No Tension. David Hume's Solution to Everyday Aesthetics

María Jesús Godoy

This study looks at the emerging branch of everyday aesthetics from the perspective of the fracture which exists in its core, as a result of the double reading of the everyday: the first, which elevates it to the realm of the extraordinary and the second, in which it remains strictly ordinary. Our purpose here is to repair this fracture by turning to David Hume's functionalist aesthetics, where disinterest and utility are reconciled through sympathy and the affective experience of otherness that it provides. Once transferred to the everyday sphere, sympathy facilitates understanding between these two versions, since the aesthetic appreciation of everyday objects or common activities requires, like the second version, that they remain in the practical environment and, like the first, to see something special in them, which is the possibility of one's own or another's well-being. | Keywords: *Everyday Aesthetics, Functional Beauty, Hume, Saito, Leddy*

1. Introduction

In current aesthetic thought, the aesthetics of everyday life has emerged as a new field of study which has expanded the narrow focus of the aesthetic discipline established in the 18th century. Revisiting these old assumptions has led to calls for theoretical reflection on utilitarian objects and everyday activities which, although having a considerable presence in our lives, were aesthetically ignored due to their practical nature. Such useful items as lamps and actions like cooking, which take up a large portion of our time and are therefore quite prosaic and ordinary, had no place in modern aesthetics, which was devoted to far nobler – and less common – artifacts and experiences; such was the case of the artistic object as an autonomous object and the aesthetic experience as a contemplative and disinterested experience.[1] By demanding a new status and treatment for these other aesthetic realities within philosophical aesthetics, the aesthetics of the everyday represents both an update of traditional aesthetic postulates and

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[1] As initially established by Shaftesbury and Hutcheson and further refined by Kant, within the theoretical development of the 18th century, which laid the foundations of the aesthetic experience for posterity.

the recovery of the original aesthetic spirit.[2]

Now, despite having a well-defined objective, this branch of aesthetics is far from being a homogeneous movement. It is, in fact, a fractured movement as can be seen by its two different variants: the "weak" and the "strong" (Dowling, 2010), or as they are also known, the "expansive" and the "restrictive" (Leddy, 2015). The interesting thing here is that the first variant, more accommodating and, therefore, less transgressive, uses traditional, artistically inspired aesthetic concepts to characterise ordinary objects and processes which, thus detached from their functionality, are subject to the same parameters that have regulated art throughout the last two centuries; those which eventually made it something different, strange and unusual. This "weak" or "expansive" variant closely follows the indications of modern aesthetic discourse, helping it to perpetuate itself over time – to 'expand', as the name suggests – by now extrapolating it to a new genre of gadgets and situations. The "strong" or "restrictive" variant, on the other hand, more heterodox and disruptive, advocates seeing common objects and activities as they really are, objects and activities that are not at all special, with nothing to do with art and the privileged experience it entails. It thus tends to elude the influence of modern aesthetic discourse – to 'restrict' its focus – which, guided by the artistic paradigm, has sought to preserve the uniqueness of both the artistic piece and the aesthetic experience. In this variant, the aesthetic condition must be able to combine with the spontaneity and functionalism of everyday life. Moreover, it must be brought about by this spontaneity and functionalism and not by external factors that interfere illegitimately and try to override them.

Thus, the profound clash between normality and exceptionality within the limits of everyday aesthetics is obvious; a tension, in the words of its main proponent, Thomas Leddy (2005), or a paradox, in those of his colleague Yuriko Saito (2007, p. 50). This situation has led Jane Forsey (2014) to encourage a rapprochement of positions, given the important underlying component that unites them, such as the aesthetic revaluation of our most mundane existence. However, while Forsey crystallises this need for agreement in an aesthetic theory of design of Kantian traits,[3] here it refers to the aesthetic ideas of David Hume, to the concept of functional beauty that sustains them and in which they meet dialectically (López Lloret, 2003), in a superb balancing act, the two aspects which clash in the double reading of everyday aesthetics: disinterest and usefulness. The former is identified here with the exceptionality of the "weak" interpretation in its attempt to transfer the artistic model to everyday objects and situations, and the latter, with the normality of the "strong" in its safeguarding of the

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[2]   In line with Yuriko Saito's thesis, in which the aesthetic discipline, originally oriented to the aesthetic phenomenon in its purely sensitive or perceptual nature, did not give preference to the artistic phenomenon with which it ended up being identified (Saito, 2017, p. 179).

[3]   Based on the distinction between free beauty and adherent beauty in Kant's *Critique of Judgement* (Forsey, 2013).

practical environment where the object is placed or the activity happens.

My purpose is thus outlined: to resolve the internal discrepancies in the aesthetics of everyday life from the perspective of Hume's aesthetic functionalism – along with its profound ethical component – and, in passing, provide the movement with the theoretical substratum and reflective antecedent that it has sometimes lacked.[4] To achieve this, the process is as follows: we will begin by breaking down each of the versions mentioned, drawing on, in the case of the "weak" version, the idea of 'strangeness' systematically invoked by its advocates and, in the case of the "strong" version, the notion of 'familiarity'. This task will enable a better understanding of the differences between them and the supposed difficulty in reconciling them; supposed, because that is precisely what we set out to achieve by then turning to the functionalist aesthetics of the young Hume, developed mainly in *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1740) and in *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751). These two works are specifically concerned with the 'utilitarian' arts, those which, while possessing an objective physical component and the capacity to influence daily life, stem from a constructive and architectural tradition.[5] Furthermore, in both works disinterest and usefulness fit together through sympathy, the third and definitive concept which, by forming a link between them, makes them compatible, as we hope it will also do with the two positions on everyday life – since we will expressly apply it to them. After all, as Hume himself observes, whoever says everyday life also says utility,[6] so they can be taken as equivalent expressions. In short, Hume's sympathy will show us that, rather than a struggle or skirmish, what really exists behind these two visions of the everyday is an internal complementarity.

2. "Weak" Version: The Everyday as Extraordinary

In general terms, the "weak" formulation of everyday life links the aesthetic dimension of the everyday to a kind of exceptionality that allows it to be appreciated in a different way than is customary. The idea is that an object such as a chair or an action such as getting dressed, temporarily leaving aside their imperceptibility in the normal course of life, suddenly catches our attention, so we not only see them as we have never seen them before – in fact, it is as if we are seeing them for the first time –, but they take on a new meaning.

Thomas Leddy, advocate *par excellence* of this modality, argues that the mere fact of paying attention to an object – as Sherry Irvin (2008) contends in her example of a routine activity such as having a coffee – does not make it aesthetic. Aesthetic attention must be given to it, which means approaching the object, dispossessing it of its normality and investing in it the

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[4]   In this regard, see Parsons and Carlson (2008, pp. 167-195), Forsey (2013, pp. 193-243) and Melchionne (2013), among others.

[5]   For this reason, Hume's major aesthetic work, *Of the Standard of Taste* (1757), focused on purely artistic objects – and more specifically, poetic objects (Jones, 1993) –, falls outside our theoretical framework. Even so, we will take some aspects of it into account in our discussion.

[6]   "In common life, we may observe that the circumstance of utility is always appealed to" (Hume, 2006, V, I, p. 33).

exceptionality that by its very essence it lacks. It is therefore an approach that makes the everyday automatically extraordinary (Leddy, 2012, p. 112), which inescapably refers to the artistic sphere.[7] While perfectly distinguishing between practical artifacts and works of art – Leddy asserts that the everyday aesthetics covers a necessary area, traditionally neglected by the aesthetic discipline (Leddy, 2012, p. 17) –, he claims that the aesthetic experience of utilitarian objects removes them from the continuous flow – instrumental and interested – in which they are embedded and grants them the superior status of other types of objects such as paintings, poems or symphonies. Not surprisingly, the ordinary seems trivial and boring, and of little importance, until it becomes aesthetic or special – artistic – and generates a memorable experience – just like art (Leddy, 2012, p. 59). This transformation – *artification*, as Saito calls it[8] – then allows for different degrees and intensities, ranging from the basic level of the simply clean or tidy, to the complexity of the sublime or tragic. Nevertheless, they are all included in the aesthetic category. They are all to do with beauty, since the object – or the action or process –, having left the realm of the inconsequential, enters that of the conspicuous and worthy of remembering (Leddy, 2012, p. 142).

As for the transformation process, Leddy explains that it happens because the utilitarian object, the ordinary activity, acquires what he, appropriating the term coined by Benjamin, calls "aura", and which moves it from the realm of the irrelevant and unnoticed – or the practical, to put it simply – into the realm of the interesting and striking. Nonetheless, his concept of aura is different from Benjamin's as Leddy expressly states: it is not an intrinsic property of the object, but a phenomenological property that it is acquired through our interaction with it, which makes us experience it in a particularly intense way, giving it a "heightened significance in which it seems to extend beyond itself" (Leddy, 2012, pp. 116-117). The fact that an object has an aura then means several things to us, according to Leddy: that we give it greater significance than it actually has, that it radiates a kind of glow and that it seems singularly vivid and real. We presuppose, in other words, a magic that is completely lacking in its natural practical environment. For this reason, we attribute aesthetic properties to it whereby we can say that the experience we are having is that of the aura and its fascination. We thus qualify a sofa as elegant because, by marvelling at it, we distinguish it from all the other anodyne sofas in the world, which in comparison are indifferent and have no value other than the purely practical.[9] With this judgement we confirm that we have had an aesthetic experience of the marvellous sofa since, freed from its futility, it has been able to reveal its inner poetry. In this sense, the author evokes the figures of the aesthete and the *flâneur* as examples of individuals appreciating the everyday, insofar as they contemplate the world "with the eyes

[7]   The artistic is, in itself, extraordinary in that it departs from the normal course of life.

[8]   In her case, from the "strong" meaning of everyday life, as we will see later (Saito, 2012).

[9]   Leddy has been a pioneer in promoting the aesthetic character of common, traditional despised perceptual properties – clean, cosy and tidy, for example –; but above all, aesthetic properties with a positive sign (Leddy, 1995), because the negative ones – the antonyms of the previous qualifiers –, however much the author claims to accept them, are not for him properly aesthetic (Leddy, 2012, p. 140).

of an artist" (Leddy, 2012, p. 260) and, in doing so, they show those who are less perceptive the wonderful – the aesthetic – side of banal things.

Leddy's recognition of the affinity between his approaches and those of John Dewey, on the one hand (Leddy, 2012, p. 55), and Edward Bullough, on the other (Leddy, 2012, pp. 130-131), is thus understandable. Both point towards the artistic paradigm enshrined in modern aesthetics to which Leddy himself subscribes. In Dewey's case – whom Leddy, like many others, considers to be a mentor of everyday aesthetics (2012, pp. 44, 77, 204)[10] –, Leddy values his quasi-mystical idea of the aesthetic experience, which, thanks to the continuity Dewey established between art and ordinary life, extends beyond the specifically artistic object to the bland and *grey* instrumental object. Hence for Dewey, following Leddy, the experience of viewing a Van Gogh canvas in a gallery is just as aesthetic as tasting a dish in a restaurant or fixing a car breakdown in a garage. There is no difference between them; they are all "experiences", as Dewey says, because they are all aesthetic, which means they are pleasant and complete experiences because, having reached their peak, they form a unity. In addition, they are so intense – and this is where Leddy (2012, pp. 86-87) draws a parallel with his concept of aura – that whoever experiences them feels transported to another world, as if plunged into a supernatural reality where the whole of existence takes on a new meaning. As far as Bullough is concerned, Leddy stays with the idea of illumination – also associated with aura – which Bullough's theory on aesthetic distance establishes. This idea involves glimpsing in the simplest things – by putting them out of gear with usual practical interests –, unexpected elements which, with the help of a little imagination, possess a mysterious component – in the thick fog over the sea, a sinking ship full of passengers, as seen in Bullough – with which to cast a spell on the ordinary object under our gaze (Leddy, 2012, pp. 246-247).

3. "Strong" Version: The Everyday as Strictly Everyday

Unlike the "weak" formulation, the "strong" version asserts the historically neglected everyday life as pure everyday life, and thus without surprises or exile to other places. Coffee makers, irons or screwdrivers, on the one hand, and doing the laundry, tidying up or throwing out the rubbish, on the other, thus remain in their original practical context. They are not extraordinary at all and it is, in that uninspiring and unappealing setting, that the aesthetic experience takes place. In its desire to preserve the everyday as strictly 'everyday', this approach aims to prevent the monotonous and the boring, but also the simplicity and humbleness of what is before us, from being buried beneath the grandeur, spectacle and drama customary in the art world. The intention here, explains its main proponent, Saito, is to move onto the aesthetic radar everything in everyday life that goes unnoticed because it is something we do – in the case of an action – or something we have contact with – in the case of a gadget – unconsciously and without paying much attention (Saito, 2017, pp. 24-25). But Saito goes even further: this is about

[10]   He is also considered by Berleant (2012), Sartwell (2003) or Poulakka (2014).

moving them onto the aesthetic radar without the patina of exoticism afforded them by the "weak" variant, because, as she says, chopping vegetables while feeling the smoothness or roughness of their skin on our fingers, or listening to the sound of the knife hitting the chopping board is one thing, and doing it as if we have never done it before is quite another. In the first case, the everyday remains as it is – we simply switch off the automatic pilot with which we perform such actions –, while in the second, through the freshness inherent in novelty, it becomes exclusive.

In revealing the narrow-mindedness of modern aesthetics, the "strong" formulation really wants the aesthetic phenomena to which we tend to be immune, the "valley moments" as defined by Saito (2007, p. 48), to have the same relevance as the "peak moments" with which we identify artistic activity. The reason is that they form the greater part of our aesthetic life, despite their functionality and the fact that they are generally relegated to the background. In this sense, the Japanese author says: "It may not be enjoyable, memorable, or special, but such quotidian ordinariness does provide an aesthetic (understood in a classificatory sense) texture of everyday life" (Saito, 2017, p. 27). So, this formulation aims to focus on those objects and situations that, in their triviality and usefulness, provide an aesthetic experience, albeit perhaps less powerful and intense, or less appealing, than that established by 18th century enlightened thinkers on the basis of the artistic standard, but in any case an aesthetic experience and, as such, most likely pleasurable and certainly worthy of attention.[11]

If the main element in the "weak" formulation is strangeness, the decisive element in the "strong" formulation is familiarity, as echoed by Arto Haapala and Saito herself. To introduce this concept, Haapala turns to its natural opposite, or strangeness, where he believes its genesis lies and which he characterises in much the same as Leddy characterises the aura. He affirms that it is a phenomenological property that things acquire through our interaction or, rather, lack of interaction with them, since we tend to consider things strange when we are not familiar or have no contact with them. Quite the opposite happens when something is part of our life, becoming homey and familiar. In this sense, Haapala invokes the Heideggerian existential analysis of a tool such as a hammer[12] which, when working well, we do not notice. In other words, while fulfilling its purpose, its *being-in-the-world*, as Heidegger would say, it is totally invisible because it is so familiar to us. Only when it stops working, do we notice its presence, which we thus find particularly strange, synonymous here with deprived of use.

In this familiar and close environment, the aesthetic experience is described by the Finnish author in the strictly everyday terms we have seen in Saito, as the serenity that emerges from the lack of visual, auditory or other sensory requirements around us (Haapala, 2005). It is as if the everyday was already

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[11]   Unlike Leddy and other representatives of the everyday, Saito does consider unpleasant or negative aesthetic experiences, which she deems essential as a warning that there is something in our life that is not working as it should, and therefore needs to be changed.

[12]   In Martin Heidegger's work *Being and Time* (1988).

pleasurable – therefore aesthetic – because of the sense of comfort and stability it brings, the feeling of knowing that everything is safe and under control. At no point then does it need to abandon its idiosyncrasies – whether that be comfort as it is here, or modesty and insignificance as seen in Saito –, just because of our familiarity with it, which provides a certain sense of being safe and at home.

4. David Hume, A Reliable Meeting Point

From the "weak" variant, Thomas Leddy has emphasised that even in his belief that the everyday, experienced aesthetically, is inexorably brought into the realm of the extraordinary – increased attention always has this effect –, he is also aware that this circumstance greatly alters its intrinsic nature. In other words, as the everyday becoming extraordinary ceases to be strictly everyday, "there is a tension with the very concept of the aesthetics of everyday life" (Leddy, 2005, p. 18). In the same sense but from the other perspective, Yuriko Saito argues that although illuminating moments in our ordinary lives allow us to find hidden treasures (Saito, 2007, p. 50), it is still a contradiction that in order to reveal the aesthetic value of everyday life, the familiar must be denied, or "defamiliarized" (Saito, 2017, p. 20). She is also convinced that by elevating the everyday to artistic status based on the dominant aesthetic model, the intrinsic strangeness of that artistic dimension will eventually vanish, as the familiarity against which it stands out is no longer there. For this reason, Saito considers that, rather than a coming together of the two meanings of the everyday as Forsey proposes – and which led her to the neutral field of design (Forsey, 2013, pp. 137-192) –, there should be a balance between what each of these meanings represents: the intensity of art and the mundane nature of life (Saito, 2017, p. 21), which is what we believe is produced in Hume's aesthetic functionalism by means of sympathy, as we are about to explain.

It must be said at the outset that Hume's aesthetics offers one of the most solid and thorough non-reductionist solutions to the dialectic between disinterest and utility in 18th century British aesthetics (López Lloret, 2003). Hence, we can speak correctly of functionalist aesthetics. In Hume's thinking on beauty, disinterest as a hallmark of the aesthetic object, which the Scottish philosopher draws from Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, and its essential utility, to which he arrives at mainly through Berkeley, effectively come together in a successful counterbalance or attractive tension. This fact makes Hume a faithful trustee of the classic synthesis between the useful and the pleasant theorised by Vitruvius.[13] In many passages of the *Treatise* and the *Enquiry*, the author effectively indicates

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[13] In his well-known and influential work *The Ten Books on Architecture* (Vitruvius, 1960). But it is not necessary to leave the British Isles to find the classical synthesis, because, as it was later expressed by Leon Battista Alberti and, above all, Andrea Palladio, it was imported there in two phases: in the 17th century by Jones and Wotton and in the 18th, by the Neo-Palladian school (Wittkower, 1983; Tavernor, 1991). Hume attempts to dialectically receive the two aesthetic theories in force on the islands – the disinterest of aesthetic experience and the utility of the artistic object – in the light of the consolidated classical aesthetic theory by tradition, to which the philosopher was always receptive.

that aesthetic pleasure is directly proportional to function and, through it, to the comfort and safety perceived in the object:

> [...] a great part of the beauty, which we admire either in animals or in other objects, is deriv'd from the idea of convenience and utility [...] That shape, which produces strength, is beautiful in one animal; and that which is a sign of agility in another. The order and convenience of a palace are no less essential to its beauty, than its mere figure and appearance. In like manner the rules of architecture require, that the top of a pillar should be more slender than its base, and that because such a figure conveys to us the idea of security, which is pleasant; whereas the contrary form gives us the apprehension of danger, which is uneasy. (Hume, 2007, II, I, VIII, p. 195)

As stated in the quote, not only utility, but also convenience and security or strength, core principles of architecture – the classical architectural principles of Vitruvius –, are for Hume the basis for the ability to produce aesthetic pleasure. By adhering to the theory of architectural orders – through its essential element, the column – and its proportional variations – the measurable relationships between the upper and lower parts –, the philosopher thus offers a functional explanation (they are this way so that the building seems safe), emanating from a utilitarian theory (it is more convenient to live safely in those constructions), which ultimately translates into pleasure (or the beauty of the built form).

However, here the appeal of this aesthetic functionalism is that it rests on an affection such as sympathy which manages to bring together two initially conflicting terms such as *voluptas* and *utilitas* – and, hand in hand with the latter, *firmitas*, as in Vitruvius. This is why we think it could also articulate the normality-exceptionality binomial of the everyday, where the underlying tension is in fact the same, pleasure *versus* utility. It is worth remembering that sympathy for Hume, as for other British Enlightenment thinkers, is the foundation for the 18th century moral proposals formulated as an alternative to Hobbesian natural selfishness. Through this emotion, sociability was considered a natural human tendency, together with an equally natural propensity towards goodness and virtue. For all of these philosophers – Shaftesbury, Hutcheson and, of course, Hume –, sympathy warmed the cold relationship between individuals and elevated sociability to a universal brotherhood in its capacity to be widely displayed. In Hume's case, this openness to other people was also presented as an inclination towards communicability and emotional transfer "however different from, or even contrary to our own" (Hume, 2007, II, I, XI, p. 206); that is to say as the substratum of a relentless exchange to and from others' impressions and ideas, whereby the experiences of others become our own, thus tracing a permanent set of relationships between oneself and others (Infante del Rosal, 2013).

This social interrelationship, with its ethical imprint, is easily recognisable in the way sympathy operates within the framework of Hume's aesthetic functionalism. Ultimately, it all really boils down to this maxim: there is an aesthetic experience and, therefore, beauty, if a *deferred* utility is

experienced.[14] In other words, aside from an object capable of meeting a need or a utilitarian object – or just *utilitas* –, there must also be a subject who notices how this possibility takes or can take effect in another subject – or *voluptas* –, who, by addressing their needs, is pleased.[15] The important point is that the interested pleasure of this second subject, that of the direct user of the object, in turn generates a disinterested pleasure in the first, since it arises sympathetically from the perceived benefit attained by a fellow human and always through imaginative intercession.[16] Thanks to the imagination, the spectator effectively becomes aware of what it means to satisfy a need, attaching themselves to the beneficiary of the object and also feeling satisfied – feeling it *next to* them or *with* them, *by* their side, through a transfer of the original satisfaction –, even though no personal benefit is obtained: "By a turn of imagination, by a refinement of reflection, by an enthusiasm of passion, we seem to take part in the interests of others, and imagine ourselves divested of all selfish considerations" (Hume, 2006, appendix II, p. 90). The spectator then feels satisfaction out of sheer sympathy and, because this pleasure is disinterested, it is also entirely aesthetic:

> Cloaths which warm, without burdening the body; which cover, without imprisoning the limbs, are well-fashioned. In every judgement of beauty, the feelings of the person affected enter into consideration, and communicate to the spectator similar touches of pain or pleasure. (Hume, 2006, V, II, p. 41)

The quote brings together the two articulating elements in the sympathetic bond: the object and its formal construction or structure – here, warm clothes –, from an examination of which its potential to satisfy a need is deduced – that of shelter and also comfort –, and a subject – the wearer of the clothing – whose needs are satisfied. In this happy conjunction, the spectator is imaginatively placed and, even knowing that they are the outside with no intention of participating, they themselves feel satisfied.

Transferring Hume's way of acting sympathetically to the realm of everyday life, it can be said that only when there is a functional object[17], providing a service to a human being, is it then in a position to be aesthetically valued. The object is thus required to remain ordinary as Saito intends, integrated into its practical world – in accordance with the "strong" modality as a whole–, even if this means disappearing from the user's sight, as is the case with

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14   Therefore, beauty acquires a moral aspect, because beauty and aesthetics are "moralized" certainly in Hume, as Peter Kivy says, unlike in Hutcheson, where according to Kivy it is morality that "is aestheticized" (Kivy, 2003, p. 287).

15   For Hume, it is indifferent if the user is real or potential; the relevant thing is the well-being that can be achieved with the utilitarian object: "A house, that is contriv'd with great judgement for all the commodities of life, pleases us upon the account; tho' perhaps we are sensible, that no one will ever dwell in it. A fertile soil, and a happy climate, delight us by a reflection on the happiness which they wou'd afford the inhabitants, tho' at present the country be desert and uninhabited" (Hume, 2007, III, III, I, p. 373).

16   Townsend outlines that this disinterested pleasure in Hume is not a prelude to that which will appear later in Kant; it is only a way of understanding affective experience beyond the dichotomy of moral character egotism/benevolence (Townsend, 2014, pp. 100, 109, 143 and 154).

17   In Hume, furniture, clothes, carriages, houses, lands and possessions of a very different nature.

Heidegger's hammer discussed by Haapala; or, alternatively, being diluted in its role, because it works exactly as expected. Nevertheless, the fact that its presence goes unnoticed by the subject who uses it, does not make it invisible at all. Thanks to Hume, we know that there is another subject paying attention to it and who, in doing so, allows the aesthetic condition to be added to its instrumental nature. This other individual also relates to the object, albeit not in a profitable or interested way, but in a purely contemplative – disinterested – way, as in the "weak" modality of the everyday, since it is a strictly visual relationship and from a distance. Endowed with great sensitivity or with an artist's eyes, as Leddy says – with a minimal capacity to connect sympathetically with peers, in Hume's ethical terms – this second individual discovers some benefits in the object that escape the first. It is thus led towards the exceptionality of Leddy, but without forcing it to move away from the normality where it is embedded, as argued by Saito, because the object remains in the practical environment where the task is performed. This is thus how this spectator subject actually perceives the well-being that the user derives from its functionality, the pleasure that this beneficiary obtains and that gives rise to their own.

For our purposes, we must also bear in mind the important role that possession of the artifact plays in Hume for its aesthetic consideration: so much so that it is this private ownership itself on which the beauty of a utensil ultimately depends.[18] On the part of the owner, they must possess, have possessed, or be able to possess, the object from which to derive satisfaction from its use: "A prince, that is possess'd of a stately palace, commands the esteem of the people upon that account; and that *first*, by the beauty of the palace, and *secondly*, by the relation of property, which connects it with him" (Hume, 2007, II, II, I, p. 215). As for the non-owner or simple spectator, despite not owning the object – and having no expectations of doing so, as Hume indicates[19] –, they must enjoy the other person's use of their possession: "Wherever an object has a tendency to produce pleasure in the possessor, or in other words, is the proper *cause* of pleasure, it is sure to please the spectator, by a delicate sympathy with the possessor" (Hume, 2007, III, III, I, p. 368). In this sense, we must remember that in the mid-18th century British context, the Industrial Revolution was in its infancy and, although social tastes had begun to move away from the luxury and finery of French Rococo, the object continued to have unique value for use and exchange, but above all, for display. It was a sign of ostentation and power, of the affirmation of the upper classes – of the old nobility first, of the stunning bourgeoisie, second –, who thus acquired the most expensive and exclusive items, guided by the criterion of comfort and, at the same time, by appearance and visual appeal, by the desire to project an image of opulence in society so as to earn the respect and admiration of all.

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18   According to Saccamano (2011), we think that private ownership occupies a central place in the structuring of sympathy in Hume's thought.

19   The philosopher talks about some things "in which, tho' we have no hope of partaking, yet we enter into them by the vivacity of the fancy, and share them, in some measure, with the proprietor" (2007, II, II, V, p. 235).

However, despite the importance of the nouveau riche, the bourgeois, for the advent of the capitalist economic system – not in vain is it the great protagonist of the public arena that everyone admires and wishes to emulate[20] –, Hume's functional beauty also makes him consider those who are not so socially favoured, those who know that their well-being and pleasure depend on the well-being and pleasure of others with whom they will never be on a par, but with whom they still get along simply because they are lucky. It depends on non-owners or spectators, on their sympathetic pleasure as we have seen, for the common and ordinary object to be a beautiful object at the same time. It is they, delighting in gadgets beyond their reach and in inconsequential acts in which only the powerful participate, who have an aesthetic experience. It seems as if the aesthetic appreciation of the everyday, of granting the utilitarian object the power to surprise, was then a privilege of those who are socially deprived of possessions.

If so, the economic freedom which allows one to be surrounded by all kinds of whims and comforts would be at odds with enjoying them aesthetically. Hume, however, solves this kind of problem – and this is of particular interest for my goal – by pointing out that the owner also has access to the experience of beauty, but on one condition: one must step into the shoes of the non-owner – the spectator – to identify oneself as the gratified user of the object and thereby obtain a pleasure which is necessarily different – being indirect and disinterested – from the pleasure obtained from one's superior status – the pleasure of profit and profitability – and which results in even greater pleasure: "'Tis certain, then, that if a person consider'd himself in the same light, in which he appears to his admirer, he wou'd first receive a separate pleasure, and afterwards a pride or self-satisfaction, according to the hypothesis above-explain'd." (Hume, 2007, II, I, XI, p. 208) Possession of the artifact does not, therefore, exclude the aesthetic experience, but it does require the suspension of direct use, that is, contemplation, or better still, sympathetic competence in order to imagine oneself in the spectator's position and see things exactly as they see them. Even the owner is then forced to momentarily dispense with their interest in the object, with its use, in order to become paradoxically aware of the benefit it brings and, in so doing, the aesthetic pleasure derived contributes to a greater utilitarian pleasure.[21]

Hume's commitment to virtually placing the user-owner next to the spectator in order to share their distant vision and pleasure, leads to an exegesis in everyday terms which favours the reconciliation between the two versions: by stepping out to contemplate oneself from the outside in the manner of Leddy's aesthete or *flâneur*, the beneficiary of the object comes to appreciate its beauty, but not because it becomes a work of art – as a useful object, it never

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[20]   By chronological proximity we apply to Hume the dramaturgical metaphor as a hermeneutical tool of Adam Smith's social theses used by López Lloret (2009).

[21]   I defend the difference of pleasures and, therefore, of emotions, invoking Hume's own general theory of the mind, which expresses how the spectator's pleasure, although resembling that of the user, is not exactly identical, because the original emotion has a force and a liveliness that the secondary or derivative one lacks: "In every judgement of beauty, the feelings of the person affected enter into consideration, and communicate to the spectator *similar touches* of pain or pleasure" (Hume, 2006, V, II, p. 41, my emphasis). Infante del Rosal (2013) holds a different opinion.

stops functioning or making life easier –, but because that which previously had no aesthetic interest because it was unconscious and customary, is brought to consciousness, onto Saito's aesthetic radar. By putting themselves in the place of someone who enjoys their own pleasure, the owner becomes aware of the surrounding comforts which explain their advantageous social position. Opening their eyes to their comfortable existence is fascinating, as it is to the non-owner – the spectator – on seeing other people taking advantage of their own fortune and belongings. In summary, by learning to value everything they have through sympathetic connection with their fellow humans – because by approaching their fellow humans, they realise that not everyone has the same standard of living and opportunities –, the rich bourgeois happily – aesthetically – contemplates the many objects at their disposal which make their existence positively enviable.[22]

5. Conclusion

David Hume's aesthetic functionalism is a good starting point in trying to solve internal disagreements within the aesthetic field of everyday life. His recourse to sympathy as a way of combining two such seemingly irreconcilable notions as disinterest and usefulness is also applicable when it comes to bringing together two other polarised concepts, now strictly everyday, such as normality and exceptionality, where the real conflict is between art and life. The routine in which we are immersed prevents us from seeing something valuable in useful objects, perhaps not something as remarkable as climbing Everest or hearing a Beethoven symphony, but undoubtedly beautiful if given its due attention. That is if, as Hume suggests in his ethical approach to sympathy, we are capable of perceiving the happiness it provides, be that rejoicing for a fellow human, feeling their well-being *by proxy*, or for ourselves, which we realise by meeting that fellow human and forgetting ourselves for a few moments. Art and life do not clash in the aesthetics of the everyday. Instead,

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[22] Even exceeding our framework of study, it is worth considering the imprint that this discourse by the young Hume will leave on his *Of the Standard of Taste* (1757); especially, in the characterisation of the true judges to whom Hume attributes, as spectators, a mind free of prejudice. In practice, this again means the ability to go out of oneself towards the other, to sympathise with them, but in addition to "forget, if possible, my individual being and my particular circumstances" (Hume, 1963, p. 245). The philosopher adds here the forgetting of the self, which introduces a first difference with respect to what we have seen in the *Treatise* and the *Enquiry*: the aim is to be absorbed by the other whose place is occupied, the public for whom the work – the poem – was originally written. A second difference is related to property, an essential component of beauty until now, but no longer so because the aesthetic object has changed too: no longer a useful object, the owner is of no importance (Shusterman (1989) thinks otherwise); the important thing is to know the identity of the original audience, to whom it was destined. And thus, exonerated from private ownership, the aesthetic experience increases affection; so much so that the true judge, transcending space and time, develops a deferred sympathy and adopts exactly the point of view required by the work, that of the historical moment and place where it was born: "There needs but a certain turn of the thought or imagination to make us enter into all the opinions which then prevailed, and relish the sentiments or conclusions derived from them" (Hume, 1963, p. 253). So, once the game of possession declines in one way or another in 18th century British society, for Hume beauty becomes interested – disinterestedly – in the concerns of a broader population; immeasurable, given its dispersion in space and time, which the true judge must make their own to mentally recompose what a segment of that huge population – the pristine recipient of the work – may have felt in the moment they received it. It is only from this broadening vision that Hume's ideal critic finds pleasure in the pleasure of those who either preceded him/her or who are thousands of kilometres away, and from that exemplary pleasure (Levinson, 2002), he/she manages to make a just pronouncement.

they complement and help each other, reminding us of the ultimate fraternal bonds which hold us together, making us a little more human when all is said and done.

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María Jesús Godoy
University of Seville
Department of Aesthetics and History of Philosophy
Camilo José Cela s/n
Seville 41018 (SPAIN)
godoydom@us.es