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HUME'S EXPERIMENTAL SCIENCE ON HUMAN NATURE IN THE TREATISE

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The aim of the paper is to present the meaning of the notion of «experimental method», which is mentioned in the title of David Hume's Treatise of Human Nature. I claim it to be the ground of the whole system of Hume's system of sciences concerning various aspects of human life.

Idea at notion

As is well known, Hume was never satisfied with his early work, and his severe judgment, that «it fell dead-born from the press, without reaching such distinction as even to excite a murmur among the zealots,»¹ for a long time had an influence on the reception of his philosophy. Up to the middle of the twentieth century, and the appearance of the work of Norman Kemp Smith, it was common to treat Hume's philosophy individually, as Hume himself had adapted the contents of individual books of the *Treatise* in producing the *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748; published as *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding*), *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751) and *Of the Passions* (1757). At the same time it is precisely in the structure of the *Treatise* that the unity of Hume's philosophical project appears most clearly and with its most characteristic features: the critique of the 17th-century metaphysics of substance and the use of his individually understood experimental method. Above all, the architecture of the *Treatise* reveals better than any of the later works the intention of Hume's philosophical project, namely the creation of a complete knowledge of human nature, which would replace «a false and adulterate metaphysics.»²

In the Introduction to the *Treatise of Human Nature* Hume writes, «In pretending, therefore, to explain the principles of human nature, we in effect propose a compleat system of the sciences, built on a foundation almost entirely new, and the only one upon which they can stand with any security.» In this «compleat system of the sciences» should be included «Logic, Morals, Criticism, and Politics,» which «comprehend almost everything, which it can any way import us to be acquainted with, or which can tend either to the improvement or ornament of the human mind.»³ In this discussion I shall be attempting to defend the thesis that the indications Hume makes in the Introduction to the *Treatise* have a fundamental significance for the demonstration of links between the following problems:

- a) the specific understanding of the experimental method that Hume employs, as well as his critique of the traditional, 17th-century metaphysics of substance,
- b) the relation between the different parts of the knowledge of human nature,
- c) the architecture of the *Treatise*.

Most importantly, it is necessary to pay heed to the method that Hume uses in his work; in contrast to oft-

repeated views, his theory of human nature does not comprise a generalization from everyday observation.

In this matter some critics have been misled by a passage that comes at the beginning of the *Treatise*:

Moral philosophy has, indeed, this peculiar disadvantage, which is not found in natural, that in collecting its experiments, it cannot make them purposely, with premeditation, and after such a manner as to satisfy itself concerning every particular difficulty which may be. (...) We must therefore glean up our experiments in this science from a cautious observation of human life, and take them as they appear in the common course of the world, by men's behaviour in company, in affairs, and in their pleasures. Where experiments of this kind are *judiciously* collected and compared, we may hope to establish on them a science which will not be inferior in certainty, and will be much superior in utility to any other of human comprehension.⁴

The view that the method employed by Hume was meant to depend on an extrapolation from ordinary observation, with the object of uncovering general principles for the description of everyday experience, is connected with Hume's critique of 17th-century speculative metaphysics. Attention has also been paid to the *Treatise's* reference to the principles of the new natural philosophy pioneered by Newton. This model served as an inspiration for Hume throughout his career as a writer. The full title of his major work of philosophy reads: *A Treatise of Human Nature: Being An Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects*, which obviously refers to the philosophical principles presented by Newton in the *Principia Mathematica*. The homogeneity of Hume's philosophical project is testified to at the end of the *Dissertation on the Passions*, one of his last philosophical works, in which he attempts to provide a description of emotions; there he describes human affectivity as «a certain regular mechanism, which is susceptible of as accurate a disquisition, as the laws of motion, optics, hydrostatics, or any part of natural philosophy.»⁵

What does this reliance on experiment itself, however, depend on? Hume borrows from Newton the opposition of *occult qualities* and the *manifest world*: an example of the first is for him the notion of substance, which cannot be given by experience. For Hume, as for Newton, the acceptance of an imperceptible substance, whether extended or thinking (as well as the assertion that the contents of thought are the representation of real and independently existing

¹ D. Hume, *My Own Life* (<http://socserv.socsci.mcmaster.ca/oldecon/ugcm/3113/hume/humelife>).

² D. Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Oxford 1998, p. 12.

³ D. Hume, *The Treatise on Human Nature*, London 1985, Introduction, p. 43.

⁴ *THN*, Introduction, p. 45.

⁵ D. Hume, *Dissertation on the Passions*, last sentence (<http://phare.univ-paris1.fr/textes/Hume/DP/Dissertation.html>).

things) is merely an unverifiable postulate, or «hypothesis,» which has no place in either natural or moral philosophy. In contrast to «occult qualities,» the phenomenal world would consist of the general data of the contents of experience, and the relations between them (perceptions – impressions and ideas – and also connections determined by the principles of the association of ideas). Hume suspends existential judgments: metaphysical judgments concerning «matters of fact and existence» is not a given, but poses a problem to which the entire *Treatise* is dedicated. The common-sense judgment which claims that «bodies exist independently of me, from which is formed nature, and also other individuals similar to me,» becomes the object of an investigation which is aimed at finding answers to the following questions: «In as much as it is not possible to substantiate the existence of bodies and things outside the mind, why have we an inclination to accept their existence?» and, «What, within the limits of experience, am I able to know concerning this matter?»

The concept of «experience» I understand here in two ways: a) as the totality of that which is given, and independent of the operation of reason, that is, as data (of both sensory and reflective perception), and b) as a concatenation of ideas, with the help of which given data are taken up by the particular powers of the mind and formed into a systematic whole.

Therefore, necessary to a description of experience is the elaboration of certain needed concepts, while the ideas of «cause» and «effect» derived from mechanical philosophy and describing the relation between individual data, would seem to be for Hume serviceable tools with whose aid experience could be described and communicated in language. We find this procedure in the first Book of the *Treatise*, where we frequently read of the transmission of liveliness among perceptions. Describing experience in this fashion ought, in Hume's opinion, to fulfill the task of «introducing the experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects.»

This procedure depends in turn on the gradual replacement of informal expressions derived from natural language (such as «thought» and «mind») by concepts created in order to form a unified and, importantly, a *comprehensible* description of experience (the concept «thought» is to be replaced by the more precise terms «perception,» «idea,» and «impression,» while the meaning of the concept «mind» is to be explained by reference to concepts denoting its particular powers, and also to the concepts of «I» and «personal identity»). It has to be assumed that Hume was aware that the description which he provides is no more than a single comprehensible *model* of human nature. This model is to be characterized by its simplicity (a small number of principles), yet at the same time must make use of concepts that go beyond the immediate testimony of the senses: an intelligible description of experience cannot be based upon empirical concepts in themselves, which would apply to parts of experience, but must provide conditions, on the strength of which experience will be sufficiently intelligible that it will be possible to submit it to judgment – it is to this end that

Hume writes that observations must be «*judiciously* collected.» Because the nature of the mind (and that of physical objects) is not known on the basis of immediate experience, «it must,» as we read in the *Treatise*, «be equally impossible to form any notion of its powers and qualities otherwise than from careful and exact experiments, and the observation of those particular effects, which result from its different circumstances and situations.»⁶

Hume's radicalization of the programme of empiricism, which had been developing since the appearance of Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), a radicalization which took as its object the extirpation of all remnants of the metaphysics of substance (which still appear in the doctrine of Berkeley⁷), led to the development by Hume of a set of concepts which are to fulfill three basic conditions:

a) they are to present a certain scheme of explanation of the possibility of experience, making it comprehensible to human reason,

b) they must refer to experience either as concepts derived from empirical data, or – indirectly – as framing concepts conditioning the comprehensibility of the whole of human experience in the world (as we shall see, such concepts are for Hume those of *belief* and *sympathy*),

c) they must refer only to experience (in one of the two above-described ways), and not to any extra-empirical designations (what Newton referred to as «*occult qualities*»).

The radicalization of the concept of «experience» depends moreover on the conscious acceptance of conceptual frames, but it involves yet a further element, which is significant for the interpretation being proposed herein, and which depends upon the combination of two perspectives, the common-sense and the empirical, which factor must be taken into account in every comprehensive interpretation of Hume's work. As the noted Hume scholar D.F. Norton clearly stressed, the two fundamental parts of Hume's

⁶ *THN*, Introduction, p. 44.

⁷ From this perspective the philosophy of Locke appears as an attempt to overcome Cartesian dualism by pointing out the unity of experience: thinking substance and extended substance are mediated by ideas (of sense and of reflection). In this regard, the conception of Locke is ambiguous, making use of the category of substance as an unperceived basis for qualities, a category that becomes ever more problematic. For Berkeley, however, there is the negation only of material substance, while absolute spirits and God are still understood as substances and are among the key elements of his metaphysical system. In Hume's philosophy there is a radical shift from the metaphysics of substance to the metaphysics of function: the chief concepts for him are no longer those of substance ('spirit' and 'thing') and their place is taken by concepts designating the relations among elements of experience. One example is the relation occurring among ideas, another is the chronological succession linking impressions in memory, and yet another is the fundamental relations of belief and sympathy. The perspective of this functionalism allows us to state that the meaning of the given fragments of experience, in relation to experience taken as a whole (and in the broadest sense of the term), is determined by the character of the relations that obtain between them. Therefore a certain perception may be called an "idea" only when it is linked with others in one of the manners constitutive of the imagination. And thus also, as we will see, Hume asserts that it is precisely the relation described by him as belief that permits the description of the elements that it connects – mind and nature – in the same manner that the concept of sympathy permits us to understand "who" sympathizes with "whom."

philosophy are written from entirely different perspectives: the empirical and analytical part devoted to theoretical philosophy stands in opposition to the common-sense theory of feelings and the moral theory that arises out of it.⁸ Every attempt to assert the unified character of Hume's philosophy taken as a whole must therefore address the question of the aim of such an approach.

Let us turn to the fact that Hume employs two distinct methods of *explication* of experience, and also two kinds of *description* of it. Both methods of *explication* of experience are on the one hand a description (of common-sense experience) which is yielded in a natural attitude, and on the other hand a description which is possible only upon the suspension of existential judgments – this second method I shall call «philosophical» or «phenomenalist».⁹ Furthermore, the two kinds of *description* of experience also involve two kinds of language, everyday (natural) language and strictly philosophical language, construed within the compass of a philosophical system. Experience which is yielded in a natural attitude Hume describes in the following way: «For philosophy informs us, that every thing, which appears to the mind, is nothing but a perception, and is interrupted, and dependent on the mind: whereas the vulgar confound perceptions and objects, and attribute a distinct continu'd existence to the very things they feel or see.»¹⁰ This experience is based on the belief in the existence of objects (and also of other people), independent of the fact of their being perceived.

This same experience can be described not only with the assistance of philosophical concepts, but also in a natural language. In this second case it can be presented in the following manner: «I receive a letter, which upon opening it I perceive by the hand-writing and subscription to have come from a friend, who says he is two hundred leagues distant.»¹¹ And yet Hume uses this example only in order to present his analysis with the aid of the concepts «belief,» «perception,» «memory,» and «imagination,» writing that «no thing is actually present to the mind except for its perceptions.»¹²

Belief in the existence of things, independent of the fact of their perception, and thus belief in the fact that, despite observable differences in its qualities, a thing remain what it is, leads to a contradiction during the attempt to philosophically describe everyday experience. Reason simultaneously demonstrates that the existence of an object is indistinguishable from the existence of the idea of the object, but it demands at the same time that the existence of the object be affirmed despite the testimony of the senses or of the imagination. Hume notes that the cause of the contradiction is not, however, reason itself, which avoids contradiction, and only demands proof of its

judgments. The attempt to explicate everyday experience in the categories of reason itself leads, however, to the suspension of judgment. «[A]s long as we take our perceptions and objects to be the same, we can never infer the existence of the one from that of the other, nor form any argument from the relation of cause and effect, which is the only one that can assure us of matters of fact.»¹³ Our belief in the identity of a thing derives from the fact that if we consider that the changes that it undergoes are gradual, we experience a feeling of the ease of transition between individual perceptions. As Norman Kemp Smith comments, «This feeling is then objectivized by the instinctive inclination of the mind to spread itself on external objects to this end, that all of the effects that they engender in consciousness should be described as qualities of the objects.»¹⁴ This inclination, a «blind and mighty instinct of nature,»¹⁵ «scholastic» philosophy had tried to describe while ignoring the affective side of experience (belief), and thereby masking the true state of affairs. Excessive claims of reason lead to scepticism: recognition of the permanence of things through their independence of the mutability of perceptions leads to the postulate of the existence of substance as the unchanging ground of perception. Reason, demanding further corroboration (trying to construct an inference that would be «demonstrable»), seeking to explain natural, everyday experience, turns out to be helpless. In Hume's opinion such «philosophical prostheses» intended to assist in the explanation of everyday experience appear in the philosophy both of Locke and of Berkeley; in the former, with the use of the concept of material substance, and in the latter with its abolition and the appeal to the existence of God. The indeterminability of both these concepts is derived from the substance-based explanation of experience, and from an errant understanding of the non-rational character of the contents of experience, which is natural belief.

Belief is for Hume an «instinctive» operation of the mind; the association of ideas and habit do not determine the final description of the appearance of belief; the succession of perceptions, even if repeated, could not indicate anything aside from those individual perceptions themselves, if it were not for the original propensity of the mind to «spread itself on external objects.»

Hume does not find any rational answer to the question of the *ultimate reason* why belief accompanies past experience and observation, and he describes past belief with the term «instinct.» In this case he is referring to the «remainder,» or that which persists after the exposition of the role of particular functions of experience; that element of experience that is not subject to demonstrative reasoning.¹⁶ Thereby the term «instinct» goes to describe the function of reason in the

⁸ See D.F. Norton, «David Hume»: *Common-Sense Moralist, Sceptical Metaphysician*, Princeton 1982.

⁹ In this I follow Hume's suggestions so as to counterpose the common-sensical and philosophical standpoints (see, for example, *THN*, I, I, 5; *EHU*, XII).

¹⁰ *THN*, I, IV, 2, p. 243.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² *Ibidem*.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 244.

¹⁴ N. K. Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, London 1941, p. 118.

¹⁵ *EHU*, XII, p. 151.

¹⁶ See also *THN*, II, I, 5: «First, I find, that the peculiar object of pride and humility is determin'd by an original and natural instinct, and that 'tis absolutely impossible, from the primary constitution of the mind, that these passions shou'd ever look beyond self, or that individual person, of whose actions and sentiments each of us is intimately conscious.» (p. 337.)

making of existential judgments, and «instinct» means a «primary» and «natural» property of the mind, one which manifests itself continuously and cannot be reduced to simpler properties.¹⁷

The contradiction that unavoidably appears during the description of everyday experience in traditional philosophical language, in which the idea of substance occupies the chief place, leads Hume to another understanding of experience, one which is undertaken from an entirely different perspective. For him, accordingly, experience is explicable only as a conceptualizable plane for the appearance of given data (understood as perceptions), which forms the field for the crystallization of the contents of both poles of experience: subject and object, «I» and «things» that together go to make up «the world.» At the same time both terms of the cognitive relation indivisibly belong to each other – the axis of their «crystallization» is «instinctive» *belief*. «I» am convinced of (or: I *believe* in) the existence of «the world.» Thanks to the successively more complete description of the empirical contents of both elements of the relation – «I» and «the world» – Hume is able to dispense with the previously stipulated «substance» as an unnecessary postulate of metaphysics up to his time.

Further analysis leads Hume to acknowledge that the subject is not only a perceiving subject, but furthermore an acting and evaluating one. The perspective of «a subject among subjects,» of a man in society, a perspective that at the same time uncovers the possibility of passing judgment in the field of values, is opened up by the introduction of the concept of *sympathy*. The description of feelings returns us to everyday description, which in accordance with the means of explicating this aspect of experience that have already been indicated, we may express in the following manner:

a) everyday experience explained in natural language: feelings are always entertained by someone and in relation to someone,

b) everyday experience expressed in philosophical language: depiction of the process of sympathy making possible the common citation of feelings between people,

c) on the phenomenalist level: the concept of sympathy is a condition of the comprehensibility of experience, and likewise makes it possible to describe the conditions for the belief in the existence of other people.

All these means of presenting the relations between people on the basis of the affective side of experience are to be found in the *Treatise*. According to Hume, however, this procedure, which provides the conditions for the comprehension of everyday experience in relation not only to nature as such, but also to the world of other people, must be construed very broadly (for it comprises the above-mentioned three areas of the science of human nature, fulfilling its logic). In Hume's view, theoretical philosophy must be supplemented by practical questions, such that both kinds of inquiry form two parts of «experimental moral philosophy,» which in Hume's theory of human nature means the reciprocal

treatment of logic and ethics, of aesthetics and politics. Hume returns to common-sense description, but thanks to the opposition of both methods of explicating experience, the necessity of basing each of them on certain principles is revealed. On the one hand such a principle is the concept of causal connection describing the relation of subject and object, and also (in the Second Book of the *Treatise*) illuminating the dual associative connection (through the description of the mind in the categories of mechanical Newtonian natural science) that describes the process of sympathy. On the other hand the concepts lying at the foundation of the description of human nature in its «philosophical» explication are belief and the emotional response that indicate the relations between «I» and «the world» and also among individuals in society. Further description of the foundations of the reception of belief and sympathy as fundamental traits of human nature is possible only on the basis of the unity of a comprehensible system, thanks to which this system may be accepted as an adequate representation of human nature.

As Hume was to write later in the *Enquiry*, insofar as cognition in its entirety concerns either the relation between ideas, or «matters of fact and existence,» the analyses carried out in the first book of the *Treatise* lead to the circumscription of the boundaries of reference of *understanding*, the subject of that book. If, accordingly, the task of the understanding is the designation of the connections between the contents of experience, these connections do not suffice to refer the concepts to any designations whatsoever. Hume dismisses all argument over whether they deserve such reference; there remains only the belief that certain contents of our experience not only exist as bundles of perceptions, but exist independently of our mind. Hume observes that the construction of the objective world, of precisely that which we hold to be independent of us, can be set out in three stages:

- 1) belief in the testimony of our senses;
- 2) belief in the testimony of our memory;
- 3) belief in the real existence of objects in support of the relation of cause and effect.

The experiment planned by Hume encounters a number of limitations. Firstly, in contrast to natural science, the object of the experiment (human nature) is at the same time the tool used in the research: every effort at description will already be formed, if only by the choice of concepts assumed at the outset. These are concepts used to describe distinguishable sense data («perception,» «impression,» «idea»), terms used for the affective sphere («passion,» «emotion,» «feeling,» «sentiment» and also «belief» and «sympathy»), and likewise concepts giving shape to that which forms the mind, such as «memory,» «imagination,» «understanding,» and «reason.» The introduction of such terms means that the object of the investigation is not human nature «in itself,» but a model of it: «judiciously collected and compared» observations are already interpreted by means of the employment of prepared concepts. Reasoning is necessary, inasmuch as the intention is to create a science determining the principles of the functioning of human nature.

¹⁷ THN, II, I, 2.

Secondly, the aim of the intended experiment is to be, as we read in *THN*, II, I, 3, showing the natural and original properties of mind. The first of them, **the natural ones**, are the properties which show «the constancy and steadiness of their actions», whereas the notion of original properties Hume defines as those «which we must consider as original, are such as are most inseparable from the soul, and can be resolv'd into no other»¹⁸. However, if it is not certain which of the revealed principles are the ultimate ones, it is also not certain if the experiment should be continued and as a result, we do not know if these principles which Hume is ready to point out, are in fact the ultimate ones.

This difficulty leads to the third problem. Since the examination of human nature conceives the rational construction, it is impossible to prove the compatibility of the conceived model by comparing it with some presupposed actual condition, original towards the description: such a condition as opposed to the image suggested by mind, would be perceived as something mindless, incoherent, something which does not exist for the mind. The only criterion of truth for all the judgements must therefore be included in the formed science of human nature. Isn't however *The Treatise of Human Nature* the next 'hypothesis' as comprehended by Newton? Doesn't it form the artificial construction appointed by mind, which would not talk about anything else than of the own notions?

In order to avoid it, Hume is radical towards Newton's sense of experiment, which is shown by the *Treatise* construction. Let me remind one detail. So, the quoted at the beginning of the *Treatise* division of perceptions into ideas and impressions makes an impression (at least on the reader finding there references to Locke's terminology) that, if the ideas are the copies of impressions, the last ones result from the effect of bodies independent of the cognitive process. In order to fully understand this division and the necessity of distinguishing both types of perception only on the basis of their strength and vivacity, the reader has to wait until the two much later excerpts. The first of them is the section *Of idea of existence and of external existence* (*THN*, I, II, 6), in which Hume points out that the only way in which we can capture 'external objects' as separate from the experimental data, is 'to form a relative idea of them, without pretending to comprehend the related objects.'¹⁹ Limiting research to the description of the relations between individual perceptions means the ultimate rejection of all attempts of the naive realism of deciding about the world based on the idea of the correspondence between mind and the external world. However, in *THN*, I, IV Hume admits that it is not only the external world which is not directly given as to give the answer to the question of what this 'imposing' the content into mind is, but even we cannot define what the substantialist subject which would receive the content could be. Thus, it is not until the end of the first *TNL* book that the criteria for division of perception given at the beginning of the book finally become clear.

¹⁸ *THN*, II, I, 3, p. 332.

¹⁹ *THN*, I, II, 6, p. 116.

In other words: the whole *TNL* should be also treated as the unique experiment.

The notion of 'experiment' should be at once given the following reservation: application of the method of proper natural philosophy in the area which human philosophy (that is moral philosophy) deals with cannot be ultimate. Therefore, the procedure applied in the *Treatise* and similarly in the later works, is constant referring to 'every day' philosophy which is based on the common-sense model of describing reality, as well as on – according to Hume – equally problematic conviction that the conceptual description of the world, which is to designate the governing it principles, will give certain and conclusive knowledge. The every day experience becomes the peculiar court of appeal of the formed theory. Carrying the necessity to interfere in what the subject of observation is, and basically constructing the model of human nature, Hume's research is ultimately to find confirmation in the every day experience. Hume is aware of the necessity to reconcile the two points of view. Both the 'philosophical', similarly to the common-sense one 'is liable to the same difficulties; and is over-and-above loaded with this absurdity, that it at once denies and establishes the vulgar supposition'.²⁰ The 'unbiased' observation of human nature causes that the 'natural tendency' will make the common-sense model silently accepted. On the other hand, the experiment introduces the language which only 'roughly' corresponds to the phenomena. Thus, each attempt to classify the experimental data is arbitrary and provided with reservations. The example of it can be Hume's remark at the beginning of the second book: 'The subject of the human mind being so copious and various, I shall here take advantage of this vulgar and spacious division [between two kinds of passions], that I may proceed with the greater order.'²¹ Therefore, the presented by Hume description of human nature is the *model* one: it does not reflect the human nature as it is but it forms its image within some notional system.

The *Treatise* is also to be the experiment revealing whether, and if yes, on which principle, the notions introduced by 'judiciously collected' observations are adequate and whether they describe the data well. Forming the science of human nature, Hume examines the foundations of the compatibility of the accepted model. Hume's metaphor of mind – the theatre can be therefore developed: the *Treatise* describes the performance which scenario is not known in advance, the performance which- although takes place in the unknown language – needs to be seen until the end, in order to start understanding both the language and the issues addressed.

Let me recapitulate:

Even at the beginning of the *Treatise*, Hume realizes the fact that the description of the human nature can be possibly taken only when the suitable notional frames are assumed. However, the correctness of this description cannot be confirmed by any comparison with anything, which could be placed outside the description. But, it is possible to confront

²⁰ *THN*, I, IV, 2, p. 267.

²¹ *THN*, II, I, 1, p. 328.

this description with the description originating from everyday experience, which expresses the conviction of existence of the objects and people independent of the subject. Therefore, the description of the common sense experience prepared in the natural language is gradually transformed into presenting the empirical model of the human nature, resigning the category of substance.

What does breaking with the category of substance mean?

Descartes defines substance as 'something which can exist itself'²². Due to this fact, the substantial character *res cognitatas*, in his philosophy is to guarantee human's independence of the world of nature, which in turn – as *res extensa* – is defined as independent of the cognitive subject. The way in which Hume exceeds Descartes' dualism is not substantialist but the functional one: what Descartes presented as two substances appears to be only two mutually complementing aspects of the experience described by science of the human nature. Its unity is described however not in a substantialist way but methodologically, and the foundation of this unity is the uniform experimental character of science of human nature. The unity of this science can be also proved by the systematic relation between its parts.

In order to show this systematic relation we should pay attention to the fact how in Hume's science the significance of subjectivity develops.

The starting point for Hume's analyses is the phenomenalist description of the experience where the simple elements – perceptions and their division are shown. Hume's criticism of metaphysics of the substance comes from acceptance of the known assumption propagating that the notions used to describe the subject must directly refer to experience or define relations between them. Within the first book of the *Treatise* Hume searches the content which could be substituted with the notion «I», which could fill it with the content. Such content should meet the requirement of continuity, thanks to which the notion of identical in time thinking substance would get some significance. However, such content does not certainly exist, at the most 'I' may be substituted with mutually related contents from the present sensual experience and the memories completed by the contents associated by imagination on the basis of the cause-and – effect relation. At the same time, the only understood 'I' is the empirical I which is defined by him in the well-known formulation, in which the mind is compared with the theatre; it is worth quoting it all here.

«The mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, re-pass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations. There is properly no simplicity in it at one time, nor identity in different; whatever natural propensity we may have to imagine that simplicity and identity.»²³

²² R. Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, transl. J. Veitch, Meditation III, paragraph 21 (<http://www.classicallibrary.org/descartes/meditations/6.htm> (03.10.2011)).

²³ *THN*, I, IV, 6, p. 301

Yes, but the quoted here principles of binding the individual contents of experience are the same with regard to the cognitive subject, as well as all the objects which within the part of science of human nature defined by Hume as *logics* (knowledge of nature), it is enough to remind the section *Rules by which to judge of Causes and Effects*. However, Hume explains, that at this point we have to 'distinguish betwixt personal identity, as it regards our thought or imagination, and as it regards our passions or the concern we take in ourselves'²⁴. However, within the first book of the *Treatise*, the presenting *logics* of Hume's system, there is lack of causes for the existence of so-called 'natural propensity', but 'imagine that simplicity and identity' even in spite of the fact that the subject does not deserve such definitions.

The external expression of coherence of Hume's philosophical system is the construction of the *Treatise* manifesting the mutual relation and correspondence of its parts. The skeptical end of the first book leaves the question of the total definition of the subject in a state of limbo and the book left itself is partly incomprehensible. The more surprising is the statement appearing at the beginning of the second book that «'Tis evident, that the idea, or rather impression of ourselves is always intimately present with us, and that our consciousness gives us so lively a conception of our own person, that 'tis not possible to imagine, that any thing can in this particular go beyond it.»²⁵

Hume also writes that «Now 'tis obvious, that nature has preserv'd a great resemblance among all human creatures, and that we never remark any passion or principle in others, of which, in some degree or other, we may not find a parallel in ourselves.»²⁶.

Even the setting of both quotes let us state that they belong to various perspectives. The first of them should be written in the philosophic interpretation of the experience, which is done from the phenomenalist perspective at suspending common-sense judgements on extrasensory existence of objects and people. It is the known description of individual contents being a part of experience: this time which is surprising in the light of the end of the first book, there is the impression of own self among the contents. However, in contrast to the mind understood as 'a bundle of perceptions', this time, as we should expect, it concerns the simple impression of 'self' «as it regards our passions or the concern we take in ourselves».

In the meantime, the second extract is from the common-sense perspective, where the existence of both your 'self' and other people is perceived as certain. The task of the second book of the *Treatise*, devoted to feelings, is showing the transition between the phenomenalist analysis of the experience content and the common-sense judgements of people's existence. It is possible thanks to the process of *sympathy*.

The quoted mention of «the idea, or rather impression of ourselves» which is «always intimately

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ *THN*, II, I, 11, p. 368.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

present with us» comes from the excerpt devoted to *sympathy*.

In the quoted above extracts, the issue of 'our self' is mentioned three times: 'self' described as 'the idea or rather impression', as impression, and at last Hume writes that the relations of association between the ideas 'when united together, convey the impression or consciousness of our own person to the idea of the sentiments or passions of others, and makes us conceive them in the strongest and most lively manner.'²⁷ 'Self' is given in two ways: as the notion referring to the various ideas and sensual impressions (both experienced at present and the ones brought to mind) referring to each other and as the reflective impression (let me recall one more time that according to Hume there is no substantial basis of experiencing, but the 'consciousness' is identified with the reflexive impression). Since the feelings are not the static experiences but they accompany the changeability of the range of the appearing perceptions which form the mind, the description of the mind presented in the first book of the *Treatise* needs to be completed. If the perception allows to constitute the objective and subjective way of the experience, in the emotional response the relation of a person towards other people is confirmed, and referring to the emotional response allows to mark the limits between our 'self' and 'self' of other people. The full description of the flow of emotion is not possible without taking into consideration the interpersonal relations. It can be achieved by the division of emotions into indirect and direct ones – the last ones such as love, humility, hatred and pride let us clarify both parts of experience – the subjective and the objective one. 'Self' is not only the mind if this notion is understood as all the cognitive functions, such as sensuality, imagination, memory, *understanding* and *reason*, and it is not understood only theoretically but it becomes a person – engaged in relations with other people. Expressing it in colloquial words: it is not only somebody who learns about the surrounding nature but it is somebody who is bound with other people by the mutual experiences: it is the object of one's love or hatred, loving or hating himself or herself, in comparison with others he or she experiences pride or humility. It allows to clarify the complex of contents which can substitute the notion «self», which the earlier metaphysics defined as the substance. Understanding the experienced emotions is possible only when the man is able to contradict direct passions and indirect sentiments and when the last ones are bound with the existence of other people.

The critic of the substantialist treatment of the subject makes that the internal architectonics of the *Treatise* needs to be read in two ways.

On one hand, in each aspect of human nature both parts of the experience – the subjective and the objective one are mutually bound. This bond is expressed both by defining the conditions of subject and object division which allows to understand the experience. Such conditions are belief and sympathy, which cannot be reduced to any content of experience

(they cannot be defined as 'perception' in Hume's understanding of this notion). Besides, in the first book the subject is described through sensual perceptions and the principles of imagination and reason, which allow to define the man with regard to the natural world: within phenomena and the bounding them principles. In the second book, which is the preparation to the further parts of science of human nature: ethics, aesthetics and politics, the indicated by Hume principles of binding separate contents of experience, they refer to the affective dimension of the experience: passions, sentiments and affections. Own experiences become coherent, not only, when their sources are sought in relation to the world of nature but also when we assume that the object and the cause are other people. Similarly to the aspect of Hume's *logics*, nature is the collection of experiences, of which independent of the man existence the conviction informs, the existence of other people is given as a result of sympathy. Among the empirical contents forming «self» there are indirect emotions, comprehended only when the man regards himself or herself in relations with other people.

In Hume's opinion only after making these analyses it is possible to move to the common-sense point of view; now we can understand what the earlier metaphysics was trying to appoint as substance. Now the notion of 'substantialist subject' or the 'soul' begins to be filled up with contents. However, attention should be paid to two circumstances. The first of them relates to the purpose of using the category of substance while describing the subjectivity, the second on the other hand, the completeness of the functional description presented to it.

If the issue of substantiality of the subject is to be examined only in the theoretical aspect, it is only of the academic significance. Meanwhile, the category of substantiality, carrying consistency and unchanging 'self' with the time is significant for the moral philosophy examining human actions and the responsibility for them. In the practical aspect, the substantiality of the subject would be the moral theory condition. However, Hume persuades that even here this notion can also be revised. In other words, what we express in the colloquial language referring to intuition covering our conviction of the substantialist character of the subject, can be submitted to the philosophical research which will reveal the demanding character of this category, but will also show the possibility of not referring to it while forming the empirical model of human nature.

What would hide under the notion of 'substance' with regard to the subject, both refers to common-sense convictions as well as the individual fields of science of human nature:

- sensual experience gives the conviction of existence of the external bodies: to the group of simple sensual impressions Hume recognizes pleasure and distress – these are the ones which persuade that this is me who experiences something, which is independent of me, it is not 'is sorry' or 'is nice' but 'I feel distress or pleasure',
- indirect feelings, such as love, hatred, pride and humility thanks to sympathy they allow to understand that this 'self' is as also social 'self', and that self

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 369.

experiences some feelings, which refers me to understanding my being with other people, when being lucky allows to feel proud, and then nobody else but I feel it myself,

- appraisal by others, the necessity to be responsible for the done acts defines me as the moral subject – hearing the approval of the others I know perfectly that the moral achievement does not belong to anyone else but to me.

Each of these feelings is explained in Hume's phenomenological analysis into parts/contents, corresponding to individual books of the *Treatise: Of The Understanding, Of The Passions*, and also in the last book *Of Morals*, in which Hume presents the theory of 'impartial enquirer'.

Now the richness of Hume's conception is revealed, which was presented at the beginning of my essay. So the planned by him 'complete system of the sciences' includes the whole knowledge of a man including criticism, politics. If we bear in mind the second of Hume's great written works, his monumental *History of Great Britain*, we should accept that this project to some extent also includes the man immersed in history: the man perceived not only as a moral subject establishing the conditions of good conduct, but also the man in its own historic casualty, in the field of politics realizing the 'artificial virtues' dependent on the changing circumstances.

In the letter of the 10th of March 1751, Hume mentioned:

„(...) Tis not long ago that I burn'd an old Manuscript Book, wrote before I was twenty; which contain'd, Page after Page, the gradual Progress of my Thoughts on that head [that is skepticism towards religion – AG]. It begun with an anxious Search after Arguments, to confirm the common Opinion; Doubts stole in, dissipated, return'd

were again dissipated, return'd again; and it was a perpetual Struggle of a restless Imagination against Inclination, perhaps again Reason.» (D. Hume, *Letters*, ed. J. Y. T. Craig, Oxford 1932, vol. I, p. 153-4.)

Falling into a decline, which cause was doubt about the providential order of the world, which Hume experienced before turning twenty, preceded opening the new 'scene of thought' to him, which led to the formation of the philosophical system. In the new philosophical project we can see the attempt to restructure the earlier vision of the world, in which the basis is not the theological metaphysics with its notions such as immortal substantial soul but perceptible in experience, revealing in everyday life human nature which judicious presentation shows how experimental philosophy can replace such notions.

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ЕКСПЕРИМЕНТАЛЬНА НАУКА В РОБОТІ Д.ЮМА «ТРАКТАТ ПРО ПРИРОДУ ЛЮДИНИ»

Метою статті є розкрити значення поняття «експериментальний метод», котрий згадується в бібліографічних даних до книги Д.Юма «Трактат про людську природу». Я вважаю, що це є основою всієї системи знань. Д.Юма стосовно різноманітних аспектів людського життя.

А. Гжелинский

ЭКСПЕРИМЕНТАЛЬНАЯ НАУКА В РАБОТЕ Д.ЮМА «ТРАКТАТ О ПРИРОДЕ ЧЕЛОВЕКА»

Цель статьи – раскрыть значение понятия «экспериментальный метод», который упоминается в библиографических данных к книге Д.Юма «Трактат о человеческой природе». Я считаю что это является основой всей системы знаний Д.Юма относительно разнообразных аспектов человеческой жизни.