

Taste and Memory in Edmund Burke's
A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful

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I. 前書き

18世紀イギリスの政治家エドモンド・バーク (Edmund Burke) は、その後の美の哲学に多大な影響を及ぼした。本稿は、彼の著作である『崇高と美の観念の起原』(1757)における記憶の役割を分析対象とするが、これは筆者による研究の2番目の、かつ最後の部分である。現在バークを感覚論者とする見方が有力であるが、この点についても本論文では再検討している。バークは彼の芸術論において、18世紀の特にスコットランド啓蒙主義の理想に従い、趣味判断の合理的根拠について論じている。彼はとりわけ我々の趣味は単に主観的なものであり、また人によって様々であるように思われるが、それは単純に我々が年齢を重ねるにつれ嗜好が不自然な連合作用によって攪乱されるためであるという。しかし、我々がバークの述べる「十分な記憶 (*sufficient remembrance*)」を通して自然的な快の原因を想起するとしても、この自然的な原因は我々の趣味判断を規制する普遍的な基準として機能する。本稿では、バークのこの主張について様々な角度から検討した。

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I. Preface

In keeping with the ideals of the eighteenth century and the Scottish Enlightenment in particular, Edmund Burke argues for the existence of rational grounds for the determination of taste in discussions of art. Burke argues that our tastes appear to be merely subjective and to vary widely from person to person only because, as we mature, our tastes are compromised by unnatural associations. However, could we, through what Burke calls sufficient remembrance, recall the natural causes of pleasure, these

natural causes would serve as a universal standard by which to regulate our judgments in matters of taste. My essay explores implications of this argument and rejects the characterization of Burke's conception of taste as being wholly based on sensations. It is the second and final part to my exploration of the role of memory in Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*.

II. The Memory of Natural Sensations

In "The Notion of Sufficient Remembrance in Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*,"¹ I draw attention to an aspect of Burke's writings on taste that, however marginal in appearance, plays an important role within Burke's overall argument. What Burke refers to as a sufficient remembrance plays a mediating role whose conception helps Burke to tie together the various faculties of the mind as Burke describes them, namely, sensibility, imagination, and judgment. As Burke says, "There is in all men a sufficient remembrance of the original natural causes of pleasure, to enable them to bring all things offered to their senses to that standard, and to regulate their feelings and opinions by it" (16, my emphasis).² Although Burke identifies the notion of sufficient remembrance explicitly in only this one passage from the Introduction on Taste, since only such remembrance is capable of assuring such a standard and regulation, it is worth exploring not only of what it consists and how exactly it functions, but also how specifically it relates to the faculties of the mind. In carrying out this interrogation, it becomes clear that the notion of sufficient remembrance is implied throughout Burke's Introduction on Taste. That is, without asserting that Burke consciously works out a full-blown concept, that "sufficient remembrance" itself constitutes a technical term, or that it represents a special category of memory, if one explores the implications of Burke's insistence on the universal function of memory (i.e., sufficient remembrance) with respect to his overall views on taste, one can no longer assert, in line with numerous other readers, that Burke's writings on taste are thoroughly "sensationalist."³ One cannot defend the idea that Burke holds that judgments of taste are merely the product of physical sensations. Rather, one must confront the role that memory plays in capturing original sensations and in sustaining their mediated relation with the faculties.

Since sufficient remembrance retains *exact* and not merely similar copies of original, natural sensations, it allows for a retention or renewed encounter of the same, but only as mediated by the faculties. Its mediation is the process or means by which the faculties relate to one another. In this mediation, remembrance plays a distinct role. The explicit reason Burke gives for rejecting the idea that taste, ensured by remembrance, constitutes a faculty in itself is that it appears to combine within itself elements of the three distinct faculties:

On the whole it appears to me, that what is called Taste, in its most general acceptance, is not

a simple idea, but is partly made up of a perception of the primary pleasures of sense, of the secondary pleasures of the imagination, *and of the conclusions of the reasoning faculty, concerning the various relations of these*, and concerning the human passions, manners and actions. (23, my emphasis)

We see here the relational function, the fact that taste concerns "the various relations of these" (faculties), which relations are clearly distinct from judgment's proper objects of attention—namely, human passions, manners, and actions. Thus, sufficient remembrance would not itself be a faculty. In what follows, I will make explicit its implicit characterization as a retained sensation by means of which the faculties relate to one another.

Consider, first, that in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*,⁴ John Locke also invokes remembrance by contrasting it with recollection. One could speculate whether Burke reactivates this distinction and whether his contemporaries would have seen, and if today we should see, in Burke's idea of sufficient remembrance a harkening back to Locke, who writes: "The same *idea*, when it again recurs without the operation of the like object on the external sensory, is *remembrance*; if it be sought after by the mind, and with pain and endeavor found, and brought again in view, it is *recollection*."⁵ However tempting this possible allusion to Locke, it is difficult to substantiate since, for Burke, the recurrence of the *like* object is not what engages sufficient remembrance but rather the repetition, in remembrance, of the *same* object or idea, if not simply one that is assuredly natural or original and not associative in nature. Nonetheless, this Lockean distinction between, on the one hand, the ease of a spontaneous, inward response to an exterior stimulus and, on the other, the arduous workings of a mind attempting to summon objects not immediately available to it, is not without resonance for Burke's treatment of sufficient remembrance. It points to the oscillating, if implicit, characterization of sufficient remembrance as being, at times, an innate capacity operating independently of the faculties and, at others, an operation dependent on a discerning judgment built through trial and error; at times, an innate process whose infallible nature would require it to take place simply and naturally (in accordance with the things that it is supposed to retain), and at others, a versatile and possibly protracted and heavily documented investigation into others' pains and pleasures, habits, distempers, prejudices, and like associations. From this perspective, we can say that sufficient remembrance, as a universal capacity, is what makes the *Enquiry* possible; but, at the same time, is what the *Enquiry* must mobilize by gathering for public consideration the pains and pleasures of a certain category of eighteenth-century British men—which sensations are, of course, presumed by Burke to be universal.

The insoluble tension between the ease or immediacy of a given process or capacity and its arduous and necessarily partial and incomplete mobilization through philosophical inquiry is everywhere in evidence in the *Enquiry*. Consider, for instance, that to counter certain Platonic and neoclassical, utilitarian assumptions concerning proportionality, it takes Burke four sections of the *Enquiry* to

demonstrate that proportionality does not belong in the catalogue of natural causes of beauty (92-104). Proportion, recalls Burke, like all ideas of order, concerns convenience and the understanding and so is not primarily of the senses; it is not recorded simply and naturally in sensibility; its commerce with the faculties is thus only partial. Proportion favors judgment disproportionately. This argument reveals the necessary, but not sufficient, empiricism of Burke's approach. Indeed, Burke often stresses the ease and simplicity of the operation by which sensibility is fed. This simplicity or even automaticity would appear to pre-empt or skirt judgment itself: "It is not by the force of long attention and enquiry that we find any object to be beautiful; beauty demands no assistance from our reasoning; even the will is unconcerned; the appearance of beauty as effectually causes some degree of love in us, as the application of ice or fire produces the ideas of heat or cold" (92). However, a few sentences after Burke states that the "*true standard of the arts is in every man's power*; and an *easy* observation of the most common, sometimes of the meanest things in nature, will give the truest lights, where the greatest sagacity and industry that slight such observation, must leave us in the dark, or what is worse, amuse and mislead us by false lights," he portrays himself as a pioneering laborer of the mind who, despite avowed shortcomings, has ventured into profound and precarious, yet likely provisional ruminations: "A man who works beyond the surface of things, though he may be wrong himself, yet he clears the way for others, and may chance to make even his errors subservient to the cause of truth" (54, my emphases). Exercising a sufficient remembrance in order, for instance, to identify the natural causes of beauty, can thus appear *either* as immediate and universal as reacting to a sudden sensation of excessive temperature *or* as time-consuming and particular as examining sensations by means of a philosophical treatise. Moreover, Burke's scientific ambition of improving the standard of sufficient remembrance suggests that, despite his reliance on the idea of universal sensibility, Burke here allows that what he calls sensibility can be altered across or within generations and cultures and even individuals. Analogously, for Burke, taste, the most reliable of standards, would not only have to answer to another standard; it would itself be transformable.

III. The Three Aspects of Taste

We can now further define Burke's conception of taste and explore the relation between it and sufficient remembrance. Burke appears to employ the word taste in three distinct ways. Its first signification is simply the *sense* of taste, as distinguished from the other four, conventionally understood senses. Burke employs this signification to exemplify the certainty that characterizes all senses by arguing that what is sour to one is sour to all others and that, moreover, everyone understands in the same way all metaphors that are based on this taste. Secondly, there is the signification of taste that concerns "those faculties of the mind which are affected with, or which form a judgment of the

works of imagination and the elegant arts" (13); which is to say, sensibility and judgment. This is the broadest sense of taste; Burke feels that it has been treated imprecisely, thus leading to skepticism and indifference which, in turn, have contributed to its not being understood as well as "mere reason" (11-12). In light of my analysis of sufficient remembrance, it is not surprising to find that there is a third signification of taste in the Introduction that offers, as it were, a reconciling link between sensibility and judgment, which faculties would otherwise be left at odds with one another. It is precisely Burke's original understanding of taste that serves to show that the determinations of the second faculty (judgment) are based on the unshakable principles of the first—sensibility in general, including the senses, properly speaking, and the realm of imagination—while remaining independent from them. *Based on but independent from* sensations: this interdependence is facilitated by sufficient remembrance. It accounts for what Tom Furniss calls Burke's "oscillation" between reliance on and distrust of fixed laws. We can locate this oscillation even in the first signification of taste (as one of five senses). Burke refers to taste as the most ambiguous of the five senses since its pleasures do not, like those of sight, "acquiesce in themselves," but are formed "by degrees, and by the force of . . . associations" (15).

The curious implication of taste's associative formation is that the sense of taste serves both as an exception to Burke's argument and as its privileged example. Certainty is derived from the universal and natural experience of taste, but taste, since it lacks autonomy and naturalness in its very formation, is at the same time an exception to the universally uniform experience of the senses. Burke's argument concerning the universally-recognized figurative import of "taste" only pushes this paradox a step further by making the universal character of taste depend upon the presumably universally understood metaphors that are drawn from it: "Here [when men taste various tastes] there is no diversity in their sentiments; and that there is not appears fully from the consent of all men in the metaphors which are taken from the sense of Taste" (14). This argument appears shortly after Burke's statement that, "[the] term Taste, *like all other figurative terms, is not extremely accurate*: the thing which we understand by it, is far from a simple and determinate idea in the minds of most men, and it is therefore liable to uncertainty and confusion" (12, my emphasis). Such mistrust of figurative language does not prevent Burke from arguing for the universality of taste by claiming that figurative expressions involving the sense of taste are understood universally in the same way.

Given this structure of being at once based on and independent from sensations, taste in the third signification not only encompasses aspects of taste understood as a sense (alongside the other senses) but also serves as the relation on the basis of which all debates concerning taste in the second signification (judgment) are waged and, ultimately, subject to regulation and consensus. It is with this nuanced approach to taste that Burke attempts to out-step the traditional skepticism in, among other possible areas, discussions of the arts. The debates over personal taste that had appeared hopelessly subjective and private can now be seen as based on, but not wholly reduced to, universally shared principles.

Rather than rest on an unqualified appeal to sensations, the resolution of differences in taste becomes a matter of the understanding or judgment insofar as judgment acts independently of the principles that serve as its grounding so as better to preserve these principles as its own ground. Assuming, then, along with Burke, that the taste (sensibility) of the participants in a debate is not damaged or corrupted, the "wrong taste" (poor judgment) is easily revealed by taste in the third signification as a deficiency of judgment. Consider that Burke allows for a defect of judgment that "may arise from a natural weakness of understanding . . . or, which is much more commonly the case, . . . from a want of proper and well-directed exercise, which alone can make it strong and ready" (24). In cases where judgment itself proves untested or naturally weak, one needs to judge judgment as being one or the other and it appears that sufficient remembrance alone is capable of doing so. On this point, we recall that solving a debate over differences in taste is first a matter of determining who has more knowledge and experience in regard to a specific object. In Burke's own expression, "critical Taste does not depend upon a superior principle in men, but upon superior knowledge" (19). Superior knowledge, however, can be superior only insofar as, spurred on by the resemblance-happy enthusiasm of imagination, it exhibits both the remembrance of initiatory or ordinary sensations (available in equal proportions to all) and the capacity of distinction that characterizes judgment. This melding, which retains the differentiated and conflictual relation of the faculties, must rely on sufficient remembrance; it is the grounding of what Burke calls "Taste by way of distinction" or "Taste by consideration" (23, 26). Sufficient remembrance thus becomes synonymous with this third, mediating, and partially reconciling role that we find explicated by means of the elusive name "taste" (in the inclusive, third sense) and reveals that not only is judgment grounded on the common principles of sensibility, but that sensibility's common principles cannot be known as such but through the always retroactive or deferring action of judgment. In short, the faintest or purest sensation of taste entails mediation and conflict.

In light of the likeness between taste in the third sense and sufficient remembrance, many of the apparent or real contradictions in Burke's conception of the faculties can be viewed otherwise than as logical blunders or, as in Tom Furniss' discussion, symptoms of bourgeois ideology (although they may be seen to have elements of each of these). Sufficient remembrance helps to maintain and even gathers within itself, so as better to regulate, the conflictual, contradictory nature of the faculties. Burke's more or less happy solution to the paradoxical nature of taste maintains the fragile structure of the faculties by positing an infallible remembrance.

Although sensations are privileged in Burke's structural conception of the faculties, sensations alone provide neither an exclusive, infallible, nor reductive foundation for human emotions or passions. Thus, what some call Burke's "uncompromising" or "radical" sensationism is not entirely sensationist. The very term "sensationism" can lead to a simplistic view of a theory of passions whose conception of the faculties leaves sensations with an important but hardly autonomous role. If imagination, the second

faculty, is affected in every case precisely as our senses are, it is nonetheless sufficient remembrance that, by incorporating, mimicking, or even anticipating certain discriminating aspects of judgment, brings the conflicting faculties of sensibility and judgment into a productive relation. In this relation, judgment flourishes and continually refines itself through experience but, aided by sufficient remembrance, remains grounded in the unchanging and nearly universal principles of sensibility. To demonstrate this non-facultative element's capacity to assure the faculties such a productive relation is the only way to account rigorously for the phenomenon by which, for Burke, taste can be regulated according to universally shared sensations despite its being continually educated and altered through customs, habits—in a word, associations. Burke's distinct conception leaves the faculties no less conflictual. Analyzing this notion of sufficient remembrance helps to single out the paradoxical status of taste as Burke conceives it: a non-faculty, it is nonetheless a reliable standard by which to regulate one's feelings. At the same time, however, it partakes in the discriminating powers of judgment and so, like judgment, can be altered. Through experience it can come into its own and be improved—or not. Thus, as a standard by which to regulate feelings, it is itself subject to regulation. As a reliable standard, it is itself subject to a standard (of sufficiency, if not also of strength). As that which keeps distinct the objects considered proper to judgment and imagination, respectively, it also keeps the ever-changing and corruptible assertions of judgment within reach of a standard that is deemed to be universal.

We can now appreciate the interdependence of the faculties as it is marked in the preliminary definition of taste: "I mean by the word Taste no more than that faculty, or those faculties of the mind, which are affected with, or which form a judgment of the works of imagination and the elegant arts" (13). It is noteworthy that, given this, the "most general idea of the word," readers of Burke reduce the faculties to a purely receptive sensibility or to an "extreme empiricism" that "purchases its lucidity at the price of the notion of human freedom, as all human action is described as a mechanical response to external stimuli."⁶ By contrast with this assessment, we note that not only are all the "faculties of the mind" engaged, so as to be conceivable as a single faculty, but they are described as both receptive (sensibility) and formative and enterprising (judgment). Without the faculty of judgment, we are left with only a partial rendering of the general idea of taste. As for the emphasis on "works of imagination and the elegant arts" to which the faculties respond, Burke has been criticized for what Remy G. Saisselin calls his "naturalistic fallacy, or, the confusion of beauty in nature with beauty in art, a confusion made possible because of the positing of aesthetic pleasure on a sensationist philosophy."⁷ Saisselin sees in this very "confusion" the only real invention in British aesthetic theory of the eighteenth century. Whether or not his assessment concerning the history of aesthetics is a sound one, it is worth noting that the very fallacy Saisselin speaks of underscores an undeniable link between the notion of taste, the faculties, and the methodology of the *Enquiry* as a whole. My view is that the *Enquiry's* strength comes from its not limiting itself to aesthetics in a narrow sense—to a discourse on fine arts, founded on the ideas of beauty

and sublimity, or to one structured on a division between art and nature. It is not surprising, then, that, for Burke, the question of taste is a question of perception generally and that we find in the *Enquiry* passages that provide explicit guidelines for the operation of taste as sufficient remembrance, as Burke later named the operation in his Introduction on Taste. Consider, for instance, that in Part Three, which inquires primarily into objects of beauty that affect our passions, Section II, "Proportion not the cause of Beauty in Vegetables," Burke writes that,

If proportion be one of the constituents of beauty, it must derive that power either from some natural properties inherent in certain measures, which operate mechanically; from the operation of custom; or from the fitness which some measures have to answer some particular ends of conveniency. (93)

We can see how these categories relate to Burke's discussion of taste. The emphasis on the mechanical operation of natural properties refers to the properties' simplicity, autonomy, and naturalness. Rather than restrict our judgments to responding "mechanically" to sensations, they assure the arrival in sensibility of properties uncontaminated by secondary considerations. Custom and convenience, for their part, concern judgment eminently and it is sufficient remembrance that assists judgment, in this case, in identifying convenience as the real cause of the false idea, which is perpetuated through custom, that proportion is the cause of beauty in vegetables or animals. In another passage, Burke says that "if proportion does not operate by a natural power attending some measures, it must be either by custom, or the idea of utility; there is no other way" (101). To a surface reading, it would not appear that remembrance is involved in Burke's various depictions of his methodology (cf. 93-94); but, as we have seen, the identification and retention of the natural, as distinguished from custom, utility, and all other associations, requires a sufficient remembrance, one whose very sufficiency preserves the inquiry from the vagaries of customs, habits, and like associations. It helps one to locate natural objects that may participate in sameness or homogeneity with other natural objects and to respond to them accordingly (naturally). By incorporating or mimicking aspects of both sensibility and judgment while remaining distinct from each and, thus, essentially non-facultative, sufficient remembrance ensures that natural and original sensations are disjoined from associations. It is therefore an essential part of Burke's methodology.

IV. Understanding the Origin

We must now take into account the fact that in Section II of Part Three of the *Enquiry* Burke appears strained to exclude associations from natural pleasures. This section has been considered a point of collapse in Burke's "sensationalist" argument, a point at which his "sensationalist aesthetics" can no longer maintain a foundational exclusion of associations.⁸ As I will argue, in light of his conception of taste (i.e., the relations of the faculties and the nature of human experience), it is understandable

that Burke's "rejection" of associations not appear categorical. The importance of this section, entitled "Association," is that it provides us with a new basis on which to question the role of remembrance and thus the nature of the origin to which it relates. The brief section, comprised of four sentences, begins with Burke showing less confidence in the power of sufficient remembrance to disentangle associations from original, natural pleasures when he remarks that, "besides such things as affect us in various manners according to their natural powers, there are associations made at that early season, which we find it very hard afterwards to distinguish from natural effects" (130)⁹. For one, the imbalance of the faculties, sensibility's apparent predominance in an individual's early years, appears to have menacing consequences to the *Enquiry* itself. As a time of heightened sensibility and untested or undeveloped judgment, youth appears particularly vulnerable to associations. Can a universal standard of taste rely on a type of memory that, in certain passages of the *Enquiry*, is of one's earliest and, from an adult's perspective, most remote experiences? If remembrance upholds the structure of the faculties' relations, do these uncertainties not compromise the faculties' natural or nearly universal and thoroughly reliable character? Burke appears to have such questions in mind when he concedes that,

It is no small bar in the way of our enquiry into the cause of our passions, that the occasion of many of them are given, and that their governing motions are communicated at a time when we have not capacity to reflect on them, *at a time of which all sort of memory is worn out of our minds.* ¹⁰ (*Ibid.*, my emphasis)

Burke here takes into account a developmental understanding of the faculties and, in particular, of judgment. What are the consequences of the fact that the origin appears to be recorded and retained at a time when judgment has not been strengthened; at a time, moreover, that remembrance would seem pressed to retain sufficiently? If what, today, is called infantile amnesia sets in, what happens to the years of stocking, for their reactivation and recombination, natural and original impressions? If they are lost as such, through a failure or weakness of memory, how could one *disassociate* them from subsequent habits or distempers, to preserve them from the realm of associations? Such natural and original impressions would appear impossible to retrieve but by association (in the modern, non-Burkean sense of the word, but with the same implication that the origin would be lost in its simplicity, autonomy, and naturalness). Furthermore, although the standard of sufficient remembrance is described as common to all men, it would appear deficient among boys and girls or with respect to one's own youth. It is not until experience has informed, or formed, judgment that judgment takes advantage of the standard in order to legitimize its own assertions on the basis of sensibility's unwavering principles; that is, unless Burke would allow sufficient remembrance to make judgments independently and without respect for judgment itself—a possibility I will return to. Indeed, although the section from which this passage comes is read as an acknowledgment on Burke's part of the inevitable incursion of associations, what Burke seems most concerned with is the possibility of unregulated faculties. The

main question raised by Burke's evocation of the "early season" is this: once the memory of youth is worn out, is not also its very sufficiency, that is, the quality by virtue of which it secures the pertinence of imagination's common principles for the widely variable judgment and thereby lays the grounds for a rational treatment of critical taste? In the face of this question, and in a concluding gesture of this section that is often overlooked, Burke unflappably insists on the methodological necessity of seeking natural causes first. The prevalent sensationist portrait of the *Enquiry*, in which sensibility is supposed to reign supreme and unregulated, seeks its confirmation in a section that presumably marks sensationism's defeat, but Burke's concern here for the possible deficiency of judgment and memory only confirms the essential roles they play throughout the *Enquiry*. Indeed, rather than appear as an awkward or embarrassing concession to "associationism," the section appears to be directed at reconfirming Burke's methodological principle, which is to say, his quest for the natural origin. Burke's presumption is not that the natural causes must be assumed to be primary solely for expedient reasons; it is rather that this methodological choice is necessitated by the fact that the associative is derived from the natural. As a derivation, it would be inappropriate for it to be placed first; but, at the same time, it participates in the nature of that from which it must be excluded on methodological grounds and so its exclusion, however necessary or radical, cannot remove it from the continuum to which it belongs. In a way that accords with Burke's monotheistic metaphysics—his assumption that there is *one* nature or one arch-origin of all powers and passions—the associative, rather than appear separately, or from without, as a corruption or aberration or heterogeneous menace to the natural, finds the very source of its strength in the natural causes it threatens to obscure. Thus, Burke writes that "it would be absurd . . . to say that all things affect us by association only, since some things must have been originally and naturally agreeable or disagreeable, *from which the others derive their associated powers*" (130-131, my emphasis).¹¹ In other words, all powers are by nature one, and we can recall in this respect the image Burke provides of God, the sovereign arch-origin of all passions, seated upon a throne, inaccessible to human inquiry (129). We can recall as well Burke's allowing for various passions to exhibit distinctions of degree, of measure, and of intensity, but never distinctions more substantial than that of the natural and the unnatural. At the same time, it follows that even the commanding distinction between the natural and the associative must be merely relative with respect to the arch-origin or arch-power. That is, even when Burke discusses the faculties as being radically distinct natural powers, he conceives them as being derived in different ways or at different removes from the power of God. Sensation and imagination would thus be deemed original and natural derivations, whereas judgment would be a derivation distant enough from the arch-origin as to straddle the line between the natural and the unnatural. Although its operation is "simple" and its power is deemed "natural," judgment is too much of an acquired faculty, too much a product of experience, to be derived purely, simply, naturally, or, as Burke says of sensations, mechanically. Associations are thus merely derivations of natural sensations, which is to say, distant derivations of so

many origins which themselves derive from a single arch-origin.

Burke's reflections on the "early season" compel us to return again to the analysis of sufficient remembrance. *Either* remembrance as it appears in youth or in inexperienced individuals—assuming it does—suffers from a lack of judgment, is thereby rendered deficient, and thus, despite Burke's efforts to make them appear valid, the universal grounds for taste are no longer assured; *or* sufficient remembrance exhibits powers of distinction known to characterize judgment while not, in fact, requiring judgment's full development in order to exhibit these powers. It would thus be like judgment in a certain respect but remain independent from it and, being steadfast and ever-present, even predate judgment. In this light, sufficient remembrance would be a kind of judgment before the faculty of judgment is formed. As curious as this implication may appear, only with such autonomy for sufficient remembrance could Burke's universalist conception of taste escape debilitating contradiction. Sufficient remembrance would thus appear to be sufficiently self-sufficient to draw distinctions infallibly between the natural and the acquired, whether or not one's judgment is sufficiently formed by experience. This aspect of sufficient remembrance necessarily implies that, whatever it is, it is autonomous and distinct from the faculties.

However, to this option between, on the one hand, an infallible and timeless remembrance that operates irrespectively of the faculties and, on the other, a remembrance that founders on the oblivions of youth, a third possibility opens up, one that is discernable in my reflections on the multiple origins of which God is deemed the ultimate source. This possibility is that the origin cannot be rigorously tied to youth or to an individual's history. Although Burke appears to rest many of his arguments on empirical observations, as in his assumption that children never seem to enjoy tobacco in their first experience of it, and elsewhere, as in the opening elegiac homage to youthful sensibility, on apparently foundational or proto-typical examples of youthful experiences of natural pleasures or displeasures (25, 31), certain passages suggest that a natural pain or pleasure can be experienced "originally" and recognized as such at any age, and even that all natural passions must be touched off or accompanied by a degree of "originality," that is, an encounter with the origin. This is how I understand Burke's statement, in a passage where Burke contrasts the experience of novelty with that of associative custom or habit, that "[s]ome degree of novelty must be one of the materials in every instrument which works upon the mind, and curiosity blends itself more or less with all our passions" (31). Originality is tied throughout the *Enquiry* to youthfulness, but this passage in particular shows originality to be not simply the privileged terrain of youth but in fact a tenacious, universal category of experience. The passage thus exhibits the interdependence of the conflictual faculties since, to apply itself to works of art and strengthen itself, judgment depends on the enthusiasms of curiosity, an active commerce in resemblances, and a lively sensibility; which is to say, on the faculties its distinctions dampen and obstruct, but never wholly defeat (24-25). In other words, even if youth is depicted in certain passages as a privileged time of exposure to the origin, the inquiry into the origin of natural original pains and pleasures takes place regardless

of the age of those affected. It is no wonder, then, that Burke's quest for the origin looks nothing like a childhood autobiography or investigation into others' youthful experiences.

The experience of the origin thus calls upon the spontaneity and immediacy that, as necessary components of experience, squarely place the origin, and thus remembrance, in everyday experience. This spontaneously encountered origin modulates the problematic status of sufficient remembrance since, for reasons that Burke's text implies and despite Burke's necessary recourse to originality, originality cannot function as a self-sufficient value. The essential tension within Burke's conception of taste is due not simply to a quaint or naïve insistence on "naturalness" or to an injudicious or slovenly concession to a competing school of thought known as associationism. This is so because, in the first case, "nature" in Burke has to be thought in tandem with the idea of the "origin," and, in the second, the apparent concession to associations is only provisional and rhetorical in nature. The tension occurs at the implicit but decisive melding of the categories of remembrance and originality. It resides in the fact that the relations of the faculties are upheld by a remembrance that itself is charged with repeating, infallibly and without fragmentation or residue, a spontaneously recurring origin. However, for this very reason, the simple, natural, autonomous, immediate and reliable access to the origin is denied. Whether undistinguished or forgotten in youth, or captured in its immediacy by repetitive remembrance, the origin disrupts any presumed automaticity of the faculties from without at the same time that it upholds their relations. Therefore, even if we wished to portray sensibility's access to originality as an unadulterated, unperturbed, and sovereign foundation, we would have to allow that sensibility in all cases requires the retroactive or deferring action of a sufficient remembrance to preserve its unshakable principles. It is sufficient remembrance that isolates what is original and natural and allows it to be experienced as such. Thus, by implication, at no age, whether for the individual or the community, is there a direct, immediate, or thoroughly original experience of sensations. The origin cannot precede its remembrance. Regulation, retention, preservation, repetition, remembrance: these are different names we have encountered for the obstacle of mediation that enervates supposedly sovereign sensibility. To skirt the omnipresence of habit-ensconced associations, taste relies upon the necessarily deferred nature of a remembrance of original sensations. And we have seen how deferred this action can be, insofar as the *Enquiry* itself exercises or produces sufficient remembrance. Thus, for example, if sight, as Burke argues, acquiesces in itself (as opposed to touch or taste, which, he says, are formed by degrees), to be fully experienced as self-acquiescence and thus be distinguishable from the gradual and thus compromised acquiescence of associations, sight nonetheless requires, like the other conventionally understood senses, the deferring regulation of remembrance. This would perhaps allow us to account for the fact that Burke describes sight with metaphors of touch or as if sight were a tactile operation. Touch would more effectively mark a self-acquiescence that is, like all senses, mediated. Be that as it may, the physiological validity that some may grant this distinction between sight and taste is thus compromised

by the necessarily retroactive or deferring operation of sufficient remembrance. Moreover, this operation holds even if the association is in force from one's first days of life or if it is made only once, as in the incidentally pleasurable sensation provided by a particular medicine.

Given what we have noted concerning the everydayness of the origin, it is understandable that Burke recognizes the *raison d'être* of the regulating operation of sufficient remembrance in its "maintain[ing] the ordinary correspondence of life" (11). Thus, in a logic that repeats itself throughout the *Enquiry* and even characterizes the *Enquiry* as such, sufficient remembrance strives to maintain that which is presumed to be inalterable; it is thus a thoroughly conservative action designed to answer to and preserve what is deemed ordinary and common to everyday existence. This emphasis on the conservation of the everyday correspondence of life could certainly be tied to the monotheistic metaphysics that pervades the *Enquiry* and, in particular, to the assertions that Burke makes concerning the divine arch-origin of all passions, namely "the throne of God himself" that "can never be unraveled by any industry of ours" (129). In keeping with Christian dogma, this arch-origin is irretrievable by any human industry or capacity, remembrance included, and that is why Burke says that he limits his *Enquiry* to "the immediately sensible qualities of things" (130). Sufficient remembrance is held within the limits of the sensible at the same time that it is called upon to distinguish within the sensible natural and associated sensations. In this sense, sufficient has a restrictive, apologetic, or even devout connotation: it is sufficient because it exposes fixed, natural principles while falling short of revealing—instead of which it posits as a principle of faith—the existence of the arch-original causes of pleasure and pain. It is sufficient in all things save for the comprehension of God. Thus, the *Enquiry* would have been written *in remembrance of God*, while necessarily falling short of bringing God into view.

Peter De Bolla's reading of section V, "On Power," also interrogates the theological undercurrent of the *Enquiry*¹² and provides a number of substantive analogies or similarities with my reading of remembrance. De Bolla's assessing the *Enquiry* "in its own terms as a legitimating and legislating theory," leads him, firstly, to emphasize the role of "godhead" as the "hinge of articulation or foundation stone of the entire system" (*Discourse of the Sublime*, 63). As with "sufficient remembrance" in the Introduction on Taste, this foundation was not made explicit until the second edition, which is also when the section "On Power" was added. De Bolla writes of this addition that, "[w]here before the theory had been primarily about the origin and causes of the sublime, it now comes close to a theory that itself might produce sublimity. In this way it enters into the distance of the sublime" (*ibid.*). De Bolla argues that Burke tries to create an all-inclusive theoretical discourse that ties ultimate power to God, but unintentionally allows discourse to reemerge as a force that *produces* the sublime and thus liberates itself from its subordinate role to God. In short, discourse trumps divine power: "In the final analysis power neither resides in the outer world, nor is Burke's attempt to claim that the final resting place of power is godhead fully convincing, for the power that is articulated is fundamentally a function of the discourse

of analysis, its power to name power."¹³ Thus, at one angle of Peter De Bolla's reading, the standard of the arts that Burke seeks becomes a will to power on the part of subjectivity. The discourse-producing subject circumscribes God with its power to name and thus brings into its power the ability to produce and control the sublime. This kernel of rational control is precisely what I have analyzed with respect to remembrance. The tensions recognized by De Bolla with respect to power mark the *Enquiry* as a work of remembrance. God is for Burke that which injects the origin into the everyday correspondence of life while remaining at an inaccessible remove, "stretched to a degree far exceeding the bounds of our comprehension" (68). And, as always, it is a question of degree only, and judgment, the faculty that draws distinctions of degree, is summoned to render sufficiently that which properly exceeds its own powers. Thus, however overwhelming or inaccessible, God is submitted to the regulation of the faculties. In the very passage where the vastness and grandeur of God are said to annihilate us, Burke details the respective roles of judgment and sensibility—in that order—in the contemplation of God: "Some reflection, some comparing is necessary to satisfy us of his wisdom, his justice, and his goodness; to be struck with his power, it is only necessary that we should open our eyes" (*ibid.*). The oscillations that mark taste, that mark a sufficient remembrance of the origin, mark equally one's relation to the divine arch-power or arch-origin.

In pressing Burke on these conceptions of the origin, I am perhaps only remarking that at all times, the faculties must be regulated. Regulating one's feelings according to the standard of sufficient remembrance means accounting for the common principles which one's feelings either conform to (when the sensation is natural), or breach (when unnatural). In modern criticism, this regulating structure is rarely emphasized and, in its place, one finds the portrait of Burke, the "radical sensationist." Some of the readings that rely on this portrait see Burke's *Enquiry* as a groundbreaking discourse of the body that constitutes a classical aesthetic tradition that is still alive today in all attempts to analyze the "politics of the body" (Terry Eagleton); others see it as solipsistic (Francis Ferguson). It is perhaps worth remarking that, in my own reading, I have not denied the possibility that there may be good reasons for linking Burke's methodology to a history of sensationalism or for calling his theory of the passions an "aesthetics." I have not argued against the common view that Burke's *Enquiry* is empiricist, since, to a large degree, it is. The claim I advance is that, despite its apparent offhandedness or insignificance, Burke's reference to a universal standard of sufficient remembrance constitutes a problematic attempt at grounding the whole conceptual framework of the *Enquiry*. If understood in this way, taste, through its reliance on memory and on the interplay of the faculties, cannot be merely sensationist, since judgments of taste are not merely the product of physical sensations. Rather, they derive from stable memories of sensations that, as such, make possible the interrelations of the various faculties of the mind.

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Notes

¹ Philip M. Adamek, "The Notion of Sufficient Remembrance in Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*," *Bulletin of the Kagoshima Prefectural Jr. College: Cultural and Social Sciences*, Volume 61 (December 2010), 1-12.

² Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. and with an Introduction and Notes by James T. Boulton (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968). Parenthetical page numbers refer to this edition.

³ See Philip M. Adamek, *ibid.*, where this conventional reading is rejected.

⁴ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, edited with an introduction by John W. Yolton (Dent: London. Everyman's Library, 1971).

⁵ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book II, Chapter XIX, 187.

⁶ Frances Ferguson, "Legislating the Sublime," in *Studies in Eighteenth-Century British Art and Aesthetics*, ed. Ralph Cohen (California: University of California Press, 1985), 128-147 (131).

⁷ Remy G. Saisselin, "A Second Note on Eighteenth-Century "Disinterestedness," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Volume 21, Issue 2 (Winter, 1962), 209-210 (210). What is unsatisfying about this charge of "naturalistic fallacy"—the idea that it is misguided to apply the same standard to works of imagination that one applies to phenomena of nature—is that it seems to presume that such a standard is possible even with respect to nature. The notion of a sufficient remembrance that would remember nature alone (in the non-Burkean sense of that which is opposed to art) would be no more compelling a concept, today, than is the notion of sufficient remembrance that Burke develops, and whose only avowed insufficiency is the impossibility of comprehending God. Cf. Boulton, "Editor's Introduction," xxxvii, for the same argument made by Saisselin.

⁸ See Stolnitz, "Disinterestedness," 14, and Boulton, "Editor's Introduction," xxxiv-v.

⁹ Showing attentiveness to the chronological dimension of this apparent readjustment in Burke's thought, Stephen K. White writes, "Just as the importance of the sphere of association expands in the second edition [which includes the Introduction on Taste], so also does that of judgment" (*Edmund Burke: Modernity, Politics, and Aesthetics*, 34). White also argues that this readjustment resounds clearly throughout Burke's political writings, in which custom or "second nature" (as opposed to original nature), plays a normative role without, however, signaling Burke's abandoning his belief in first or original, universal human nature (*Edmund Burke: Modernity, Politics, and Aesthetics*, 34-35). The implication of White's comments is that, whether or not it occurred so as to oppose or accommodate Hume, the expansion of the dominion of associations—assuming that such a thing takes place—does not constitute a radical revision or embarrassing concession in Burke's thought. It is noteworthy in this respect that the section under question, "Association," remained unchanged in the second edition.

¹⁰ The first two sentences in this section, whose apparent contrast with the rest of the *Enquiry* is disavowed in the lines that immediately follow, are cited by Bruce James Smith at the beginning of his discussion of the *Enquiry* and treated as if they were the thick of Burke's general arguments. This helps Smith to support his claim that in Burke a "decay of memory" is at the origin of "our passions, terror and love," and subsequently to exploit this misleading claim as a substantial link to Burke's political writings (understood by Smith, anachronistically, on the basis of J.G. A. Pocock's exposition of seventeenth-century Whiggish historical justifications of English common law): "The parallel to many of Burke's political arguments is striking. This decay of memory, which becomes the necessary boundary to the work on politics, is penetrated in the work on aesthetics." See Smith's *Politics and Remembrance: Republican Themes in Machiavelli, Burke, and Tocqueville* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985, 133-144). The anachronistic nature of this claim is substantiated by Pocock's exposition of Burke's varying stances on the doctrine of the ancient constitution. See Pocock, "Burke and the Ancient Constitution – A Problem in the History of Ideas," (*The Historical Journal*, 1960) 3:125-143.

¹¹ In a passage in which he criticizes Locke's view that "darkness is not *naturally* an idea of terror," Burke links "associations" to the very thing—universal, natural causes—that, in every other instance, he argues associations degrade or obscure: "But with all deference to such an authority [i.e., Locke], it seems to me, that an association of a more general nature, *an association which takes in all mankind* may make darkness more terrible" (143). This "universal association"—to give it a name—is all the more curious for the fact that associations are said in many cases to weaken our grasp of natural, *original* causes (even to the point where the sufficiency of sufficient remembrance would seem to be menaced). Thus, Burke writes: "Though the effects of black be painful originally, we must not think they always continue so. Custom reconciles us to every thing" (148, my emphasis). Ferguson cites this final statement, while characterizing its immediate context in a note, as evidence that the sublime itself can be weakened or co-opted by custom: "A major dilemma of the sublime is that of preserving its difference from the custom, habit and fashion which are continually launching insidious assimilative forays upon it. As Burke says, 'custom reconciles us to everything'" (*Solitude and the Sublime*, 46-47). Since everything, including the sublime, is susceptible to associations, what Ferguson writes here is not inaccurate; however, it is misleading, because it does not account for the fact that, holding fast to his principles of sufficiency and regulation, Burke concludes this apparent concession to custom by insisting, "*yet the nature of the original impression still continues . . .* and what was said of darkness, will be applicable here" (149, my emphasis).

¹² Peter De Bolla, *The Discourse of the Sublime: Readings in History, Aesthetics, and the Subject* (New York: Basil Blackwell: 1989): 63.

¹³ See Peter De Bolla, *The Discourse of the Sublime*, 66.