

Topic Page: [Hutcheson, Francis, 1694–1746](#)

Definition: **Hutcheson** from *Collins English Dictionary*

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1 Francis. 1694–1746, Scottish philosopher: he published books on ethics and aesthetics, including *System of Moral Philosophy* (1755)

Summary Article: **Hutcheson, Francis**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

(hŭch'ƏsƏn), 1694–1746, British philosopher, b. Co. Down, Ireland. He was a professor at the Univ. of Glasgow from 1729 until his death. His reputation rests on four essays published anonymously while he was living in Dublin, prior to his college teaching. Two of them were included in *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725) and two in *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense* (1728). Although one of the first to write on the subject of aesthetics, he was primarily known in the field of ethics. According to Hutcheson, man has many senses, the most important of which is the moral sense. This “benevolent theory of morals,” in which man has a desire to do good, was a development of Shaftesbury's natural affection to benevolent action and was in opposition to Hobbes's theories. The criterion of moral action was the “greatest happiness for the greatest numbers,” an anticipation of the utilitarian philosophers in word as well as spirit.

See his *System of Moral Philosophy* (with memoir by Rev. Leechman, W. , 1755).

See studies by W. L. Taylor (1965), P. Kivy (1976), and V. Hope (1989).

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