

might beget as to their objectivity, we are sure that they have an existence independently of us—that we neither make them nor unmake them. And why may it not be so with beauty? If I should say that because power is said to reside in an infinite variety of objects, objects so unlike as a thought and a piece of wood, a smile and a cask of powder, it must be a creation simply of the human mind and not an inherent property of material objects, who but a Hume would assent to my statement? or would I be right or near the truth? The only legitimate inference that can be drawn from the fact that an infinite variety and contrariety of objects are called beautiful, is, not that beauty is not a quality of things, but that like life and power, of which it is a phase, it may be hovering and impalpable. It may be real though we may not be able to analyze it into its component elements, or say what it is that makes them beautiful—though we may not be able to seize it and enclose it in a formula, or lay down rules and principles by which we may be able in every case infallibly to determine its presence. It is suggestive always, incomprehensible, and runs with us into the illimitable and infinite.

But further. So far from regarding the fact that such an immense variety of objects go under the name of beautiful as an argument in favour of the Alison-Jeffrey theory of beauty, I think it is one of the very strongest arguments that could be produced against it. For who can say, or pretend to believe, that even one third of the objects which are called beautiful, and which he judges to be beautiful, has ever been associated in his mind, by even the most “casual bond of connection,” with previous agreeable sensations or emotions? Why, we go abroad into the world, and we come upon a thousand things with which we could not possibly have had any previous agreeable experience, and we pronounce them beautiful *at once*, and without being conscious of any resemblance or analogy in the things to objects which we have seen or felt before, or having any agreeable train of thought awakened in us by them, and we think them all the more beautiful *because of their novelty*. We may not know what they are or anything about them, and if we discover in them any resemblance to anything with which we are acquainted, that may be an *additional* trait to their beauty and *enhance* their value to us, but it is not the reason of our instantaneous decision respecting them. If only a small number of things with which we are