



Francis Hutcheson. *On the Nature and Conduct of the Passions*. Edited by Andrew Ward

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Hume Studies Volume XXVI, Number 2 (November, 2000) 354-356.

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FRANCIS HUTCHESON. *On the Nature and Conduct of the Passions, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense, 1728*. Introduced and Annotated by Andrew Ward. Manchester: Clinamen Press, 1999. Pp. xxii + 168. ISBN 1-90308-3001, \$35.00.

In the last fifty years, increasing general and scholarly attention has been paid to Francis Hutcheson (1694–Dublin, 1746), usually referred to as “the father of Scottish Enlightenment.” In the English-speaking world, scholars have profited from a number of facsimile reprints of Hutcheson’s works, as well as from P. Kivy’s modern edition of the *Inquiry on Beauty* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973). In the last fifteen years the *Inquiry on Virtue* has been translated into German, both the *Inquiries* into French, the *Inquiries* as well the *Essay on Passions, Illustrations* and the *Letters between G. Burnet and Hutcheson* into Italian. All these translations supply the variants found in different editions and provide readers with a number of aids (substantial introductions and/or bibliographical apparatus, indexes of names, explanatory or historical annotations, etc.). Their editors seem to share, to a greater or lesser extent, the idea that a text of the past is, first of all, an historical document to be respected in its integrity and to be understood in its historical context. This idea is also gaining credit in the English-speaking world, as is shown by the recent proliferation of critical editions of Hume’s, Smith’s and Reid’s works. Of course, there are opponents to this idea: it seems that historical integrity and readability of a text of the past are often considered to be in opposition.

Andrew Ward acknowledges that Hutcheson was a very influential thinker and aims to present a readable modern edition of his *Essay on Passions*. The introduction is very short, his biographical note is reduced to one line (and a mistaken place of death), and only the first 1728 edition has been used, notwithstanding the “considerable number of significant changes and additions” in the 1742 edition. “For the sake of readability,” typology has been changed considerably: capitalization of terms suppressed, italics reduced to a minimum, “antiquated spelling . . . updated,” quotations from classics translated into English, thirteen short editor’s notes added to Hutcheson’s (ten of them explain “vestigial words” or different readings of classics). The text seems reliable, apart from the fact that first section’s subdivision into four articles has been omitted without explanation, and that all the marginalia (i.e. summaries of articles or particular contents in the page margin) have been cancelled without any indication that this has been done.

In the short introduction Hutcheson’s aims and main arguments are clearly stated in seven pages, but the perspective is so general that it is difficult to distinguish Hutcheson’s reaction to selfish systems of morality from those of Butler or Shaftesbury. The remaining six pages are inspired by the idea that “philosophy develops—or, at any rate, continues to exist—by criticism” and

are devoted to Hume and Kant. "Humean modifications" are supposed to perfect Hutcheson's account of moral conduct, while "Kant's arguments" indicate "a strong negative influence of Hutcheson's thought on his own." Again, this current view makes the reader ask why we should need a modern edition of Hutcheson's *Essay*, and should not be well content with the portions existing in the continuously reprinted Selby-Bigge's *British Moralists*. At the end of the volume, four short notes on Butler, Burnet, Clarke, and Wollaston repeat well-known information, while not a word is spent on Shaftesbury, Cicero, Grotius, Barbeyrac, Malebranche, John Clarke of Hull, etc.

However, a comparatively inexpensive and almost integral edition of the *Essay on Passions* is welcome and represents a good opportunity to compare Hume's and Hutcheson's teachings. Very early on in the text, the Humean scholar will learn that Hutcheson's division between calm affections and violent passions is a distinction in kind, while Hume's division is a distinction in degree; later, he or she will discover sentences by Hutcheson such as: "One has better reason to deny the inclination between the sexes to be natural, than a disposition in mankind to religion" (93), which is exactly the opposite of what was famously stated by Hume in his brief introduction to the *Natural History of Religion*.

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