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**The Role of the Problems of the Subject in the Development
of Hume's Philosophical Standpoint**

Rola problematyki podmiotu w kształtowaniu się stanowiska filozoficznego Hume'a

Роль проблематики субъекта в формировании философии Юма

In every philosophical system the subject must be a specific epistemological "a priori", a kind of Kant's transcendental category, the presence of which must be presupposed in any statement on cognition. Similarly, the subject is in all instances a condition for the actual cognitive process to occur. This is obviously banal as it only ascertains the indisputable actual state of things underlying the essence of all cognitive situations. As such, this assertion is theoretically neutral and its recognition cannot produce any doctrinal contention for it cannot be an object of a sensible controversy. However, this metatheoretical obviousness does not answer the question about the degree to which this obvious fact is perceived and taken into account within a given epistemology. The problem formulated like that reveals an issue which is fundamental for the essential form of every epistemological conception. The subject potentially belongs to the basic problems in every epistemological conception, and various approaches are distinguished by the significant factor of the extent and means of actualizing the problem of the subject.

The question of cognitive subjectivity seems somehow concealed in those philosophies which take as their starting point certain ontological ascertainments that characterize "being as such". These ascertainments are accepted "immediately" and primarily, with a tacit assumption of the transparency or indifference of the cognitive apparatus and procedures for the obtained characteristics of ontological categories.

The opposite attitude gives prominence to the problem of the

subject. Within this attitude epistemology conditions ontology. The vision of the world is determined by prior investigations on the possible forms, ways and methods of making contact with this world and on the means by which the world makes itself felt in human life. With this attitude the philosopher's attention must also focus on the question of the structure of the subject, its functioning and the forms and planes of the subjective-objective relations. In a word, human subjectivity reveals its primary significance in the structure of the view of the world.

This differentiation is obviously schematic, provisional and relative. It also requires some specifications however brief.

If a philosophical system prefers the ontological point of departure, this certainly does not prevent it from having a well-developed epistemological department with valuable and seminal ideals about the subject of cognition. This can be exemplified by the theories of Democritus or Aristotle. The problem, however, is that all those characteristics of the subject which even acknowledge certain active participation in the cognitive process (senses with Democritus and reason with Aristotle) are confined to assigning a usually minor role to the subject in the process of human cognition. However, the ascertainments about the function of the subject in cognition, play very little role within the whole of a doctrine, especially in relation to the conception of being.

Epistemology (including the theory of the subject) can possibly be in concord with ontology but this does not significantly affect the content of ontological assertions. This relation should rather be the opposite. The subject is treated only and simply as a non-specific fragment of the ontic reality, while the theory of the subject is a fragment of ontology. In this conception the cognitive subject undergoes far-reaching objectification. The idea of subjectivity is thus very much limited. It only takes part as a certain epistemological minimum in solving internal and, in a way, technical problems of cognition. It is not an essential element that shapes up the total vision of the world.

If, on the other hand, priority is given to epistemological analyses in constructing a philosophical system, it does not need unequivocally to produce subjectivism in the form of ontological or gnosiological idealism. The main point here is only to realize that a theory of being must take into consideration the fact that being is a correlate of a definite subject. This is not indifferent to ontological categories obtained in that way. Being is treated as an object of possible human knowledge which does not necessarily forejudge about subjectivist conclusions but leads to the formulation of certain postulates and rules which eliminate certain characteristics of being while preferring others. The point of departure is therefore the epistemological model which can have as its foundation the

analyses of various aspects of the cognitive process which are regarded as fundamental and constitutive for its validity. Such a model serves as an instrument of criticism and a criterion of the correctness and validity of the knowledge about the world, and thereby of ontological theses. This kind of philosophical attitude also emphasizes the role of the problem of the subject. This problem can be materialized in various forms. For example the subject can be treated as the condition of cognition, as with Descartes or Kant. The starting-point here can be provided by the analysis of the structure of the subject itself (Descartes). Or it can be the analysis of the formal structure of scientific knowledge whose discovered universal rules are attributed to the theoretical subject as a guarantee of their constancy (Kant). Another form in which the above problem is materialized is the research on the psychology of the cognitive processes in the subject as a psychic individual (British empiricism). The subject can also be treated as a more complex whole determined by a large number of factors, historical, social, theoretical etc.

It should be added that this division of the ways of constructing philosophies, carried out after the criterion of the role of the subject, is not at all identical with another possible division, that is, a division into doctrines which attribute the influence upon the results of the cognitive process to the subject, and into theories which treat the subject as a passive factor in cognition. The phenomenological conception of cognition exemplifies the situation where the ascertainments about the essence of the cognitive subject and his powers have a fundamental importance for the whole gnoseological and ontological theory. At the same time the extent of the subject's action upon the cognitive contents is greatly limited in that doctrine.

The historical development of philosophy was basically a transition from the former to the latter of the above models of philosophical reflexion. This is connected on the one hand with the growth of the dynamics of social life and the revelation of man's role as the subject that creates his world and history. On the other hand (and initially first of all) the primacy of the epistemological model of philosophy was due to the quantitative and qualitative development of sciences and to the accompanying awareness of the need for systematic reflexion on the methods of cognition. In philosophy this was expressed in the emergence of autotelic interests, of programmatic criticism and in the awareness that the foundation of philosophy is highly developed self-consciousness.

One of the peculiarities of Hume's philosophy is that it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to unequivocally assign to his philosophy any philosophical attitude that has been distinguished in the above typology. That is why Hume's thought is worth discussing against this back-

ground. It so happens that the division under consideration seems to reflect rather well the theoretical situation which emerged and became settled in the 17th- and 18th-century European philosophy. Therefore, in the light of the criteria assumed in that division the distinct character of Hume's philosophy can be shown more clearly against the tradition and style of philosophizing in his time.

Not only the apex of the development of British empiricism, but also, along with Kantianism, the highest achievement of the 18th-century European philosophy, Hume's philosophy was the object of many often divergent interpretations throughout the whole period of its cultural functioning. This refers especially to its epistemological plane. Although in the 18th-century English thought Hume was still mainly a religious theorist (the reaction of the Scottish school being already an exception), yet since Kant's famous response priority has been given to Hume's epistemological ideas in the reception of his work. From that time, these ideas will shape his profile in the history of philosophy, where the most wide-spread is Hume's image as a forerunner of positivist scepticism. The significant factor which made this interpretation prevalent was T. Green's preface to the 1874 four-volume edition of Hume's writings. Reid's and Kant's share should not be overlooked either. Without an intention of making Hume a positivist Kant interpreted Hume's conception of cognition exclusively in its critical-destructive dimension. He even formulated a direct charge that Hume "ran his boat onto the shallow of scepticism" and could not reconstruct the foundations of cognition after the new rules¹. Therefore, in Kant's reading, Hume's epistemology is reduced only to a critical and negative aspect which undoubtedly contributed to an interpretation which ascribed to Hume total agnosticism and scepticism.

The presented attitude of Kant towards Hume is very significant for our discussion of his treatment of the problem of the cognitive subject against the background of the dominating tendencies in his time. Kant's philosophy is a classical and model realization of the epistemological, subjective type of constructing a philosophical system. The characteristics of this type, which we discussed at the outset, can refer directly to Kant's theory. Moreover, it is even difficult to avoid Kant's terminology in this characterization. As we know, his estimate of Hume was dual. Kant thought highly of Hume's analyses of cognition because they put forward the problem of the foundations of the validity of ontological assertions that went beyond the data of experience. Kant contended that Hume was in a sense the first critical philosopher. He also attributed to Hume's analyses the role of the decisive impulse for the formation of his (Kant's)

¹ I. Kant: *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können*, Leipzig 1920, p. 9.

philosophy of subjectivity. This philosophy decided the question of validity by recognizing that absolute *a priori* dispositions of the theoretical subject are a sanction of cognition. The other side of this estimate was the charge that having presented the problem (too narrow), Hume solved it in a negative way, without finding theoretical sanctions for the ontological theses and with conclusions sceptical and destructive for cognition. Kant's essential rejection of the conclusions destructive for human knowledge, which result from Hume's analyses, is an important fact. Kant and Hume shared the negative attitude towards the 17th-century metaphysical tradition. The two philosophies were largely formed upon the realization of the premises of the theoretical crisis of rationalist metaphysics. The two philosophers saw the sources of its weakness alike. The controversy between them must therefore prove that they undertook the criticism of the metaphysical tradition for different ideals of cognition.

The birth of modern philosophy also means the primacy of epistemological questions as the starting point in constructing a philosophical vision of the world. Among others, what modern thought undoubtedly owes to the 17th-century *a priori* systems is that due to them it noticed the primary importance of epistemological problems. This raised the question of the foundations of the validity of knowledge, of the reasons upon which its reference and adequacy towards the objective world was to lean, and thereby of the reasons and sense of pursuing philosophy together with all cognitive activity. All that meant the emergence of a qualitatively new stage of the development of self-consciousness of philosophy. It was a transition of self-consciousness from the prehistoric epoch, where it existed only directly in methods preferred and applied in cognitive problems and the subject. The sense of the importance of self-consciousness became a separate problem and object of reflexion for itself. Or, to be more precise: modern rationalism created only indispensable premises for this transition by bringing into prominence the cognitive problems and the subject. The sense of the importance of self-consciousness for philosophical judgments found different expressions with individual thinkers in the 17th century. Often it was still fragmentary and spontaneous. Descartes probably had that sense to the largest extent. In the rationalist thought, it was only Kant who was credited with the work of systematizing these problems. His programmatic criticism placed at the foundations of his system the task of defining the ultimate conditions of cognitive validity as the condition of practising philosophy.

One of the most significant effects of the above process, which took place in modern philosophy owing to the 17th-century apriorism, was the formation of the conception of theoretical reason and its consolidation as an epistemological norm. It does not follow that earlier cognitive con-

ceptions were based on the assumption of some radically different cognitive subject and its qualitative equipment. The point is that the notion of theoretical reason came to denote a certain norm, a universal and impassable cognitive standard which determines the structure and contents of cognition and which constitutes its sanction and criterion. In consequence the standard became a dominating model against which all forms of man's contact with reality were relativized.

This theoretical reason became the main object of polemical intentions which accompanied Hume in creating his own philosophy.

With his empiricism, Hume is by no means a mere reverse of the 17th-century rationalism. It is not so that Hume proposed a ready formula of epistemology based on sensualist empiricism in place of apriorism. This would only mean a shift of emphasis within the existing and accepted epistemological horizon. It would mean that his standpoint was a dogmatic rejection of one and preference of the other cognitive power of the subject without criticizing the conception which itself gave rise to such a notion of the subject². Hume's analyses in fact questioned the fundamental theoretical assumptions of the whole mode of thinking which conditioned the conception of that subject. This premise of traditional epistemological thinking reversed by Hume was a conviction about the self-sufficiency of the subject reduced to two dispositions: senses and discursive intellect. The self-sufficiency referred to the construction of the cognitive image of the world (of science, philosophy or of everyday life). Hume negated the competence of the subject thus conceived with regard to every form of cognition with scientific cognition included.

The functioning of the theoretical reason was based on its attributed ability to create synthetic knowledge a priori. Cognition was therefore to unite two values: reality and necessity. Cognitively non-trivial items of information about reality were at the same time to have the theoretical sanction of logical coercion. Hume's criticism was directed against the thesis about the possibility of finding within the theoretical subject the power of sanctioning the necessary character of our real knowledge. He believed that an epistemological conception attributing the ability of acquiring such knowledge to man must be based on theoretical abuse.

Hume criticized the two cognitive powers of the theoretical subject. His analyses referred to the fundamental ontological categories which formed the basis of all our reasoning about the world. He sought to find out whether the theoretical and natural dispositions of either cognitive power could be recognized as the basis of their valid application. The results of the analyses are known to be very sceptical. Hume constructed

² See R. A. M a l l: *Naturalism and Criticism*, The Hague 1975, p. 45.

his own parallel conception of the cognitive subject. This was a mechanistic-associative psychological subject and radically empiricist. From his standpoint only a nominalist conception of knowledge was possible. Such a conception of the subject was partly motivated by the tradition of British empiricism. This was a way of a polemic with apriorism in the field of some kind of ontology of the subject. Hume sought to demonstrate that the mind was passive and receptive by its nature, whereas all theories which attributed to the mind the ability of going beyond the data of experience in a valid way were based on the mystification of the real essence of the mind. More significant was the theoretical criticism of apriorism (intellect). The analyses of the epistemological status of the category of cause led Hume to ascertain the futility of *a priori* knowledge. Intellectual power treated as an epiphenomenon of the senses has no cognitive autonomy. Within this power it is possible to determine dependences characterized by a purely notional necessity, which refer to the relations of similarity, opposition, to degrees of quality and to qualitative and numerical relations. These dependences, however, have no objective validity whatsoever³. Rational power operating within these relations is simply a domain of mathematics, which, incidentally, is itself interpreted in a specific empirical way. Necessity certainly belongs to its theorems, but only on the basis of intuitive obviousness⁴. On the objective side this necessity does not refer to anything. The structure of this knowledge is entirely neutral in this respect.

Another less obvious stage of Hume's destruction of theoretical reason is his criticism of sensualist empiricism.⁵ It should be borne in mind that Hume's analyses do not refer to the value of knowledge in general but to the model of its validation constituted by rationalist metaphysics. Along with the criticism of intellect Hume reveals the indispensability of non-empirical justification of empirical knowledge. Neither by the *a priori* method nor from pure sensory experience is it possible to derive the structures of knowledge upon which man's image of the world is actually based. The cognitive inefficiency of the senses can be seen in some important aspects.

Now, a concrete individual sensory act does not and cannot contain any information about the existence of a real object of which it is to be a copy. "A single perception can never produce the idea of a

³ D. Hume: *A Treatise of Human Nature in Two Volumes*, Introd. by A. D. Lindsay, London 1911, vol. 1, pp. 73—74.

⁴ See D. Gotterbarn: *Kant, Hume and Analyticity*, "Kant-Studien", 1974, no 3, L. W. Beck: *Essays on Kant and Hume*, New Haven, London 1978, pp. 83—84.

⁵ See J. Wilbanks: *Hume's Theory of Imagination*, The Hague 1968, pp. 142—168, R. A. M a l l: *op. cit.*, pp. 45—48.

double existence but by some inference of the reason or imagination. When the mind looks further than what immediately appears to it, its conclusions can never be put to the account of the senses; and it certainly looks further, when from a single perception it infers a double existence and supposes the relations of resemblance and causation betwixt them"⁶. Another difficulty is that sensations are always interrupted and numerically different while they have to reflect the world of things which are characterized by continuous and identical existence. This difficulty, too, cannot be overcome on the purely sensory plane. At the same time this should not mean that we eventually do not recognize the existence of things and the adequacy of our knowledge.⁷ Hence it is necessary to find a factor in the subject to which we owe the certainty of our knowledge. The next point is the problem of correct relations and connections between things. This question is linked with Hume's analysis of causation and the problem of induction. His analysis shows that the mind, which uses and must of necessity use the notion of causation, could not have produced it in an *a priori* way. But the idea of this relation does not come from immediate experience, nor can it be inferred by induction from multiple experience. The essence of this relation and its central importance for all human knowledge and practical life lies in that owing to it, we can go beyond the empty immediate data of the senses. "It is only causation, which produces such a connection, as to give us assurance from the existence or action (...)"⁸ "(...) of those three relations, which depend not upon the mere ideas, the only one that can be traced beyond our senses, and informs us of existences and objects, which we do not see or feel, is causation"⁹ And further on in "An Enquiry...": "Had not the presence of an object instantly excited the idea of those objects, commonly conjoined with it, all our knowledge must have been limited to the narrow sphere of our memory and senses; and we should never have been able to adjust needs to ends, or employ our natural powers, either to the producing of good, or avoiding of evil"¹⁰. Hume is therefore entirely aware of the fact that if experience is to be real cognition, it cannot dispense with categories that go beyond immediate empirical data. These categories will rationalize the world and knowledge about it. However, not in the sense, that they will make the world conform to the absolute requirements of reason, but to the requirements of human life.

⁶ Hume: *A Treatise*, vol. 1, p. 184.

⁷ See R. F. Anderson: *Hume's Account of Knowledge of External Objects*, "Journal of the History of Ideas", 1975, no 4, p. 475.

⁸ Hume: *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 77.

⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 78.

¹⁰ D. Hume: *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding and Selections from a Treatise of Human Nature*, La Salle Illinois, 1963, pp. 58—59.

In reality Hume's problem was to find the mechanism, the principle by virtue of which the mind produced these categories from the material of experience.

Hume could not regard as this mechanism the cognitive procedures developed also within the empirical trend of epistemological tradition. This can be seen in his criticism of induction. It demonstrates that from the theoretical standpoint experience could not be the basis of knowledge with any degree of theoretical certainty, of knowledge which would go beyond given individual cases even to the least extent. Individual-concrete by its nature, experience retains only individual certainty. The probability of judgment about an unknown case is thus psychological. It lies in the force of conviction about the chances of anticipated events, the force formed by the pattern of events in the past. Any concrete experience does not reveal in itself any premise of transferring the feature observed in it upon other cases¹¹, while the duplication of experience does not change anything, either in knowledge itself or in things¹². Each case of multiple experience and all of them considered together do not show more than what is given in an individual case. Therefore, all inferences going beyond immediate experience must be based on the nonempirical premise of the constancy of the course of natural laws. They must also be based on the assumption of the similarity between unknown and known cases, that is of the similarity between the future and the past. In other words, inductive generalizations (in incomplete induction) cannot have probability, which is sanctioned only theoretically. They must contain as their premise the ontological assumption about causalities and their constancy. These causalities are the only ones that make it possible to pass from one thing to another in the process of inference.¹³ However, the conviction about the constancy of the course of nature, which constitutes the condition of all our reasoning about the objective reality, cannot itself be justified a priori. Nor is it empirical in the strict sense. Also, this conviction cannot be derived as a probable inference from experience because it would lead to the vicious circle: the conviction itself is a premise of probable knowledge. Thus, non-tautological knowledge, not being at the same time simple self-obviousness of the senses, given immediately or in memory, i.e. the whole effective knowledge about reality, cannot be reconstructed exclusively in logical and empirical terms. Ontological convictions of realistic type are, as demonstrated by Hume, the condition and basis of cognizing reality. However, the justification of ontological realism does not lie within the possibilities of

¹¹ Hume: *A Treatise*, vol. 1, p. 139.

¹² *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 161—162.

¹³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 91—92.

theoretical reason. Therefore, the confinement of cognitive subjectivity to the dispositions of theoretical subjects threatens to produce sceptical effects. In his 1754 letter to John Stewart, a professor of natural philosophy in Edinburgh, Hume wrote: "(...) I never asserted so absurd a Proposition as that any thing might arise without a Cause: I only maintain'd that our certainty of the Falseness of that Proposition proceeded neither from Intuition nor Demonstration; but from another Source".¹⁴ The task which Hume thus put before the cognitive theory was to find non-arbitrary principles in the nature of man as the cognitive subject. The principles constitute those fundamental ontological convictions.

Hume's epistemological analyses undermined first of all the ideal of theoretical certainty of real knowledge. In metaphysical tradition this value was conferred upon cognition by extending the sanctions of reason upon the sphere of all cognition. This was expressed in a conviction that rationality could justify itself, possibly by referring to God's universal rationality with which it was homogenous. It was also accepted that a rational sanction also comprised the basic characteristics of being. Hume's scepticism also demonstrated that the case was converse in the logical structure of condition. If cognition is to go beyond empty self-obviousness, the acts of theoretical reason, both of intellect and its sensible side, must be secondary to the foundations of the subject which cannot be made theoretical and in which there are ontological views of the subject. Above all they express the subject's primary non-discursive bondage with the world. Those ascertainments resulted in the acceptance of the probabilistic conception of knowledge and also a significant change of views on the ultimate sanctions and sources of cognitive activity. The destruction of the theoretical foundations of that conception of cognition was for Hume a specific emancipating act of man's natural reason from its own mystified image. This was an expression of the tendency to free the mind from any *a priori* guarantees which were at the same time outside the mind's common and natural equipment.

Hume is commonly regarded as a philosopher who destroyed ontology from the position of extreme empiricism and created a subjectivist conception of cognition. From his point of view, however, the ontologies of rationalist metaphysics reveal a very clear subjectivist aspect. They are methodologically dependent upon the principles of discursive reason which for them was the only medium through which man could contact being. For Hume reason is a secondary and mystified aspect of human subjectivity and thereby a more advanced expression of that subjectivity than natural habitual convictions. On the same grounds empiricism be-

¹⁴ After N. K. Smith: *The Philosophy of David Hume. A Critical Study of its Origins and Central Doctrines*, London 1966, p. 413.

fore Hume should be placed in that line. We find in it the analogous conviction about the ability of the cognitive subject to self-justify his results. It is a conviction that in the structure of cognition itself there are ready conditions of recognizing the theoretical value of cognitive knowledge. Hume himself makes a peculiar valuation of ontology. He pointed out that the recognition of the existing world and its determination conditioned all reasoning. Ontological categories cannot themselves be the object of theoretical justification because they occupy such a position in the cognitive structure (both logical and practical). These categories, in fact, do not require such justification since their recognition is a question of both practical and cognitive compulsion. The question by Descartes and Leibniz: "what makes me recognize existence" is thus considered by Hume within a completely different conception of cognition and the subject.

Hume's epistemology demonstrated that a philosophy which made the self-justifying subject as its starting point must eventually absolutize it. As a consequence, the constructions of such a philosophy will be of arbitrary character. What he inferred from recognizing this situation was his realization that at the very starting point of philosophy the bond of the subject with the world must be taken into consideration. This bondage must be of such kind as would not at once contain the fundamental dichotomy between the objective and the subjective, the concrete and the rational. The dichotomy belongs to the essence itself of cognitive situation and must appear in every epistemology. It appears as the problem whose the solution (being always a model of overcoming the dichotomy) decides about the essential sense of a given theory. However, because this dichotomy is a constitutive feature of the cognitive relationship, it cannot effectively be overcome unless by finding a mediating factor: by referring the whole cognitive relationship to some non-cognitive domain, that is, by deriving the cognitive situation from that other non-cognitive domain. Thus, the subjective-objective dichotomy (chronic in "pure" cognition) will be relativized and a plane of possible communication between the object and the cognitive subject will be found. In other words, the overcoming of the contradictory character of the elements in the subject-object relationship, this overcoming being the essence of cognition, is only possible when the theoreticality of that system is overcome as well. We encounter that kind of situation in Hume. Man's status as the cognitive subject is secondary to his ontological condition and is determined by it. In that way, the opposition between subject and reality can be shown as non-absolute and insufficient, which in Hume's view, cannot be achieved by the purely theoretical subject. For Hume the category which expresses this ontological, epistemological,

and anthropological position is nature and human nature. Hume's operation does not consist in merely complementing the cognitive subject with non-rational elements, whose function would be to support in a way the standard powers of the theoretical subject. Formed in the practical process of life, the instinctive dispositions of the mind, derived from the stratification of individual and social experience and playing a regulative role in life and cognition, are the non-discursive elements of human nature and they themselves form the basic framework of human subjectivity. They do not function in the structure of cognition which is basically determined by the principles of theoretical reason. Conversely, they themselves condition the functioning of reason. "Thus the sceptic still continues to reason and believe, even though he asserts that he cannot defend his reason by reason; and by the same rule he must assent to the principle concerning the existence of body, though he cannot pretend, by any arguments of philosophy, to maintain its veracity. Nature has not left this to his choice, and has doubtless esteemed it an affair of too great importance, to be trusted to our uncertain reasonings and speculations. We may well ask, What causes induce us to believe in the existence of body? but it is in vain to ask, Whether there be body or not? That is a point which we must take for granted in all our reasonings."¹⁵ Hume, therefore, had in mind a much more general question than the reason of our inductive inferences, or the justification of inferring about the essence of existence from concepts. His analyses led him decisively to pose the problem of the validity of all cognition. They also made him aware that it was not possible to solve this problem within the epistemological horizon current at that time, that is within the theoretical justification of cognition. To assume the naturalist attitude meant for Hume to change the whole conception of philosophy and to make its starting point not the cognitive subject but the subject of life.

The foregoing considerations seem to confirm the earlier assertion that it is difficult to place Hume within our present typology of how the problem of the subject is treated. His standpoint can be presented as very non-typical because it is, on the one hand, a philosophy which prefers the ontological point of departure, while on the other hand it was the analyses of the cognitive subject that contributed greatly to the formation of Hume's attitude. Moreover, despite considerable importance of the problems of the subject, its role, in turn, in the cognitive process lies only in passive perception or mechanical association of the perceptive material. Hume's philosophy can also be presented as one of the first conscious attempts to break this division and to unite the ontological and

¹⁵ H u m e: *A Treatise*, vol. 1, pp. 182—183.

epistemological, and anthropological aspects in the starting point of philosophy. Hume's distinctiveness, however, will be understood if we take into consideration his attitude towards the tradition which we have characterized earlier. He was probably the first thinker to make such thorough criticism of the foundations of the model of epistemological thinking dominant in modern philosophy. Hume can undoubtedly be treated as the philosopher who diagnosed the decline of a certain theoretical epoch but he was alone in his sharp awareness of the premises of the crisis of that formation. Only Kant can equal him in that respect but Kant used this awareness in quite a different way. Hume can be shown both as a decadent and a pioneer in a virgin territory. His positive propositions were not as precise and finite as his criticism but they were certainly consistent. He presented an outline of the conception of "practical reason", but he abandoned any attempts to save theoretical reason. This gave his naturalism a clearly pragmatist character.¹⁶ This was also connected with his depreciation of the discursive reason, too extreme from the objective point of view, and its reduction to the role of the epiphenomenon of adaptive abilities. This reflected Hume's resignation of attributing to human existence any sanctions and senses not identical with that existence itself. For him human nature means in fact individual and social existence alone and a complex of abilities of cognitive and practical adaptations to the world. These abilities were automatically formed in the course of this existence. Furthermore, Hume maintains that we cannot attribute to these abilities any autonomous value that goes beyond an assertion that these and not others were developed and that they are a sufficient instrument of the existence of the species.

STRESZCZENIE

Na wstępie artykułu przyjmuje się schematyczne rozróżnienie dwu punktów wyjścia w konstruowaniu systemów filozoficznych: „ontologiczny” i „epistemologiczny”. Ten drugi model uprawiania filozofii eksponuje problematykę podmiotu i jego zasadnicze znaczenie w strukturze światopoglądu. W modelu tym kategorie ontologiczne są wtórne wobec ustaleń epistemologicznych, które stanowią kryterium prawomocności twierdzeń o bycie. Rozwój europejskiej filozofii polegał m.in. na przejściu (u Kartezjusza) od modelu „ontologicznego” do dominującego w nowożytnej filozofii modelu „epistemologicznego”.

Na tle tego schematu ujawnia się odrębność Hume'a. Podejmuje on próbę przezwyciężenia powyższej dychotomii i zespolenia w punkcie wyjścia filozofii aspektów ontologicznych, epistemologicznych i antropologicznych. Sceptycyzm Hume'owski był bowiem wymierzony głównie w wypracowany przez nowożytną metafizykę ra-

¹⁶ See G. B. Mathur: *Hume and Kant in their Relation to the Pragmatic Movement*, "Journal of the History of Ideas" 16 (1955), p. 203.

cjonalistyczną generalny sposób uprawomocniania poznania. Podstawą jego było przekonanie o zupełnej zdolności czysto poznawczego podmiotu do samodzielnego uzasadniania wartości poznawczej osiąganych przez siebie rezultatów. Tezę tę podzielał też nowożytny empiryzm (będący także przedmiotem krytyki Hume'a) wierząc, że w samej wiedzy (jakkolwiek uzyskiwanej) znajdują się gotowe przesłanki jej prawomocności. Destrukcyjne wyniki analiz Hume'a godzą właśnie w to najogólniejsze przeświadczenie epistemologiczne nowożytnej filozofii. W konsekwencji też ukazują one konieczność odwoływania się przy uznawaniu wiedzy do pozateoretycznych, naturalnych, ostatecznie sankcjonujących poznanie uwarunkowań istnienia podmiotu.

РЕЗЮМЕ

В данной работе учтено схематическое различие двух точек зрения в конструировании философских „онтологической” и „эпистемологической” систем. Эпистемологическая модель экспонирует проблематику субъекта и указывает на его особое значение в структуре мировоззрения. В этой модели онтологические категории бывают вторичным явлением по отношению к эпистемологическим определениям, которые являются критерием правомочия тезиса о бытие. Развитие европейской философии заключалось в переходе (у Декарта) от модели „онтологической” к господствующей в древней философии „эпистемологической” модели.

На фоне этой схемы проявляется своеобразие философии Юма. Юм стремится преодолеть вышеуказанную дихотомию, соединяя онтологические, эпистемологические и антропологические аспекты. Скептицизм Юма направлен против обработанного новой рационалистической метафизикой, генерального способа узаконения познания. В основе скептицизма лежало убеждение о способности познавательного субъекта к самостоятельному определению достоинства достигнутых результатов. Этот тезис одобрил также новейший эмпиризм, который критиковал Юм, веря, что в самом познании (каким оно не было способом приобретенное), находятся готовые предпосылки его правомочия.

Деструктивные результаты анализа Юма метят именно в это самое общее эпистемологическое убеждение новейшей философии. В последовательности, они указывают также на необходимость ссылаться, акцептируя познание, на вне-теоретические, естественные, санкционирующие познание обусловленности существования субъекта.