must approach the problem in Hume. As he beautifully puts it: “Sentiments must be understood as non-reflective, perception-based, spontaneous judgments which are right or wrong, depending on what the “real matters of fact” are. The only difficulty with sentiments, then, seems to be the same as with judgments and opinions in general, namely “to fix and ascertain” their truth and falsity. This task, however, leads into trouble. Sentiments, though judgments, are feelings nonetheless. They are something occurring to us, not something we arrive at through operations of our understanding. But then, how are we to decide the truthfulness of sentiments? How are we to spell out a rule by which to confirm one sentiment, and to condemn another?” (Kulenkampff 1990:95) But he also argues that there is an essential difference between the approaches of Hume and Kant in that Kant holds that “the beautiful object comes to serve us as a representation, as a symbol or as a model, of the idea of empirical cognition in general” (1990: 106). We believe, on the other hand, that Hume shares a similar view, that is he conceives the role of aesthetic experience in terms not far removed from Kant; that is, as a form of free play in which we come to appreciate the harmony in the functioning of our basic cognitive faculties. What separates them is their ultimate account of this empirical cognition, which for Hume is a matter of empirical-associative principles while Kant of course, armed with his theory of pure intuition, effectively considers it as a transcendental matter of *a priori* constitution. So when he writes that for Kant “from the fact that this single rose or many other ones (be it even all roses we ever saw) are beautiful, we are not entitled to conclude that all roses are beautiful; nor are we entitled to conclude from the fact that roses in general are beautiful that any single one will be so too” (1990: 100-101), we take this to be the very point Hume is after, though his associationism does not allow him to put the matter exactly like the way Kant puts it; that is, as the unity of the consideration of the aesthetic value of this object as such under the objectivizing form of singular judgment.

sentiment of beauty insofar as she finds any association she happens to entertain at that moment relevant. That is, in being ultimately a matter of internal sentiment, it is liable to be judged as to its value according to the resemblance of the object to remembered cases and in terms of its contiguity, that is relevant proximity or remoteness to the subject and finally in terms of the causal relations it bears within the nexus of the practical concerns and interests of the subject. Judgments of taste, however, are supposed to be pronouncements on the object. The case of beauty is especially suitable for such confusion for Hume as it is among the calm impressions¹⁵ and as such can easily be taken as an objective quality. Then, to enable a more reflective consideration of the object requires us to develop a fiction, which will serve as a corrective to these unreflective inferences based on the immediate appeal of the object for us. This means that, the apparatus of association should be used in a manner consistent with the demands of aesthetic evaluation; it must accommodate both the influence of general rules and the reference to the sentiment.

The reason behind such confusion is the same natural tendency of the mind that led it to infer the independent existence of the resembling perceptions through taking the resemblance in its disposition¹⁶ in conceiving these distinct perceptions, or distinct series of perceptions, as grounded independently of itself and through adding of a causal basis for that existence.¹⁷ In this case of beauty, to correct the immediate judgments that are given on the basis of customary associations made between the pleasure felt and the ideas of utility, convenience, etc., one must consider the association for itself and give

15 See T, 2.1.1: 181 for the division of reflective impressions into those that are calm and those that are violent.

16 See the following quote from the Treatise: “The faculties of the mind repose themselves in a manner, and take no more exercise, than what is necessary to continue that idea, of which we were formerly possest, and which subsists without variation or interruption. The passage from one moment to another is scarce felt, and distinguishes not itself by a different perception or idea, which may require a different direction of the spirits, in order to its conception.” (T,1.4.2: 135).

17 This is so because for Hume senses are not capable of presenting its objects, i.e., impressions as objects, as they are capable only of singular representation. He writes: “That our senses offer not their impressions as the images of something *distinct*, or *independent*, and *external*, is evident; because they convey to us nothing but a single perception, and never give us the least intimation of anything beyond. A single perception can never produce the idea of a double existence, but by some inference either of the reason or imagination”. (T,1.4.2: 126).

judgment from a general point of view, which takes into account the general rules of beauty and which is thereby capable of attending to the precise correlation between the transition itself in the apprehension of the object, severed from the particular relations and circumstances of the subject, and the attendant thoughts.¹⁸ Without the possibility of correction of appearances by judgment, by general rules obtained through experience and the general points of view which enables their application in the present situation of the subject, Hume says, we would not be able to talk steadily on any subject whatsoever, as the divergences in situation and circumstance would lead to a permanent conflict:

The judgment here corrects the inequalities of our internal emotions and perceptions; in like manner, as it preserves us from error, in the several variations of images, presented to our external senses. (...) And, indeed, without such a correction of appearances, both in internal and external sentiment, men could never think or talk steadily on any subject; while their fluctuating situations produce a continual variation on objects, and throw them into such different and contrary lights and positions (Hume 1982: 48).

General rules serve to correct the immediate inferences through appropriate causal knowledge, that is, they enable us to check against the influence of custom on our inferences.¹⁹ However, this would by itself give mere negation of the immediate inference and the subsequent suspension of belief. That is, it would explain the failure of the present case with respect to the purported relation but would not inform us of the cases of exemplification of a general causal relation in perception. Then, positively, some necessary connection is to be presumed to hold in cases where this connection is not immediately inferred through custom but is to be introduced fictively.²⁰ Through such fictions, one becomes able to give the unity of the rule to the succession in sense and thereby to read into the relations of contiguity a connection and reversely imbue the ideas with a relation to impressions. That is, the specific relation of thought to sense in

18 See T, 3.3.1: 371-372 for the role of general points of view in correcting immediate inferences. See also the following passage from "The Sceptic": "But though the value of every object can be determined only by the sentiment or passion of every individual, we may observe, that the passion, in pronouncing its verdict, considers not the object simply, as it is in itself, but surveys it with all the circumstances which attend it." (Hume 1993b: 106).

19 See T,1.3.10: 85 and T,1.3.11:101 for the role of general rules in correcting our judgment.

20 See T,1.4.2: 131-2 for the way the fiction of continued existence is generated.

aesthetic experience requires a proper fiction to account for their correlation, i.e. to account for the possibility of a judgment of taste. Then, proper appreciation of beauty requires to develop the ability to make causality function not as mere principle of association between distinct existences but a principle capable of accounting for the connectedness and harmony in any appearance, as what is required here is to provide the means whereby thoughts about an object coincide with the impressions that are constitutive of its appearance.²¹

The possibility of reconciling the divergences in judgments of taste, which arise due to the particularities of situation, calls for a general point of view, which is able to relate the operations responsible for the sentiment to the general rules that represent the correlations that are found to be universally valid between the form and the sentiment.²² That is, without such a fiction, what is found to be beautiful at present and what is generally so found would not have more than an arbitrary relation. Then, the standard of taste, though a matter of reconciling the differences in opinion and which as such is also about the clarification of the language we use in expressing our sentiments in judgments, has to be grounded on the possibility of such a general point of view²³ and hence on the proper disposition of the faculties responsible for aesthetic evaluation.

In each creature there is a sound and a defective state; and the former alone can be supposed to afford us a true standard of taste and sentiment. If, in the sound state of the organ, there be an entire or a considerable uniformity of sentiment among men, we may thence derive the idea of the perfect beauty; in like manner as the appearance of objects in daylight, to the eye of a man

21 Shelley in his "Hume and the Nature of Taste" writes, partly quoting Hume: "the human mind is so structured that the perception of certain qualities in objects naturally gives it pleasure or displeasure-but only those who properly perceive all the relevant qualities are qualified to "establish their own sentiment as the standard of beauty"." (Shiner 1998: 32). "according to Hume, there are, as it were, two separable stages involved in every judgment of taste: a perceptual stage, in which we perceive qualities in objects, and an affective stage, in which we feel the sentiments of pleasure or displeasure that arise from our perceptions of qualities" (Shiner 1998: 33). In our view, which seems to be essentially similar to Shelley's, this perceptual stage is judgmental in character and what distinguishes those with developed taste is nothing but the ability to reflect on, and to correct through knowledge and experience, the initial judgment.

22 As Hume believes that there are general principles of "approbation or blame" that one can see to be uniformly operative in mind despite "all the variety and caprice of taste". (SOT: 140)

23 See also T,1.2.9: 587.

in health, is denominated their true and real colour, even while colour is allowed to be merely a phantasm of the senses." (SOT: 140).

A reflective attitude is necessary for a coherent correlation between the object and the sentiment. In this reflective attitude we transcend the particularities of the immediate situation and attain a steady viewpoint through which we can judge the object perceived as to its possible causal efficacy with respect to possible sentiments.²⁴ In unreflective judgments of taste, mere addition of some causal consideration to what is perceived, that is, a loose association between the feeling and thought is obtained. In the cases of objective judgment on the other hand, the relation of contiguity of parts is combined with considerations of efficacy of the form and something about the object and its formal adequacy is thereby judged.

If we consider all the hypotheses, which have been form'd either by philosophy or common reason, to explain the difference betwixt beauty and deformity, we shall find that all of them resolve into this, that beauty is such an order and construction of parts, as either by the *primary constitution* of our nature, by *custom*, or by *caprice*, is fitted to give a pleasure and satisfaction to the soul. This is the distinguishing character of beauty, and forms all the difference betwixt it and deformity, whose natural tendency is to produce uneasiness. Pleasure and pain, therefore, are not only necessary attendants of beauty and deformity, but constitute their very essence. And indeed, if we consider, that a great part of the beauty, which we admire

24 Gracyk writes in his "Rethinking Hume's Standard of Taste": "Hume evidently means that objects betray no common cause of the sentiment, thus rejecting Hutcheson's proposal of uniformity amidst variety as a "definition." Yet he wants to emphasize that the impression grounding the judgment of taste is merely a subjective response, not a property of the object. So Hume opts for a more complex account, in which "beauty" denotes both the sentiment and the object's "power" to produce it. This power is to be understood as indirect, because the sentiment is an impression of reflection arising from sensations or ideas concerning them, and not from the object immediately." (Gracyk 1994: 172) His argument, we believe, is right and valuable insofar as it succeeds in showing the way Hume relates the objective and subjective aspects of beauty through a reflection on the ways the object is capable of producing the relevant sentiment. As here the object is in a sense immanent to the process of thought in which it is considered, the capacity of the object to promote pleasure is not separate from, but inherent to the consideration of the object itself. That is, we understand Hume to hold that beauty is in a sense constituted in aesthetic experience itself, and that in this respect it is not something opposed to the sentiment, nor sentiment is something opposed to the object. Gracyk puts it beautifully when he says that "'X is beautiful" is both a predication of causal regularity and an endorsement of that object and of some action or behavior directed towards it." (Gracyk 1994: 173) and that "without principles of taste, "X is beautiful" cannot be distinguished from "X pleases me" because "without uniformity of cause and effect between specific features of objects and resulting pleasures and pains in apprehending the object, the predicates "beauty" and "deformity" would be first-person reports or expressions of our sentiments", so "Hume's theory requires principles, even if we never consciously formulate them." (Gracyk 1994: 174).

either in animals or in other objects, is deriv'd from the idea of convenience and utility, we shall make no scruple to assent to this opinion. That shape, which produces strength, is beautiful in one animal; and that which is a sign of agility in another. The order and convenience of a palace are no less essential to its beauty, than its mere figure and appearance. (T,2.1.8: 195).

On the side of taste, there is the parallel requirement of delicacy, that is, of the developed sensibility to the most minute of elements in a composition of parts. The recognition of the coherence and mutual relation among parts of an object or a work of art requires as much receptivity as reflective consideration. Aesthetic evaluation then consists of the apprehension of the parts with a view to judge of the adequacy of their relation and coherence in terms of some postulated utility, convenience or purpose in general.²⁵ A fiction such as general utility for mankind, of convenience, etc., is to be introduced to be able to objectify internal sentiment attending a train of thought. For, it is impossible that thoughts about beauty be determinative of and conducive to the production of the sentiment itself. And as beauty is ultimately a matter of taste, one cannot establish a standard in terms that lack essential reference to this dimension. Yet on the other hand, mere sentiment as such has no representative link to anything other than itself and thereby do not provide any basis for a representation of its cause or causes. A true critic is then the one who thinks thoroughly as to the precise relations of contiguity among the parts, based on the resemblance of this relation to similar objects (SOT: 144), with a view to its adequacy in exemplifying the postulated fiction (i.e. form), that is, its adequacy in representing beauty.²⁶

²⁵ Hume believes that "every work of art has also a certain end or purpose for which it is calculated; and is to be deemed more or less perfect, as it is more or less fitted to attain this end." (SOT: 147).

²⁶ For the role of fictions and general rules in judgments of taste see also T,1.3.9: 76. As to the joint necessity of delicacy and regard for general rules and standards, see SOT: 147 where Hume notes that "the same excellence of faculties which contributes to the improvement of reason, the same clearness of conception, the same exactness of distinction, the same vivacity of apprehension, are essential to the operations of true taste, and are its infallible concomitants. It seldom or never happens, that a man of sense, who has experience in any art, cannot judge of its beauty; and it is no less rare to meet with a man who has a just taste without a sound understanding."

3. Conclusion: Standard of Taste and the True Critic

To sum up, beauty can be represented through an object only on the condition that its parts are considered in terms of their contribution to the whole. This is possible through the fiction of some sort of utility.²⁷ Like the fiction of external existence, which allows the mind to sever the perceptions from the subjective succession they actually belong and to attribute them an independent objective relation, through fictions related to beauty, a representation of an objective relation of form and purpose becomes possible.²⁸ This form, in being representable only fictively, is itself a function of this postulated purpose. In this way then, a standard capable of relating the vivacity of impressions with the facility in the association of ideas is obtained. The vivacity of the sentiment is distributed to the whole train of thought. On the other hand, due the indeterminacy of thought, as opposed to its determinate employment in the inferences concerning matters of fact, it becomes possible to attend to the train itself, making it the object of reflection and hence deriving the proper pleasure from it.²⁹ In this way, the

27 "Ideas of utility and its contrary, though they do not entirely determine what is handsome or deformed, are evidently the source of a considerable part of approbation or dislike." (Hume 1982: 50).

28 Korsmeyer notes in her "Hume and the Foundations of Taste" that "when Hume speaks of "beauty of form," he does not describe it in what we would ordinarily consider a "formal way". (Kormeyer 1976: 208) She notes, that is, the non-formal character, as it were of Hume's form, or its kinship with more classical conceptions of beauty in terms of utility (function). In short, she argues that though form for itself is not Hume's primary concern, beauty is not utility as such, it is only that it is to be associated to the pleasures that rely on such things as utility, that is, to individual sentiments of a more direct and personal sort. She writes: "If Hume's "beauty of form" does have the utilitarian roots that I think it may, the "fitness" of beautiful form is considered not only in relation to an object's purpose, but also in relation to a human standard." (Korsmeyer 1976: 210) Here the problem is the difference between form and sentiment of course and it is we think clear that no clear separation of considerations of form from those of sentiment is possible in the framework under which Hume works. As long as sentiment is empirical, there is after all no way of attaining more than a general viewpoint and the object of beauty cannot be defined once and for all through such a procedure. It is necessarily an empirical matter; a matter of standards, particular tastes, objects, works, and their comparison. But still we believe that Hume, as in many other points, anticipates Kant in trying to ground sentiment of beauty on some internal functioning of our faculties. And as such the sentiment he reduced it to, is a special sort of sentiment that approaches a thought without becoming one, that is a sentiment that is communicable to others. In short something approaching a full-blown judgment; not mere an instinctual type of belief but a belief of a reflective and considered sort.

29 See T,1.3.10: 85 where Hume contrasts the effect of causal association in empirical cognition with its use in accordance with aesthetic purposes. He writes: "We observe, that the vigour of conception, which fictions receive from poetry and eloquence, is a circumstance merely accidental, of which every idea is equally susceptible; and that such fictions are connected with nothing that is real. This observation makes us only lend ourselves, so to speak, to the fiction: But causes the idea to feel very different from the

relation of each part to the whole can be properly evaluated and a judgment concerning the merits of the whole can be given:

If it pronounce the whole in general to be beautiful or deformed, it is the utmost that can be expected; and even this judgment, a person so unpractised will be apt to deliver with great hesitation and reserve. But allow him to acquire experience in those objects, his feeling becomes more exact and nice: he not only perceives the beauties and defects of each part, but marks the distinguishing species of each quality, and assigns it suitable praise or blame. A clear and distinct sentiment attends him through the whole survey of the objects; and he discerns that very degree and kind of approbation or displeasure which each part is naturally fitted to produce. (SOT: 143).

As is clear from what we have seen so far, the standard of taste depends on the particular taste of an individual. Such a person is the one who can, through her developed sensibility with regard to these matters, and by the extensive knowledge and experience she has, follow the precise associations involved in the evaluation of beautiful objects, who can see the implicit development and unfolding in more complex objects of taste (i.e. works of art) thanks to her ability to compare and contrast objects with a view to their aesthetic qualities. That is, the standard lies in the balance she attains in reconciling the various elements necessary for proper evaluation provided that she is someone with a suitable mental constitution. Her taste constitutes the standard in that it actually judges the conformity of some object to itself. That is, she judges some particular work of art according to the established models and general rules in a language proper to it thanks to the suitable disposition of her mind.³⁰

Then Hume relies on his theory of reflection for reconciling subjective sentiments and objective standards to the extent that he takes reflection to be basically a form of feeling. Hence, judgments of taste can be subject to objective evaluation insofar as initial subjective reflection on the beauty of an object admits of correction and development by an attentive reflection guided through general rules.³¹ That is thanks to

external establish'd perswasions founded on memory and custom. They are somewhat of the same kind: But the one is much inferior to the other, both in its causes and effects."

30 See also Stradella 2012: 39.

31 See Stradella's "The Fiction of the Standard of Taste: David Hume on the Social Constitution of Beauty" for an account of Hume's essay that we believe to be essentially in agreement with our reading

the fact that judgments of taste are already reflective, further reflection, provided that the reference to sentiment is preserved, does not necessarily lead to go beyond the sphere of feeling and sentiment. Hume's objective is not to find a pure,³² eternal standard and the standard he provides is one that is grounded on and confined within the very nature and limits of the faculties of the mind. Such a standard even varies in accordance with the temper of the person, the characteristics of the period and the society she lives in³³ and that is why consensus among critics has an important role in aesthetic evaluation.

Thus, though the principles of taste be universal, and nearly, if not entirely, the same in all men; yet few are qualified to give judgment on any work of art, or establish their own sentiment as the standard of beauty. The organs of internal sensation are seldom so perfect as to allow the general principles their full play, and produce a feeling correspondent to those principles. They either labour under some defect, or are vitiated by some disorder; and by that means excite a sentiment, which may be pronounced erroneous. (...) strong sense, united to delicate sentiment, improved by practice, perfected by comparison, and cleared of all prejudice, can alone entitle critics to this valuable character; and the joint verdict of such, wherever they are to be found, is the true standard of taste and beauty. (SOT: 147).

To conclude, "catholic beauty" (SOT: 139), is represented by nothing other than that object which best serves as a surrogate for the mind of the harmony between its thoughts and feelings and which as such allow the mind to extract the most pleasure

but which has the additional advantage of underlining the dialectical nature of Hume's approach in reading his essay in terms of the relation between the individual and society and in taking him as offering a nuanced account which transforms a simplistic causalism with a theory of fictions and standards. She writes: "The main concern of the essay is for us, the spectators of art in a social context. What might superficially look like a causal theory of beauty is, in fact, the first moment in the progress from a functional to a conventional theory of beauty. Hume's notions of beauty and taste relate, respectively, to the individual and the social, to one's unrefined feeling and one's corrected sentiment or judgment. With Hume, art is not for the benefit and enjoyment of the individual." (Stradella 2012: 33) Her overall argument is that Hume's fictional beauty, much as the "speculative fictions of book 1 of the *Treatise*", "confers completeness, stability, and durability to our mutable feelings." (Stradella 2012: 38) That Humean understanding of taste is grounded in the causal fictions generated by the imagination is what we try to establish in this paper.

32 See also the following passage: "It is evident that none of the rules of composition are fixed by reasonings *a priori*, or can be esteemed abstract conclusions of the understanding, from comparing those habitudes and relations of ideas, which are eternal and immutable". (SOT: 137).

33 See SOT: 149-150 for the factors that may lead to a failure of our search for a standard.

possible from such harmony.³⁴ The distribution of vivacity through the whole construction allows the mind to experience as much feeling as possible through a thought process as sustained and coherent as possible. A work of art true to its name would then be the one which prompts such an activity on the part of the observer and the person capable of such a comprehension would be the one with the most delicate of taste and the strongest of understanding and hence with the most justified claim for her sentiment to constitute the standard for all.³⁵

34 Here is how Hume puts it: “The several incidents of the piece acquire a kind of relation by being united into one poem or representation; and if any of these incidents be an object of belief, it bestows a force and vivacity on the others, which are related to it. The vividness of the first conception diffuses itself along the relations, and is convey’d, as by so many pipes or canals, to every idea that has any communication with the primary one. This, indeed, can never amount to a perfect assurance; and that because the union among the ideas is, in a manner, accidental: But still it approaches so near, in its influence, as may convince us, that they are deriv’d from the same origin. Belief must please the imagination by means of the force and vivacity which attends it; since every idea, which has force and vivacity, is found to be agreeable to that faculty.” (T,1.3.10: 84)

35 See Redding (Redding 1957) for an account of the social character of aesthetic appreciation in Hume.

KAYNAKÇA

GRACYK, Theodore A. (1994). "Rethinking Hume's Standard of Taste," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 52(2): 169-182.

HUME, David. (1982). *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. J.B. Schneewind, Indiana: Hackett Publishing.

HUME, David. (1993a). "Of the Standard of Taste," *David Hume: Selected Essays*, ed. By Stephen Copley and Andrew Edgar, pp. 133-153, New York: Oxford University Press.

HUME, David. (1993b). "The Sceptic," *David Hume: Selected Essays*, ed. By Stephen Copley and Andrew Edgar, pp. 133-153, New York: Oxford University Press.

HUME, David. (2007). *A Treatise of Human Nature, Vol. 1: Texts*, ed. David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton, New York: Oxford University Press.

KORSMEYER, Caroline W. (1976). "Hume and the Foundations of Taste," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 35(2): 201-215.

KULENKAMPPFF, Jens. (1990). "The Objectivity of Taste: Hume and Kant," *Noûs*, 24(1): 93-110

REDDING, S. Sugg. Jr. (1957). Hume's Search for the Key with the Leathern Thong, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 16(1): 106-112.

SHELLEY, James R. (1998). "Hume and the Nature of Taste," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 56(1): 29- 38.

SHINER, Roger A. (1996). "Hume and the Causal Theory of Taste," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 54(3): 237-249.

STRADELLA, Alessandra. (2012). "The Fiction of the Standard of Taste: David Hume on the Social Constitution of Beauty," *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 46(4): 32-47.

WAXMAN, Wayne. (1994). *Hume's Theory of Consciousness*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.