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The aesthetics of the invisible: George Berkeley and the modern aesthetics

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ABSTRACT

George Berkeley is usually not discussed in the canonical histories of modern aesthetics. Similarly, Berkeley scholars do not seem to have paid attention to his possible contribution to modern aesthetics. Berkeley exploited certain theoretical potentials of the emerging aesthetic experience that was invented and formulated especially by his contemporaries like Joseph Addison, Richard Steele and Lord Shaftesbury. He applied these elements in shaping a theologico-aesthetic language in the very same period when Francis Hutcheson and Alexander Baumgarten wrote their widely acclaimed first aesthetic theories in Europe. At the same time, Berkeley advances the linguistic and religious aspects of the modern aesthetic experience not in his theoretical, but in his pragmatical and popularizing writings. Instead of relying on a purely rational theology or a negative theology, he offers an ‘aesthetic’ one based on the model of the (always visible) beautiful and the (mysteriously invisible) sublime. Aesthetically, this meant a re-interpretation and re-configuration of the duality of the beautiful and the sublime – decades before Edmund Burke’s *Philosophical Enquiry*.

KEYWORDS

Aesthetics; history of aesthetics; George Berkeley

I.

The title of this essay could be the ‘Invisible Aesthetics’ as well, because George Berkeley is usually not discussed or not even mentioned in the canonical histories of modern aesthetics, neither in the most recent Anglo-American works,¹ nor in the classical ones.² Similarly, Berkeley scholars do not seem to have paid much attention to his possible contribution to modern aesthetics: most of them do not even mention the word ‘aesthetic’ – the *Cambridge Companion*³ could be a symptomatic example in this respect.⁴ Considering this relative silence in the scholarship, one can say that perhaps there is nothing to discuss here, Berkeley’s philosophy may have nearly nothing to do with aesthetics. I think, however, if we focus on the complex phenomenon of the aesthetic as emerging in the early eighteenth century by avoiding anachronistic historical patterns and the oversimplifications of certain comfortable narrations or definitions, we can discover that Berkeley’s certain writings contained and developed aesthetic ideas.

In this essay, I will offer an interpretation of some of Berkeley’s ideas and insights to show that he exploited certain theoretical potentials of the emerging aesthetic experience that was invented and formulated especially by his contemporaries like Joseph Addison, Richard Steele and Lord Shaftesbury. I will argue, furthermore, that Berkeley applied these elements in shaping a theologico-aesthetic language in the very same period when Francis Hutcheson and Alexander Baumgarten

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wrote their widely acclaimed first aesthetic theories in Europe, that is, in the decade between 1725 and 1735; although our bishop chose different genres and turned to different audience. As opposed to a proper ‘theory’ in the sense of academic treatises, his work rather belongs to the tradition of ‘the way of life’ philosophy.⁵ I will demonstrate that Berkeley was well aware of the new phenomenon of ‘the aesthetic’ from at least 1713 – when his *Three Dialogues* and his *Guardian* essays were published – onwards, and that he presented a full-fledged theologico-aesthetic *perspective* by the 1730s, especially in his *Alciphron*, as a response to some ardent theological and devotional issues.⁶ Instead of relying on a purely rational theology or a negative theology, he offers an ‘aesthetic’ one in which the Cudworthian distinction between conceivable and incomprehensible⁷ is reframed after the model of the (always visible) beautiful and the (mysteriously invisible) sublime. Aesthetically, this meant a re-interpretation and re-configuration of the duality of the beautiful and the sublime (decades before Edmund Burke’s *Philosophical Enquiry* of 1757), which was Berkeley’s new and original contribution to the evolution of ‘the aesthetic.’ His enterprise resulted in by no means an ‘autonomous discourse’ – that would be an anachronistic demand altogether in this period⁸ –, it was profoundly interwoven with his philosophy of language and his (popular) theology. In that regard, he advances the linguistic and religious aspects of the modern aesthetic experience which were implicit already in Steele’s and Addison’s essays on ‘aesthetics.’

It is also worth mentioning that Berkeley’s aesthetic or aesthetic-perceptual ideas had significant influence on both theory and art already in the eighteenth century. His fellow Irishman, Burke’s far-reaching aesthetic insights ‘Of Words’ as the Part V of his *Philosophical Enquiry*,⁹ in which Burke discusses the strong emotional effects of certain words, contrasting them with the weaker effects caused by mental images, owe a lot to Berkeley’s emotive theory of language.¹⁰ According to O’Donnell’s art historical analysis of John Smibert’s portraits of the 1720s, the Scottish artist’s own ‘Titianesque style’ was invented on the basis of Berkeley’s theory of perception as a representational alternative to the traditional linear perspective.¹¹ Moreover, beside his marginal annotations to Berkeley’s *Siris*, William Blake’s art in its continuous mental fight with the complex relationship between (and the mutual transformation of) words and images, between the invisible and the visible,¹² could be considered as a great artistic experiment that was at least partly inspired by Berkeley’s theologico-aesthetic thoughts. Even Blake’s idealist attitude in general can be interpreted as having a lot in common with Berkeley’s *esse est percipi*.¹³ The detailed philological proof of these claims would be beyond the scope of the current essay.

By the term ‘aesthetic’, I mean an essentially modern phenomenon (despite some of its inspirational sources in antiquity and humanism) which was interconnected with a much wider range of fields of knowledge than the majority of scholarship have acknowledged (such as natural sciences, rhetoric, theology, devotional literature, medicine, moral philosophy, social-political language of *délicatesse*, etc.). In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, ‘the aesthetic’ appeared on the scene as a new form of experience accompanied with strong emotions or affections in which the connection between the sensible and the transcendent was being re-established. The former was becoming the indispensable and constitutive framework for the latter, which differentiates the new ‘aesthetic’ experience from the traditional mystical one; and both the divine contents of this experience and the beholder’s self with his/her appropriate faculties and sensibilities were re-invented and re-shaped. Considering the applied vocabulary, at least two major (ideal)types of this new language appeared simultaneously: the one (the more philosophical, in a sense) relied on and advanced the classical *kalokagathia* tradition focusing on the conceptions of beauty, perfection, order, design (it seemed also fully compatible with the new discourse of physico-theology and the design argument in general), while the other was conceived in the framework of sensation, spirituality (mostly in the sense of spiritual exercises) and the emotive-habitual foundations of Christian faith. In this essay, I consider natural prospects, scenes and objects, even natural and everyday habits, activities as the *paradigmatic* examples of the rising aesthetic experience, instead of artworks and artistic creation or performances.

Addison is undoubtedly one of the first central figures of this emerging aesthetic discourse, whom Berkeley – having joined the London literary circle of Addison, Richard Steele, Jonathan Swift and Alexander Pope in 1713¹⁴ – called ‘a great philosopher, having applied himself to speculative studies more than any of the wits that I know’.¹⁵ To demonstrate Berkeley’s aesthetic interest, now I will refer mostly to Addison’s ‘aesthetic’ writings.¹⁶ His treatment of ‘the aesthetic’ is manifold: he approaches it as a special state of mind in his Cheerfulness essays (*Spectator*, Nos. 381, 387, 393); or as the everyday experience of ‘innocent pleasures’, which is made possible for us by a human faculty, ‘polite imagination’, in his ‘The Pleasures of the Imagination’ series (*Spectator*, Nos. 411–21); or as a walking in nature experience which eventually leads to mystical-theological insights on infinitude and eternity in his ‘Essays Moral and Divine’ (*Spectator*, Nos. 565, 571, etc.). And, of course, there are further significant essays by Steele¹⁷ who writes about a proto-aesthetic ‘Frame of Mind’ by means of which we can turn natural views into ‘Picture and Landskip’ (*Tattler*, No. 89), or about a special ‘Disposition’ of mind to be preserved for receiving ‘a certain Delight in all we hear and see’ (*Spectator*, No. 100), or about his *flânerie* in urban environment (*Spectator*, No. 454). And we could add to these examples Hutcheson’s three famous philosophical letters on laughter even if they were published in the *Dublin Weekly Journal* slightly more than a decade later.¹⁸ It was a very exciting and whirling time, when several authors were striving to find proper language and expression for a new type of experience, which, at the same time, they were inventing and shaping – and amongst these figures there was Berkeley who directly connected to this literature, even to this genre. This is why Berkeley too deals with the ‘aesthetic’ phenomenon mostly in dialogues and essays, and not in philosophical treatises (unlike, for example, Hutcheson, later Alexander Gerard, Lord Kames, Thomas Reid, Burke, etc.). The key-texts of the following discussion will be some of his *Guardian* essays, the second of his *Three Dialogues* and the seventh dialogue of his *Alciphron*.¹⁹

II.

Based on his reflections on various subjects like pleasure, happiness, education, philosophical manners, and the like, Berkeley seems rather to consider the new ‘aesthetic’ as a way of life for a Christian believer. The exercises of everyday life (from walking to conversation, and from pious practices to ‘occasional meditations’) were useful patterns for the emerging aesthetic experience. It was not simply the refusal of the reclusive contemplation of nature or art, rather it was an attempt to find an optimal balance between *vita contemplativa* and *vita activa*. Berkeley was embedded into the Latitudinarian theological-devotional tradition (cultivated by Isaac Barrow, John Tillotson, William Sherlock and John Scott, to mention just a few), and even into the Protestant ‘empiricist devotions’ originating from Joseph Hall, and later influentially popularized by Robert Boyle,²⁰ thus his aesthetic ideas emerged in a context in which both the emotive or affective side of human life and religious experience,²¹ and the model of everyday spiritual exercises were relevant features. Berkeley highly appreciated, for example, John Scott’s *Christian Life* written in 1681.²² This popular guide can well represent how this devotional tradition of ‘a way of life’ could become a fertile soil for the emerging aesthetic consciousness:

the Pleasure of all Acts, whether *Sensitive or Rational*, consisting [...] in the *Sprightfulness* and *Vigour* of them. [...] [E]ven in this *imperfect state* we find by experience [...] that the more perfectly we *Love* and *Adore*, &c, the more of *Heaven* we taste in these *Blessed Acts*, and that, when by a *long* and *constant* practice of them we have once rendered them *natural* to us, we enjoy such a *Heaven upon Earth* in the *easie*, *free* and *Vigorous* exercise of them, as we would not exchange for all the Pleasures and Felicities which the World can afford us ...²³

The stress on vivid experience, on tasting and on the available enjoyment of heaven on earth by means of habitual exercises can well demonstrate the affinity between devotional and the rising ‘aesthetic’ discourses.

In his 'Essay on the Pleasures Natural and Fantastical' (*Guardian*, No. 49), Berkeley was evidently inspired by some of Addison's 'aesthetic' essays (especially *Spectator*, Nos. 411–21 which were prefigured by Steele's *Spectator* No. 206) in several respects.²⁴ Its aim is to show the readers the right way of human life in which the greatest pleasures can be gained. Contrary to 'fantastical pleasures' of property, money, luxury, social rank, curiosity and the like, 'natural pleasures' do not depend on the sphere of taste and fashion, instead, 'we are prompted to natural pleasures by an instinct impressed on our minds by the Author of our nature'.²⁵ To keep alive and clear this inclination to the natural pleasures, which results in 'tranquillity and cheerfulness', is a fundamental principle which shapes both our everyday life and our afterlife.²⁶ These pleasures are 'suited as well to the rational as the sensual part of our nature', but the sensual ones are to be under the control of 'the rules of reason'.²⁷ Thus 'natural' means a beautiful harmony between the sensuous and the rational. While Addison mostly discussed the fields of certain natural scenes and prospects, architecture and belles-lettres in his Imagination series, Berkeley extends the sphere of 'the aesthetic' to urban scenes, to home interiors, to fair weather, to the walks by moonlight and finally to the presence of the Deity. The essay does suggest that the everyday 'aesthetic' series of natural pleasures inevitably ends in the experience of the divine being as their utmost perfection. This is a pleasure 'which naturally affects a human mind with the most lively and transporting touches', i.e. it is:

the sense that we act in the eye of infinite Wisdom, Power, and Goodness, that will crown our virtuous endeavours here, with a happiness hereafter, large as our desires, and lasting as our immortal souls. This is a perpetual spring of gladness in the mind. This lessens our calamities, and doubles our joys. Without this the highest state of life is insipid.²⁸

The actual 'aesthetic' experience of the presence of deity, without which everything would be tasteless or joyless, can be reached in the form of natural pleasures. Here, finally, we transcend the state of an Addisonian spectator when we become moral agent as well: 'we *act* in the eye of God. Contemplation and action, natural pleasures and Christian morality (with the direct references to the mysteries of afterlife and immortal soul) seem to be inseparable in the type of 'aesthetic' exercise Berkeley recommends.

Natural (and eventually rational) pleasures, in a beautiful harmony with Christian mysteries, maintain an active principle for a cheerful and tranquil life. 'Virtue has in herself the most engaging charms', Berkeley adds in *Guardian* No. 55, 'Christianity, as it places [virtue] in the strongest light, and adorned with all her native attractions, so it kindles a new fire in the soul, by adding to them the unutterable rewards which attend her votaries in an eternal state'.²⁹ It is an intriguing application of the traditional metaphors of 'light' and 'heat'³⁰ (of reason and passion, respectively), nevertheless this passage shows that the issues of virtue and Christian mysteries are discussed in an 'aesthetic' language: 'charms', 'attractions', 'unutterable' nature. Here, however, Berkeley does not utilize the vocabulary of beauty (or harmony, balance), but that of the *je-ne-sais-quoi* and the sublime. He does so in a way which does not yet reflect on the difference between the beauty of natural (rational) pleasures and the sublimity of the mysteries which are 'above reason'.³¹

In the second part of the *Three Dialogues*, Philonus gives Hylas a relatively long and almost enthusiastic declamation on the system of nature which may remind us of the influential and much longer apotheosis of the 'glorious nature' in the *Moralists* of 1709.³² In order to eliminate Hylas' physicalist view of our sensations and ideas by showing that his explanation leads to 'a mere dream', that is, to the conclusion that 'no sensible things have a real existence',³³ Philonus calls Hylas' attention to the 'noble and delightful scenes of all reality'.³⁴ Philonus relies not only – or we may even say: not primarily – on truth, but on the beauty of the whole system to be convincing in the demonstration of its reality. As if truth was not sufficient in itself, 'beauty' is needed in the very project of distinguishing delusions from real facts, or, in more 'aesthetic' terms, 'a false imaginary glare' from 'all the visible beauty of creation.'

Look! are not the fields covered with a delightful verdure? Is there not something in the woods and groves, in the rivers and clear springs that soothes, that delights, that transports the soul? At the prospect of the wide and

deep ocean, or some huge mountain whose top is lost in the clouds, or of an old gloomy forest, are not our minds filled with a pleasing horror? Even in rocks and deserts, is there not an agreeable wildness? How sincere a pleasure is it to behold the natural beauties of the earth! To preserve and renew our relish for them, is not the veil of night alternately drawn over her face, and doth she not change her dress with the seasons? How aptly are the elements disposed? What variety and use in the meanest productions of Nature?³⁵

Then he continues with the familiar arguments of design, harmony, contrivance which evidently demonstrate the existence of ‘the unseen Author of Nature’.

The listed natural views and prospects – fields, woods, rivers, mountains, ocean, deserts, forests, wilderness, etc. – and their ‘aesthetic’ affections and feelings come from several texts including Addison’s Imagination series (especially, No. 412, cf. his ‘aesthetic’ triad that can be applied here as *the beauty* of fields, *the sublime* of wild natural views and *the novelty* of the ever-changing face of nature); John Dennis’ letters on his Alpine travel with his famous phrases of ‘delightful horror, terrible joy’ contrasting with a mere ‘delight’ which is ‘consistent with Reason’;³⁶ Lord Shaftesbury’s above-mentioned hymn to Nature-Deity including ‘agreeable wildness’ and ‘gloomy forest’; and Cudworth’s Book 1, chapter 5 of *The True Intellectual System*³⁷ where the exact phrase of ‘pleasing Horror’ can be found in a context which is full of natural metaphors of sea, ocean and mountain, and concerns the conceivable yet incomprehensible nature of the absolutely perfect Being.³⁸ So there are many ‘aesthetic’ (or at least proto-aesthetic) subtexts behind this declamation, which, at the same time, still maintains that the passions and affections raised by these natural views are regulated by truth or reason (as it was the case in *Guardian* essay No. 49) within the framework of an aesthetics of beauty and harmony. By means of the beneficial co-operation of reason and passion we can grasp the reality (the presence of an active divine spirit) through our finite faculties. ‘Is not the whole system immense, beautiful, glorious beyond expression and beyond thought!’³⁹ Although he remains within the visual realm, Berkeley-Philonus expresses himself in a highly sensuous and quasi-aesthetic language.⁴⁰

Following his predecessors and contemporaries, Berkeley integrates the new aesthetic qualities of the great or the sublime and the novel as well into his description of nature-experience, and he also insists on its internal connection to the design argument or to the teleological explanation of nature in general. This comes at a price, however, namely that he ignores some significant differences, for example, the one detected by Dennis during his Alpine experience between the ‘delight [from a pastoral scene] that is consistent with Reason’ or even the ‘transporting Pleasures’ aroused by a mountain landscape which have been ‘design’d, and executed too in Fury’ and ‘the astonishing Prospect’ of the ‘not only vast, but horrid, hideous, ghastly Ruins’ of the Alps.⁴¹ In the 1710s, Berkeley still seems to maintain a scale, instead, to integrate different qualities with a rationally and visually graspable order. For example, in his ‘Essay on Minute Philosopher’ (*Guardian*, No. 70), he writes that ‘the Christian religion ennobleth and enlargeth the mind beyond any other profession of science whatsoever’; our mind adapts herself to the different nature and extension of her objects, so:

Astronomy opens the mind, and alters our judgement, with regard to the magnitude of extended beings; but Christianity produceth an universal greatness of soul. Philosophy encreaseath our view in every respect, but Christianity extends them to a degree beyond the light of nature.⁴²

It seems that science and philosophy are not transcended here, but ‘aesthetically’ extended, so to speak: the enlargement in quantity is accompanied by the improvement in quality. Here, the ‘beyond of the light of nature’ (i.e. the invisible, in a sense) does not become a real counterpart of the visible, rather it is an extension to the same direction where the modern science and philosophy are headed. Its direct precedence can be one of Addison’s Cheerfulness essays:

The Creation is a perpetual Feast to the Mind of a good Man, every thing he sees cheers and delights him ... [...] Natural Philosophy quickens this Taste of Creation, and renders it not only pleasing to the Imagination, but to the Understanding. [...] It heightens the Pleasures of the Eye, and raises such a rational Admiration in the Soul as is little inferiour to Devotion ...⁴³

Berkeley's 'aesthetic' approach to nature in the *Three Dialogues* and his *Guardian* essays seems also to result in 'a rational Admiration in the Soul' – but this was not the last phase even in Addison's essay.

In David Hume's *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* (written in the 1750s, but published only posthumously in 1779), Cleanthes, the moderate theist, having briefly unfolded a Berkeleian interpretation of the visual language of God,⁴⁴ says to the sceptic wit, Philo who is the sharp critic of natural religion:

Some beauties in writing we may meet with, which seem contrary to rules, and which gain the affections, and animate the imagination, in opposition to all the precepts of criticism, and to the authority of the established masters of art. And if the argument for theism be [...] contradictory to the principles of logic; its universal, its irresistible influence proves clearly, that there may be arguments of a like irregular nature ...⁴⁵

And this is the one and only moment during these conversations when Philo seems 'a little embarrassed and confounded', and leaves the argument without proper answer. Cleanthes here draws on the theory of a universal divine language and on the Longinian sublime (even though Hume mentions 'beauties in writing'). Instead of the speechless Philo, the 'orthodox' Demea reacts on this combined thesis,⁴⁶ and warns the dangerous closeness between our concepts and those of deity, by drawing on Peter Browne's mystical-agnostic view:

when we mention the supreme being, we ought to acknowledge, that their meaning [...] is totally incomprehensible; and that the infirmities of our nature do not permit us to reach any ideas, which in the least correspond to the ineffable sublimity of the divine attributes.⁴⁷

Demea was well aware of the Longinian nature of Cleanthes' argument, and soon pushed it into the extreme of the 'ineffable sublimity' of negative theology. Between the capitulation before the 'ineffable sublimity of the divine attributes' of the fideist and the paralysation of the witty sceptic facing the emotionally effective irregularities we may posit Berkeley's mature theologico-aesthetics.

III.

At the very end of the above-mentioned enthusiastic flight of imagination over the whole 'glorious nature', Lord Shaftesbury's philosophical enthusiast leads his interlocutor – and his readers – into a gloomy forest (Philonus, of course, would not do the same with Hylas) where 'horror seizes' us when 'the day diminished by the deep shades of the vast wood, which [...] spreads darkness and eternal night below.'

The faint and gloomy light looks horrid as the shade itself, and the profound stillness of these places imposes silence upon men [...]. Here space astonishes. Silence itself seems pregnant while an unknown force works on the mind and dubious objects move the wakeful sense. Mysterious voices are either heard or fancied, and various forms of deity seem to present themselves and appear more manifest in these sacred sylvan scenes ...⁴⁸

In this explicitly 'sublime' experience of 'unsociable places',⁴⁹ privations dominate: the lack of visibility and that of audibility, which, at the same time, raise extraordinary emotions, and the associations of the sacred, mystery and 'various forms deity'. Here, darkness and obscurity do not only function as background to highlight and exalt some bright part of the foreground: the whole scene is simultaneously horrid *and* attractive in and for itself. In this sylvan scene – whose Classical prototype could be Lucanus' ghastly grove hidden from the sun and devoted to ancient and unknown gods of terror, demanding human sacrifice⁵⁰ –, our familiar, rationally ordered, soberly enjoyable world is sinking, yet we reach the surprising conclusion (surprising indeed from a Stoic-Platonic philosopher): 'Even we ourselves, who in plain characters may read divinity from so many bright parts of earth, choose rather these obscurer places to spell out that mysterious being, which to our weak eyes appears at best under a veil of cloud'.⁵¹ Another way is opening here: beside the vision of the beautifully bright order of nature, there is a darker side which conceals a 'mysterious being' who is not available to our vision and our intellect, at the same time it is not a distant,

incomprehensible, mystical being but an *intensively tangible and sensuously mysterious one*. Berkeley develops his theologico-aesthetic ideas into the same direction, and speaks about – as we will see – the primary emotions of ‘love, hope, gratitude, and obedience’ of *the invisible*⁵² by the 1730s. With this, he advances Addison’s aesthetic model, too, which remains in the sphere of the visible establishing on images and the imagination. In a moral-theological context of his *Theory of Vision Vindicated* (1733), Berkeley sharply criticises Shaftesbury:

All that is said of a vital principle of order, harmony, and proportion; all that is said of the natural decorum and fitness of things; all that is said of taste and enthusiasm [by Shaftesbury], may well consist and be supposed, without a grain even of natural religion, without any notion of law or duty, any belief of a lord or judge, or any religious sense of a God; the contemplation of the mind upon the ideas of beauty, and virtue, and order, and fitness, being one thing, and a sense of religion another.⁵³

Although Shaftesbury maintains a Stoic version of natural religion, this criticism is fair, and especially the difference between the contemplation upon beauty, virtue, fitness of things and the sense of religion is crucial to us. To Berkeley, the latter is a necessary pre-condition of the former, and this difference seems to me to be the pattern of others like the theologico-aesthetic ones between visible and invisible, between images and words, eventually between beauty and sublimity.

Harmony, design, and contrivance in nature are much more convincing (rhetorically) concerning the existence and attributes of the divine being. God meant to delight us and not ‘to astonish’ us with his works. Reason harmonizes perfectly with beauty, while astonishment, awe, surprise have hardly any space and function with respect to an always-visible reality.⁵⁴ However, Lord Shaftesbury’s sylvan scene represents a new (aesthetic) approach to nature-deity, beyond rhetoric: the mysterious being in the depth of this sublime experience always appears ‘under a veil of cloud’ – and cannot be easily identified with the traditional image of the Author of nature who displays his design and intention in the visible beauties of creation.⁵⁵ This ‘mysterious being’ as appears in weird multiplied forms in the dark forest can be characterized as a strong presence of the godhead of power and will. In his *Siris* (1744), Berkeley speaks about the divinity of wisdom and omnipresent force in nature:

Why may we not suppose certain idiosyncrasies, sympathies, oppositions, in the solids, or fluids, or animal spirit of a human body, with regard to the fine insensible parts of minerals or vegetables, impregnated by rays of light of different properties, not depending on the different size, figure, number, solidity, or weight of those particles, nor on the general laws of motion, nor on the density or elasticity of a medium, but merely and altogether on the good pleasure of the Creator, in the original formation of things?⁵⁶

There is an abundance of means in the hands of God; his actions cannot be explained solely according to mechanical principles: ‘For although the general known laws of motion are to be deemed mechanical, yet peculiar motions of the insensible parts, and peculiar properties depending thereon, are occult and specific’.⁵⁷ Both the weird and irresistibly attractive presence of a ‘mysterious being’ in Shaftesbury’s sylvan scene and the unpredictable and unforeseen operations or communications of the godhead can be interpreted and appreciated from the theologico-aesthetic angle of the sublime (quasi-)invisible: the former opposes the transparency, brightness and distinctness of beauty, the latter the unifying and simplifying ‘gravitational’ force in the human ideal of beautiful order of nature.⁵⁸

As for his most significant and original contribution to modern aesthetics, Berkeley, on the one hand, radicalizes the lessons drawn from Shaftesbury’s mysterious sylvan experience in the sense that he does not simply lessen the visibility, but even eliminates it when speaking about the communication of strong and motivating affections and passions without the mediation of images. By doing so, he transforms the sublime into the invisible, and, on the other hand, he displays it as an indispensable principle of the everyday religio-aesthetic experience, and not as an occult extraordinary experience which makes us feel our desperate finitude and loneliness. Berkeley turns again to the nature and function of language. In already the ‘Introduction’ of the *Principles* of 1710, he outlines this new language theory, and claims that:

the communicating of ideas marked by words is not the chief and only end of language, as is commonly supposed. There are other ends, as the raising of some passion, the exciting to, or deterring from an action, the putting the mind in some particular disposition.⁵⁹

In the *Manuscript Introduction*, moreover, as Berman claims, Berkeley gives a richer description applying his ‘theory in detail to a religious mystery – the afterlife – and also suggests a mechanism – association or customary connection – whereby the non-cognitive words concerning the afterlife can evoke emotions, actions, and dispositions’.⁶⁰

In the fourth dialogue of his *Alciphron* (1732), Berkeley unfolds his cognitive theology to prove the existence of God, because, ‘in order to believe sensibly in mysteries such as the Holy Trinity and the grace of God we must, according to Berkeley, first believe that there is a God’.⁶¹ Based on his *New Theory of Vision* (1709) – which he re-revised and re-published with the first three editions of *Alciphron* –, Berkeley applies his optical language theory saying that ‘this Visual Language proves, not a Creator merely, but a provident Governor, actually and intimately present, and attentive to all our interests and motions’.⁶² Then, in the seventh dialogue, he elaborates in detail his emotive language theory in defence of the Christian mysteries against the attacks of free-thinkers.⁶³ In the case of human knowledge, words and signs often lead to philosophical problems – cf. ‘the deception of words’, ‘dress and incumbrance of words’, ‘curtain of words’⁶⁴ – to be solved, but in the case of the mysteries of the unseen Author of Nature (as Holy Trinity, grace, sin and future life), words gain great significance – become sublime in theologico-aesthetic sense.

According to Addison:

Words, when well chosen, have so great a Force in them, that a Description often gives us more lively Ideas than the Sight of Things themselves. [...] [T]he Poet seems to get the better of Nature; he takes, indeed, the Landskip after her, but gives it more vigorous Touches, heightens its Beauty, and so enlivens the whole Piece, that the Images, which flow from the Objects themselves, appear weak and faint, in Comparison of those that come from the Expression ...⁶⁵

Here the poet is capable of intensifying the visual experience in a special way; a more vivid, more abundant, more complete image appears in the eyes of the reader’s mind. Still, we remain within the sphere of visuality. While Berkeley insists that without exhibiting ideas, words are capable of ‘raising proper emotions, producing certain dispositions or habits of mind, and directing our actions in pursuit of that happiness which is the ultimate end and design, the primary spring and motive, that sets rational agents at work’,⁶⁶ also of suggesting the relation of things enabling us ‘to act with regard to things’, and of summoning ‘something of an active operative nature, tending to a conceived good’.⁶⁷

The significant words or signs of mysteries do ‘serve to regulate and influence our wills, passions, or conduct’ while not suggesting ideas; and their strong affections in themselves make men accept their terms as meaningful:

a man may believe the doctrine of the Trinity, if he finds it revealed in Holy Scripture that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are God, and that there is but one God, although he doth not frame in his mind any abstract or distinct ideas of trinity, substance, or personality ...⁶⁸

The proper impression of the Trinity on the mind produces ‘therein love, hope, gratitude, and obedience, and thereby becomes a lively operative principle, influencing his life and actions, agreeably to that notion of saving faith which is required in a Christian’.⁶⁹ This ‘lively operative principle’ is the sublime counterpart of – or framework for – the habit of ‘tranquillity and cheerfulness’ which support us throughout our lives – as Berkeley already wrote in his *Guardian* essay No. 49.⁷⁰ The thus re-shaped pair of the beautiful and the sublime began serving as the model for the pairs of image and word, the visible and the invisible, the transparent order of creation and the divine mysteries of life, natural affection and ‘the sense of religion’,⁷¹ cognitive theology and emotive-devotional everyday practice, as well as knowledge and faith: ‘Faith [...] is not an indolent perception, but

an operative persuasion of mind, which ever worketh some suitable action, disposition, or emotion in those who have it'.⁷²

In his highly influential *Laocoön* (1766), G. E. Lessing claims that it is 'erhabner Zug' (sublime breeze) to the ears when Virgil writes on the agonizing scream of the Trojan priest as 'clamores horrendos ad sidera tollit'. Whoever would want to find (or to imagine) 'schönes Bild' (beautiful image) upon this scene, does not understand the intention of the poet⁷³ – and the nature of poetical representation at all. A few years earlier, Burke too, in the fifth book of his *Philosophical Enquiry* (1757), makes it clear that:

eloquence and poetry are [...] much more capable of making deep and lively impressions than any other arts, and even than nature itself in very many cases. [...] [One of its reasons is that] many ideas have never been at all presented to the senses of any men but by words, as God, angels, devils, heaven and hell, all of which have however a great influence over the passions ...⁷⁴

'[C]lear expression' (through images), which regards the understanding, and 'strong expression' (through words only), which belongs to the passions, differ. What – in the cases of Lessing and Burke – is an almost purely aesthetic (artistic-representational) issue, was still a theologico-aesthetic one in Berkeley who deals with the divine language and not with the modes of artistic representation; with nature as conveyed in beautiful (ordered, harmonious, designed and transparent-visible) images, and the Christian mysteries experienced through the words of the invisible, and not with the differences between approaches and techniques of artists. Burke claims that verbal arts have a more profound effect than visual arts or even nature herself, Berkeley seems to suggest that the sublime words of mysteries constitute an inevitable framework within which even the beauties of nature can be rightly appreciated.

On the basis of Berkeley's 'aesthetic' ideas spread out in his essays, dialogues and popular philosophical writings, one can reconstruct a kind of applied aesthetics, on the one hand, and a kind of everyday aesthetics, on the other, which is tightly connected to everyday religious or devotional practices. He relied on a religious-spiritual layer, inherent in the nascent modern aesthetic experience, and eventually advanced its devotional and linguistic aspects into a new theologico-aesthetic perspective. Theologically his practical or pragmatological efforts focusing on the pious and aesthetic habits of life can be considered as a middle way between purely rationalistic theologies and fideist or negative theologies. From the point of view of the aesthetic, this resulted in a re-interpretation and re-configuration of the duality of the beautiful and the sublime – decades before Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry*.

Notes

1. Timothy M. Costelloe, *The British Aesthetic Tradition. From Shaftesbury to Wittgenstein* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Paul Guyer, *A History of Modern Aesthetics*, vol. 1, *The Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
2. For example, Benedetto Croce, *Estetica come scienza dell'espressione e linguistica generale. Teoria e Storia*, 3rd ed. rev. (Bari: Gius Laterza, 1908); Alfred Baeumler, *Das Irrationalitätsproblem in der Aesthetik und Logik des 18. Jahrhunderts bis zur Kritik der Urteilskraft* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967); Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, trans. Fritz C. A. Koelln and James P. Pettegrove (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1951); Monroe C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present: A Short History* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1975); Władysław Tatarkiewicz, *The History of Six Ideas. An Essay in Aesthetics* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff; Warszawa: PWN/Polish Scientific Publication, 1980).
3. Kenneth P. Winkler, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Berkeley* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
4. There are only a few exceptions. We can find some brief commentaries on Berkeley's concept of beauty elaborated – in the context of his criticism of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson – in the third dialogue of *Alciphron*, cf. e.g. J. O. Urmson, 'Berkeley on Beauty', in George Berkeley: *Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher in Focus*, ed. David Berman (London: Routledge, 1993), 179–84; Peter Kivy, *The Seventh Sense. Francis Hutcheson and Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetics*, 2nd ed. rev. and enlarged (Oxford: Clarendon, 2003), 134, 336;

- David Berman, *Berkeley and Irish Philosophy* (London: Continuum, 2005), 153–4. Recently, Tom E. Jones profoundly discussed Berkeley's theory of the value of artworks in the social world, including Berkeley's interest in the interaction between taste and market value, beyond *Alciphron* III, especially in his journals, letters and *The Querist*, cf. Tom Jones, 'George Berkeley and the Value of the Arts', 1650–1850: *Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era* 21 (2014): 89–108. And Oliver C. O'Donnell offered an interpretation of certain canvases of Berkeley's friend, John Smibert as examples of a kind of pictorial Berkeleyanism, cf. Oliver C. O'Donnell, 'Depicting Berkeleyan Idealism: A Study of Two Portraits by John Smibert', *Word and Image* 33, no. 1 (2017): 18–34. It is an essay to demonstrate a possible aesthetic (artistic) application of Berkeley's new theory of vision.
5. Cf. Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, trans. Michael Chase, ed. Arnold I. Davidson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995). It was a vivid philosophical manner (i.e. philosophy as a kind of spiritual exercise) amongst Berkeley's contemporaries like Lord Shaftesbury (cf. John Sellars, 'Shaftesbury, Stoicism, and Philosophy as a Way of Life', *Sophia* 55, no. 3 [2016]: 395–408), Steele (cf. Brian Michael Norton, 'The Spectator, Aesthetic Experience and the Modern Idea of Happiness', *English Literature* 2, no. 1 [2015]: 87–104, 96) or even Hutcheson (cf. his 1742 translation of Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* with James Moor). According to its philosophical or theological background, there were differences, of course, amongst them: beside the original Socratic-Stoic, the Protestant – notably Robert Boyle's 'meletetics' –, the Pietist, and the Jesuit versions were influential.
 6. During these two decades, Berkeley himself went through significant change, but I am not dealing with the details of his personal and spiritual development: in his new, monumental intellectual biography, Tom E. Jones offers its incomparably better description than I could do, cf. Tom Jones, *George Berkeley: A Philosophical Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021), e-book. – Jones' monograph was published after the completion of the manuscript of the current essay.
 7. Cf. Ralph Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, 2nd ed. (London: J. Walthoe, D. Midwinter, etc., 1743), 638.
 8. Both Hutcheson's and Baumgarten's aesthetics were deeply embedded in their moral philosophical and moral theological projects, cf. Simon Grote, *The Emergence of Modern Aesthetic Theory: Religion and Morality in Enlightenment Germany and Scotland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
 9. Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 4th ed. (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1764), 311–42.
 10. Cf. Dixon Wecter, 'Burke's Theory concerning Words, Images, and Emotion', *PMLA* 55, no. 1 (1940): 167–81, 174–7; Berman, *Berkeley and Irish Philosophy*, 131–2.
 11. O'Donnell, 'Depicting Berkeleyan Idealism', 21.
 12. Cf. W. J. Thomas Mitchell, *Blake's Composite Art. A Study of the Illuminated Poetry* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019), 14–33.
 13. Cf. Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry. A Study of William Blake* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1947), 14 and passim; Susan J. Wolfson, 'Blake's Language in Poetic Form', in *The Cambridge Companion to William Blake*, ed. Morris Eaves (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 63–84, 66–9.
 14. Cf. David Berman, *George Berkeley. Idealism and the Man* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 72–3; Jones, *George Berkeley*, 174–5.
 15. George Berkeley. *The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne*. Eds. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop. 9 vols. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1948–1957, 8: 63.
 16. Their relationship can hardly be characterized as a one-way influence, it was rather a mutual one in the 1710s, cf. Jones, *George Berkeley*, 174; Addison's "aesthetic" essays could be interpreted on the mirror of Berkeley's early philosophical treatises, even if Addison explicitly refers, for example, to John Locke or to Francis Bacon, and never to Berkeley. But now I put this issue apart.
 17. With whom Berkeley maintained the best relationship in the London circle.
 18. The *Dublin Weekly Journal* was James Arbuckle's (Hutcheson's friend's) enterprise from 1725 onwards: 'Arbuckle wanted to use the journal to introduce English "polish" to the minds of Irishmen'. Michael Brown, *Francis Hutcheson in Dublin, 1719–1730. The Crucible of his Thought*. (Dublin: Four Courts, 2002), 101. *The Spectator* of Addison (who was secretary to the viceroy Thomas, earl of Wharton in Dublin between 1708 and 1710, and whose co-editor was the Dublin-born Steele) meant to Arbuckle a cultural and political model to follow.
 19. Berkeley's 'immaterialist' position, elaborated in his early treatises, could also be interpreted as a kind of pan-aesthetic view. He writes in §149 of his *Principles*: 'It is therefore plain, that nothing can be more evident to any one that is capable of the least reflexion, than the existence of God, or a spirit who is intimately present to our minds, producing in them all that variety of ideas or sensations, which continually affect us, on whom we have an absolute and entire dependence, in short, *in whom we live, and move, and have our being*'. Berkeley, *The Works*, 2: 109. Berkeley obviously spiritualizes the sensation: we can already perceive the 'manifest tokens' of the divine presence as an ever-active spirit via the direct sense-perception of the world around us, hence the divine spirit is 'intimately present to our minds'. Our everyday experience seems eventually to be identical

- with a permanent spiritual experience, the scriptural words in italics (Acts 17: 28) seems to have become fully realized. Writing his several essays, sermons and dialogues (in which he never discusses his most radical philosophical theses), Berkeley tacitly acknowledges that more efforts are necessary than ‘the least reflection’ to persuade people in this issue. Nevertheless, ‘we live, and move’: the continuous spiritual and sensuous (everyday) exercise has nothing to do with any reclusive and solitary contemplation or utmost tranquillity, we do not need to climb any mountain to look around peacefully.
20. Cf. Courtney Weiss Smith, *Empiricist Devotions. Science, Religion, and Poetry in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2016), 86–9; Robert J. Mayhew, *Landscape, Literature and English Religious Culture, 1660–1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 109, 186.
 21. Cf. Dávid Bartha, ‘The Human Passions and the Purely Active Will of God: An Introduction to Berkeley’s Theory of Emotion’, in *The Concept of Affectivity in Early Modern Philosophy*, eds. Gábor Boros et al. (Budapest: ELTE–Eötvös, 2017), 221–39; Lisa M. Zeitz, ‘Addison’s “Imagination” Papers and the Design Argument’, *English Studies: A Journal of English Language and Literature* 73, no. 6 (1992): 493–503, 499–503.
 22. He mentions Scott in his letters (Berkeley, *The Works*, 8: 40; Marc A. Hight, ed., *The Correspondence of George Berkeley* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013], 534–5), whom Addison also praised in the following words: ‘That Excellent Author has shewn how every particular Custom and Habit of Virtue, in its own Nature, produce the Heaven, or a State of Happiness, in him who shall hereafter practise it’. *The Spectator*. Ed. Donald F. Bond. 5 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 4: 73.
 23. John Scott, *The Christian Life*, 4th ed. corr. (London: Walter Kettily, 1686), 13–14.
 24. Cf. Michael G. Ketcham, *Transparent Designs: Reading, Performance, and Form in the Spectator Papers* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985), 65–8.
 25. Berkeley, *The Works*, 7: 194.
 26. Not just Addison’s ‘aesthetic’ essays, but his *Spectator* enterprise in general can be interpreted in the light of his treatment of the afterlife as an extension, or ‘as a continuation of a trajectory begun on earth, an extension to its logical conclusion of a regimen of habits created in daily life’. Jacob Sider Jost, ‘The Afterlife and The Spectator’, *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 51, no. 3 (2011): 605–24, 606.
 27. Berkeley, *The Works*, 7: 194.
 28. *Ibid.*, 7: 196.
 29. *Ibid.*, 7: 199.
 30. Berkeley repeatedly uses them, cf. Bartha, ‘The Human Passions and the Purely Active Will of God’, 236–8.
 31. Berkeley, *The Works*, 4: 102.
 32. The Third Earl of Shaftesbury (Antony Ashley Cooper), *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, ed. Lawrence E. Klein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 298ff.
 33. Berkeley, *The Works*, 2: 210.
 34. *Ibid.*, 2: 211.
 35. *Ibid.*, 2: 210.
 36. John Dennis, *Miscellanies in Verse and Prose* (London: James Knapton, 1693), 134, 138. Berkeley’s letters to Alexander Pope from Italy echo some ingredients of Dennis’ description: ‘to enable a man [i.e. a poet] to describe rocks and precipices, it is absolutely necessary that he pass the Alps’. Berkeley, *The Works*, 8: 83. ‘Several fountains and rivulets add to the beauty of this landscape [of the island Inarime], which is likewise set off by the variety of some barren spots and naked rocks. But that which crowns the scene, is a large mountain rising out of the middle of the island, (once a terrible volcano, by the ancients called Mons Epomeus). Its [...] top is a sandy pointed rock, from which you have the finest prospect in the world, [...] this noble landscape [...] would demand an imagination as warm and numbers as flowing as your own, to describe it’. *Ibid.*, 8: 107–8.
 37. A two-volume *Abridgment* of Cudworth monumental work came to light in London in 1732.
 38. Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, 637ff.
 39. Berkeley, *The Works*, 2: 211.
 40. It is worth citing Nigel Everett’s comparison between Berkeley and his contemporary William Butler concerning their theological approach to nature: ‘Berkeley’s nature [in *Three Dialogues*] is much richer in visual impact and sensuous delight than Butler’s infinitely various but more mechanical universe. The world seems to exist to “recreate and exalt the mind” with the prospect of the beauty, order, extent, and variety of natural things. Berkeley rapturously and romantically describes the delightful verdure of fields, the soothing intricacy of woods and groves, the soul-transporting delight of rivers and clear springs. [...] An apparently endless sensual pleasure in nature is made a moral experience in the insistence that God has created nature and man’s faculty of vision to serve the mind’s “strong instinct for a better state, ... something unknown and perfective of its nature”’. Nigel Everett, *The Tory View of Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 18. Jones also quoted from this passage of Everett’s book, cf. Jones, ‘George Berkeley and the Value of the Arts’, 94.

41. Dennis, *Miscellanies in Verse and Prose*, 138.
42. Berkeley, *The Works*, 7: 208.
43. *The Spectator*, 3: 475.
44. '[N]o language can convey a more intelligible irresistible meaning, than the curious adjustment of final causes'. David Hume, *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, ed. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1947), 154.
45. *Ibid.*, 155.
46. It can remind us of §152 of *Principles*: 'the very blemishes and defects of Nature are not without their use, in that they make an agreeable sort of variety, and augment the beauty of the rest of the creation, as shades in a picture serve to set off the brighter and more enlightened parts'. Berkeley, *The Works*, 2: 111.
47. Hume, *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, 157.
48. Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, 316.
49. *Ibid.*
50. Cf. Lucanus, *Pharsalia*, III, 399–425.
51. Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, 316. Only after this point of the dialogue, one can find the phrase 'mysterious beauty' of nature (*Ibid.*, 317, 320).
52. By 'the invisible' I mean only the mental representation of certain existentially significant words, as we will see, and not invisibility in general; there are several further invisible issues in Berkeley's philosophy: other spirits (e.g. Berkeley, *The Works*, 2: 107), abstract general ideas (e.g. in the later omitted three sections of *Alciphron* III. vii, cf. George Berkeley, *Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher in Focus*, 121–4), the vital flame or animal spirit in man (e.g. Berkeley, *The Works*, V: 84), the 'invisible elementary fire, or animal spirit of the world' (*Ibid.*, V: 106), etc.
53. *Ibid.*, 1: 252–3; cf. also 3: 131.
54. 'It may indeed on some occasion be necessary, that the Author of Nature display his overruling power in producing some appearance out of the ordinary series of things. Such exceptions from the general rules of Nature are proper to surprise and awe men into an acknowledgement of the Divine Being: but then they are to be used but seldom, otherwise there is a plain reason why they should fail of that effect'. *Ibid.*, 2: 68.
55. The former will be aesthetically exploited and generalized by Burke: he characterizes this experience with horror and astonishment, a pleasing kind, of course, and offers examples which are silent, obscure, dark, nightly and horrid. Encountering with this type of sublime scenes, the soul is not elevated, not even extended, but shrunk in (delightful) terror, and senses her own utmost solitude – and the utmost foundation of her existence.
56. Berkeley, *The Works*, 5: 115.
57. *Ibid.* I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer of my paper to remind me of these passages of *Siris*.
58. Of course, after the suggested ascent to the 'First Mover, invisible, incorporeal, unextended, intellectual source of life and being', this quasi-aesthetic perspective will change – become purely intelligible: 'proceeding still in his analysis and inquiry, [a curious inquirer] ascends from the sensible into the intellectual world, and beholds thing in a new light and a new order, he will then change his system, and perceive that what he took for substances and causes are but fleeting shadows; that the mind contains all, and acts all, and is to all created beings the source of unity and identity, harmony and order, existence and stability'. Berkeley, *The Works*, 5: 137.
59. *Ibid.*, 2: 37.
60. Berman, *George Berkeley*, 145.
61. *Ibid.*, 134.
62. Berkeley, *The Works*, 3: 160.
63. From the perspective of our reconstruction, the issue of what the role of the emotive language theory was in Berkeley's philosophy in general is irrelevant.
64. Cf. Berkeley, *The Works*, 2: 39–40.
65. *The Spectator*, 3: 560.
66. Berkeley, *The Works*, 3: 307.
67. *Ibid.*
68. *Ibid.*, 3: 297.
69. *Ibid.*
70. As earlier too Addison writes: 'how great a Tendency there is to Cheerfulness in Religion, and how such a Frame of Mind is not only the most lovely, but the most commendable in a virtuous Person. [...] The Contemplation of the Divine Being, and the Exercise of Virtue, are in their own Nature so far from excluding all Gladness of Heart, that they are perpetual Sources of it'. *The Spectator*, 4: 254.
71. Berkeley, *The Works*, 1: 253.
72. *Ibid.*, 3: 301. One of the textual sources of this quotation can be Addison's essay on the proper means to strengthen faith in the mind of man. Here he mentions a method between morality and reclusive meditation:

‘There is still another Method which is more *Persuasive* than any of the former [including Morality], and that is an habitual Adoration of the Supreme Being, as well in constant Acts of Mental Worship, as in outward Forms. The Devout Man does not only believe, but feels there is a Deity’. *The Spectator*, 4: 143 – my emphasis, E. Sz.

73. Cf. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoon. An Essay upon the Limits of Painting and Poetry*, trans. Ellen Frothingham (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1887), 20–1.
74. Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, 335–6.

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