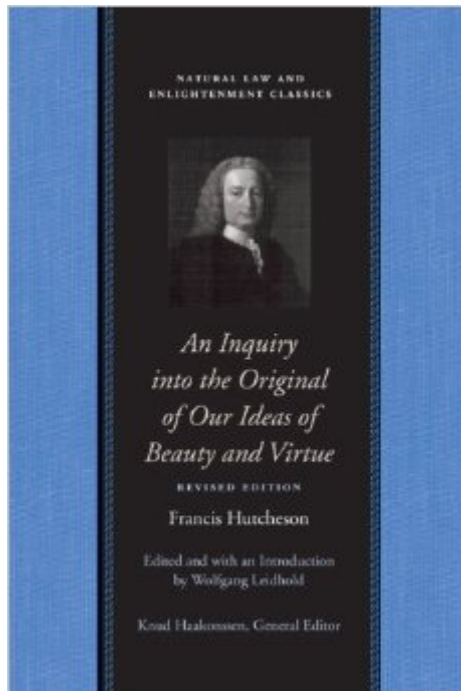


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An Inquiry Into The Original Of Our Ideas Of Beauty And Virtue (Natural Law Paper)



Synopsis

Francis Hutcheson's first book, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, was published in 1725, when its author was only thirty-one, and went through four editions during his lifetime. This seminal text of the Scottish Enlightenment is now available for the first time in a variorum edition based on the 1726 edition. The Inquiry was written as a critical response to the work of Bernard Mandeville and as a defense of the ideas of Anthony Ashley Cooper, Lord Shaftesbury. It consists of two treatises exploring our aesthetic and our moral abilities. Francis Hutcheson was a crucial link between the continental European natural law tradition and the emerging Scottish Enlightenment. Hence, he is a pivotal figure in the Natural Law and Enlightenment Classics series. A contemporary of Lord Kames and George Turnbull, an acquaintance of David Hume, and the teacher of Adam Smith, Hutcheson was arguably the leading figure in making Scotland distinctive within the general European Enlightenment. Wolfgang Leidhold is Professor of Political Science at the University of Cologne. Knud Haakonssen is Professor of Intellectual History and Director of the Centre for Intellectual History at the University of Sussex, England.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Hutcheson's work is important for the history of aesthetics and empiricism, and therefore it is wonderful to find an inexpensive edition of his works, which languished in library-only authoritative editions and Grove reprints. The apparatus and introduction to this edition is good, if limited, and serviceable, but the oddity comes in the form of the publisher. Liberty Fund publishes this volume,

and you may well guess their agenda. The work is part of their "Natural Law" series. Someone forces Wolfgang Leidhold to turn the discussion of the work toward its role in Revolutionary America and its importance to the idea of "Lockean" natural law. Hutcheson is not particularly invested in the revolutionary ideas that Locke had licensed, but the publishers want him to be, and Leidhold complies with their wishes to the degree that Hutcheson will allow. If you feel funny about giving money to the "Liberty Fund" so much that you would deprive yourself of a good, portable Hutcheson text, then so be it. For myself, I am pleased that I have a chance to own a pivotal philosophical text on a poor scholar's budget.

Some concepts have been debated for centuries. "An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue" is a reprinting and revised edition of Enlightenment philosopher Francis Hutcheson and his argument on human nature against the many other philosophers of the era. Arguing for the internal sense of humans towards concepts of what is beautiful and the difference between right and wrong, "An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue" is an Enlightenment classic, and solid look into how the human mind may work.

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