

R. A. MALL

HUME'S CONCEPT OF MAN

AN ESSAY IN PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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Philosophical Anthropology*

RAM ADHAR MALL



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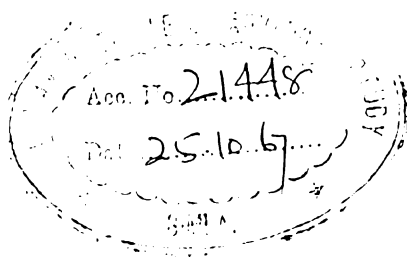
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PREFACE

In this work I have tried to present Hume's philosophical anthropology faithfully and in as clear a manner as I can. In doing so, I have chosen the more modern phrase 'philosophical anthropology' which is synonymous with Hume's phrase in the introduction of his *Treatise* 'Science of Man'. I have chosen two books of Hume which in my opinion are representative of his whole philosophy, viz. *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, and the *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. Hume, in a very short work of autobiography 'My Own Life', writes about his *Enquiry* as follows: "my *Enquiry Concerning Human Morals* which, in my opinion (who ought not to judge on that subject), is all of my writings, historical, philosophical, or literary, incomparably the best. It came unnoticed and unobserved into the world."

Hume's life as well as his philosophy were subject of misunderstanding and adverse criticisms. In the age of enlightenment he was an upright man of letters ("... indeed, almost all my life has been spent in literary pursuits and occupations")¹ fully devoted to philosophy and literature. His life is a singular story of a brilliant man constantly struggling against the odds of soaring ambitions, poor health, superstition, intolerance, financial difficulties, misunderstandings. He was a Scot and that was enough for his suffering and frustration in an England of anti-Scottish feeling. In his own native Scotland, he was snubbed and constantly attacked because of his anti-religious ideas (a case of misunderstanding his philosophy). In France, he enjoyed a popular understanding and fame but his philosophy was not correctly understood and fully appreciated. The Science of Man conceived and expounded by Hume as the science of all sciences has met with two responses, either of negligence or misunderstanding. As ill luck would have it, Hume did not live to live Kant's appraisal of his philosophical genius. The nineteenth

¹ See, 'My Own Life', published with Hume's *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Liberal Arts Press, p. 3.

century world of philosophy was much interested in Hume but mainly for the sake of adverse criticisms and ill-founded refutations. In twentieth century, his philosophy has met with sympathy and understanding still the false picture of a notorious Hume made popular by the commonsense philosophers like Reid and Beattie remains in certain minds. The main trend today is not of approval or disapproval of Humean philosophy, but a respectful attention. This is all that is needed for a better understanding of Hume's intentions.

This *Science of Human Nature* was conceived by Hume as an all-inclusive science which may well be compared in its import and far-reaching consequences to the "Fundamental ontology" of Heidegger and to the 'Universal phenomenological ontology' of the phenomenologists. Today, specialists in different fields of human enquiry are studying this foundational science of man carefully including psychologists, moralists, logicians, politicians, economists, social scientists and anthropologists. This universal approach to man is marked by and is based upon Hume's particular conviction that the most appropriate object of humanistic sciences is human nature, its authenticity, veracity, and dignity. This new way of conceiving human nature as the most original and fundamental principle of explanation is a revolution in philosophy which becomes explicit in Kant and goes by the name of *Copernican Revolution*.

The present study of 'Hume's Concept of Man' certainly suffers from one limitation, and this must be made clean right here in order to avoid misconception about my intentions. I have not sufficiently taken into consideration Hume's logic and knowledge in the field of 'relations of ideas'. My humble presentation of Hume's philosophy offers two excuses by way of reasons for its limitation : in the first place much has been done on this part of his philosophy, so that I have preferred to confine myself to a neglected aspect. Secondly, I strongly feel that a study of human nature is of central importance. My another excuse in writing the book on Hume is my hope to put him in a different light than what the tradition has made out of him.² By doing this, I expect to render Hume more consistent, relevant, and helpful in our modern context.

² See Chapter Two.

The sceptical Hume is no clue for a real understanding of his *philosophy*. A faithful delineation of Hume's science of man is accepted to be the right clue to an understanding of all human enquiries including even the abstract sciences like mathematics and geometry. The science of man is the most urgent concern of man. Hume's advice can never be obsolete, "Be a philosopher, but amidst all your philosophy, be still a man." That is why I have chosen it to be the motto of my book. Hume's own method in working out a science of man is observational and experimental (experimental reasoning). The phrase 'philosophical anthropology' is mainly of continental origin and is now much in vogue. It claims to provide us with certain clues to the question of a fundamental science of man. Kant thought of philosophical anthropology and put it well in his *Introduction to Logic* and discerned there four questions to be main task of philosophy : (a) what can I know, (Epistemology or Metaphysics), (b) what ought I to do (Morals), (c) what may I hope (Religion) and, (d) what is man (Anthropology). In a very important sense (the most relevant) all the first three questions may be traced back to and subsumed under the fourth one : for all human enquiries, in the last run, orient themselves by and start from the science of man. Whether or not, *there is a science of man, or the science of man*, is not discussed here.

Philosophical anthropology thus claims to be the most pervasive and foundational discipline. A delineation of Hume's concept of man could not get the importance it unmistakably deserves because of the traditional orthodox Humean scholarship. In course of my interpretation of Hume's concept of man, I have arrived at the following fundamental ideas :

(a) Hume possesses the philosophical penchant which he describes himself as the search for 'common principles'. The same are termed 'universal principles' in his *Enquiry*.

(b) Underlying such a search, there is an expectation which is the expression of Hume's conviction that there is a human nature which is fundamentally the same in all of us. The present work has grown out of a doctoral dissertation conceived, completed and accepted for the Dr. phil. degree of the University of Cologne, West Germany.

My thanks are due to Professors Paul Wilpert with whom I studied philosophical anthropology and Ludwig Landgrebe

who introduced me to phenomenology and whose lectures and discussions have greatly influenced my philosophical thought. I am also grateful to Professors Josef Konig, Hermann Wein, Helmuth Plessner and Harald Delius. In preparation of the present work, I also acknowledge with pleasure my indebtedness to my esteemed teacher Professor J. N. Mohanty.

I take the opportunity of recording my gratitude to Dr. D. P. Chattopadhyaya for his unkind but not destructive criticism and to Sri Bijoy Bhattacharya and Sri Buddhadeva Bhattacharya for their unfailing and kind help. And to Renate I owe more than what can be expressed in words.

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CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	v
I The Concept of Philosophical Anthropology : An Historical Treatment	1
II The Traditional Interpretation of Hume's Philosophy	23
III The Role of Experience in Hume's Concept of Man	41
IV Custom and Habit as the Guiding Principles in Hume's 'Science of Man'	55
V The Principle of Belief and Hume's Concept of Man	62
VI The Concept of Imagination in Hume's 'Science of Man'	72
VII Sympathy and Hume's Concept of Man	92
VIII Human Nature	107
IX Hume's Anthropology	119
X Conclusion	139
<i>Appendix</i>	151
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	161
<i>Index</i>	163

“Be a philosopher, but amidst all your philosophy,
be still a man.” DAVID HUME

CHAPTER ONE

THE CONCEPT OF PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY : AN HISTORICAL TREATMENT

THE most important thing about a culture or a people or a nation is its philosophy, the way it understands itself and the world of 'lived-experience' and existence. Philosophy, thus, is a concrete system of such an understanding. It is philosophy by which we live, it is no artificial product of expert minds in an equally artificial and technical language. Human thought has always been in the service of human life. Philosophy is a necessary part of the lived human life worked out sometimes consciously and sometimes subconsciously as we walk along the road and do our jobs in offices and homes. It is to this type of 'self and world-understanding of man' that the name philosophical anthropology has been given. Philosophical anthropology, as we shall see, in the following pages, is the most primary philosophy based on the most primary thought, *i.e.* a nation or a people need not necessarily consciously philosophize or reflect in order to have a philosophy of life (*Lebensphilosophie*), for such a philosophy is always there prior to all conscious reflection. Pre-reflective level of human existence is not unphilosophical, but primarily philosophical. Thinking in life is always first primary thinking and then there is a secondary thinking—a reflection on the first.

Different cultures of different peoples are different systems of contact with the world of things and beings. Man finds himself already born within a particular network of a concrete system working with the help of a particular framework of reception and response. Not only that, even animals, as Üekesul has so convincingly shown in his book *Theoretische Biologie*, possess such a receptive system. Their world of perception is, thus, determined by their receptive scheme which they receive from nature.

Nature, being the dominant principle in life subserves thought, and thought, being an organic purposive function bears the

character of a means to an end — end being life as such. Abstraction in philosophy seems to have been the result of thought freeing itself from its character as a means to an end in itself. This freedom on the part of thought may be partly or fully achieved leading to semi or pure abstraction. For philosophical anthropology man is the problem of all problems ; he is the subject and object both of his study. There is something like an apriori character of anthropology. This apriori character of this discipline includes all that other disciplines like art and religion have to say on man. Philosophical anthropology, as the science of man is that foundational discipline which stands at the back of all other sciences. The concept of man of a particular people is not the result of a necessary process of conscious reflection. This is what we may term 'the self-evident character' of all anthropology. A closer study of the history of philosophy reveals what we may call 'the deep lying anthropological line of the history of philosophy'. It ever remains and remained in the background and is thus likely to be forgotten. For we moderns, who seem to have a more conscious anthropological sensorium, it appears as if there had always been a coherent anthropological system growing from the ancient to the modern period, although always lying at the back of different disciplines.

The discipline, philosophical anthropology, is not a completely new discovery of the modern period in the world of philosophy. Anthropology may be aptly described as the 'science of man' ; the knowledge of man by man. Such a knowledge being independent, every one is born and lives as if in a horizon of self-understanding. Life is 'self-hermeneutic', says W. Dilthey. We find ourselves born into an already existing system of meaning and values of things and beings of this universe. Philosophical anthropology is, thus, that fundamental and foundational discipline for all sciences in general and for 'human sciences' (Geisteswissenschaften) in particular of which Dilthey thought in the last century, although he suggested the name 'descriptive psychology or typological psychology' rather than philosophical anthropology which is more appropriate.

The very title 'philosophical anthropology' implies that there are other branches of anthropology as well. The different branches of anthropology, namely medical, biological, historical, social, cultural, physiological, psychological, physical and so on are

named after the different points of view from which the self-same phenomenon man may possibly be studied. The question that naturally crops up is : Is then philosophical anthropology only a systematization and summarization of the results of all these different branches of anthropology ? Or is there something characteristically new when man is philosophically considered ? Except philosophical anthropology, all other branches start from a fixed notion of man and then study him in relation to his environment, to his historical and cultural achievements. But philosophical anthropology, on the other hand, takes nothing for granted and asks about the very man who studies and is studied. It is a knowledge of man of himself. One of the most difficult problems that a philosophical study of man has to face is that man's knowledge of himself, *i.e.* his self-knowledge is bound up with his self-interpretation which influences again his self-formation and development. Normally this is not so in other forms of studies ; for the things studied there have their own constitutions and formations. It is in this sense that we maintain that man cannot be defined for all times to come. 'Man cannot be ontologically fixed', says Jaspers ; he is ontologically an open field of diverse possibilities. This is true not only of individual human beings, but also of different peoples in different ages. Thus, man is free to form his life as he chooses after the original formation which was, of course, not his own choice. Heidegger speaks of this in his own way as 'thrown-ness' (*Geworfenheit*). We may put all this under Nietzsche's motto that 'man is an animal not yet determined' (*das noch nicht festgestellte Tier*). The 'yet' in the above phrase seems to point out to a lack in man, but that is really not so ; for man is free to form himself which is a strength rather than a weakness in him. We may leave out 'yet' and describe man in contrast to animals as one who remains undetermined. Thus, man becomes a task of man ; he is his own problem. This is what Prof. Plessner and Gehlen maintain when they take man as not simply living his life but leading it, too. It is precisely in this sense that Theodor Litt conceives different self-interpretations to be different directives for self-formation. Ortega Gasset once aptly remarked : 'man is *causa sui* in a double sense ; for, firstly he creates himself and secondly, he also determines as to what for he creates himself'.

A look at the history of philosophy is at the same time a look

at the history of philosophical anthropology. The Greeks considered man to be essentially rational (*homo sapiens*) and tried to show the primacy of reason every where from political to moral philosophy. For the medieval philosophers, man is a child of God fallen down from his heavenly abode ; he is an original sinner. All his difficulties, thus, must be referred back to this outworldly disloyal accident. For the moderns again, man is no '*homo sapiens*' ; he is no fallen down creature either. He is '*homo faber*'. He is an animal only more complex. That the world is unlimited finds its echo in human aspirations that are also unlimited. This tendency's expression is sometimes termed today 'modern man's unlimited expansionism' in all fields. It is this phenomenon of modern expansionism that leads us to believe that modern period is the most eclectic in nature. It is a healthy sign so far as the wealth of material is concerned, but so far as there is no common meeting ground among them it points to a lack, temporary, no doubt, this lack may be.

Thus, we may be said to have come nearer to a more exact description of philosophical anthropology. It is a discipline accompanying man at every time and at all levels of his development. Like other animals, man also exists but he does not merely exist ; he also asks about himself ; he understands and interprets himself. Man is a self-formative creature. In some quarters of philosophical anthropology, man as an 'asking-being' (*fragendes Wesen*) is emphasized and considered. The origin of all metaphysics lies here in this 'asking-nature' of man. Metaphysics is grounded in the very human nature, maintains Heidegger. It is a discipline out of sheer necessity to ask and to ask means to wait. That every 'anthropos' is at the same time an anthropologist is not a mere theoretical trifle, but it follows from the very nature of human reality which is that man has to be always conscious of his responsibility of self-formation based on his self-understanding and self-interpretation. Closely related to Heidegger's emphasis on man's question-asking character, M. Scheler describes him as one who can say 'no' to the things and beings of the world. He is a '*Neinsagenkönner*'.

Man being always in possession of an understanding as to what 'man' is, life as such becomes a natural reflection of which we may and need not always be conscious. To show this natural reflective character of life goes to the credit of W. Dilthey who

maintained that all abstraction is and must be subservient to life. Philosophical anthropology is always a pre-philosophical anthropology. Thus, we can very well say that there is a sub-conscious pre-reflective character of all philosophy which is anthropological in nature. To start with, we can observe the main characteristic of this pre-philosophical anthropology to be its anthropomorphic character. The primitive man seems to have had no common word to include all the animals under it. He takes himself as one like others ; he is one of them. This humanization of animals is just the expression of the general phenomenon of humanization as such. Such was the world of Homer and Hesiod. Anthropomorphism is an attempt to understand the world of things and beings 'ex analogia humanis'. Xenophanes of Elea raises for the first time the voice of protest against such a tendency to understand others, including gods even, as oneself. Goethe has remarked very aptly that man never understands to what extent he is anthropomorphic. But a critical understanding of the origin of Greek anthropomorphism points to something else. The main problem of Homer's anthropomorphism was not so much the humanization of gods but the deification of man. Gods are not dethroned but only man is raised above to the levels of gods. Strictly speaking, this is no anthropomorphism but 'theomorphism'. Although we can never be fully free from anthropomorphism, still it is good that it is not accepted in some of its very crude forms. A total absence of it may degenerate into 'ethnocentrism' (Ethnozentrismus). The essence of ethnocentrism is a peculiar tendency of self-love ; it appears to be narcissistic in nature. All men, even all nations seem to carry within themselves a tendency of self-appraisal along with a rival tendency to look down upon every thing that is foreign to them. It is this tendency that becomes the root cause of such beliefs of certain peoples that they are the chosen peoples of God on earth and are born to rule others who again, as they maintain, are born to serve. Whether the other peoples are also men has been lately debated a few hundred years ago in the west. To be a Christian seemed to be the criterion of being a man. The non-Christians were doubted to have been created by devil. Therefore, we notice the unlimited amazement of some of the church fathers on mission towards the east when they found that the eastern culture was higher and richer than their

own. It is to this wish to feel oneself superior that Sartre traces back the origin of antisemitism. This is also the explanation of that psychological phenomenon which goes by the name of 'projection'. If for the middle ages, man in the full sense was only a Christian and all others were barbarians, so also the Muslims were calling the Christians 'Chirstian dogs' (Christenhunde).¹ Such a tendency of looking down upon foreigners as barbarians can be shown also in Greek thought. Even a philosopher like Aristotle tries to show in his *Politics* the root of slavery in nature. He again tries to justify the institution of ancient slavery in the field of agriculture by saying that the natural order falls into two classes of 'masters' and 'slaves'.

Herodotus finding to his utter astonishment that the Egyptians have also a word in their language corresponding to the Greek word 'Barbar' comes to the conclusion that such ideas are relative. Thus, convinced of the relativity of such concepts, partly based on ethnocentrism and partly on the lack of knowledge of other peoples' cultures, he, for the first time, decries the theory of natural order falling into two classes of masters and slaves. This we find again very clearly exemplified in Thucydides, the great historian of the fifth century B. C. That the Greeks did have a higher culture was due to their rich developments in diverse fields. At the time of the Sophists, there came a great humanistic turn in Greek thought that some how went back to pre-Socratic tendencies. It is really the Sophists who, for the first time, proclaimed the equality of all men as men. Thus, there arises the tendency to consider all men of all cultures and peoples under one concept 'humanity'. Schiller once remarked 'humanity is the universal brotherhood'. It is this humanity which falls into many different peoples with different cultures, religious faiths, languages, etc. but man in all of them is the same. Nationalism gave place to internationalism ; ethnocentrism to altruism ; self-love to others-love. This was the special feature of the age of enlightenment. What was still lacking in this concept of humanity was a real common meeting ground among all these different peoples and nations with different systems of cultures. Diogenes' standing in the centre of a market place in

¹ The story of an Italian beating his ass for the simple reason of latter's being a non-Christian is generally referred to in this connection. See *Philosophische Anthropologie* by M. Landmann, pp. 22-23.

Athens and lighting a lantern in order to search a man in the bright day-light indicates to such an idea of humanity. Thus, humanity seems to become one of the most essential defining characteristics of human beings. It is also charged with ethical qualities ; it is not what we always in fact are but what we in fact should be.

If one tries to single out a particular date when philosophical anthropology in the history of philosophy began, one feels inclined to refer to fifth century B.C. in Greece. According to Cicero, it must have been Socrates who brought the heaven on earth and made man the study of man with his wise council 'know thyself', meaning thereby that man should understand that he is no God but man. It is such descriptions of man in terms of what he is not that point to a lack in him. We shall return to this point a little later while discussing the problem of the definition of man in modern anthropology. The pre-Socratic philosophy was less anthropological and more cosmological. It was more a natural philosophy than the philosophy of man. Heraclitus is reported to have once said that he was always exploring himself. Still, we shall propose and maintain the thesis that Sophists and not Socrates gave philosophy an 'anthropological turn'. That the word 'Sophist' bears a nickname is due to the misuse of it which can be traced back to the opposition between the Sophists and Socratic circle. But Socrates is really one with the Sophists on the question of the pre-Socratic cosmology which is macrocosmic and not microcosmic in origin. Both Sophists as well as Socrates being interested solely in the problem of man discover him under two aspects. Socrates discovers man under the ethical aspect whereas Sophists discover him under the perspective of cultural philosophy. Sophists can be said to be the first anthropologists ; for we know that there is an inseparable relation between anthropology and cultural philosophy. Man is a being who has to form and determine his life. It is this self-formation through the help of self-understanding and self-interpretation that goes by the name of 'culture'. Nothing is given by nature as ready made ; man has to shape himself in the light of his own idea of man. He invents his own culture, his ethics and so on. Thus, the recognition of the power and ability of man to create his own culture is first discovered and celebrated by the Sophists. Protagoras tries to relate this human ability of self-formation to his bio-

physical characteristics. Man, compared with animals falls far short off regarding the natural gifts, *e.g.* he possesses no specialized organs of attack and escape, he has no clutch and also his sense organs are not so sharp and specialized. Man being, thus, at a disadvantage, develops his own ways and means of compensating them. Culture is one of them — the most important of all human devices. Thus, all his biological and physical handicaps are more than compensated by his self-creative power and ability. Man is a 'born-poor creature' but he makes himself rich. The Sophists recognize this creativity of man not only in the fields of culture and ethics but also in epistemology. The world of knowledge is no independent world ; for it depends upon the human needs and deeds. It is a subjectively coloured human world. This contention leads the Sophists to their famous theory of 'universal relativism'. There is no universalism except this universal relativism. It is in this way that the Sophists become the real predecessors of modern period in philosophy which is also dominated by relativism, historicism and scepticism. We may well maintain that for the history of philosophical anthropology, a Protagoras is more important than a Plato, a Pascal more important than a Descartes, a Herder than a Kant and a Feuerbach than a Hegel². Linking directly the Sophists with the moderns, we may leave out the medieval anthropology that always moves within the limited spheres of religion and takes man to be created in the image of God. It is an uncritical and naive anthropology. The moderns study man from a wiser perspective ; it is a study of man more from within man himself (Dilthey). Life is the only all inclusive real category of all references. Pope, in his *An Essay on Man* revives with courage and faith the same old Sophistic programme of a real anthropological turn by declaring that 'the proper study of man is man'.

Anthropology, for Kant, remained just a part of his lectures on Geography and as such cannot detain us here long. It is an anthropology 'under the pragmatic perspective' as he himself says. That 'man is freely creative' means to Kant only in the field of morality where categorical imperative reigns supreme. In other spheres is man labouring under different conditions. Although Kantian anthropology remained far behind our expectations still it goes to the credit of Kant to have left this vital problem

² See *De Homine* by M. Landmann, Introduction.

of man not wholly untouched. It is really with Feuerbach that anthropology occupies the central most position in all human enquiries in the modern period. Man in his existence, according to Feuerbach, is a member of the same world of which any other thing is a member. He is no abstraction ; for he is a concrete reality ; he is his existence, nothing more and nothing less. In his existence, he is finite and is born to end. His existence is an existence just out of necessity — ‘a must-existence’. Feuerbach does not want to start with the world and the cosmos as the cosmologists do, also not with the ‘world-reason’ as Hegel did ; he also rejects the starting-points of Descartes and Kant, namely human reason ; for it is too abstract a principle to serve the purpose of concrete philosophy. His own starting-point is the whole existing man, the total man. Reality is life and life is existence and existence is a ‘lived-experience’. Philosophy should not philosophize on man, but man should be the centre of all philosophizing. Feuerbach proclaims anthropology so passionately, because it should take the place of theology. Transcendence is a human construction or projective invention, perhaps necessary for his comfort and betterment. Instead of man being created in the image of God as the whole Western tradition has it, it is really God who is made in the image of man. Theology becomes anthropology ; anthropology is the secret of theology. All the reverential qualities man worships in Him should be taken primarily as human qualities projected out there in God. As the ‘heavenly absolute’ of Hegel objectifies itself in human history leaving its trails in the form of philosophy of history, so also, but just in the reverse order, the human spirit objectifies itself in God in the case of Feuerbach. God is nothing but the desired and wished-for being of man projected outside in the form of an adorable object with the help of human imagination. Thus, the knowledge of man of God is the knowledge of man of man by man. ‘God suffers and is crucified for the sake of His dear children’ teaches the holy Bible ; ‘to suffer for others is godly’ is the teaching of Feuerbach. Theology that remained ever a latent and lame anthropology now works out itself into a manifest anthropology in the hands of Feuerbach. He speaks of himself : ‘God was my first thought’, ‘reason my second’, and ‘man was my third and last thought’. He was blind to everything that was not somehow related to human beings. The whole burden of his

revolutionary thinking is less the dethronement of God rather than the enthronement of man. This description of God in terms of human wishes and aspirations points to a phenomenology of religion. Feuerbach has, thus, much in common with Comte who expressed the same idea more crudely. After the first two stages of historical process, namely, the religious and the metaphysical respectively, have been vanquished, man should establish a positivistic human culture of his own. Man is his own God, God is a project of man.

Thus, we come down to the present period of the history of philosophical anthropology. To-day, philosophical anthropology has become a mode — more so from the twenties of our century. The real and decisive turn that was out and out anthropological in nature was given to modern philosophical thought by Max Scheler. He wrote an essay *On the Idea of Man* (Zur Idee des Menschen) before the first world war and showed convincingly enough therein that all philosophical disciplines converge on the problem of man. 'The problem of all problems is the problem of man' — this is the thesis of this essay. At the end of his life again he writes, 'if there is at all any philosophical problem whose solution is so pressing and so earnestly desired, it is the problem of philosophical anthropology — the most fundamental science of the essence and being of man'. Above all, Scheler became the main inspirer of modern German anthropology through his book *The Place of Man in the Cosmos* (Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos). Here, in this treatise on man he seems to come to the conclusion that man occupies a special position (Sonderstellung) in the scheme of things in the cosmos. Man lives and behaves as if he were free from natural bonds on him. This leads him to characterize man as the 'ascetic in life' (Asketen des Lebens). Although Scheler accepts the poverty of man in view of his uncertain and less rigid instincts, still he maintains that since man possesses a mind (Geist), he not only compensates his loss but becomes the monarch of life and nature. According to Prof. Plessner the only stumbling block in the onward march of philosophical anthropology is the dualism between mind and body (Geist und Leben). He frees anthropology from this dualism by showing the inter-relatedness of man to animals as different stages in the organic development. This is also the main thesis of his book *The Organic Stages and the Man*.

(Die Stufen des Organischen und der Mensch). Man and animals are, thus, coupled together and should be studied in their relation to the surrounding environment and the world. The key to his anthropology, thus, becomes the study of the relation of man to animals. Plessner also recognizes the fact of poor human birth inadequately supplied with instincts and other natural gifts. The fact of man's being a 'lacking-creature' (Mangelwesen) becomes the main feature of Gehlen's anthropology. Man is more primitive at birth than other animals because his organs are very much undeveloped at that time ; his organs are also not very much specialized. In Gehlen, we find the synthesis of the ideas and motives of Max Scheler, Plessner and H. Mead. Although man, biologically speaking, is a lacking-creature, still he makes his mark by the possession of his mind (Geist). As a result of this compensation with the help of mind, it is only man who can have a cultural and commercial life. Thus, he describes man as one that trades and is active. Man is a 'handelndes Wesen'. Man is born to protect himself. Nature has been harsh to man. He possesses reason and intelligence to enrich his life with artificial products. Instincts we get but reason we cultivate. Nature treats man in opposition to animals step-motherly. Man, thus, not only builds his world to live in but he also cares for his 'being-in-the-world' and 'living-in-the-world'. In other words, he finds himself out of nature in a broken nature, *i.e.* to say he has to earn and learn to live. Man is an animal that has to labour in order to exist. Not by nature man is fit to survive but by nurture he makes himself fit to that. Max Scheler once very aptly remarked that man 'has' the world whereas animals 'are' the world. Man being a reflective being faces the world in all openness. It is in this sense that the modern anthropologists define man to be an 'world-open creature'. He is 'weltoffen'. The meaning of this world-openness of man is that the whole world for him is a vast field to work in. This world offers man an open field of infinite possibilities. Thus, results what we call culture which is a great help to man in his life. It is only man who can have an idea of the absolute ; for he has alone the knowledge of relativity. This idea of the absolute may be false but it is useful : it is a fiction in the sense of Vaihinger developed in his book *The Philosophy of 'As If'*.

The dormant idea of the pre-mature birth of man in Gehlen's

anthropology becomes manifest in the anthropology of Portmann, who, in his book *Zoology and the New Concept of Man* (Zoologie und das neue Bild des Menschen) declares the new born child to be a 'too-early-birth' (Frühgeburt). Portmann does not talk of the spirit, soul or human mind (Geist). He takes human biology to be the starting-point of his anthropology. No birth is a mature birth in the sense that no new borns are able to take care of themselves. Human child is no exception to this universal practice of nature. What is noteworthy in the case of the human child is that he lags far behind in the process of a speedy development which we find as a rule in the kingdom of animals but not in the human kingdom. Human child requires a longer period to attain the same level of maturity which, in the case of lower animals is very short. This is why Portmann describes man 'a nest-seeking-animal'. It is this 'nest-seeking character' of man which also makes him 'world-open' in the sense of not being bound to the world as it is the case with the animals. Man is not a fixed product just at birth ; he needs and requires time to be a man. The same idea finds expression in the philosophy of the existentialists when they proclaim that man is the programme of man ; he is his own task ; he is his own project.

Modern philosophy laboured hard for a long time under the concept, so deeply rooted in it (as its heritage of accepting Descartes to be the father of modern philosophy), *i.e.* the concept that knowing is the sole function of consciousness. But now that the philosophical anthropology has come to the forefront, twentieth century has come to realise fully well the inconclusiveness of such a starting-point in philosophy. Cognition is one of the functions of human consciousness among so many other functions of it. The real subject for a philosophical starting-point is not the abstract Cartesian 'knowing-subject' but the whole life as such — the real subject. It is in this way that the real position of cognition can be shown in human life. Thought is an organic function in the service of life. Thus, results the emphasis on life as such giving rise to a new discipline which the Germans call 'Lebensphilosophie'. The phenomenological programme of 'back to things themselves' (zurück zu den Sachen selbst) has contributed to the rise of philosophical anthropology its own share. Modern continental philosophy does not accept the primacy of epistemology in philosophy. Phenomenology

was a good blow to this primacy. Existentialism, in its own way, undermined the all importance of a purely theoretical discussion of the problem of knowledge. Not only cognition, but affection and conation are also cognitive, *i.e.* to say they also inform us about the world of things and beings. Between the two poles of modern philosophy, namely the 'I-metaphysics' and the 'world-metaphysics', philosophical anthropology has its own secure place. Taking its stand in between the two, it explores the whole subject. In order to clarify the problem of man, anthropology is interested in all those allied sciences that go by the name of 'human studies' (Geisteswissenschaften—Wissenschaften vom Menschen) on the one hand, and also in those natural sciences that claim to study man biologically, physically and physiologically. There are different branches of anthropology.

The problem of the real nature of man is one of the most burning problems of recent developments in philosophy, more so, since man has now become conscious of this fact. Man, as a concrete system of likes and dislikes, pleasure and pain, and so on is no longer going to be consoled by the abstract theories on man. The only way to a genuine metaphysics is through anthropology and a concrete analysis of the real concrete man leads to a genuine anthropology. Man is his 'Lebenswelt', nothing more nothing less. After a slow but steady dethronement of reason, the concept of man underwent markedly or unmarkedly a radical change under the influence of the thinkers like Schopenhauer, Marx, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard and Freud. Thought in all of them was assigned a secondary place in human life. They all showed in their own characteristic ways that the real origin of human behaviour lies, not in reason as a discursive faculty but in instincts, feelings, society and life. Man became questionable to man. He was faced with uncertainties in all walks of life. Thus, the twentieth century man very sharply feels that the question of the problem of the real nature of the real being of man is the fatal question ; for it is the most decisive. Sören Kierkegaard pointed to this problem when he once characteristically remarked. 'well, who knows who among us is a man'. This is how philosophical anthropology comes nearer to existence-philosophy.

Both these philosophies, existentialism as well as anthropology are the offshoots of twentieth century, having man as the object

of their enquiry. 'Existentialia' and not 'essentialia' is the call of modern philosophy. One of the main differences between these two disciplines is that the former considers man from within under the main perspective of existence whereas the latter studies him as a whole in order to determine his place in the whole scheme of things and beings of this universe. In a sense, both of them represent in their own ways a revolt against the excessive intellectualism and formalism in philosophy. William James also raised his cry against the barrenness of intellectualistic constructions. The real world is the world of concrete human experience. It is complex and riddled with 'lived-contradictions'. But, James says, 'the world of reason is not better'.

The world to which your philosophy professor introduces you is simple, clean and noble. The contradictions of real life are absent from it. Its architecture is classic. Principles of reason trace its outline, logical necessities cement its parts. Purity and dignity are what it most expresses. It is a kind of temple shining on a hill.

In point of fact, it is far less an account of this actual world than a clear addition built upon it, a classic sanctuary in which the rationalist fancy may take refuge from the intolerably confused and Gothic character which mere facts present. It is no explanation of our universe ; it is another thing altogether, a substitute for it, a remedy, a way of escape.

Its temperament, if I may use the word 'temperament' here, is utterly alien to the temperament of existence in the concrete. . . .³

It makes a great difference if one speaks in the first person or in the third. In anthropology, man asks : what he is? What is his place and relation in and to the world respectively ? The 'I' of the existentialists, on the other hand, is not the 'I' in general (man in general), but the very concrete individuality of man in his spatio-temporal existence. Jaspers maintains that anthropology may not be taken very seriously ; for it claims to have a fixed knowledge of human being whereas no such knowledge is

³ *Pragmatism*, (New York : Meridian, 1942).

possible, taking in view the impossibility of any ontological fixation of man. Man is an open field of diverse possibilities. But it may be argued against him that anthropology, far from claiming to have a fixed knowledge of man, is really an earnest attempt to that end. The fact of the many-sidedness of human existence and being does not come under the purview of an existentialist as it is the case with anthropology. Anthropology, thus, becomes the most fundamental science claiming to be the most foundational also. It is in this sense that Scheler once aptly remarked that 'modern metaphysics should be no cosmology but meta-anthropology'.

Man, being in the centre, a science of man becomes the most important discipline. Unless one is fully familiar with the 'science of man', maintains Hume, no real progress can be expected and achieved in any of our other enquiries. The science of man is the pivotal science. It is under the sole perspective of philosophical anthropology that an attempt will be made to understand and interpret Hume's philosophy. It will also be shown that Hume, far from being a sceptic, was really a critic of scepticism : he was convinced of the dignity and veracity of human nature as the science of all sciences ; human nature's primacy is an indubitable fact for Hume. It is a sheer waste of our philosophical wit to construe hypothetical explanations in order to delineate human nature. Human nature is a matter of close observation and experience. A phenomenologically faithful description of human nature is all that is needed for an understanding of it. Hume's concept of man, *i.e.* his anthropology utilizes human nature as a principle of explanation rather than a problem to be explained. Hume's most fundamental thesis of which his whole philosophy is an elaboration and practical application, is that 'reason is the slave of passion and man's sensitive nature is more important than his cognitive side'.

The author feels that all the great systems of philosophy, which were at the same time most complex and most systematic, have neglected the irrational aspect of human life which is a matter of common experience. The irrational has received either no attention at all or at least an inadequate attention. The very rationality of human reason is grounded in the irrationality of human nature. The ideal of philosophy was generally taken to be able to explain everything rationally, *i.e.* to say to prove

things by logical abstract conclusions as significant and fitting. The personality of Hume is a conscious healthy revolt against this lack of sincerity in many of the great systems of philosophy.

What gives originality to Hume's philosophy is his siding with the irrational. Thought and reason are always in the service of the will ; they further latter's end. This should also be so, says Hume. Life is a concrete system of experiences of various types, still we find that there are many abstract systems in the world of philosophy aiming at giving an explanation of the problem of life as such. In the course of evolution of the history of thought, it (thought) develops into an end in itself ; it no longer serves life but serves itself. Here lies the origin of all the abstract disciplines in philosophy in the form of useful fictions. There seems to lie in all of us some type of fictive tendency which creates fictions. The very phenomenon of abstraction is due to the transmission of the character of thought from means to an end in itself. It is because of fear of barren abstractionism in philosophy that Hume maintains quite rightly that psychology should be the basis of all philosophizings. But by philosophizing, he does not simply mean psychologizing in the sense of giving psychological explanation with the help of hypothetical psychological theories. This is what explanatory psychology has done. Being hypothetical in nature, it colours other sciences which it proposes to explain. Explanatory psychology is an uncertain scientific psychology. By psychologizing here, we should be understood to mean giving faithful descriptions of different concrete human intuitions and experiences which are surely higher than human thought and reason. Hume's disdain of system-building in philosophy can be traced back to this conviction of his that without psychology as described above, philosophy and epistemology are and can only be methodic abstractions leading to coherent systematic conclusions. This coherency of the abstract systems is a costly bargain ; for the real life which is so complex and uneven is explained away instead of being explained. Reason tends to construction which in turn leads to system-building. One system, thus, leads to the construction of a new more comprehensive system till the whole world is subsumed under one giant system. Since these systems are not directed by the reality of the concrete universe, there arises the phenomenon of different systems, sometimes contrary and sometimes contradictory to one another.

Hume seems to have realized quite convincingly that the ideas of substance, causality, necessity, etc. are imposed subjectively by the human psyche on the given. Without denying these categories to outside world, he showed us one of the most plausible ways as to how they originate and wherefrom do they do so. In an article *The Naturalism of Hume*, N. K. Smith writes that the central most principle of Hume's philosophy is that 'not reason but feeling is the guide of human life'. He says : "My general conclusion will be that the establishment of a purely naturalistic conception of human nature by the thorough subordination of reason to feeling and instincts is the determining factor in Hume's philosophy."⁴

Hume is generally taken to be a thorough-going sceptic in the history of philosophy. That 'he is a sceptic in a very restricted sense' will be shown in the following pages. His scepticism is defined by his views he takes of human reason ; he is sceptical about the authority of reason. Human reason is instrumental in human life. Hume's main accomplishment in the world of philosophy is his limiting the power and scope of reason. Man is, thus, no longer purely and principally a rational being but he is guided by his feelings, beliefs and instincts. It goes to the credit of Hume to have shown the cognitive function of these human faculties. Criticizing human reason, he adores human nature and makes it to be the principle of all explanation. The question, thus, arises : 'What is Hume's concept of man?' It is this concept of man which we term here 'Hume's anthropology'. Traditional interpretation has done much injustice to Hume's real teaching. N. K. Smith's interpretation of Hume's philosophy is one of the most important and faithful modern attempts at a real understanding of his philosophy. Believing that it is Hume's science of man which is of utmost importance in the whole of Humean literature, an attempt will be made to work out his theory of man. It is in the light of this theory of man that his theoretical as well as practical philosophy will be better understood and appreciated. It will also be shown that Hume's claim of founding a science of human nature as such as the most foundational and fundamental discipline is similar to the same type of claim in the hands of the German philosopher Max Scheler who names such a foundational discipline 'meta-anthropology'.

⁴ See *Mind*, 1905, p. 150.

The word 'philosophical anthropology' never occurs in Hume's philosophical writings. By the phrase 'Hume's anthropology', we should be understood to mean his science of man, his view of man, his picture of man, his concept of man. To start with, two questions of much consequence will be put : (i) What type of being man is — is he rational or irrational or a mixed kind of being? and (ii) What are those principles of human nature which guide human life? Hume will be considered more as a metaphysician of human nature than the Hume who is traditionally taken to be only a logical successor of Locke-Berkeley tradition in philosophy. A unitary picture of Hume's philosophy may be drawn only when we take his unitary views on human nature on which his whole philosophy bases itself.

Hume has become one of the most controversial figures in the history of philosophy. He, as a sceptic, is more known to the world than the Hume who gives a delineation of human nature in the form of the science of man. It is the latter Hume who revolutionized the world of philosophy. Making man the centre of all philosophizing is the great achievement of Hume in modern philosophy. Not Kant, but Hume should be taken the main representative of modern thought ; for it is really Hume who first became sceptical about the power and scope of human reason and understanding. Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* may be taken as a brilliant and masterly fulfilment of this original Humean idea. Our conception of Hume as one who is a critical genius in philosophy delivering no constructive philosophy to the world except his negative and devastating criticisms leading to the total banishment of 'mind', matter and God from the world of philosophy, is the result of *Kant's Discovery of Hume*. Kant's reading of Hume is still 'an eighteenth century one' as Hendel very aptly puts it. "Kant's Hume" writes Wallace, "is, therefore, a somewhat imaginary being : the product partly of imperfect knowledge of Hume's writings, partly of pre-possession derived from a long previous training in German Rationalism".⁵ Thus, Kant's reading of Hume is a biased understanding of his philosophy. The author also feels that Kant is more indebted to Hume than it is generally recognized.

⁵ See *Prolegomena to Hegel's Logic*, pp. 96-97.

Hume's scepticism is a stepping stone to his science of man. Hume's problem of the primacy of feeling over thought is still a 'dead-lock' in philosophy. There is some kind of antagonism between nature and nurture. Hume was always in suspense, nay, he was sometimes at a loss to think and decide between the rival claims of nature and reason. It is this suspense that really defines his scepticism. Hume found that both these rivals are obstinate and none is ready to quit the field. Still what ultimately prevails is nature and not reason. Hume is convinced of the primacy of human nature in human life and thought. He was not very sure of his constructive philosophy, but the problems he raised were and still are of utmost importance and consequence to philosophy and life. Kant believed to have answered Hume successfully. But it is doubtful whether it was the real Hume.

In the world of philosophy to day, we find a very interesting situation. On the one hand, our practical social intercourse (practical philosophy) with the real world as such is possible but a theoretical justification of the same (theoretical philosophy) is highly problematic. Hume's philosophy is an attempt to solve this very problem by establishing the primacy of nature over nurture. Understanding is more experience than reason and Hume was convinced that inference has no basis in reason if by the latter we mean the faculty of proving and disproving things with the help of the law of contradiction. The very law of contradiction is understandable in the concrete contest of life because of the lived-contradictions of the lived-life. That a chair cannot be chair and table at the same time is true not because we cannot think so but because we do not find it so in our experience. Laws of thought are laws of things, maintains Russell. The life as we live it is and should be the ultimate point of all reference ; it is the point where we come from to return to.

In Hume, there are many points of much philosophical importance. They have attracted little or no attention at all. The author feels like rehabilitating the case of Hume. The most fundamental principle in human life, according to Hume, is a natural propensity. Man is more a 'believing animal' although he reasons but that, too, just to explain and justify what he naturally believes in. Reason is a help but no real guide. Kant, after being aroused out of his dogmatic slumber, takes up Hume's challenge

and works hard for many years to meet it. Philosophers are generally unwilling to accept defeat. They start with their own interpretations and every interpretation being either addition or subtraction leads to misinterpretation. Hume would not like to be understood and answered in the way Kant did. Kant, thus, gave philosophy a particular colouring and influenced the world of philosophy so much that Hume either remained unnoticed or in the background. Continental philosophy never took Hume very seriously and always considered him a sceptic. Not only are the problems, raised by Hume, of much philosophical importance but his attempt at solutions is also praiseworthy, if not always right. Hume's theory of man seems to-day to be very modern ; man is more natural and instinctive than rational. Man has realized the self-troubling nature of human reason ; it cannot help asking questions which it is unable to answer properly. This was a great insight of Kant. Hume's discard of discursive human reason leads him to declare 'that reason is an unintelligible and wonderful instinct in us'. A philosophy whose starting-point is ethics views man differently than one whose starting-point is reason. This primacy of feeling makes Hume's concept of man more irrationalistic than rationalistic. The guiding forces in human life are the forces of instincts, belief, imagination and sympathy.

We may show the appropriateness of a science of man by pointing out towards the need of a co-ordinating, all-inclusive science. The more the individual disciplines develop the more we feel the need of a foundationally fundamental science of human nature. Anthropology is the need of the time. Every thinker puts up questions regarding human nature but many of them lose much of their time and energy in speculations and theory-constructions. Human nature is not an object of abstraction. There is no need of methodic abstraction where only a close observation and experience of human nature in all faithfulness will do. A faithful and unbiased description of our intuitions and experiences is the best and most concrete starting-point in philosophy. This is also the most wholesome.

A glance at the history of philosophy teaches us that the problem of the real basis of human behaviour has taken either of the two roads : (i) certain philosophers have tried to explain it with the help of reason and understanding. 'Ratio' is the *essentia*

of human beings. Behaviour originates here in reason and understanding. Such thinkers always believe in the primacy of human reason over human instincts. They are the famous rationalists in philosophy. This philosophy tends towards abstractionism and system-building. It is free from perplexities and contradictions of real life : it is smooth, systematic, coherent, and logical. (ii) Others have taken the help of senses in order to explain human behaviour. They are the famous sensationalists in the world of philosophy. This type of thinking leads to probability, scepticism, and agnosticism. In the eyes of Hume, both the ways are mistaken : for, according to him, reason is too poor a principle to explain the richness of too complex a life whereas senses are too weak a basis. Hume has shown a third way which is the way of belief—belief based on different other principles of human nature. Human behaviour results due to that peculiar mental determination which Hume calls belief. An answer to the problem of human behaviour may be more profitably searched in the principles of custom, habit, imagination, and sympathy. Hume tries to naturalize reason : for he defines it as a wonderful instinct in all of us. According to Hume, belief precedes knowledge ; for, in the last analysis, as we shall see, all kinds of epistemological as well as ethical differentiations are derived not from human reason but from belief or some sort of human propensity. Cognition is not the only function of human consciousness ; it is also not the most important. According to some, knowledge is for life and not vice-versa. This is what Dilthey maintains. Other functions of our consciousness have also cognitive import ; they are also informative of the world inside and outside. This is generally recognized today in all quarters, but the same thing was neglected when Hume proclaimed cognitive value of our feelings, beliefs, and instincts. Construction in philosophy is a bad taste. Constructions being hypothetical and abstract in nature are great refuges of powerless human reason. Real world along with the real life in it may have its own contradictions, confusions, complexities, and ambiguities but that is the only world in which we are born to live, exist, and die. Logical necessities of a rationally constructed world-system may be all clean, simple, and noble far from any contradictions and ambiguities, but it is far less an account of the real actual world that means and matters to us.

21448

We shall see how Hume, remaining faithfully nearer to life works out a most fundamental science of man. This we shall do by a close observation of the different principles of human nature. The method we shall follow is phenomenological, *i.e.* to say it consists in faithfully describing the world (of given phenomena) without any bias and pre-conceived notion.

CHAPTER TWO

THE TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION OF HUME'S PHILOSOPHY

By traditional interpretation of Hume's Philosophy is to be understood that Hume :

- (i) belongs only to the Locke-Berkeley tradition,
- (ii) carries the theory of ideas to its last logical consequences and shows that it leads one to scepticism,
- (iii) is a thoroughgoing sceptic,
- (iv) has no constructive philosophy of his own, and
- (v) is a solipsist who believes only in transitory impressions and ideas

Hume, thus understood, is Hume traditionally understood. Hume's Philosophy, according to this interpretation, becomes fully negative and sceptical in character. These interpreters are of opinion that Hume starts from Locke and moves through Berkeley to his scepticism. He disintegrates the problems of Mind, Matter, and God, and comes to the negative conclusion that nothing exists outside our mind and its ideas. Stephen summarizes such a reading of Hume nicely :

Hume starts from the position occupied by Locke and Berkeley. He regards innate ideas as exploded ; he accepts Berkeley's view of abstraction (as he understands it) and of the distinction between primary and secondary qualities ; he applies and carries out more systematically the arguments by which Berkeley has assailed the hypothetical substratum of material qualities. But with Hume the three substances (*i.e.* Mind, Matter and God) disappear altogether we are conscious only of an unceasing stream of more or less vivid feeling, generally cohering in certain groups. The belief that anything exists outside our mind, when not actually perceived, is a fiction:

The belief in a continuous subject, which perceives the feelings, is another fiction. The only foundation of belief that former coherence will again cohere is custom. Belief is a "lively idea related to or associated with a present impression". Reason is nothing but a wonderful and unintelligible instinct in our souls, which carries us along a certain train of ideas and endows them with particular qualities according to their particular situations and relations. Association is in the mental world what gravitation is in the natural world. We can only express mental processes of any kind by resolving into such cases of association. Thus reality is to be found only in the ever-varying stream of feelings bound together by custom, regarded by a fiction or a set of fictions as implying some permanent set of external or internal relations. Chance, instead of order, must, it would seem, be the ultimate objective fact. The old bonds which held things together have been completely dissolved. Hume can see no way to replace them, and Hume, therefore, is a systematic sceptic.¹

Here we reach the fullest expression of an one-sided reading of Hume's philosophy. All that Hume, in the eyes of L. Stephen, stands for, is negative, destructive, and sceptical in character.

Hume was influenced not only by Locke and Berkeley but he was also under the influence of Francis Hutcheson, Shaftesbury and other writers in moral philosophy. This influence from the side of moral philosophy determined and formed Hume's philosophy more than the former one of Locke-Berkeley tradition. This is what Stephen so convincingly misunderstands or does not take into consideration at all.

N. K. Smith refers to Stephen's reading of Hume as the most misleading one :

It would be difficult to compile a more misleading summary of Hume's actual teaching. Like Green, Leslie Stephen has taken no account of what was a quite primary influence, rivalling that of Locke and certainly far exceeding that of Berkeley, namely the teaching of Francis Hutcheson who

¹ *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* by Leslie Stephen, pp. 43-45.

handed on in a manner peculiarly his own certain traditions with their origins in Shaftesbury and others.²

This traditional interpretation begins while Hume was still alive. Reid writes :

The ingenious author (Hume) of that treatise upon the principle of Locke who was no sceptic hath built a system of scepticism, which leaves no ground to believe any one thing rather than its contrary. For my own satisfaction, I entered into a serious examination of the principles upon which this sceptical system is built ; and was not a little surprised to find, that it leans with its whole weight upon a hypothesis, which is ancient indeed, and hath been very generally received by philosophers, but of which I could find no solid proof. The hypothesis, I mean, is that nothing is perceived but what is in the mind which perceives it.³

Thus, according to Reid, Hume is a thorough-going sceptic ; he does not understand the philosophy of Locke and develops a sceptical system out of a non-sceptical one. Hume, in the eyes of Reid, destroys the world of all its substantialities and leaves it barren with mere transitory sensations and ideas to populate it.

The theory of belief is of central importance in Hume's philosophy. This belief, as we shall see later, is really an attitude of mind, a bent of mind. It is, in other words, a way our human nature works. Much of Reid's misunderstanding is due to the fact that he did not realize the central importance of this theory in Hume. Here is an example how lightly he takes up this theory and misunderstands it wholly. He writes :

The belief which we have in perception, is a belief of the present existence of the objects, that which we have in memory, is a belief of its past existence ; the belief of which we are now speaking (the belief involved in expectation) is a belief of its future existence, and in imagination there is no belief at all. Now all I would gladly know of this author : how one degree of vivacity fixes the existence of the object to the present

² *The Philosophy of David Hume* by N. K. Smith, p. 82.

³ *Reid's Works*, ed. by Hamilton, pp. 95-96.

moment ; another carries it back to time past, a third taking a contrary direction carries into futurity ; and a fourth carries it out of existence altogether.⁴

Reid understands belief as if it were a matter of degree. But belief, according to Hume, is a manner of conceiving things with a peculiar certainty and vivacity of its own comparable to that of sensations and impressions. This is the vivacity and certainty we have when we believe in other selves and in an objective world. Belief is a native characteristic of our human nature. It is more anthropological and biological in nature than epistemic. As ill-luck would have it, this misleading interpretation of Reid does not end with him but Beattie still carries it further and makes it notoriously popular. In Beattie, confusion becomes worse confounded. Not only that, Beattie's *Essay* was first published and translated into German language. It is through this translation that Hume was introduced to Kant for the first time.⁵ In Beattie's view Hume's *Treatise* is a demolition of common sense. It covets much but attains nothing. Beattie, in his criticism of Hume, goes to an extent of becoming very harsh, rude and roughly personal. This is what he writes about the *Treatise* :

Those unnatural productions, the vile effusion of a hard heart that mistakes its own restlessness for the activity of genius ; and its captiousness for the sagacity of understanding, nay, like other monsters, please a while by their singularity ; but the charm is soon over and the succeeding age will be astonished to hear that their forefathers were deluded or amused with such fooleries.⁶

Reid and Beattie could not realize the main problem of Hume's philosophy which is an attempt to work out a systematic science of human nature by showing the right place of reason and understanding in it. Reid and Beattie may be partially right in maintaining that Hume ended in scepticism. Starting with the Locke-Berkeley tradition, Hume was unavoidable ; for Locke-Berkeley tradition

⁴ *Reid's Works*, Edited by Hamilton.

⁵ Kant's Debt to Hume via Beattie by R. P. Wolf.

⁶ See *Essays*, Beattie, pp. 444-45. The treatment that Hume has got in the hands of posterity is just the opposite of what Beattie prophesied.

was to end in scepticism and solipsism. But Hume can be taken simply as an efficient cause for logically rigorously showing that the theory of ideas must end there. The very logic of the theory of ideas exposes itself to Humean criticism of it. Since this Locke-Berkeley tradition cannot explain the whole of Hume, his real positive contribution begins there where he ends with the theory of ideas. This Humean scepticism is a pre-condition delivered by the empirical tradition. But this tradition can neither explain nor justify Hume's views on man and human nature. It is this aspect of his philosophy which Reid and Beattie and all other traditional interpreters so convincingly miss. All that was negative in Hume has been taken by them as if he (Hume) were maintaining it outright.

Scepticism is a legitimate child of Locke-Berkeley tradition. But Hume himself maintains that he is not a sceptic in the destructive Pyrrhonian sense of the term. One always starts with a certain pre-logical and pre-scientific belief, *e.g.* there are bodies, there are other men, there is an external world and so on. "We may well ask", says Hume, "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".⁷

If the theory of ideas means that the only direct object of our mind are the ideas of the mind, then Hume is right in maintaining 'there can be no guaranteed leap from these ideas to an objective world which these ideas are understood to represent'. No valid transcendence is possible on the basis of such a theory of ideas. Correspondance, thus, will always be a matter of speculation and faith but cannot be directly observed. According to Locke, ideas are the objects of thinking. We are conscious of ourselves and in thinking these ideas are present in our mind. They are expressed by the words like intensity, whiteness, hardness, sweetness, etc.⁸ Locke lets ideas stand for all our perceptions. This loose use of the word idea is what Hume does not pardon in him and criticizes very harshly. Perception is too wide a term to be identified with ideas only. Ideas, for Hume, are the pictures — faint pictures of our lively impressions. "Perhaps I restore the word idea" says Hume, "in its original sense from which

⁷ Hume's *Treatise*, p. 87.

⁸ See Locke's *Essay*, p. 26.

Mr. Locke has perverted it, in making it stand for all our perceptions".⁹

Human mind is full of perceptions. These perceptions are resolved into two kinds which Hume calls 'ideas' and 'impressions'. Ideas follow impressions. Impressions are the most lively and forceful perceptions of our mind whereas ideas are the faint images of these in our mind while thinking. To the question of the real seat of scepticism, Hume instigates at the theory of ideas. Berkeley was the real father of modern scepticism. In the fear of being declared a sceptic and atheist, he most inconsistently denies the existence of matter and retains the world of spirit. It is here that he was a real sceptic in disguise. Since he avoids scepticism consciously, it is tantamount to acceptance.

"... and indeed most of the writings of that very ingenious author (Berkeley) form the best lessons of scepticism, which are to be found either among the ancient or modern philosophers. He professes, however in his title page (and undoubtedly with great truth), to have composed his book against the sceptics as well as against the atheists and free-thinkers. But all that his arguments, though otherwise intended are in reality merely sceptical, appears from this, that they admit of no answer and produce no conviction. Their only effect is to cause that momentary amazement and irresolution and confusion, which is the result of scepticism".¹⁰

In so far as, Hume is a sceptic he is a logical successor of Locke-Berkeley tradition. Being logically more consistent and sincere, he could not avoid scepticism embedded in the theory of ideas. Locke's classification of qualities into primary and secondary forms another lesson of scepticism. Since everything is an idea in thinking, no allowance can be made logically in respect to primary qualities that they inhere in the objects as against the secondary qualities which are affections in our mind. In other words, if everything is mind-dependent, why not primary qualities also? "If this be allowed", writes Hume, "with regard to secondary qualities, it must also follow with regard to the supposed primary qualities of extension and solidity ...".¹¹

⁹ Hume's *Treatise*, pp. 1-2.

¹⁰ Hume's *Enquiry*, p. 155.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

But the most positive and constructive side of Hume's philosophy is his science of man. What is central in Hume's teaching is not the 'ideal-theory' of Locke and Berkeley, important, no doubt, it is for him. All that is negative in Hume is a legacy of Locke-Berkeley tradition. The deeper one plunges in Hume's philosophy, the clearer it becomes that the whole of his philosophy rests on the sure foundation of human nature ; human nature is the ultimate guide of human life. Hume leaves the theory of ideas in favour of his theory of man. It is here that he is influenced by F. Hutcheson and other moral writers. A real understanding of this influence on Hume is what gives his system a clearcut unity. Human nature is the most predominant factor in Humean philosophy as well as in his ethics. Hume writes : "All probable reasoning is nothing but a species of sensation. 't is not solely in poetry and music , we must follow our taste and sentiment, but likewise in philosophy."¹²

Still the puzzling question arises : where is the real ground for such an understanding of Hume's philosophy? On what does it lie? Does it lie in Hume? Hume's *Treatise* is a production of his very young years and he always emphasizes that his *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* is his best and most representative accomplishment of all his writings. Now, his *Treatise* has been taken by many of his critics as his most important and representative book. If one takes *Treatise* alone and wants to work out a systematic development of his philosophy, one is mistaken. There was a tendency in Hume in his later years to disown *Treatise*. In one of his letters to Mr. Eliot, Hume writes about his *Treatise* in the following way : "So vast an undertaking, planned before I was one and twenty, and composed before twenty five, must necessarily be very defective. I have repented my haste a hundred, and a hundred times."¹³

From one of his letters written to critics, it becomes clear that Hume was not ready to allow his *Treatise* to be taken as his most mature and representative book. He chides himself for publishing this young mischief at all. It is an immature birth.

That you may see, I would no way scruple of owing my mistakes in argument, I shall acknowledge (what is infinitely more

¹² Hume's *Treatise*, Book I, Part III.

¹³ *Letters*, Grieg, p. 158.

material) a very great mistake in conduct, viz. my publishing at all, '*The Treatise of Human Nature*', a book which pretended to innovate in all the sublimest of philosophy, and which I composed before I was five and twenty. Above all the positive air which prevails in the book and which may be imputed to the author of youth, so much displeases me, that I have not patience to review it.¹⁴

In his later years, Hume has repented over and over again his haste of going to the press too early with his *Treatise*. Hume would have cherished the idea if the world could somehow be made to think of *Treatise* that no such book ever existed. N. K. Smith goes to the length of asserting that Hume would have rejoiced to commit it to the flames. "Could Hume have obtained possession of every published copy of *Treatise*, there can be no doubt — such was his attitude to it in these late years—he would have rejoiced to commit them to flames".¹⁵

It would be clear from the pages to follow that Hume really entered his philosophy through the gateway of morals and his treatise on the principles of morals is presupposed by his treatise on human nature. He first outlined his practical and moral thought. Regarding scepticism, Hume himself says that nature never allows anybody to be an extravagant sceptic. A consistent sceptic is a sheer character. If the question is put to him, says Hume, whether he is a sceptic holding that all is uncertain he would like to reply that the very question is superfluous ; for all of us are just of the opposite opinion. Nature has not left this choice to the faulty calculations of human intellect ; it has allowed us to breathe as well as to judge. Still Hume discusses this fantastic sect of scepticism at length. In so doing, he says, he has certain intentions : "My intention, then, in displaying so carefully the arguments of that fantastic sect, is only to make the reader sensible of the truth of my hypothesis 'that all our reasonings concerning causes and effects are derived from nothing but custom ; and that belief is more properly an act of the sensitive than of the cogitative part of our natures'".¹⁶

Thus, we see that Hume is no sceptic in that abusive, negative,

¹⁴ *Letters*, Grieg, p. 187.

¹⁵ *The Philosophy of David Hume*, p. 532.

¹⁶ Hume's *Treatise*, p. 183.

and destructive sense of the term. Not only that, he is a critic of sceptics who maintain that nothing is certain. Hume was very much pained—so much so—that he once wrote to his publisher regarding Dr. Reid's and Beattie's misreading of his philosophy. "It is a complete answer to Dr. Reid and to that biogotted silly fellow Beattie".¹⁷

Hume works out his philosophical system more from the side of ethics than epistemology. His picture of man is based more on an observational and 'experimental' analysis of the practical life of man in which reason is sub-ordinated to feeling and other propensities of human nature. Hume does never ask : how man should live? After a sincere and close observation of human life, he comes to the conclusion that man is an ethical creature. The principle of sympathy forms the corner-stone of his ethical philosophy. Man is by his very nature moral, for sympathy, the mother of our moral approval and disapproval, is a native quality of human nature itself. Nobody is callous by nature. Thus, sympathy is the foundation of the moral life of man.

In his theory of knowledge (epistemology or theoretical philosophy) Hume comes to the conclusion that it is not reason but belief which is the basis of our knowledge regarding matters of fact. This belief, as we would see, itself is a quality of human nature.

Following are the reasons why the author maintains that the traditional interpretation of Hume's philosophy is a misinterpretation :

(i) Tradition has always put Hume wholly in the line of Locke-Berkeley tradition. It is onesided ; for it does not take into account that Hume never ended his philosophical discussions and teaching with the ideal theory of Locke and Berkeley. He has his positive philosophy of human nature, which he cherishes to call the 'science of man'.

(ii) Traditional interpretation is no account of the firm faith of Hume in the dignity and veracity of human nature. Tradition fails to explain the whole of Hume.

(iii) It gives too much importance to the negative factors in Hume's philosophy which is nothing but a casual legacy of Locke and Berkeley. Hume never took so seriously the Locke-Berkeley tradition as the tradition thinks he did.

¹⁷ *Letters*, Grieg, p. 301.

(iv) It does not take into account that Hume's view of man, namely, his philosophical anthropology, is of central importance to all his philosophy. In other words, Hume was first a practical philosopher and then a theoretical one.

(v) Hume's methodology was no doubt empirical and experimental in his sense of the term, still it was a phenomenological method of getting at the theoretical conditions of pre-reflective experience. This reflection consists in describing the lived-experience faithfully. Hume has never forced the facts to fit in any preconceived theory ; he has ever allowed the phenomena to speak for themselves.

(vi) Tradition totally neglects the fact that Hume was also under the influence of F. Hutcheson and other moral writers.

(vii) Tradition has always taken Hume's *Treatise* to be the most representative book containing his philosophy which goes against the view Hume takes of his *Treatise* himself.

(viii) Tradition is totally blind to those moral and existential interests of Hume to which he traces the real origin of his philosophy.

Thus, we can well maintain that the whole of Hume is not only the unavoidable logical successor of Locke-Berkeley tradition. It is hardly his one half and that, too, of less importance. Beyond all doubts, this logical successor has robbed of all the certainties of knowledge regarding mind, matter, soul, and God. But still Hume maintains there is an objective world, there is matter, there are other selves. This all, he believes in, not on the ground of reason but on the ground of certain other principles of human nature as custom, habit, belief, imagination, sympathy, etc. Hume's main concern is not human reason ; it is a very poor source. For him, the most important thing above all is the human nature itself. Hume wants to find out the ways in which human nature works. It is these ways which he calls the 'principles of human nature' in his theoretical as well as practical philosophy. So the robbed of certainty is again given back not on the authority of human reason but on the sole authority of these principles of human nature. Reason is the guide only in the world of the 'relations of ideas' where it deals with objects it itself creates, e.g. ideas, relations, etc. The world of reason is different from the world of life. Hume was more interested in the latter than in the former. Reason never informs us of the continued independent existence of the world outside.

In doubting that 'the sun will rise tomorrow', what Hume really means is not that the sun may not rise tomorrow but that the opposite of this assertion, *viz.*, 'sun may not rise tomorrow' is neither intuitively nor demonstratively nor apriori certain. Hume's main problem is to find out the real nature and conditions of this certainty. The rising of the sun is as certain a fact for him as for any one of us. So also regarding the problem of causality, Hume was one with all of us in so far as we all believe in it. Hume's originality lies in showing as to where the real origin of the certainties of these principles lies. Out of the two alternatives between reason and human nature, Hume decides in favour of the latter.

Belief is that peculiar mental determination which gives rise to the certainty and necessity of causality. Hume was sure that there are different kinds of certainty and some types of certainty are as good as any demonstrative kind. Belief is different from faith. The certainty to be found in belief is a certainty to be explained with the help of the principles like custom, habit, practice, imagination, and sympathy. In a letter to Stewart, Hume makes all these points very clear. He writes :

But allow me to tell you that I never asserted so absurd a proposition as, that anything might arise without a cause ; I only maintained, that our certainty of the falsehood of that proposition proceeded neither from intuition nor from demonstration but from another source. 'That Caesar existed', that 'there is such an island as Sicily' ; for these propositions, I affirm, we have no demonstrative or intuitive proof. Would you infer their truth or even their certainty? There are many different kinds of certainty ; and some of them as satisfactory, though perhaps not regular as the demonstrative kind.¹⁸

If Hume's teaching is what Reid and Beattie maintain it to be, namely, out and out sceptical and destructive, how can we explain Hume's own positive views on man and human nature. Hume's theory of natural beliefs cannot be explained with the help of Locke-Berkeley's *ideal theory*. This ideal theory after being led to its most logical consequences, breaks down in Hume and

¹⁸ *Letters*, Grieg, p. 185.

gives place to some positive theories regarding man and human nature. Hume's picture of man is the picture not of a sceptic but of a man who lives-in-the-world and with-the-world. What Reid and Beattie, and in a way all the traditional interpreters, fail to realise is that they totally miss the decisive role played by Hume's theories of natural belief, of imagination and sympathy. This is what no scepticism can justify. The common-sense beliefs were very dear to Hume ; for they are of much value in the theoretical as well as practical life. Belittling the importance of these principles in human life is endangering the practical day-to-day life of man ; in fact nobody does so in practice. This is why we say that a consistent sceptic is a lecture-hall phantom. These guiding principles, being undeniably unavoidable, are also accepted by Locke and Berkeley but most inconsistently. Their principles are too weak to bear the heavy weight that is laid upon them. Hume left the ideal theory, for it did not and could not serve his purpose in his mission of a foundational science of man. Hume found after a close examination of the history of philosophy that philosophers have always tried to explain and answer the philosophical problems either with the help of pure reason and intellect or with the help of senses. Thus, there resulted in the world of philosophy the dualistic trend of rationalism and sensualism. Both of them tried to reduce the one to the other and the philosophical forum remained a battle ground. Now Hume maintains that both these ways are mistaken. We shall return to this point a little later. It is here that Hume searches for a *new medium* by which truth may be established. He is happy that he has got that red tape of philosophy that runs in and through all its different phases consciously or sub-consciously. "Every one", Hume writes, "who is acquainted either with the philosophers or the critics, knows that there is nothing yet established in either of these two sciences, and that they contain little more than endless disputes, even in the most fundamental Articles".¹⁹ Kant once remarked that metaphysics once the queen of all sciences has now been dethroned. Not only that, its very possibility is under suspicion. Being the ground of endless disputes, she no longer can claim to deal with those supersensible objects like soul, God, world-origin, etc. Kant, in these lines, seems to repeat

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Grieg, p. 12.

Hume's thought. Hume decides to observe very closely only human nature without any pre-suppositions or prejudices in order to arrive at the surest foundation of all other disciplines. It is human nature upon which everything must depend if it wants to be certain and not simply hypothetical in nature. Philosophers are generally prone to consult their inventive fancy in order to arrive at certain systems in philosophy or morality. This, as a parallel to psychologist's fallacy we may term *philosopher's fallacy*. We have ample cases of such a fallacy.

Hume again writes in a letter that he, after examining these different systems, felt inclined to search for a new approach :

Upon examination of these, I found a certain boldness of temper growing in me which was not inclined to submit to any authority, in these subjects, but led me to seek out some *new medium*²⁰ by which truth may be established. After much study and reflection on this, at last when I was about 18 years of age there seemed to be opened upon me a *new scene of thought*²⁰ which transported me beyond measure, and made me, with an Ardor natural to young men, throw up every other pleasure or business to apply entirely to it.²¹

Hume was very much interested in the problems of moral philosophy. He also found that moral philosophy has always been the subject of philosophers' inventive reason. To reason, Hume accords a place, but it is just a help and no guide. Human nature and not reason or intellect is the real guide. Anything when it becomes hypothetical it loses in reality (concrete) and becomes abstract. Morality, according to Hume, should be no object of arm-chair discussion. He writes :

I found that the moral philosophy, transmitted to us by antiquity laboured under the same inconvenience that has been found in their natural philosophy, of being entirely hypo-

²⁰ This '*new medium and new scene of thought*', stand for Hume's two most revolutionary principles, namely, the principle of sympathy in his moral philosophy as the sole foundation of human moral life, and the principle of natural beliefs in his epistemology as the main basis of our knowledge regarding the world of things and beings.

²¹ *Letters*, Grieg, pp. 3-14.

thetical and depending more upon invention than experience. Every one consulted his fancy in erecting schemes of virtue and of happiness without regarding human nature, upon which every moral conclusion must depend. This, therefore, I resolved to make my principal study, and the source from which I would derive every truth in Criticism (*i.e.* in regard to literature and fine arts) as well as Morality.²²

It is clear from this letter of Hume that he was convinced of the dignity and veracity of human nature. Not only that, he was also sure of human nature as providing the most fundamental and foundational basis for all other sciences whether theoretical or practical, remotely related or closely related to human nature. N. K. Smith is also of opinion that it was through the gateway of morals that Hume entered his philosophy. This is why book II and III of the *Treatise* are in thought of first composition, *i.e.* prior to the working out of book I. It is really human nature itself that works under the name of sympathy as the guiding principle in Humean ethics. Again, it is the same human nature in his theoretical epistemological philosophy expressing itself through the principles of natural beliefs and imagination. Man is a being who is determined and defined more from the side of his own nature, his irrationality and his commonsense-beliefs than from the side of his rationality. Reason is an earned faculty.

On the one hand, Hume is under the influence of Locke-Berkeley tradition. Here, he is a critic of the same tradition. On the other hand, he has also been influenced by Hutcheson and other writers in the field of ethics and moral philosophy. The latter had a more lasting influence than the former. It was more positive because it determined the course of his philosophy.

The central thesis of Hume's philosophy, namely, that 'feeling is the only guiding principle in all our moral disciplines', has been taken over from Hutcheson who was always in favour of the primacy of feeling in moral sciences. Hume's originality lies in this that he accepts this primacy of feeling not only in moral sciences but extends it to his epistemology. Thus, we find that the primacy of feeling has been accepted by Hume in his practical as well as theoretical philosophy. Reason is in the service of

²² *Letters*, Grieg, pp. 12, 13, 14 and 16.

feeling not only in ethics but also in epistemology. In one of his letters to Hutcheson, Hume writes :

I must consult you in a point of prudence. I have concluded a reasoning with those two sentences. When you pronounce an action or character to be vicious, you mean nothing but that from the particular constitution of your nature you have a feeling or sentiment of blame from the contemplation of it. Vice and virtue, therefore, may be compared to sounds and colours Heat and Cold, which according to modern philosophy are not Qualities in objects but perceptions in the mind.²³

It is in this extension of the primacy of feeling (human nature) to all the fields of human knowledge that Hume's teaching can be taken as one systematic unified whole. We are not talking here of the rightness or wrongness of his system. That is a different question altogether. Hume is convinced that it is not merely in poetry or music that we have to follow our taste and sentiments but likewise in philosophy.²⁴ When one is convinced of one set of arguments and gives preference to it in opposition to others, one does really nothing but decides from one's feeling regarding the superiority of one of the sets. That 'Future will resemble the past', 'Future will not resemble the past' these two statements are of equal importance for reason. With reason as such we cannot decide in the favour of one at the cost of the other. When we decide for one rather than the other it is not our cold reason but our warm feeling that lets us prefer one rather than the other.

Hutcheson's main interest centres round the morals. Opposed to Hobbes' egoistic theory of morals, he developed the benevolent-theory of morality where he postulates a moral-sense in all of us endowed by nature at birth. It is this native moral sense which approves and disapproves our moral actions. Thus, the very frame of our nature is responsible for our being moral creatures. Certain objects in our surrounding please us and certain others do not ; as also certain actions we judge to be morally good and certain others to be morally bad. What is morally good is appro-

²³ *Letters*, Grieg, pp. 39-40.

²⁴ See Hume's *Treatise*, pp. 102-3.

ved by us and what is morally bad is disapproved by us. All this is due to that native moral faculty in us. The answer to the question why we approve of a morally good act and disapprove of a morally bad act lies in the very constitution of human nature. "By the very frame of our nature", writes Hutcheson, "the one (morally good) is made the accompaniment of Delight, and the other (morally bad) of dissatisfaction."²⁵

As we find sugar sweet directly through our taste-organ, so also this nature-given moral sense in us approves the good of others. It lets us like it. What Hutcheson actually aims at and wants to stress is the fact that feeling is the last principle in moral science. According to him (Hume also), our value-judgments, in relation to their objects they evaluate, are necessary and at the same time irrational in character. They have very little to do with our reasoning faculty.

Hutcheson and Hume would like to put the question : Why do we accept a certain type of necessity in the fields of sense—given knowledge but not the same type of necessity in our moral and aesthetic perceptions and feelings? Why it appears to us to be mysterious that moral approval and disapproval may be the direct feelings aroused in us just after the contemplation of an act in the same way as when some one slaps us and we feel pain? They answer that our nature has determined us by implanting in us certain senses to behave as we really do—whether in moral sciences or in our bodily reactions. Thus, these three following judgments :

- (i) That 'bread tastes good',
- (ii) that 'this building is beautiful', and
- (iii) that 'this action is morally good', are of the same nature and stand on the same level in so far as they are :
 - (a) directly certain,
 - (b) necessary judgments and
 - (c) having no justification from the side of reason. Their source is feeling and not reason.

We can summarize Hutcheson's moral philosophy as follows : Man is in possession of a moral sense from his very birth. Nature

²⁵ *Inquiry*, Hutcheson, p. XII.

is the mother of this faculty. This moral sense is instructive and natural. It lets us feel directly one action to be morally good and others to be morally bad as our sense organs inform us directly about the qualities of the objects. The criterion of the good is a tendency in us. This tendency from the very nature is in service of humanity and that is why the real freedom is to be able to do what we desire and not, to be able to desire what we desire.

It is an original instruction in us which chooses the good and avoids the evil. The very important problem of morals has not been left to our poor reason. It has been decided once and for all by nature's implantation of certain native powers in us. Hume says : "Nature, by an absolute and uncontrollable necessity has determined us to judge as well as to breathe and feel".²⁶

Thus, in our enquiries and pursuits it is our nature that guides us and not our reason. Hume thought of some kind of *natural reason*. He wanted to *naturalize* reason and not rationalize it. The primacy of feeling is everywhere in Hume. Like Hutcheson, Hume is of opinion that reason does not play the main role in human life, important, no doubt, its functions are. Reason is the slave of passion. The biology of man gets always the upper hand in Hume's concept of man than reason : "Reason is and ought to be", says Hume, "the slave of the passions and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them".²⁷

The word passion means here all kinds of feelings and not only the feelings of pleasure and pain. Hume is also under the influence of Hutcheson's philosophy when he maintains that value-judgments are grounded not in reason but in human nature and its native principles. Thus, it is really Hutcheson's philosophy which opens to Hume a *new scene of thought*. "Hutcheson's contention", writes N. K. Smith, "that all moral and aesthetic judgments rest not on reason or on reflectively considered empirical data, but solely on feeling, is the main in opening to Hume his new scene of thought".²⁸

Hume's *new scene of thought* really means his discovery that all our judgments (moral as well as epistemological) rest on

²⁶ Hume's *Treatise*, p. 103.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 405.

²⁸ *The Philosophy of David Hume*, p. 41.

human nature and its principles. Hume seems to argue as follows :

If the fundamental judgments of moral and aesthetic sciences depend not on reason but on feeling and instinct, *i.e.* if nature is so kind that she helps us in our solution of all our moral and aesthetic problems, can it not also be, that the same motherly nature would help us in our theoretical disciplines where reason fails? In other words, Hume faces the problem :

Is it not so, that our so-called judgments in the field of theory of knowledge in relation to 'matters of fact' are really accomplishments of our belief and not of our reason or knowledge as such?

In the chapters to follow (Hume's theoretical philosophy) an attempt will be made to solve this problem.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ROLE OF EXPERIENCE IN HUME'S CONCEPT OF MAN

HUME is generally taken to be one who does not work out a metaphysical theory. Not only that, he also does not give us any kind of speculative metaphysics of man. But as he tries to find out the real conditions of practical human behaviour, he makes certain fundamental assertions regarding human nature. If this is his metaphysics, it is surely a search for a concept of man implied in his analysis of man. His analysis of man is his science of man. Hume's method of investigation is what he terms *experimental method of reasoning*. With the help of this method he comes to the conclusion that experience is one of the most important principles in all those sciences which I would like to call *matters of fact sciences*, meaning thereby that matters of fact and existences are the subject-matter of these sciences and not the 'relations of ideas' or any kind of speculative and ideally constructed system.

Hume is no system-builder in philosophy. Like Nietzsche, he dislikes all system-makers in philosophy. He observes human life as it is lived and draws his own picture of man. His main interest is to outline the most fundamental science of man. And it will be this science of man all other sciences will depend upon. Before Kant revolutionized the world of philosophy, Hume had already started such a revolution making human nature the basic science. Man cannot break the bounds of his experience. It is man who is in the centre. Man philosophizes rather than man is philosophized.

The real origin of Hume's philosophy lies, as he himself says, in his ambition to inform the world about his ideas on man. He thinks and hopes to contribute to the world of knowledge his own share.

I feel an ambition to arise in me of contributing to the instruction of mankind, and of acquiring a name by my inventions

and discoveries. These sentiments spring up naturally in my present disposition ; and should I endeavour to banish them by attaching myself to any other business or diversion, I *feel* I shoul'd be a loser in point of pleasure ; and this is the origin of my philosophy.¹

His greatest 'invention' and 'discovery' is the sub-ordination of reason and intellect under feeling, instinct and human nature. It is his firm faith that unless one becomes well acquainted with the science of man as such, *i.e.* what type of being man is, one cannot have the sought for certainty in other allied investigations. The most fundamental, basic, and interesting science is the science of man. "For my part", writes Hume humbly, "my only hope is, that I may contribute a little to the advancement of knowledge by giving in some particulars a different turn to the speculations of philosophers, and pointing out to them more distinctly those subjects where alone they can expect assurance and conviction. Human nature is the only science of man...."²

Our whole experience consists of our perceptions which can be outer or inner perceptions. The most lively perceptions are impressions ; the less lively of them are ideas or thoughts. Thus, the material of our knowledge is supplied through these two sources of inner and outer impressions. In this way, all our ideas become the images or imitations of our impressions. There is no idea whose impression we have not had before. I have an impression of the pen or pencil I am at present writing with and which comes in contact with my sense-organs : I have an idea of the same pen or pencil I was writing with if I now be in my bed and think of it. These both kinds of perceptions differ not in kind but in their degrees of 'liveliness and force'.³

Observed from outside, human thought seems to possess an unlimited freedom. But after close scrutiny from within, we find it to be a mirage because it is, in fact, very poor and is allowed to work under the limited sphere of experience. What appears to be the creative power in all of us is simply the ability of our mind to assimilate, to transform and to mix the materials already

¹ Hume's *Treatise*, p. 271.

² *Ibid.*

³ See *Enquiry* p. 15.

supplied to us by the sense organs and experience. Mind is never a creator but only an organizer. Hume advances following two arguments in favour of his thesis : (i) All our ideas—simple or complex—can be traced back to impressions which are simple in nature, and (ii) where there is no impression there is no idea, *i.e.* to say what cannot be traced back to our simple impressions must be doubted. Hume says : “When we entertain, therefore, any suspicion that a philosophical term is employ’d without any meaning or idea (as is but too frequent) we need but inquire, from what impression is that suppos’d idea deriv’d? And if it be impossible to assign any, this will serve to confirm our suspicion”.⁴

Hume divides the whole world of human enquiry into two kinds, namely ‘relations of ideas’ and ‘matters of fact’. Anthony Flew refers to this division when he talks of the *great divide* in his book *Hume’s Philosophy of Belief*. The division, relations of ideas, refers to that branch of human investigation where all affirmations and negations are either intuitively or demonstratively certain. The sciences of Geometry, Algebra and Arithmetic belong to this group. It is, thus, by mere operation of human thought without any dependence on what is anywhere existent in the universe that knowledge in this field of human enquiry is possible. It is the world of apriori and analytic knowledge. Our reason can combine the different ideas according to a *necessity* which can be formally demonstrated with the help of different laws of thought and logic. Our reason has to follow here certain rules. Since this branch of our knowledge solely depends upon our thought and analytic reason, Euclid had never to bother about the real existence of his triangles in the nature. Thus, the certainty in this branch is the certainty of our own thought. We do not know, nor do we need to know nor we can know whether the natural as such is also mathematical. The judgments in the field of ‘relations of ideas’ are always analytic judgments.

‘Matters of fact’, the other branch of our knowledge, is not ascertained in the same way. This branch deals with the real existents in the world of objects. It always waits the verdict of our experience ; experience and not reason is the source here.

⁴ Hume’s *Enquiry*, p. 19,

While discussing Hume's concept of man, we have to concentrate on this branch more than on the former because it is less formal and more concrete. Here we cannot maintain with the same certainty that the sun must rise in the east tomorrow as we can do in the case of two and two making four. In the latter case, all the variables are known to us, whereas in the former it is beyond our grasp. It, then, means that there are certain other factors which affect our thought in this field of matters of fact. In other words, our experience does not allow us to travel so far. It is exactly here that Hume revolutionizes philosophy, because it is here that the real problem of causality becomes for him the central problem. Knowledge, here, needs other measures than intuition or demonstration. The contrary of every 'matter of fact' is at least conceivable, if not always 'exist-able'. This is so because the conception of any matter of fact is not hampered by the conception of its opposite. No opposition of a fact implies contradiction. It is conceived by the mind with the same facility and distinctness as the opposite of it. The judgments are, in this field, synthetic but they are all 'a posteriori' judgments. In a special sense, Hume is more modern than Kant.

The principle of causality is never doubted by Hume. He maintains, on the other hand, that it is the very basis of all our knowledge in the 'matter of fact world'. *Experience without causality is lame and blind, whereas causality devoid of experience is empty and formal.* What Hume really is interested in is the problem of the real source of this principle of causality. The credit goes to Hume to have shown a new origin of this principle. This principle, he says, cannot be deduced from the simple ideas of cause and effect, because both of them are two distinct occurrences and can be easily so conceived. The relation between the two is not known to us objectively. The 'power-hypothesis' is nothing but a myth, says Hume. On the other hand, we cannot be sure apriori of the principle of causality; for experience is the mother of all genuine synthetic knowledge. Thus reason (analytic) left to itself can neither tell us anything about the origin of this principle nor about its truth and validity. If this is so, then, maintains Hume, the burden of explaining this principle must fall back upon the sensations and perceptions. It is here that Hume tries to show the empirical origin of this principle as it is deduced from our perceptions.

We shall briefly touch upon two questions in our discussion of the problem of causality :

(i) Where lies the real seat and origin of this principle?, *i.e.* to say to what factors in our experience can it be referred back? and (ii) Why must the future resemble the past, *i.e.* to say what is there in our experience to induce us to believe in our spontaneous transformation of the past to the future?

To start with, Hume shows us clearly and convincingly enough that this principle cannot be deduced either by comparison of ideas or by intuition or by demonstration. In the field of 'relations of ideas' all certainty arises from the comparison of ideas. Hume writes :

It is a general maxim in philosophy that whatever begins to exist must have a cause of existence. This is commonly taken for granted in all reasonings without any proof given or demanded. All certainty arises from comparison of ideas and from the discovery of such relations as are unalterable, so long as the ideas continue the same. These relations are resemblance, proportion in quantity and number, degrees of any quality and contrariety, none of which are implied in this proposition, whatever has a beginning has also a cause of existence. That proposition therefore is not intuitively certain.⁵

The next question then is : If this principle cannot be deduced from any logical operation or intuition, can we at all prove its validity? Hume answers, no, if by proof is to be meant *apriori* with the help of relations of ideas. Demonstration and causation do not go together. Both the ideas of cause and effect can be imagined vividly and separately. Thus, it implies no contradiction to say that all that begins may not end ; for Hume believes that all that our mind can conceive clearly and distinctly cannot be proved false by reason. This is closely related to his first conviction that 'opposite of any matter of fact involves no contradiction'. Hume criticizes the view that the idea of cause is really implied in the very idea of effect. He maintains that this does not prove that every being must be preceded by a cause. His witty example in the *Treatise* is a case in point, namely,...because every husband

⁵ Hume's *Treatise*, p. 78-79.

must have a wife that, therefore, every man must be marry'd. The true state of the question is, whether every object, which begins to exist must owe its existence to a cause : and this I assert neither to be intuitively nor demonstratively certain."⁶

That 'every cause has an effect and must have one' is not denied by Hume. What he really disputes is that it is no proof to say that every beginning presupposes a cause. If this important principle of causality cannot be maintained either intuitively or demonstratively, it must, then, come from experience. Hume tries to show this in the following manner : In our search for the origin and real seat of this principle, we can take one of the two ways, (i) either we can consult our perceptions and memory or (ii) we can fall back upon other causes. We cannot accept the second alternative, because, then, we have to commit the fallacy of *ad infinitum* in search of the first cause. We can reach certainty when this process ends in sense perception. One can go still further and ask for the reason of sense perception itself. But that will be expecting too much from poor human experience. What is here clear is that the principle of causality is not merely analytic.⁷

The ultimate cause of our impressions is beyond the pale of our human experience. One may well remark here that Hume seems cleverly to have avoided the much discussed and debated problem of the distinction between '*noumena*' and '*phenomena*', which Kant somehow could not succeed in avoiding. Hume clearly writes, "As to those impressions, which arise from the senses, their ultimate cause is in my opinion perfectly inexplicable by human reason and it will always be impossible to decide with certainty, whether they arise immediately from the object, or are produced by the creative power of the mind or are derived from the author of our being".⁸

This troublesome division, Kant maintained in his philosophy. The author feels that Hume's challenge regarding the problem of causality has not been met by Kant who took more than twelve

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁷ It is particularly here that the polemic between Hume and Kant becomes acute. Hume maintains : (i) causality is informative, *i.e.* to say synthetic in nature and (ii) causality is not apriori. Kant disputes not the (i), but only the (ii).

⁸ Hume's *Treatise*, p. 84.

years of deep study to give a rejoinder to it. But Kant believed that he has answered Hume successfully. Hume, who aroused Kant from his dogmatic slumber really meant something else. The real issue which Hume raises regarding the problem of causality is, in his own words : 'Why we conclude that particular causes must necessarily have such particular effects? and why we form an inference from one to another'? Hume believes in the empirical origin of the principle of causality with utter disregard to demonstration, intuition and apriori. By all this, we should not be understood to mean that the solution given by Kant was already thought of by Hume. All that we intend to contend is that Hume would not like the very way Kant puts the question, e.g. 'how are synthetic judgments apriori possible? The tacit pre-supposition of Kant, namely, that they are possible, is what Hume wants to dispute. Causality is to be learnt from experience, says Hume ; causality is presupposed by experience, maintains Kant. But Hume would like to ask the simple naive question 'how do we learn that experience presupposes causality?' Is it not again another experience? When reason handles the problem of causality, it simply abstracts from experience.

In a certain sense, Hume has said the last word regarding this problem. Categories are to be traced back to experience. Bertrand Russell writes in his *History of Western Philosophy* : "To refute Hume has been ever since" he wrote, "a favourite pastime among metaphysicians. For my part, I find none of their refutations convincing." Russell has here particularly Kant in view.

Let us now search our experience. What lies in our experience which induces us to infer the effect from the cause? Hume analyses the problem in great detail and at length in his *Treatise*. He comes to the conclusion that there are three relations of *contiguity*, *succession* and *constant conjunction*. It is they that occasion in us a tendency which induces us to take this bold step of inferring the cause from the effect and vice-versa. The whole problem of causality for Hume cristalizes in these five words, *why should future resemble the past?* In other words, we daily observe and experience, water cools us, fire warms us but what is the real answer to the question why should it remain so? We can conceive the opposite of it or we can also think of a change in the course of human nature. Different laws of nature are not only laws of things but they are also grounded in human needs. Hume wants

to assert that all our information in the field of matters of fact and existences comes not from human reason but from other sources.⁹ The transformation or the carrying-over of the past to the future is the central problem of causality. This carrying-over is not without reason or just automatic ; it is conditioned by the psychological necessity resulting from the repeated occurrences in the past. This repetition occasions in us a tendency to expect that which has happened many a times in the past. Thus, the real origin of this principle of causality lies in certain dispositions of our mind. Inference is, therefore, an expectation of our mind. There is no strict rational or logical inference in the world of matters of fact. We can very easily imagine the situation of the first man who for the first time saw the rising of the sun in the east. That must have been, for him a wonder-event. Seeing the sun's rising for the first time, he must have simply failed to infer with certainty (the certainty as such, he could not learn till then) its rising again. He may, no doubt, hope it, given the life-needs in which the sunrise was a great help. After repeated observation, he was led to expect *i.e.* to infer its rising daily.¹⁰

That the sun will rise tomorrow is no less intelligible a proposition and implies no more contradiction than the affirmation that it will rise. We shou'd, in vain, therefore attempt to demonstrate its falsehood. Were it demonstratively false, it would imply contradiction and could never be distinctly conceived by the mind.¹¹

What is intuitively or demonstratively false can never be clearly imagined by the mind, because it would be a contradiction. The guiding principle in Hume's philosophy is whatever is intelligible and can be distinctly conceived, implies no contradiction, and can never be proved false by any demonstrative argument or abstract reasoning apriori.¹²

⁹ These other sources are custom, habit, practice, belief, etc. which will be discussed in the chapters to follow.

¹⁰ Hume seems to analyse man psychologically in order to arrive at philosophical clarity. Thus, his anlysis of man is psycho-philosophical. It is also biological, anthropological and natural at the same time.

¹¹ Hume's *Enquiry*, p. 24.

¹² see Hume's *Enquiry*, p. 34.

We can put forward no apriori reasoning to the effect that those cases that have not taken place as yet will follow the cases that have already taken place. This we cannot do, because we cannot apriori know that nature will remain the same. Hence, the need to believe. But that 'nature is regular' is what Hume firmly believes in. This belief is grounded not in reason but in human nature. In a sense the whole of human life is based upon inferences. These inferences themselves are grounded in the principle of causal relation. This principle of causality, in its turn, depends on the principle of human experience that teaches us the constant conjunction of two objects and lets us expect the one after the appearance of the other. This is the real mechanism of our transference of the past to the future. Hume here ventures to affirm that experience is one of the master principles in human life ; for it is experience that gives us the knowledge of causal relation.¹³

Thus, in Hume's picture of man experience seems to have replaced reason. In all the branches of human knowledge concerned with the matters of fact and existences, experience plays the guiding role. By reason, in this context, Hume means only analytic reason and not the synthetic reason which he sometimes terms as *a wonderful instinct in us*. Reason in the hands of human experience is serviceable. Devoid of it is reason a cry in wilderness. This subordination of reason under experience or belief is something new in Hume. He uses the principle of experience as an 'explaining principle'. It is not on the ground of reason that we plan a tomorrow but solely on the ground of the past experience. Thus, one can say the real logic of life, for Hume, is irrational.

Hume recognizes the practical value and validity of our common-sense beliefs and consciousness in the life of man. At the same time he also recognizes the theoretical irrationality and inexplicability of the same. Hume is a healthy sceptic. Taking experience to be the guide of life, he still asks further, how can this experience guarantee me that the fire will burn in future also. That we have had such experiences in the past is no answer because it can just be also otherwise. Tomorrow one can experience something which is new to our till-to-day-experi-

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

ence. It is here that Hume casts doubt upon the principle of experience.

Thus not only reason fails us in the discovery of the ultimate connection of cause and effects, but even after experience has informed us of their constant conjunction, it is impossible for us to satisfy ourselves by our reason, why we shou'd extend that experience beyond those particular instances, which have fallen under our observation. We suppose, but are never able to prove, that there must be a resemblance betwixt those objects, of which we have had experience, and those which lie beyond the the reach of our discovery.¹⁴

Hume's treatment of the principle of experience is critical. The cause of all causes and the explanation of all explanations is not our experience. It goes but does not go far, because we can ask about the ground of experience itself. Thus, Hume leaves those questions undiscussed which are by their very nature speculative.

Taken for granted that experience seldom misleads or mis-informs us, we still want to know its full justification. Things of use and utility should also be explained. The Humean man does not doubt the past, also not the present because that was and it is already present before him. What he doubts is future which may not resemble the past.

As to past experience, it can be allowed to give direct and certain information of those precise objects only and that precise period of time, which fall under its cognizance, but why this experience shou'd be extended to future and to other objects which for ought we know, may be only in appearance similar.¹⁵

Hume examines also the power-theory of causality according to which some power in the cause occasions the effect. It is a myth, declares Hume. All that we perceive when one billiard ball hits the other is as follows :

Firstly, the first ball somewhere in a position,

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 91-92.

¹⁵ Hume's *Enquiry*, p. 31.

Secondly, its movement first, and
Thirdly movement of the other.

But we perceive nowhere any power in the cause as the power producing the effect.

It is not clear here what Hume really wanted us to understand by 'perceiving a power in the cause'. If it means perceiving as we do in our own organism when we want to move our limbs then the very question is meaningless because in that way we cannot experience anything outside. If it derives certain connection between the two it is unwarranted. But Hume never denies the connection. He simply wants to know from where do we get the impression of this connection. That there must be some relation, is beyond all doubt. In criticizing the authority of experience what Hume actually aims at is to search for some other principle in human nature. "... it may surely be allowed a philosopher to have so much curiosity at least as to examine the principle of human nature which gives this mighty authority to experience...."¹⁶

No argument from experience can, strictly speaking, prove the similarity between past and future because it is the same similarity on which this argument itself depends. The real qualities of things are not known to us although we have experience of those things. We do not know even the real qualities of things we always infer. Hume, thus, wants to know the real source of this inference. "In vain do you pretend to have learned the nature of bodies from your past experience. Their secret nature and consequently all their effects and influence, may change without any change in their sensible qualities ... I want to learn the foundation of this inference."¹⁷

Before discussing the problem, where does the experience get its authority from, we should know how does our experience perform this transformation of the past to the future. Hume's theory of experience is original and interestingly informative. We may sketch it out briefly as follows : Experience is much memory or the knowledge of many repetitions in the past. Hobbes in his book *Leviathan* says 'much memory or memory of many things is called experience'. The nature of experience says Hume

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

is this: "We remember to have frequent instances of the existence of one species of objects ; and also remember that the individuals of another species of objects have always attended them and have existed in a regular order of contiguity and succession with regard to them. . . ." ¹⁸

In the past, we have always observed the going-together of *A* and *B*. Now after seeing *A*, we think of *B*. Experience here supplies us the missing link on the ground of the past. It is in this 'supplying us of the missing link' that experience is original and useful. Thus, experience becomes the foundation of all our knowledge derived from causes and effects. But is experience something that we have to learn first?

What is very peculiar in the notion of causality is that there reigns a special type of necessity. This may be 'the causal necessity' This necessity is nothing but the felt-necessity in the mind that is occasioned on account of past experience. When we infer one object from another we are automatically and subconsciously led to this operation of mind through some power of human nature.¹⁹ There is of course nothing in the objects to inform us about the principle of causality or, as a matter of that, about this felt-necessity. But it is simply an impression in our mind that emerges as a result of objects constantly conjoined together in our experience. It is this impression which is the real seat of the origin of that peculiar necessity in the principle of causality. In other words, we can say, it is some kind of mental determination, which is, in the last resort, the criterion of reality or objectivity.

This principle of causality is really the backbone of all our researches in natural and moral sciences. Its rightness and validity is tacitly presupposed in all our enquiries. Hume introduces a new method which he calls 'the method of experimental reasoning'. This is why he entitles his first book "Treatise—Being An Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects".²⁰ This experimental method can really

¹⁸ Hume's *Treatise*, p. 87.

¹⁹ See chapter on Imagination.

²⁰ *Remark* : It may here be noted that even the new logicians are also not in a position to work out purely objective criteria of reality. Sigwart, although he is a psychological logician, says that regarding the question of necessity in causality, no other answer can be given. The only way is to

be said an experiential method, *i.e.* explanation is an experiential fact. In reality, he wanted to revolutionize the world of moral science through this method and thus wanted to be 'the Newton of moral sciences', as Passmore has put it. According to Hume, reason is dry for all moral purposes. It is the principles of causality and experience that help us here. Thinking apriori, anything can come out of anything.

If we reason apriori anything may appear to produce anything . . . It is only experience which teaches us the nature and bounds of cause and effect, and enables us to infer the existence of one object from that of another. Such is the foundation of moral reasoning, which forms the greater part of human knowledge and is the source of all human action and behaviour.²¹

Hume always emphasizes the importance of moral sciences in his science of man. In fine, we can say, Hume answers the question: 'where lies the origin of the principle of causality', by telling us 'in experience' in that peculiar impression of a felt-necessity. To the question, 'why do we at all accept that future will resemble the past' he asks us to wait till he has exhausted all the principles of human nature. We come to the knowledge that 'the future will resemble the past' not by observing that it does so but because it is so. Hume writes: "Nature by an absolute and uncontrolable necessity has determined us to judge as well as to breathe and feel . . ."²²

After doubting the sole authority of experience, Hume, in no way, lessens the importance of it in human life. He simply wants to learn why our till-to-day-experience should be extended to our tomorrow-experience and with what right? Hume answers this question that it is just a 'custom-bred-tradition'.²³ Strictly

fall back upon the experienced subjective, upon that feeling of evidence in us that accompanies our thinking. Hume takes the help of this experienced necessity in order to show us the seat of the principle of causality. Our belief in the authenticity of this feeling and of its certainty is all that can be accepted as the anchorage of all certainty whatever. See *Hume und der Deismus* by L. Berkowitz, p. 27.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 114-15.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 183.

²³ See next chapter.

speaking, our inferences as such are grounded in some propensity or determination of human nature. "No sufficient evidence existing for inference, it must be the outcome of some unreasoning propensity, and that propensity is custom or habit."²⁴

In short, we can say, Hume starts his philosophical career with this revolutionary discovery that our inferences, that are so important in our life, are not grounded in reason or intellect. The principle of causality itself cannot be explained by our analytic reason. The real source of these principles is the human nature itself. Human nature is accepted as an 'explaining principle'. It is why Hume emphasizes that human nature is the only science of man.

Strictly speaking, Hume would like to inform us that if man is only rational there would be no inferences at all. Experience is the guide of life. It is impossible to get out of the limits of experience. The experience guides men as well as animals. Thus, Hume's theory of knowledge ends in his very new conception of experience and its conditions. In this sense, as N. K. Smith says, Hume can be rightly said to be the father of modern philosophy because the opposition between reason and feeling characterizes the modern philosophy. "Hume may be regarded more truly than Kant as the father of all those subsequent philosophies that are based on an opposition between thought and feeling, truth and validity, actuality and worth."²⁵

Thus, in Hume's science of man, not only experience, but principles like custom, habit, practice, etc. also play a great part.²⁶ It is just a mental habit to think of the resemblance of the future to the past.

All inferences from experience, therefore, are effects of custom, not of reasoning. Custom, then, is the great guide of human life. It is that principle alone which renders our experience useful to us. Without the influence of custom, we should be entirely ignorant of every matter of fact, beyond what is immediately present to the memory and senses.²⁷

²⁴ 'Naturalism of Hume', *Mind*, 1905.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ See next chapter.

²⁷ Hume's *Enquiry*, pp. 44-45.

CHAPTER FOUR

CUSTOM AND HABIT AS THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN HUME'S 'SCIENCE OF MAN'

AFTER a thorough and critical examination and analysis of experience, Hume finds out that experience alone is not in a position to help us in explaining the problems of causality, of an independent world, of other selves and so on. Experience is, no doubt, a great guide in human life. But in its effort to explain the different problems of human life, it is assisted by some other principles of human nature. These principles are the forces of custom and habit. What experience cannot guarantee us, they do it. These habits and customs are the different ways of human mind's working. These ways of mind are really different acquired determinations of the mind in the course of experience. By custom, we do not mean here the ordinary social customs and conventions. Hume uses this principle of custom as one of the principles of explanation. It is based on the authority of observation and 'experiment'. It is one of the ways in which human nature works. Hume seems to have worked out a certain type of *metaphysics of these principles*. We shall return to this point. Granting them the status of guiding forces in human life, Hume appreciates them in life. The main interest of Hume is to explain and interpret human behaviour. These principles, thus, should not be taken lightly as if they were of no great value to philosophy.

Hume writes in his *Enquiry*, after he has come to the sure conclusion that experience is not the sole authority in human life : "There is some other principle which determines him to form such a conclusion. This principle is custom or habit. For wherever the repetition of any particular act or operation, without being impelled by any reasoning or the process of the understanding, we always say, that propensity is the effect of custom."¹

By this observation of custom as a propensity, Hume does not

¹ Hume's *Enquiry*, p. 43.

pretend to have furnished the ultimate reason of such a principle.

All that he claims to have *shown is to point out a principle of human nature*. Thus, Hume now proceeds to show that it is only by custom alone that we expect the one from the appearance of the other. These principles of custom and habit are, thus, embedded in human nature in the form of different propensities ; they are potentially there as innate tendencies. They become actual and operate the moment operations or events repeat themselves. That 'operations repeat in nature' is a fact of experience whose only proof is their observation. In a certain sense, *experience is much repetition*.

We can throw light upon these principles considering them subjectively and objectively. Objectively considered, this principle of custom is something dependent upon our past repetitions of acts and operations in our experience. It is occasioned in us, so to say, by changes taking place in the outside world. Taken subjectively, it is some inner determination leading us to expect the same in the future. It is a tendency to believe in the future resembling the past. Custom seems to be a psychological determination than merely a physical product. In the absence of such a principle, we cannot delineate our human experience meaningfully. Custom is a 'meaning-conferring-context'. It is within this context that our experiences of the past and the present become our guide for the future, although there is no future experience. It is through these two windows that we have a look into the future. What, therefore, passes by the name of the wisdom of experience is nothing but the effect of these two principles mainly. Hume very clearly writes : "All inferences from experience, therefore, are effects of customs not of reasoning. Custom then, is the great guide of human life".²

Experience is serviceable to us because of these principles of habit and custom. All the inferences from experience are, therefore, the results of these two principles. Inference is not grounded in reasoning, according to Hume. These inferences have, no doubt, their support in the similarities of experienced facts and operations, but this does not guarantee us to infer a similar future. These similarities of experiences are, undoubtedly, the presuppositions for the emergence of that mental determina-

² *Ibid.*, p. 44.

tion which we describe as custom and habit. The necessity felt in these determinations is subjective necessity. It is this subjectively felt necessity which we habitually extend over to an objective necessary relation. It is thus that habit and custom become the guiding forces of human life ; they are grounded in human nature. They are natural propensities. They appear to be instinctive in their operations. A similar past points to a similar future.³

Human life is more guided by the principles that are irrational in nature, *i.e.* to say principles not to be accounted for by our reasoning faculty. If the different adventures of our human mind, *e.g.* inferring an outer world, other selves, etc. cannot be accounted for by human reason. Hume seems not to end in scepticism leaving all hope of being able to explain them with the help of some other principles. Custom is sometimes defined to be a tendency in us to expect the same in future. This expectation is independent of reason or of understanding. All the acts that are not the logical operations of our mind, are the acts of custom and habit. The very mechanism of these principles allows us to infer a future on the basis of the experienced past ; the transference of the past to the future takes place due to them. Reason as such is disinterested in all these problems. Thus we can venture to describe the life of man to be an experiential, habitual, customary system of dynamic relations. It is why Hume's concept of man is more irrational in character than rational—irrational not in that abusive or inferior sense of the term. Human life is more instinctive. Prof. Hendel writes in his book *Studies in the Philosophy of David Hume*, that our human understanding advances in knowledge only by virtue of mental habits or dispositions that are a second nature in us.⁴

Custom and habit are 'second nature' in us not only in the sense explained above, but also because they are the different ways of the working of our human nature. The ultimate ground of these principles is as mysterious as any other ultimate ground of any other principle. The search for ultimate causes is a self-defeating attempt ; it is shrouded in mystery. Regarding the problem of the genesis of these principles, we can have no arm-chair discussion. How these principles of custom and

³ See, 'Hume', in, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, Überweg.

⁴ See, p. 128.

habit originate, we do not know and cannot know. But that 'they originate as a result of the repetitions', we experience. It will be wrong to proclaim these principles to be either only subjective or only objective, because they have their conditions in both these spheres. They are, thus, facts of experience. Hume seems not to have taken great interest in the ontological status of these principles. An ontological discussion of them will also be out of point here. But a purely subjective reading of these principles is what the author feels to be a misreading of Hume's teaching. Hume always avoided Berkeley's subjectivism.

We may also touch upon Hume's theory of custom in relation to the problem of custom in its historical set-up. Here, we can mention the names of Hobbes and Montaigne in particular. Montaigne's theory of custom takes it to be a 'second nature in us'. He emphasizes the part played by custom in human life very much. Further, he also stresses the point of animal study as a great help in the study of human beings. Hume seems to have been influenced by him, in his method of experimental reasoning⁵ as an empirical and comparative study of the worlds of man and animal. The scepticism of Montaigne like that of Hume is just a stepping-stone to his positive teaching. From the beginning of his philosophical career, Montaigne emphasizes the part played by experience in human life. Ultimately, he rounds up his philosophy with an intellectual scepticism and pessimism along with a moral optimism.⁶ Custom is a part of practical than theoretical life. Nature is man's best friend. In practice, at least, there are very few sceptics. Wisdom on the part of man consists, according to Montaigne, in committing oneself to nature.

I study myselfe, says Montaigne, more than any other subject. It is my supernaturall Metaphysike, it is my naturall philosophy.

⁵ The term 'experimental', can be interpreted in two ways in Hume's philosophy : (a) it may be identified with the word empirical. Here it becomes a synonym of empirical, and (b) it may also be equated with 'experiential'. In both the cases, the emphasis lies more on observation than on reasoning. Still, the word seems to be nearer to and a stronger word for the 'empirical' ; it is radical.

⁶ The same can also be said of Hume's scepticism. Hume is really an intellectual or academic sceptic ; he is no sceptic in life and in morals. There none is a sceptic. Reason is the servant of passion ; it is dispassionate in life.

...I shall sufficiently know it when I feele it With great reason doe philosophers address us unto natures rules ...They falsifie them and present her to us with a painted face, too high in colour and over-much sophisticated ; whence arise so many different pourtraits of so uniform a subject. As she has given us feete to go with all so hath she endowed us with wisdom to direct our life.⁷

Custom is native to man ; it is innate in him. Montaigne also asserts 'man drinks this principle with mother-milk'.

Hobbes' theory of custom maintains that custom is the mother of human behaviour. He takes it to be a kind of connection of our ideas. There are three kinds of connections for him. Certain ideas connect themselves in our mind just by chance, *chance-connection*. Others are conditioned by human will. This he calls *conventions* or *customs*. The third type is the *natural connection*. Of all these, the second is of utmost importance to man.

The most puzzling problem of the universal is solved by this principle in Hume's philosophy. Custom occasions in us together with an individual idea a general idea also. This general idea, we term 'universal'. Thus, this principle of custom is not only constructive and natural but also impulsive. Universals are like shadows of the particulars which they accompany and inhabit. The universal, therefore, exists as a habit of our mind. Hume's emphasis on this principle is a great contribution to the world of philosophy. We have a certain type of impulse to see things in causal relation, which is again the result of repetitions of events in our experiences. This impulse itself is a habit of our mind. Hume's own theory of mind is interestingly informative and modern. For him, mind is something that has a history of its own development ; it is dynamic in nature. Mind develops and is determined by its own diverse habits which are acquired in course of human experience. Human mind is always in the making. (Hume is here very near to the modern existentialists for man is a project of man). Hendel writes : "For Hume the mind that we know is never a pure agent expressing solely its own nature, it is one whose activities have been developed and made definite

⁷ Montaigne, Florios translation, quoted by N. K. Smith in his book *The Philosophy of David Hume*, p. 104.

by its intercourse with nature, a mind determined by habits acquired through experience. And these habits serve us as luminous insight into the connection of things.”⁸

As a matter of fact, it has become customary with us to think of the resemblance of the past to the future. It has become not only habitual but natural to our mind, for they ultimately originate in human nature. We can always think of a change in the course of nature. Cause, according to Hume, is sometimes objectively and sometimes subjectively defined. We talk of causation when we experience events constantly conjoined with one another. On the subjective side, it is our habit that moves us to expect an event after the appearance of the other on the ground of our past experience.⁹ It is really a mental habit to plan a tomorrow on the analogy of yesterday. As man never realizes as to how much he is anthropomorphic, so also he is never fully aware of the extent to which his life is guided by analogical arguments. “When I throw a piece of dry wood into fire, my mind is immediately carried to conceive that it augments, not extinguishes the fire. It derives its origin altogether from custom”¹⁰

If the principles of custom and habit are so strong in human nature how does it come that we are not always conscious of its operation in us. This is so, not because such principles are not there at all but because they are there in the highest degree. What spells out the mystery is that the way we think with the help of these principles corresponds with the way nature works and behaves. Guided by habit, a burnt child dreads the fire, and is never disappointed in his expectation. It is, therefore, not right to label these principles as purely blind ; for they are impulsively and instinctively purposive in nature. Hume seems to think with Leibniz that there may be some kind of ‘pre-established harmony’ which is guided on its subjective side, by these principles of custom and habit and on its objective side perhaps so arranged at the time of creation. The latter point, Hume does not discuss at all ; for by its very nature this problem will lead to constructions and abstractions. Hume writes :

⁸ *Studies in the Philosophy of David Hume*, pp. 136-37.

⁹ See, *Studies in the Philosophy of Hume*, Hendel, pp. 208-9.

¹⁰ *Hume's Enquiry*, pp. 54-55.

Here, then, is a kind of pre-established harmony,¹¹ between the course of nature and the succession of our ideas, and though the powers and forces, by which the former is governed, be wholly unknown to us,¹² yet our thoughts and concepts have still, we find, gone on in the same train with other works of nature. Custom is the principle, by which this correspondence has been effected, so necessary to the subsistence of species and the regulation of our conduct in every circumstances and occurrence of human life¹³

Like modern 'comparative anthropologists', Hume maintains the decisive role played by this principle of custom not only in the life of human beings but also in the life of animals. They also expect what they are led to as a result of experience. It is custom that engages animals to infer the usual attendant from the appearance of one of the members. No other explanation, says Hume, can be given. Comparative anthropology, therefore, is a great help to philosophical anthropology. Inferences are thus habitual and customary. Hume is no sceptic in the Pyrrhonian sense of the term ; his is not the universal scepticism of Pyrrho of Elis. He limits the power and scope of human reason in guiding the life of human beings. This is what we should mean by his scepticism. What he wishes to affirm is that man is more irrational. His hypothesis in his own words, is : "My intention . . . is only to make the reader sensible of the truth of my hypothesis : that all our reasonings concerning causes and effects are derived from nothing but custom ; and that belief is more properly an act of the sensitive, than of the cogitative part of our natures".¹⁴

These different mental habits, thus, seem to produce a change in our manner of apprehending things. It is this change in manner which is the soul of belief. This is how, we pass over to the problem of the place of the principle of belief in the concept of man according to Hume. Conviction is added to custom when belief comes in.

¹¹ With the help of this principle, Hume tries to explain our successful intercourse with nature, whose real laws we may not know.

¹² Hume does not claim to explain this intercourse as such. In his opinion any explanation must be abstract in nature and he is at all not interested in constructive and abstract metaphysics.

¹³ Hume's *Enquiry*, p. 55.

¹⁴ Hume's *Treatise*, p. 83.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PRINCIPLE OF BELIEF AND HUME'S CONCEPT OF MAN

OUR examination of the principles of custom and habit taught us to expect *B* after the appearance of *A*. Now the question is : Is this expectation of *B* merely an imagination of *B*? We shall see in the course of our discussion of belief that this expectation is not a *mere expectation* ; we believe in what we expect. This phenomenon of belief is a peculiar type of conceiving ; it is a peculiar mental determination which changes the manner of our conceiving things. Hume's theory of belief and his theory of man go hand-in-hand. Belief is a mental act. Hume observes that this act of belief, important as it is, has not been explored by philosophers properly. It seems that its force in human life was the reason of its being taken so simply. As it was so forceful in human life, says Hume, that no body thought it worth the trouble to explore it in full detail, regarding its nature, place and functions in human life. Since philosophers were, thus, prone to take it as a matter of fact, they went on constructing other principles of explanation which were artificial in character.

Hume's *Enquiry* is mainly concerned with the problem of the nature of belief. Hume, through his theory of belief, claims a certain degree of originality by showing the world its importance not only in philosophy but everywhere in life. The problem of belief is of central importance to Hume's theoretical as well as practical philosophy. His explanation of the problem of causality finally falls back upon this theory of belief. Believing is, no doubt, conceiving ; but 'to believe' is not identical with 'to conceive'. The problem of the relation between these two may be considered from two sides. Objectively seen, there seems to be no difference at all between these two acts of our mind. But seen subjectively, there is nevertheless a difference. We can well conceive a horse with a human head or a golden mountain but hardly can we believe in what we so conceive. But we have to

conceive that in which we believe, although the vice-versa of it is not necessarily true. One of the most essential parts of belief in an object is the idea of that object, but it is not the whole of it. We conceive many things which we do not always believe in.¹

Hume comes to the final version of his theory of belief through different stages of developments ; he describes the phenomenon of belief, corrects himself and thus proceeds in his attempt to come to a satisfactory theory of belief. To start with, he defines belief 'as the vivacity of our perceptions'. Belief does not add anything new to the idea of an object. It simply produces a change in the manner of conceiving objects. Belief is really a way of our human nature's working. Thus, the differentia of belief lies in our manner we conceive an object than in the matter of it. It is a force from within and not from without. Hume is convinced of the fact that the idea of existence is no addition to the idea of an object. There are many followers of Hume in this regard, not excluding Kant. "I likewise maintain," says Hume, "that the belief of the existence joins no new idea to those, which compose the idea of the object. When I think of God, when I think of him as existent, and when I believe him to be existent, my idea of him neither increases nor diminishes... ; it follows that it must lie in the *manner*, in which we conceive it."²

Sometimes Hume describes belief as if it were a force or *liveliness of an idea*. Again he defines it to be a quality of our impressions, *i.e.* to say their liveliness and vivacity. "An opinion, therefore, or belief may be most accurately defin'd *A lively idea related to or associated with a present impression.*"³

Another way of defining and describing belief is by way of differentiating it from fiction. Belief and fiction, both have conception as their common element, still fiction is not belief. The difference lies in certain type of sentiment or feeling which is added to belief and not to fiction. Thus belief comes very near to feeling. But this addition of feeling to the one and not to the other is not arbitrary. It is conditioned by human nature. It is this similarity of belief to feeling which leads us to the real theory of belief, which we may term as *Hume's natural theory of belief*. It is natural because it is a way our human nature works.

¹ See Hume's *Treatise*, pp. 94-95.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

Although Hume always tries to explain belief in clear logical terms, but still he accepts that belief, being more a part of our sensitive nature, is more felt than known. Belief as a guiding force is always at work. It is more related to our impulsive nature than to our cognitive nature. Belief is an internal mental determination that is felt by the mind. Hume writes : "The belief is something felt by the mind, which distinguishes the idea of the judgment from the fictions of imagination. It gives them more weight and influence, enforces them in the mind and renders them the governing principle of our mind."⁴

After a brief description of belief as a natural tendency of our mind in its intercourse with world of things and beings, we may put up the problem of the objective validity of the principle of belief. To the question, how far this belief possesses an objective validity, Hume would like to answer as follows⁵ : This principle works well in our life ; it always guides us. It possesses an objective validity in so far as it is demanded by the objects themselves. Again it is objectively valid because it works as a universally successful principle of guidance in human life. But this should not lead us to the false supposition that belief can be inferred from the objects of our experience. The pragmatic side of belief is what confers upon it the objective validity. Although belief is related with experience, still its validity is free from experience and objects of experience because it is really grounded in human nature as an innate tendency in the form of an impulsive principle. It is, so to say, a quality of human nature. This quality can be influenced by other principles of human nature, namely, custom and habit in particular. Thus, belief is no mere supposition ; it is really a conviction—a feeling with conviction. Belief is an approval of human nature, impulsive and instinctive in character. Thus, knowledge is really a habit or belief of our mind. These different habits of human nature are the different explanations of human behaviour. Strictly speaking, to think of similar causes with similar effects or to join them together is no case of knowledge ; it is how human nature works and nothing else. Expectation of *B* after the appearance of *A* is the performance of belief

⁴ Hume's *Enquiry*, pp. 49-50

⁵ It appears as if Kant were going to show the objective validity of the subjective categories of understanding. They are valid ; for they work and guide our experience.

and whatever certainty we have in knowledge, it is grounded in human nature—in belief. Hume says, *as the nature has taught us the use of our muscles and different organs without our real knowledge of them, so also she has endowed us with this most useful principle of belief to help us in our knowledge of objects*. Although we do not really know the real secrets and powers of the things themselves, still what we believe in, corresponds to the real process of nature as such. It may be due to the fact that human nature is a part of that great scheme of nature as such. We shall return to this issue at the end of this book and see how Hume is presupposing some type of ‘pre-established harmony’.

Belief, being natural is common to all of us ; for one and the same nature runs in and through all of us. It is inter-subjective and as such objective. Hume also observes the working of this principle in the world of animals. Animals are also guided by their experience which is supported again by the principles of custom and habit. The problem, whether animals possess reason, engaged Hume’s attention much. Animals also expect the associates of a group after the appearance of a member of the same group. The same nature that guides man, also guides animals. Man differs from animals mainly in what he develops and learns and not in what he gets by nature. Reason is what we learn and instincts are what we get. The same instinct that teaches man to avoid fire also teaches the animals to build their nests so perfectly artistically. The perfection and exactness with which a bird builds its nest is due to the instinctive wisdom. From all this, it follows that belief and certainty go together. What lies behind, when one utters ‘he believes’ ? It is an inner conviction ; belief is really a kind of knowing. In the real context of life, no rational knowledge which is abstract and constructive in nature helps us but the knowledge that is based on belief.

Selby-Biggy registers in the index of his addition to Hume’s *Treatise* different grades of certainty. All of them amount to knowledge in their own way. These different grades are : (i) demonstrative knowledge ; (ii) memory ; (iii) the causal relation ; (iv) probability. Hume does not speak of belief in the case of (i) ; for in the field of demonstrative knowledge, *i.e.* to say in the field of relations of ideas, there is no question of belief. This is so because here conclusions can be proved demonstratively ; they can also be intuitively certain. Thus the realities of mathe-

matural sciences are demonstrative by nature. In the case of (iii) and (iv), Hume speaks of belief ; for, causal relation, strictly speaking, is not demonstrative. It cannot be logically proved either ; we can have no intuitive certainty of it. Still this relation is held with every certainty—certainty of belief. In probability also, there is a working certainty which is enough for guidance. Thus in these two fields there is no demonstrative certainty, but the certainty of belief. The same belief, according to Hume, accompanies our memory and senses. Right memory is always believed in. Belief having a peculiar certainty of its own type pervades the whole field of matters of fact and existences. It is here that we can well say that belief is some type of mental determination leading to conviction accompanying the real and not the fictional objects. Hume wants to affirm that belief is a mental assent that lets us feel surer and more secure in our adventures with the things and beings of this world. Belief may be described as irrational (because there is no demonstrative proof of its certainty), but it is not useless. On the other hand, it is one of the most serviceable principles of human life. This accompanying certainty of belief is so universal that we can venture to affirm that certainty is one of the innermost characteristics of belief. It is its nature, its essence. Hesitation leads to indetermination which in its turn kills action. Reason hesitates and thus fails to guide. When belief is there, there are no hesitations and uncertainties. We cannot command our belief because it is belief that guides us. Otto Quast in his book *Humes Begriff des 'Belief'* (Hume's Concept of Belief) takes belief to be one kind of expectation we are convinced of. According to Quast the idea of belief is the most central idea in Hume's philosophy.

Belief is, thus, a guiding principle in human life. All knowledge of matters of fact and existence depends on it, knowledge of causal relation, knowledge that there is an objective world, and knowledge that there are other selves. It is belief that stands at the back of other principles of human nature. These different principles of human nature are the different ways our human nature takes in its intercourse with the world of things and beings. The world of matters of fact and existences lacks all kinds of demonstrative proof which is only peculiar to the world of the relations of ideas. This great *divide* of Hume is later on worked out into divisions of judgment, namely, analytic and synthetic.

Analytic judgments belong to the latter whereas synthetic to the former. All the different proofs for the existence of things and for the existence of God are just so-called proofs.⁶ It is in this sense that *Hume's anthropology* conceives man as a *believing-animal*.⁷ The problem of belief is inseparably related with the being of man. Without this belief man cannot do. It is a necessity of his nature. There is a pre-predicative intercourse with nature. First there is life then comes reflection on it.

The whole philosophy of Hume depends on his theory of belief, because belief is working in his philosophy as a principle of explanation. It is also a principle that governs and guides. Thus, all those writers and critics of Hume, who fail to read in Hume a constructive philosophy, really fail to realize the importance given to this principle of belief. In the absence of this principle, Hume's philosophy, particularly his theoretical one, will be really a sheer negative and destructive philosophy. He is a logical successor of Locke-Berkeley tradition but that is what he negatively contributes to philosophy by showing the inconsistencies in Locke and Berkeley or in the whole movement of the *ideal-theory*.

By all this, it is now clear that belief stands in between the religious and the common sense beliefs. It is not religious because it is not mystical as the former. It has its sources in some other principles of human nature that help to build up such a mental-determination which we term belief. It is also not the common sense belief because it exists in its own right. Thus, rightly we have called it *natural belief*. Hume discovered this principle of belief not after an examination of religious but after an 'experimental' observation and study of human nature. It is really an epistemological principle. It explains the problems of theory of knowledge. Here we leave the question open what relation does it bear to religious belief? We shall come to this problem in the course of our discussion while working out synthetically a coherent picture of man.

Belief and human nature are thus closely related. Human nature not only guides us through this principle of belief but

⁶ Hume here prepares the way for Kant's antinomies by showing us the limit of reason. Antinomies just are results of reason trying to go out of relations of ideas.

⁷ See, Hume's *Anthropology*.

also possesses an authority which can never be challenged. In other words, we can say that none would challenge it, since, in that case, the practical life of man would be hardly possible. The question here is not why do we believe or why should we believe because we must believe. The question may be more reasonably put, if we ask *how do we come to belief?*

Thus, belief is not depending on human reason. It is not arbitrary. It is something universal and inter-subjective. When I believe that *fire will burn and water will quench my thirst* I am not arbitrarily doing all this. It is the way I have to take up. This is the way my very nature guides me. To believe in the opposite of what we are at present believing in is hardly possible, because, in that case, that mental determination with a peculiar certainty of its own, which we termed the *certainty of belief* is failing us. All that we can do is to imagine.

Thus, what is new and revolutionary in Hume is his claim that our knowledge about the existence depends on a habitually observed coherence. Belief as one of the principles of human nature is very active here.

Hume already refers to this characteristic of his philosophy in the Introduction of his *Treatise*. Here he claims originality because he supplies moral sciences with new fundamentals and new explanations, e.g. the different principles of human nature itself. For the first time, Hume shows us the unintelligibility and impossibility of any kind of proof for the existence of a most perfect being—for the existence of anything whatsoever.⁸

Belief, being the most important principle of Hume's philosophy, becomes central in his picture or science of man, because it is this principle that guides us in our practical life. It is the most original principle of our nature. Although it is related to the instinctive and impulsive side of our nature, still the human reason has to accept and realize its superiority and guidance in all practical human affairs. Reason can doubt the certainty we have in our beliefs regarding the world, other selves and causality, but we cannot help believing in them, i.e. it is not reason but belief that guides man.⁹

⁸ Cf. *Hume's Begriff der Realitat*, Meleker, M., p. 4.

⁹ It is not out of place here to note and credit Hume to have shown us the importance of the *irrational* in man.

It appears, that belief is an original necessity of man, because in the absence of it man cannot do. Knowledge, in the strict sense of the term, is nowhere possible, at least, not in the matters of fact and existence because the opposite of all is conceivable, if reason is our only guide. Causality we cannot deny although no proof of it is possible. Thus, it is an object of belief rather than of knowledge proper. The principle of causality is grounded in belief through the two other principles of custom and habit that go to produce in us a tendency to that effect. All inferences of experience are no longer the inferences of reason but of belief. The same is true of the problems of an objective world and other selves ; for they are also not grounded in reason but in belief. The most important affairs of human life have not been left to the doubtful guidance of reason or human intellect. The realities of life are not to be discursively discussed, proved and demonstrated. Hendel aptly remarks :

The fundamental truths of life do not arise from any deliberate or reflective activities of the mind. They are all believed before we are able to make certain of them by reason. This holds for the reality of space, time, causation and objective existence, and it holds, too, for the existence of the person of self.¹⁰

In his *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* what Hume is criticizing is not, properly speaking, the being or non-being of a God or of a world-ground but the attempts of reason to prove them. Thus, reason is no solution to these problems. He criticizes the very wish of church-philosophers or of any philosopher or thinker who attempt to prove Christianity with the help of reason. Thus Hume's problem is not the alternative between *Theism* and *Atheism* but between *Theism* and a *rational proof of the same*.

Lastly, we can briefly consider the question whether there is an opposition between belief and knowledge. This problem really does not arise for Hume. If by knowledge is meant knowledge in the field of matters of fact and existence, then, knowledge depends on belief, *i.e.* belief makes knowledge possible. If by knowledge is meant knowledge in the field of relations of ideas where it can be proved, demonstrated and intuited, then of course,

¹⁰ *Studies in the Philosophy of David Hume*, pp. 242-43.

there may be an opposition, in the sense that one has nothing to do with the other. But this is no genuine opposition, because both these fields of knowledge and belief belong to two different worlds altogether. Thus, what opposes belief (matters of fact) is not knowledge but probability because certainty of belief fails us in the latter.

All reasoning is reduced first to experience, then to habit and customs as mental determinations that accompany our experiences. They are again reduced to belief which is explained to be nothing but a peculiar sentiment or lively conception partly occasioned by custom and habit. "We may, therefore, conclude, that belief consists merely in a certain feeling or sentiment ; in something, that depends not on the will, but must arise from certain determinate causes and principles, of which we are not masters."¹¹

Hume lastly formulates two questions regarding the problem of the nature of belief for a serious and sincere consideration of philosophers : (i) What is that *more* in belief as compared to mere conception? Belief is really a feeling or sentiment ; and (ii) this feeling is really a force to hold the objects of belief faster, *i.e.* with certainty.

Whether there be anything to distinguish belief from the simple conception beside the feeling or sentiment? And whether this feeling be anything but a firmer conception, or a faster hold, that we take of the object.¹²

In fine, we can say that Hume has shown us that the problems of an 'I' of 'soul', of 'God', of 'World' and 'of causality' are not the subject matter of reason but of belief. Thus, we find in Hume's anthropology the primacy of feeling over reason. This is the most important contribution of this philosopher to the world of philosophy. Man has to be grateful more to his nature than to his reason, although the latter is not to be underrated. Hume's picture of man has developed through the principles of experience, custom, habit, and belief. Hume asserts that the assertions of reason are irrational in the sense that they cannot be demonstrated by the same reason.

Thus, the real wishes of reason are not rationally compre-

¹¹ Hume's *Treatise*, p. 624.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 627.

hensible. Reason seems to be its best friend and worst enemy.¹³ It is in this way that Hume works out his concept of man which is more irrational than rational. Life is natural because nature with her different principles guides us in our life.

Experience, to start with, replaces reason ; then come the principles of custom and habit. They again give place to belief. It so appears as if the lower principles are, so to say, absorbed in the higher, building up a hierarchy of principles. There is no inner opposition between them because one is the ground and source of the other. Here we find a descriptive but a very critical picture of man.¹⁴ Man and animal come closer to each other ; for the same principles are also the guiding principles in the world of animals. Man is a 'lacking-creature' in so far as he is rational, for he lacks reason for his beliefs that guide him. It is why the theory of natural belief is of utmost importance in Humean science of man. In his view of man, reason is in the service of belief. Thus, man is primarily an irrational being and secondarily rational.¹⁵

Now, we face the problem : can we accept these principles mentioned above to be the only guiding principle in our intercourse with the world of man and of objects? Or are there other principles in this hierarchy of principles which Hume discovers in his science of man? The following chapter on *Imagination* will deal with this problem.

¹³ Cf. *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*.

¹⁴ Cf. Hume's *Anthropology*.

¹⁵ Herder, the German philosopher, says that man has come here to learn reason and furnish explanations for his instinctive acts.

CHAPTER SIX

THE CONCEPT OF IMAGINATION IN HUME'S 'SCIENCE OF MAN'

ONE of the most original accomplishments of Hume's philosophy is to show that the whole conceptual world is the product of our imaginative faculty. It is this idea that is continued by Kant, Schopenhauer and Herbart in their own ways. Imagination works at all levels of our contact with the world of things and beings. The problem that we face at this stage of our enquiry in working out Hume's concept of man is as follows : Hume discovers the principles of experience, custom, habit and belief as the guiding principles in our theoretical as well as practical life. This, he does with the help of observation and experiment which he chooses to term 'Method of Experimental Reasoning.'¹ He started his enquiry by asking for the real conditions of human behaviour and he found those conditions in different principles of human nature. Two questions crop up here : (i) Does Hume try to search for a still deeper-lying principle of human nature following the maxim of Occam's razor in his philosophy, *i.e.* to say does he enquire about the real source of these already worked out principles of experience, custom, habit and belief? If our answer to this question is in the affirmative (as the author thinks it is), the second question would be, (ii) What is that principle then? Hume's demand to base these principles on a still deeper-lying principle of human nature is a move towards human nature as the explanation of all explanations.

Imagination, says Hume, is that principle which lies at the back of all those principles that are less general in nature. There are three things that we shall discuss here in this chapter :

¹ According to Hume, the primacy of feeling and belief is an hypothesis that can be well maintained on the ground of empirical observation. Hume further maintains that the primary duty of all philosophical enquiries should be no rational deduction or justification of these principles of human nature but the search after them.

- (i) What is Hume's own theory of imagination and how does he work it out in his philosophy?
- (ii) Why does Hume need such a principle at all? and
- (iii) How does this principle really work, *i.e.* to say what is the true mechanism of this principle?

Hume, to start with, warns us about the ambiguity of the diverse uses of this word in the hands of different philosophers. Imagination is generally used in a double sense. Commonly understood, it stands for our ability or power which freely puts the ideas together or separates them. It is in this sense that we talk of the freedom of imagination. In the other sense, it is a principle with certain permanent characteristics of its own. Hume tries to contrast imagination with the faculty of memory. Imagination is freer than memory; memory is always tied to the past. In memory, the original order of our perceptions and sensations remains to a great extent intact but in the case of imagination there is very little of this order to be marked. Imagination mixes the material in such a way that its delivery of the ultimate result appears to be original.

We find by experience, that when any impression has been present with the mind, it again makes its appearance as an idea; and this it may do after two different ways: either when in its new appearance it retains a considerable degree of its first vivacity, and is somewhat betwixt an impression and idea; or when it entirely loses that vivacity, and is a perfect idea. The faculty by which we repeat our impression in the first manner, is called *Memory* and the other the *Imagination*.²

The other sense of imagination as maintained by Hume means just the opposite of the first mentioned above. It is very near to the vivacity of perception and sensation. Being similar to perception in clearness, imagination thus becomes the faculty of direct acquaintance with reality. Imagination may aptly be described as that propensity of human nature which, not being grounded in reason, transcends the mere present. In other words, it is the process of directly comprehending reality. In this way, imagination is always at work when we do not merely fancy but believe. We come to belief through the spontaneous activity of

² Hume's *Treatise*, pp. 8-9,

the faculty of imagination. Thus, imagination becomes the ground of memory, understanding and belief ; for it lies at the back of all of them in the form of an instinctively impulsive principle of human nature. Hume writes :

Without this quality,³ by which the mind enlivens some ideas beyond others (which seemingly is so trivial and, so little founded on reason) we cou'd never assent to any argument, nor carry our view beyond those few objects, which are present to our senses. Nay, even to these objects, we cou'd never attribute any existence but what was dependent on the senses; . . . Nay, further, even with relation to that succession, we cou'd only admit of those perceptions, which are immediately present to our consciousness, nor cou'd those lively images, with which the memory presents us be ever receiv'd as true pictures of past perceptions. The memory, senses and understanding are, therefore, all of them founded on the imagination, or the vivacity of our ideas.⁴

These lines from Hume may lead us to think that imagination hardly differs from the vivacity of our perceptions. In the last line of the above quoted passage, Hume speaks of imagination as if it were the vivacity of our perceptions. This is so because it is really due to this faculty of imagination that the past is so lively presented before us ; imagination enlivens the past and makes it appear with the clarity of vivid perceptions. Thus, the liveliness of memory becomes the liveliness of imagination. Since the remembered is believed in (as it is not a mere fancy-product), and since the belief is no arbitrary act of our mind, imagination must be possessed of characteristics that are of permanent and universal nature. It will be these qualities of imagination in which our thought will be grounded. As these principles are permanent, universal and unchangeable, they must be common to all human beings. Since they are common to all human beings, they are no longer individually subjective but inter-subjectively objective. These qualities of imagination thus seem to work as the natural standard of our judgment. Our customary transition from cause to effect and vice versa

³ Quality of imagination.

⁴ Hume's *Treatise*, p. 265.

is nothing but an expression of this principle of imagination. Hume takes these qualities of imagination to be the guiding forces behind our life of thought as well as of action. Human nature will perish if these principles are not there. Hume writes :

In order to justify myself, I must distinguish in the imagination betwixt the principles which are permanent, irresistible and universal, such as the customary transition from causes to effects, and from effects to causes : And the principles which are changeable, weak and irregular ; such as those I have just now taken notice of. The former are the foundations of all our thoughts and actions, so that upon their removal human nature must immediately perish and go to ruin.⁵

Those who see in Hume simply an empirical treatment of the problem of causality fail to realize that Hume has grounded this principle in some human propensity which is of universal nature. This principle is the principle of imagination. Causality being a universally accepted principle of transition of the past to the future is grounded in the universal faculty of imagination. It is indirectly a principle of imagination. This, I would like to call *the natural explanation of the principle of causality*. Imagination, being itself a quality of our human nature, explains things naturally. Thus, all the permanent characteristics of our experience are supplied by our imagination and experience devoid of all these characteristics cannot guide us. Philosophy discards the principles of irregularity and changeableness in imagination, because they contradict custom, habit and belief which are universal in their use and application.

This dual character of imagination becomes still more clear when Hume shows us its opposition to memory and to reason. Compared with memory, imagination is the faculty of producing less lively and less forceful ideas. Opposed to reason, it becomes the source and ground of the principles of custom, habit and belief. It is here that one can speak of the *epistemological* importance and implication of the principle of imagination. The concept of imagination is of utmost importance in the theoretical philosophy of Hume. Imagination having nothing to

⁵ Hume's *Treatise*, p. 225.

do with demonstrative reason and argument leads us in our life. Since custom, habit, and belief are synthetic principles and since they depend upon imagination, imagination becomes one of the most constructively creative principles of human nature. Opposed to phantasy, imagination is the principle of postulation ; it is human imagination that dares to anticipate an outline of future. The question arises, what type of postulation? Postulation that contains the propositions related to matters of fact and existence. Our sense-perceptions are all transitory ; they come and go. The picture of the world that logically emerges on the basis of these perceptions is temporary and transitory in nature. But the world we live in and the world that matters for us is, on the other hand, permanent and regular. Without supplementation this world of perceptions is at all not to be understood. Reason knows the world in piecemeals ; its knowledge moves through its construction. This supplementation of the characters of permanency, regularity and unchangeableness is the work of imagination. The imagination adds its own nature to the world of perception in order to work out a more stable and regular world of practice. What was broken becomes now a complete whole. One can as well venture to say that this way of supplementing our knowledge of the sense-organs is a natural method of human mind. It is a tendency or a propensity of human nature itself. The activity of this tendency of human nature is what Hume terms *imagination*. That there is such a tendency is a fact of observation. In modern terminology of sense-data, we may express the same thing as follows : the transitory and 'gappy' sense-data are worked out into a world of permanency and coherency.

Not only that, imagination is also a methodological procedure. It is a way our human nature works. It always informs us about propositions that are related to matters of fact and existences. Since this procedure is a fundamental tendency of human nature, no question about its truth and falsity as such arises. Sensations and perceptions left to themselves cannot provide us with a permanent world. In modern terminology of sense-data philosophy it can be stated as follows : Sensations and perceptions are always changing ; they furnish us with the fragmentary data of a particular table, *i.e.* to say we are directly acquainted not with the table but with the sense-data of the table. Thus, the table itself as a physical object becomes an object of *construction*

and belief.⁶ Now knowledge involves the problem of transcendence which is epistemological in nature. We seem here to be in need of the help of imagination. Imagination is the reservoir of the *unsensed-sensibilia*. It solves the problem of *epistemological transcendence* by taking a single step to the object. Imagination is a method of co-ordination and supplementation. Prof. Price puts the same matter as follows :

If we like to put it so ; material object sentences give expression to the way in which our mind works, when it is confronted by the fragmentary or 'gappy' data of sensation. And its working consists in supplementing them and co-ordinating them... Perhaps it formulates not a proposition—something true or false, but rather a method, a plan of procedure—a method of co-ordinating our actual sense-impression by supplementing them with unsensed sensibilia. To use this method is a fundamental tendency of human nature ; and the activity in which we use it is called by Hume 'Imagination'.⁷

Prof. Price seems to take this act of supplementation to be no problem of truth and falsity ; for this is a way our human nature works. Since the 'epistemological transcendence' works well, *i.e.* to say it is verified in our empirical experience in the sense that we really meet an objective table for our practical purposes, this can be taken as a good proof for the existence of such a principle. Imagination is a help to man. It appears that the principle of imagination works instinctively and subconsciously ; it has an instinctive and subconscious character. It is only at the reflective level that we become conscious of this very important service of this equally very important principle of human nature. Thus, to ask, whether this method is true or false, is pointless ; for it is always there at work. To ask like this is to ask whether respiration is true or false. Thus, this synthesizing and supplementing principle of imagination is one of the most important methods in Hume's anthropology. It verges on the biological principle of instinctively recognizing the objects of interests. *Our material object sentences*, *i.e.* to say sentences in the field of *matters of fact and existence* would have been impossible in the absence

⁶ Cf. Bertrand Russell, *Problems of Philosophy*.

⁷ *Hume's Theory of External World*, pp. 194-95.

of such a principle. It is in this sense that Price so aptly remarks that imagination provides us with *the grammar of material objects*. Imagination feels the pulse of objects existing regularly and independently.

Let us now turn to the question : why does Hume need such a principle at all, *i.e.* to say what use he does make of this principle in his concept of man? Strictly speaking, the principle of custom, habit, and belief are also not in a position to give us an information about what lies outside of these 'gappy' sensations and perceptions. They can induce us being the different tendencies of human mind, but they cannot explain this important work of epistemological transcendence and also the transformation of the past to the future with an element of belief in it. Imagination leads us from *part perception* to *whole-perception*. It is for this reason that Hume dives deep into human nature in order to find out that imagination lies at the basis of all non-rational adventures of human mind. To form an idea of 'what has happened, will also happen' is the work of imagination. Imagination teaches us not only that the objects of perception will remain regular but will also continue to exist even without their being perceived. Hume writes :

Any degree, therefore of regularity in our perceptions, can never be a foundation for us to infer a greater degree of regularity in some objects, which are not perceiv'd ; since this supposes a contradiction, *viz.* a habit acquir'd by what was never present to the mind . . . But as all reasoning concerning matters of fact arises only from custom, and custom can only be the effect of repeated perceptions, the extending of custom and reasoning beyond the perceptions can never be the direct and natural effect of the constant repetition and connexion, but must arise from the co-operation of some other principles . . . , that the imagination, when set into any train of thinking, is apt to continue, even when its object fails it, and like a galley put in motion by the oars, carries on its course without any new impulse.⁸

Thus, the permanency, regularity and continuance of the objective world depend on this faculty of imagination. The

⁸ Hume's *Treatise*, pp. 197-98.

principle of causality itself depends on this faculty ; for this principle of cause and effect presupposes regularity, continuity and permanence. We have observed the stone fell and the glass was broken. Now seeing the stone and glass again, we first *imagine*, i.e. perceive in terms of ideas 'the falling' of the stone and then 'the breaking' of the glass. It is this imagining that must be present before we can talk of any causal relation.⁹ Hendel says :

When we infer causes or effects we are imagining, and what we then infer we also believe to be real. Hence we form a still more extensive system of realities, corresponding all that we perceive through our senses, memory and imagination.¹⁰

If we want to understand and explain fully our understanding of things, we have to take into account some other principle of human nature than reason. According to Hume, reason has been taken as the principle of explanation for all our beliefs in the outer world, other selves, causality, etc. But it cannot help us long ; for with reason the opposite of everything is conceivable as well. Bishop Berkeley has already proved that general concepts have no rational ground. John Locke has already cast doubt on the rationality of our belief in substance ; for he says 'matter is something, I know not what'.

Thus, if reason is not the last court of appeal, we take up imagination as the principle of order and synthesis. The genius of imagination lies in its making possible the different epistemological principles of custom, habit and belief. These different principles in Hume's science of man are different adventures of human mind.

Imagination schematically represented in relation to the following principles of human nature :

*Imagination as the source of the
different adventures of mind*

- Experience
- Custom
- Habit
- Belief
- Memory
- Understanding

Imagination seems to possess an innate nature. It is the tendency to make everything continue uniformly. It is

⁹ Causal relation seems to consist in this relation itself.

¹⁰ *Studies in the Philosophy of David Hume*, p. 118.

an instinct working through different habits of the mind. Hume goes so far as to say that it is difficult, if not impossible to imagine human nature without this faculty of imagination.

When we emphasize Hume's two ways of understanding and describing imagination, namely, through the qualities of irregularity, weakness and changeableness and through regularity, permanence and universality, we come very near to *Kant's empirical and transcendental theories of imagination*. There are more points of similarities between Hume and Kant on this point than what is accepted by the philosophers.¹¹ It is particularly here that Kantian theory of outer world comes very near to Hume's theory of the same. The part played by this faculty of imagination in both is remarkably interesting. It was the genius of this Scotch philosopher (Hume) who did away with the principle of reason as a sham explanation of our belief in the outer world. Kant seems to have worked out from this hint his theory of the phenomenal character of the world. Kant's transcendental world became a prototype to Hume's conviction that the real secrets of things are not known to us. But Hume solves this problem in Leibnizian fashion by tentatively postulating a pre-established harmony.

Price very aptly remarks : "... the imagination is even more fundamental in Hume's theory of knowledge than he himself admits. If you like, his theory of the empirically real is even more Kantian than it looks. To do Hume justice, I do not think he would much mind admitting this. There are some very Kantian sentences in the introduction to the *Treatise* which I cannot forbear to quote, because very little attention seems to have been paid to them. "There is no question of importance whose decision is not compris'd in the science of man ; and there is none, which can be decided with any certainty, before we become acquainted with that science. In pretending, therefore, to explain the principles of human nature, we in effect propose a complete system of the sciences, built on a foundation almost entirely new, and the only one upon which they can stand with any secu-

¹¹ Not only on this point, but in the opinion of the author many things in Kant are just the explication of what was already implicit in Hume-Copernican revolution, division into phenomena and noumena, analytic and synthetic judgments.

rity”¹². What is this, but a scottish version of Kant’s Copernican revolution.¹³

According to Hume, it is now human nature that is in the centre. It becomes the principle of all reference, *i.e.* the knowledge of the world has to conform to those conditions of the human mind that are necessary in understanding the world. These principles are thus mental habits or ways of working of human nature. This is also the central teaching of Kant, if we avoid here the differences in detail. As in Hume so also in Kant human mind takes the place of a determining agent. Thus the authority and apodeictic of these principles of custom habit etc. are in the last analysis supplied by imagination. *Hume’s Copernican solution of the problem of reality* has more or less remained a hint in him which has become so explicit in Kant who works it out in all its details. Kant owes more to Hume than he himself and the world seem to think and are ready to recognize. M. Meleker shows very clearly how Hume’s limits have been worked out by Kant.

‘It is thus that we can appreciate what Hume has accomplished by his theory of imagination. The problem, for which Kant, according to that famous letter to Moses Mendelssohn of August 1783, needed twelve years of hard labour and constant reflection ; nay, his life-time to solve, was raised and solved by Hume at the age of twenty five, namely Copernican solution of the problem of reality. Hume brings about this revolution in the world of philosophy by his reversal of the order of nature in which the real seat of necessity is not the object but the mind.’¹⁴

Mind orders the chaotic manifold into an intelligible whole with the help of its own natural principles. To understand the world, we need the principles which have their seat in human mind. This is, in a nutshell, the famous *Copernican revolution*.

¹² Hume’s *Treatise*, p. 1, (Introduction)

¹³ *Hume’s theory of the external world*, pp. 8-9.

¹⁴ Nur so kann man zur Würdigung dessen gelangen, was Hume geleistet hat. Wozu Kant nach dem bekannten Brief an Moses Mendelssohn vom August 1783 des zwölfjährigen Nachdenkens bedurfte, ja, wir können sagen, wozu er ein Menschenleben brauchte, das war Hume unit 25 yahren geglückt : die Kopernikanische Lösung des Problems der Realitat ; wie Hume sagt : die Umkehrung der Ordnung der Natur, die Verlegung der Notwendigkeit von den Objekten in den Geist. See, *Humes Begriff der Realitat*, by M. Meleker, p. 109.

In Hume's opinion, imagination has not only weight, but also authority. It is not only the source of belief, but it also confers truth on this principle of belief. We may not be in the know of those secret powers of nature ; the real forces of nature at work may not be wholly known to us, still imagination guides us successfully. According to Hume, no education and cultivation of understanding, no laboured rational thinking will help us even a little bit in our knowledge of the real world.

In this way, we may well maintain imagination to be the basis of our successful intercourse with the world of things and beings. Imagination is an instinctively intuitive step of human mind in its contact with the real world. It is in this sense that imagination can be said to be more of an impulsive and instinctive nature than of cognitive nature. We, on the ground of our past experience, which is helped in its endeavour by the principles of custom, habit, belief and imagination, expect the same course of nature in the future as it was the case in the past in an *oblique* manner. It is this very obliquity which is the genius of imagination. This genius consists in our act of transferring the past to the future. This act of transference is an irreducible datum in Hume's philosophy. Besides being unanalysable, it is also not demonstrative in the sense of giving proof in terms of the law of contradiction. Since it does not admit of any proof, we may well maintain that this faculty of imagination is irrational with indispensable practical uses in life.

We have also a tendency to believe in what we expect on the ground of our past experiences and other principles of human nature. This tendency or inclination (propensity) is something that falls outside the field of these principles. It is a quality of imagination itself. After criticizing the so-called metaphysics in the hand of reason,¹⁵ Hume comes to his own theory of 'positive metaphysics' which takes experience along with the other principles of human nature as the sole guide in life. Kant's metaphysics, we can also term 'experiential' ; for there also he decides in favour of experience. Without the operation of imagination, other principles of human nature are useless. Hume writes : "Experi-

¹⁵ One may here note Kant's replacement of rational metaphysics by 'metaphysics of experience' as if it were a version of Hume's disbelief in speculative metaphysics. If Hume is said to possess any metaphysics, it must be sought within the boundary lines of human experience.

ence gives us information about the particular conjunction of things in the past ; a habit of mind impells us to the same junctures for the future. Whenever experience affords the opportunity ; the native determination of the mind makes us infer, and believe in the existence of some new fact. This operation takes place through the imagination".¹⁶

In fine, we can describe Hume's theory of imagination as follows : Imagination is a natural process of human mind ; for it has been implanted in us by the merciful hands of nature ; it is a native tendency in us. It is instinctive ; for it works in us as if it were an instinct. It is a constructive principle, because it is the source and ground of the principles of custom, habit, belief, etc. It also works as an epistemological principle in us ; for all our knowledge about causes and effects, about the physical world of objects depends on it. It is also impulsive and synthetic ; for it supplements and synthesizes the 'gappy' and broken sense-data ; it makes out of the transitory world of perception a world that is regular and continuous. It is an irrational faculty in us, because it cannot be explained with the help of reason. We may term it 'supra-rational' in the sense that where reason fails it comes to our help. It is also a creative principle in us ; for it creates for us an independent permanent world of objects which, reason being alone our guide, cannot be accomplished. Thus, the importance of the concept of imagination in the theoretical as well as practical life of man can hardly be exaggerated. A regular imagination, and not reason is the sole guide of human life. Hume's interest in philosophy is always ethical and practical ; he is first of all a moral philosopher, and then anything else. Hendel raises Hume to the height of Socrates in this regard and compares Hume with him.¹⁷

Further, the question regarding the ultimate nature of imagination is unanswerable, if by this question we aim at explaining the principle of imagination. That which explains everything cannot itself be explained, at least in the same sense of explanation. It has to be taken as a fact, a reality present in us. The practical utility we derive from imagination is another proof of its presence in all of us. Imagination being a principle of supplementing reason, is the faculty of filling gaps in our percep-

¹⁶ Hume's *Treatise*, p. 265.

¹⁷ See, *Studies in the Philosophy of David Hume* by Hendel, p. 258.

tual world. Imagination regularizes the irregular in a way that, for all practical purposes, corresponds with the regularity of the external world of objects. Imagination is both our theoretical as well as our practical guide. We may easily assert that Hume conceived imagination to have a nature of its own which, according to him, consists in its being the source and ground of all our primary beliefs which are so prominent in the life of human beings. To the question : *why imagination works in this regular manner?* no definite answer can be given. This is so because in asking about the reason as to why it works in this way we are really asking what it means in this argument.

Strictly speaking, says Hume, we do not know as to how we should think and live but simply as how do we really think and live. In other words, we do not clearly know as what to believe and what not to believe except what we really believe in. The action always follows with a necessity which is no matter of rational discussion and deliberation. Nature does not trust our intellect and, thus, lets us believe in things necessary for life without at the same time telling us anything about her secrets. It is here that human life has much in common with the life of the animals. At such places, Hume's anthropology becomes more comprehensive. There are many points of information in Hume on the problem of comparative anthropology which is still in the process of making.

Imagination, being the central principle in Hume's picture of man, does not only explain human behaviour but also justifies it. It is a self-justifying principle of human nature. Imagination being grounded in the human nature, is no lawless rendering of human mind. Causal inferences along with our deductions of an independent external world and other persons is possible only through this natural faculty of imagination.

John W. Lenz says : "Upon closer examination of Hume's view, we see that, strictly speaking, it is not their being caused by the imagination, which justifies causal inferences. It is rather their being caused by what is 'permanent', 'irresistible', and 'universal',¹⁸ in all men's imagination which justifies them. Only that core of imagination common to all men has presumably been implanted by nature."¹⁹

¹⁸ This is what the author has termed *Hume's own theory of imagination*.

¹⁹ See, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, p. 564.

These three qualities of imagination, namely, 'its permanency', 'its irresistibility', and 'its universality', exhaust the real nature of imagination. They are the underlying structures of this natural principle of imagination. It is these qualities of imagination that lead us to believe in an universal theory of imagination. This universal theory of imagination gets verified, because the presence of such a principle is common to all of us. Hume goes still further and wishes to affirm that it is common to animals. Animals do 'believe' in an outer world, which is no result of reasoning ; for animals do not possess any reasoning power. The difference here between animals and men is only regarding their complexity and not in their having such a principle. Man must assent to the principle concerning the existence of bodies and other selves, although he cannot claim to give any argument in proof of them. Since no argument of philosophy can claim to maintain the veracity of this principle except that it must be taken for granted as the most natural way which human life can take in existing.

Thus, we have come to the conclusion that imagination is the key to the theoretical philosophy of David Hume, particularly to his epistemology. The unity in Hume's philosophy is just the unity given by imagination. Imagination appears to us to be a process in human nature, *implanted by nature*, as Lenz says. Imagination is the most original grasp of human mind into the real nature of things themselves. But the real laws that govern those things are not known to us in their entirety. Total comprehension of the whole nature is beyond our mental grasp ; the guide always remains hidden, and nature being our ultimate guide hides her secrets from us. Thus, the most important category of 'existence', which is the Alpha and Omega of all the existentialist thinkers, is itself supplied by this natural faculty of imagination. Hume is no solipsist ; for he believes in the existence of the world of objects and persons. It seems to be most natural to us to behave as if the world had always been there and she would ever continue to be there. This pre-reflective successful belief is possible through imagination and imagination being an implantation of nature in all of us works subconsciously in us. Imagination produces an irresistible strong propensity in all of us to take things in the light in which we take them instinctively and naively. Hume very clearly says that "After the most accurate and exact of my reasonings, I can give no reason,

why I shou'd assent to it, and feel nothing but a *strong* propensity to consider objects *strongly* in that view, under which they appear to me."²⁰

The real burden of epistemology or theoretical philosophy as such lies in the problem of *epistemological transcendence*. By such a transcendence, we mean the ground of the possibility of knowledge. That, we know, is a *factum* of human experience ; for experience as such is the store of such knowledge. Now we credit imagination with this power of transcendence. Imagination enables us to have a look into the future with an instinctive leap which occasions belief in us. This is why we maintain that it is no mere abstract faculty ; it is an active and practical power in all men. Some of our beliefs are not simply the acts of our mind ; we have to accept the influence of imagination being at work in and through these mental acts.²¹

To the third and last question that we set ourselves to answer, is : How does imagination do all this? It is a question pertaining to its nature of working, its mechanism. Sensations and perceptions are the two main sources of knowledge. They are temporary and their information is always 'gappy'. Still we observe a certain degree of 'coherency', 'consistency', and 'constancy' in all our perceptions which are spatio-temporal. They are taken to be so as they are perceived. But the faculty of imagination extends this validity of the present to the future and, thus, makes the transcendence possible. The working of the concept of imagination can be described as follows :

Imagination, to start with, engages our attention instinctively and impulsively ; it starts working as a sub-conscious process. It occasions us to imagine the same 'coherence' and 'consistency' of the present perceptions for the occurrences of the future. Since this 'causing us to imagine' is no mere 'fantasying', imagination also occasions in us belief in what we so imagine. It is in this

²⁰ Hume's *Treatise*, p. 265.

²¹ The peculiar difficulty of not being able to get at the real actual physical 'table', in which the modern sense-data philosophy seems to have hopelessly fallen can be explained by Hume with the help of his theory of imagination. Bertrand Russell takes this real physical table to be an object of belief. This transcendence to the real table through the act of belief is rendered possible through the imagination. This is no rational transcendence ; for reason is too alert to be naively active. All that a percipient is acquainted with are only the sense-data. We may also term this transcendence 'imaginative'.

way that the idea of identity emerges. Thus, in the hands of imagination, the temporary world of objects becomes a permanent world of objects.²² This working of imagination in all of us is so spontaneous that it appears not to take place at all. The most simple has always the fate either of being neglected or of getting no recognition at all. It is in this sense that imagination may be taken as a postulate. Simply on the ground of our reason, no permanent world of objects can ever be worked out. Hume sometimes takes this instinctively impulsive belief in a world of objects to be an 'opinion', based on imagination. He writes : "So that upon the whole, our reason neither does, nor is it possible it ever shou'd, upon any supposition, give us assurance of the continu'd and distinct existence of body. That opinion must be entirely owing to the IMAGINATION".²³

Hume has weakness for *vulgar consciousness* ; he loves to use this phrase. The imagination is called upon to work out a continuing and identical world (this is the world of vulgar consciousness) out of, and on the basis of temporary perceptual sense-data. The opinion of the vulgar consciousness of the existence of objects, when not perceived, may be illogical but it is the only one that is nearer to life as it is lived. Since this consciousness is so near to life, it is recommended by imagination, too. This consciousness in its naive opinion of a common world shared by all of us neglects the broken and 'gappy' sense-data of perceptions. Prof. N. K. Smith writes :

Our perceptions are broken, interrupted, and however similar, are still different from each-other ; the imagination with only such perceptions as the material of its operations would be called upon to proceed directly to the belief of another order of existence resembling these perceptions and yet continued uninterrupted and identical. Though the opinion that the

²² Hume has become *notorious* for his expression of the soul as the *bundle of sensations and perceptions*. But we can be profited more if we search for the real problem of soul here in this faculty of imagination. So far as reason is our guide, soul is, no doubt, a bundle and has to be so ; but imagination may put us on the right track and let us imagine along with a belief in this act of imagination a permanent soul in all of us which is enough for all our practical purposes.

²³ Hume's *Treatise*, p. 193.

perceptions are themselves objects and exist when not perceived—the opinion of the vulgar consciousness—is indeed false—it is the only attitude natural to the mind, and the only one that has any primary recommendation to the imagination, being in fact due to the imagination.²⁴

Imagination is always at work ; it is most present there where it seems to be present in the least. Prof. N. K. Smith seems to criticize vulgar consciousness for its identification of perceptions with objects as such. The author feels that this not differentiating between the objects and the actual perceptions, is one of the characteristic marks of this type of consciousness. Vulgar consciousness 'vulgarly' avoids the problem of falling into the troubles either of 'ideal theory' of Locke-Berkeley type or of the 'sense-data problem' of the modern philosophers. There is a difference between the perception as a process taking place in individual minds and the things perceived, still the vulgar consciousness remains true to its sole purpose of the continuance of interrupted perceptions. What Hume seems to criticize in this theory of consciousness is the unwarranted identification of perception with the perceived, but he is, on the other hand, happy that such a thing takes place in all of us naturally. The author feels inclined to interpret the real import of the theory of vulgar consciousness in these words : although our perceptions are not continuing ; they are temporary and are interrupted, still their objects continue to be there in their actual absence. This is done again by imagination. Thus, we can maintain that Hume's theory of the external world criticizes and accepts at the same time the vulgar theory of the same.

We can evaluate Hume's own theory of the external world by saying that it is an improvement on the theory of the vulgar consciousness of the world, for here the principle of imagination called upon to explain our belief in the continued existence of bodies, supplements the broken and interrupted data of perceptions with the characters of permanence and continuation. Hume never felt happy in denouncing the activities of this vulgar consciousness. Thus, we can ascertain how imagination brings forth a world of objects. But the real 'how' (*i.e.* to say, how does

²⁴ *The Philosophy of David Hume*, p. 488.

it really work) of imagination still remains a mystery to all of us.

One can appreciate Hume's theory of imagination better by comparing it with that of Kant's of the same. For both, Hume and Kant the external world is in some sense a construction.²⁵ Imagination is always at the back of such a construction. What differentiates Hume's theory of imagination from that of Kant's treatment of the same is that the former emphasizes the supplemental character of imagination more than Kant and Kant emphasizes the synthetic character of imagination more than Hume. But both of them recognize the part played by both these characteristics of imagination in venturing an external world.²⁶ Hume's own theory of imagination is what Kant would like to call his 'transcendental theory of imagination', because here in Kant as in Hume the 'universality', 'regularity', and 'irresistibility' of imagination are at work. That the phenomenal world of material objects is, in a sense, an imaginative construction, is accepted by both Hume and Kant.²⁷ The practical and the pragmatic sides of imagination are worked out more by Hume than by Kant, who was more interested in working out the implications of a transcendental philosophy with the help of a pure transcendental logic. Hume was less interested in such high types of speculations.

The most important problem of Hume's philosophy is his science of man. This science of man is at the same time the most foundationally fundamental ; for it is the basis of all other human disciplines, inclusive of mathematical sciences.²⁸ Strictly speaking, induction is no problem of logic ; for there is no fully exhaustive induction. The *leap-character* of induction makes it illogical or less logical. Hume solves the problem as follows : There is present in all of us a tendency of making inductions. We cannot and need not (we should not also) challenge this tendency, because in that case life would be ruined without any basis for its various practices. Further, suggests Hume, that there seems to be present another tendency to insist and persist

²⁵ *Mind maketh nature*, says Kant.

²⁶ It is here that one can see that imagination, for Kant, is more a principle of transcendental philosophy than of life as it is the case with Hume.

²⁷ See, Price, Prof. H. H., *Hume's Theory of the External World*, pp. 15-17.

²⁸ See, Hume's *Treatise*, Introduction.

in inductions. This *fundamental principle of human inertia* (if this coinage is at all allowed) which is only hinted at by Hume and is not worked out in its various details, is really the 'fountain-head' for 'Kant's ideas of reason'. According to Kant, imagination works very deep in human nature ; its seat is down below in the depth of the human soul. Kant's transcendentalism is implied here which he so formally works out with great labour and success. Thus, the mysterious character of imagination is accepted both by Hume as well as by Kant.

We may resume our discussion by saying that imagination is a necessity of and in human life ; it is a principle of explanation and justification. Not only that, but even the ventures of reason are made possible through the imagination. Imagination is and is not irrational ; for it supplements the activities of reason. Imagination, in a sense, is the fulfilment of reason.

In the theoretical philosophy of David Hume, we were mainly concerned with the epistemological questions, *viz.*, the principle of causality, the theory of an external world, the existence of bodies, other selves and so on and so forth. In other words, we have explored and explained Hume's concept of man in its relation to the things of the world, *i.e.* to say we have tried to understand man in so far as he is in contact with the world of objects. We have also observed and concluded that the principles of experience, custom, habit, and belief are dependent on the principle of imagination. This principle of imagination works in us as an innate and instinctive tendency with qualities that are of universal nature. These qualities of universality, irresistibility and regularity are common to all of us.

In the other part of Hume's concept of man, namely, the practical philosophy, we shall examine the problem of man in relation to man. The object of our enquiry here would be society ; man in intercourse with other men. As a social being, man is always bracketed with fellow-men. By practical philosophy, we may be understood to mean Hume's moral philosophy also. We have already observed that Hume entered his philosophy through the gateway of morals. He himself testifies this contention of ours by saying that it is the field of morality and ethics he is most interested in. He patterns his theoretical philosophy on his practical convictions which he terms his practical or moral philosophy. We shall also try to show that Hume's anthropology

is mainly influenced by his theory of morality. Hume's practical philosophy will include a discussion of his theory of sympathy which forms the corner-stone of his theory of morality. It will also include a chapter on the problem of human nature which Hume terms 'the science of man' ; for 'human nature is the only science of man'.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SYMPATHY AND HUME'S CONCEPT OF MAN

IN THE theoretical philosophy of David Hume, as we have already noticed, the concept of imagination transcends the mere broken, 'gappy' and interrupted sense-data of perception and thus succeeds in constructing an independent, continuous and objective world on the basis of the 'constancy', 'regularity' and 'coherence' to be found in perceptions. Another question of much import and importance that naturally crops up in his practical philosophy is : what is that principle that guides us in our conduct in society? In other words, we ask here for some ethical principle of transcendence that allows a peep in the hearts of other persons. We thus enter Hume's moral philosophy or his theory of ethics. By Hume's moral philosophy, we should be understood to mean his theory of man in relation to his fellow-men. Society is a *sui generis* phenomenon.

Hume's theory of morality colours his theory of man. Hume was an enemy of those armchair moralists who undertook to construct ethical systems according to their apriori conceptions without any reference to empirical data. The only guide they consult while constructing ethical systems is their fancy and nothing else. Morality is no system of abstract rules invented by human reason. From the time of Socrates onward, philosophers have become used to relating reality to a combination of concepts in the firm belief that by so doing they are explaining the real life of the individual in society. They were mistaken ; for they were reductionists—reducing the empirical reality of morality to a system of abstract, logically related ideas. To live is not mainly and primarily to think ; to live is to act. The reality of moral system is bound up with the reality of society. Moral behaviour is not something to be conjectured by human reason and intellect.

The question of an ethics arises in man's relation to his fellow-men. Ethics and society are closely connected. We cannot

conceive the one without the other. Morality, thus, begins with group life. After working out the principles of *natural beliefs*, and *imagination*, in Hume's theoretical philosophy, we have now to explore his practical philosophy for the fundamental concepts therein. We put the question : Is there also a principle in his moral philosophy that explains man's being not only a social creature but also a moral being? To start with, we can point out that moral philosophy is of utmost interest and importance to Hume. In actual writing, Hume might have written his theoretical philosophy first but in thinking his ethical convictions precede all his philosophizing on matters of theoretical importance. Hume like Kant enters his philosophy through the gateway of morals. "Morality is a subject that interests us above all."¹

In our treatment of the principle of sympathy three questions will be put and discussed in turn :

(i) What is Hume's theory of sympathy?

(a) its treatment in his *Treatise*, and

(b) its treatment in his *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*.

(ii) Why does Hume need such a principle at all? and

(iii) The role of sympathy in Hume's concept of man.

It is very interesting to note Hume's way of treatment of sympathy and its development from *Treatise* to *Enquiry*. In his *Treatise*, Hume tells us that sympathy is a propensity of human nature. It is through this native quality of human nature that we come to share the pains and pleasures of other fellow human beings. It is the same tendency that also provides the basis of that social feeling which forms the very basis of our social life. Sympathy is the faculty of our approbation and disapprobation of virtues and vices respectively. We have a tendency to promote the good of the society. Hume is giving us no 'emotion or virtue theory' of sympathy meaning thereby that sympathy is one of the virtues or emotions. Sympathy itself is neither a virtue nor an emotion ; it is more a way our human nature works. Sympathy generates disinterested passions in the absence of which no moral life would be possible. These disinterested passions are devotional in nature, *i.e.* to say they lead us to view other individuals and society of greater and richer value. How can I suffer for you unless I am sure of your greater worth ? Sympathy is a quality of human

¹ Hume's *Treatise*, p. 456.

nature—remarkable and of consequence. The propensity in us to sympathize with others is not only fundamental but is also the basis of *communication in our moral life*.² As a property of human nature, sympathy is the ground of love among us. Every one of us has a concern for society, and it is this concern which is termed by Hume 'sympathy'. It is a natural, native and altruistic principle in all of us. Not only that, our concern for society and our fellow-beings is grounded in this capacity of sympathy, but it is also the mother of all virtues ; it is the principle which engenders in us concern, care and love for others.

Now we have no such extensive concern for society but from sympathy ; and consequently 't is that principle, which takes us so far out of ourselves, as to give us the same pleasure of uneasiness in the characters of others, as if they have a tendency to our own advantage or loss.³

Contrasting Hume's views of human nature and society with those of Hobbes and Locke we can say that society is hardly the product of rational manipulation of certain individuals. Hume disagrees with the English social contract school of philosophy (propounded by Hobbes and Locke) which takes human intellect as the progenitor of society and morality. Human nature, for Hume, is by its very nature sympathetic and social ; for sympathy is an innate tendency of human nature. Society, in the social contract school, is the artificial result of an equally artificial contract. Thus, man is not bellicose by nature as Hobbes takes him to be. The ethics of Hume differs from that of Hobbes and Locke ; for it is altruistic and naturalistic. Compared with Hume, Hobbes and Locke may be called 'arm-chair moralists' ; for they devise an abstract moral system to explain the concrete facts of human moral life. Man's social nature is not an attainment at a particular stage in his socio-cultural development. Man is born in a society, as he is always born in a language.

Sympathy as an inborn quality of human nature is as important in Hume's ethics as imagination is in his epistemology. Without the mirroring power of sympathy, human life would be intolerably lonely. As the imagination transcends the 'gappy' and

² See, Hume's *Treatise* pp. 315-16.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 579.

broken sense-data of perception, so also the sympathy transcends our egoistic feelings of pleasures and pains. We, therefore, naturally believe that others also weep in sorrow and laugh in joy and so on. Hume writes : "We are certain that sympathy is a very powerful principle in human nature All lovers of virtue (and such we all are in speculation, however we may degenerate in practice) must certainly be pleased to see moral distinctions derived from so noble a source, which gives us a just notion of both of the *generosity* and capacity of human nature."⁴

Hume's treatment of sympathy in his *Treatise* differs from the treatment of the same in his *Enquiry*. The characteristic treatment of sympathy in *Treatise* is Hume's tentative belief to be able to analyse this propensity still further. This becomes clear when he tries to explain sympathy as depending on different relations. He thinks that sympathy can be causally explained in terms of different relations as their causes. But to be more sympathetic to ones own relations, kith and kin is an expression of egoism and not of natural sympathy. Hume writes : "sympathy depends on the relation of objects⁵ to ourselves ; since we are most uneasy under the contempt of persons who are both related to us by blood, and contiguous in place. Hence we seek to diminish this sympathy and uneasiness by separating these relations, and placing ourselves in a contiguity to strangers, and at a distance from relations."⁶

Hume here seems to be interested in working out a mechanistic and associationistic theory of sympathy. He in his *Treatise* makes too much of the theory of association which, he thinks, is as important in mental and moral philosophy as the law of gravitation in physics. He is still not seeing the futility of such an attempt. Before one is conscious of the different relations as father, mother, etc. one sympathizes with them, *i.e.* to say sympathy precedes relation. All that results due to these relations is an influence. In his *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* the term sympathy often occurs. But Hume seems not to try here a mechanistic explanation of it, he is convinced of the fact that sympathy is an inborn quality of human nature. Psychology implied in his *Treatise* is an 'explanatory psychology'

⁴ See, Hume's *Treatise*, p. 579.

⁵ By *objects* is here meant other persons.

⁶ Hume's *Treatise* p. 323.

patterning herself on the natural sciences like physics and chemistry. In his *Enquiry* he seems to change his procedure from explanation to description for an understanding of the phenomenon of sympathy. *Enquiry* implies, therefore, a descriptive psychology. Different synonyms for sympathy are used ; sometimes it is termed 'humanity' and sometimes it is 'fellow-feeling'. It is also known as the desire in us or the 'well-being' of others. Sympathy thus is always an altruistic, never an egoistic force in us. It is due to sympathy, that we, without any selfish end in view desire the good and welfare of others. Now, if one asks as to why at all we possess this propensity of sympathy, it will amount to asking why do we at all possess our legs or hands? It is enough, says Hume, that we really experience such a principle in us. Hume's procedure is very much phenomenological in the modern sense of the term. Hume like Scheler also maintains that sympathy is a 'lived or felt-experience' (*Erlebnis*). A faithful observation of the life lived and its faithful description are the two important elements of Humean procedure. Hume says that one has to stop somewhere in the search for causes. Sympathy may be accepted as the most general principle of ethics by showing that nobody is purely indifferent to the happiness of others—at least in principles. Lip-sympathy is also a kind of sympathy. World is integrated because truth is valued. Disowning of what is morally good may happen in private affairs of life but in principles and in public we all are taking the side of the virtuous over against the vicious. Sympathy, thus, is the most original principle of ethics.⁷ Sympathy again is more than a mere moral postulate ; it is not merely hypothetical in nature, because at every moment we experience it in us. It is a force which is always felt.

With the help of his method of observation and experimental reasoning, Hume concludes that the phenomenon of sympathy is not further analysable. Hume maintains that man, besides being a social creature is also a moral being. Man is born not only with a fellow-feeling but also in the world of such fellow-feeling and concern-for-others. Sympathy ingrained in all of us by nature explains the moral and ethical nature of man. In other words, moral approbations and disapprobations are the concerns of sympathy which serve the social interest. Hume writes : "... but sympathy with public interest is the source

⁷ See, Hume's *Enquiry*, pp. 219-20.

of moral approbation, which attends virtue.”⁸ Everyman is a shareholder in the fortune of others ; for no one is totally immune to the welfare of others. Now the question that naturally crops up is : how does sympathy accomplish all this? In other words, we raise here the problem of the communication in moral life.

Sympathy, being the common possession of all, works as a social mirror in our social intercourse. It becomes thus the ground of that social communication without which society would be a dumb display. Tear is an indicator of sorrow whereas laughter indicates pleasure. The affections of others are first observed by us which are physiological and bodily in nature. These natural signs recall in us their natural accompaniments, *e.g.* different emotions, and thus we transfer our feelings to them or to their emotions. This is how the communication in moral life is arrived at. There seems to be a three-term relation in this process of communication. Pain leads to sorrow and this in its turn leads to tears in the eyes. The process in self-observation is from pain to tears through sorrow whereas in observing other's emotions we move from tears as indicators to pain through sorrow. The process looks like an inference which, in fact, it is not for the simple reason that sympathy enlivens the faint images of emotions with the same vividness and force as of the original one and lets us live them as if they were directly our own. This is the first step in the long and complex process of communication.⁹ The second step is accomplished when sympathy converts the ideas or the faint images of the emotions of pain or pleasure of others into impressions with vividness, force, and immediacy. This, it does with its natural power of sympathizing with others. In other words, the emotions after the communication appear to us with the clarity, vividness, force, strength, and immediacy of the natural and original impressions. Thus, the idea of pain becomes as if it were itself painful. We start weeping when we perceive others weeping.¹⁰ This process of *communication* is of central importance in the philosophical anthropology of Hume. Sympathy is not only among the members of the same species

⁸ Hume's *Treatise*, pp. 499-500.

⁹ This process of *communication*, the corner-stone of Hume's ethics is explained with the help of a very minute psychological analysis of the phenomenon of sympathy.

¹⁰ See, Hume's *Treatise*, p. 317.

but it spreads over the vast range and includes also the members of different species. Animals, too, are found to be sympathetic.

To the problem : what is the genesis of moral ideas, and how do they develop, Hume says that it is sympathy which generates moral ideas and also lets them develop in us. Hume would like to remark that Kant neglected the part played by human desires, intensions and motives in what is morally good. The very feeling that I am obliged to do so is a part of the explanation of the phenomenon of moral behaviour.

Since sympathy approves of what is morally good, it becomes the source and origin of all moral excellence. Sympathy is also the source of the idea of beauty. All that is good is in some sense also beautiful.¹¹ What we, from our very nature approve and disapprove has the tendency to the good and bad of the society respectively ; for sympathy itself is a natural principle in us. In fine, we can say that sympathy is the main pillar of ethical philosophy of Hume. What imagination is to epistemology, sympathy is to ethics. It is again sympathy which makes the very existence of human society possible, because if man would have been bellicose by nature no amount of education whatever can convert him into a real lover of virtues. Thus, Hobbes, in the eyes of Hume is talking abstraction when he ascribes the origin of human society and of state, of moral codes and laws to artificial means of social contract which is nothing but an intellectual arbitration.

Man is a moral being as much as he is a social creature. This means that he possesses a system of approbation and disapprobation, a system of likes and dislikes, ought and ought not. This system is based on the immediate feelings of things and persons. But this ethical system of Hume is no apriori and categorical system. It is through and through empirical in its origin as well as in its nature. It is a *material ethics* more of the type of Max Scheler, the German philosopher, who has so profitably applied the method of Husserl's phenomenology to the field of ethics and has worked out a system of values which he technically terms *material value ethics* (materiale Wertethik). Values, he says, are felt-qualities ; they are given in our different acts of feeling. Values, thus, are subjectively felt independent entities.

¹¹ See, Hume's *Treatise*, pp. 577-78.

Man as a social being is always an altruistic being. He breaks the boundary of his egoism, for he is in possession of the natural and benevolent principle of sympathy. Sympathy is thus the name of our natural affective communication of feelings and emotions. This principle of sympathy is the principle of transcendence in our ethical life. It betokens that particular tendency in us which takes us so far out of ourselves as to make us feel the pleasures and pains of fellow-beings as our own.¹² It is in this context that we say 'unshared pleasure becomes pain whereas pain shared amounts to pleasure.' Man suffers most when he seems to enjoy all alone. Man is not only in need of his fellowmen, rather man is the need of man. Thanks to human nature for the natural principles of sympathy and humanity. If man is made the master of all the forces on earth, water and air, he would not feel happy in the want of sympathetic human hands. Thus the process of communication is the natural process arising out of sympathy which in its turn comes into play after the principle of humanity starts playing its part of taking an active interest in fellow-beings and attending to them.

Hume writes : "Let the sun rise and set at his (man's) command : the sea and rivers roll as he pleases... he will still be miserable, till you give him some one person at least, with whom he may share his happiness, and whose esteem and friendship he may enjoy."¹³ Hume's theory of sympathy can be meaningfully termed as *the natural mirror theory of sympathy* ; for it reflects others pain and pleasure through the process of communication. Since sympathy in Hume is always social by its very nature, we may maintain that sympathy is a *social-mirror*. 'Social-consciousness' precedes 'I-consciousness'. A solitary man lacks both definition and description ; such a man is an abstraction, a non-entity. We love others because we sympathize with them and not vice-versa. "In general", says Hume, "we may remark, that the minds of men are mirrors to one another, not only because they reflect each others emotions, but also because those rays of passions, sentiments and opinions may be often reverberated, and may decay away by insensible degrees ... One of the most considerable of these passions is that of love or esteem in

¹² See, Hume's *Treatise*, p. 579.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 363.

others, which, therefore proceeds from sympathy"...¹⁴ Man thus can be defined and described in terms of fellow-feeling. This means, in other words, that man is always with fellow-men. Hume's description of 'man as with-the-man' is very near to the modern existentialism where man is always taken to be 'man-with-the-world' and 'in-the-world'. Hume, in this particular sense, can be taken to be one of the precursors of modern existentialism ; for he attempts to solve the problem of scepticism and solipsism by taking human existence always as an existence 'with- and in-the-world'.¹⁵ Thus Hume says that our belief in the existence of body is what we always start with.¹⁶

The process of communication is not an inference ; for it is the direct enjoyment of what happens there in the mind of others. But we can, nonetheless put it in the form of an inference. For example, we may put it in the following form of syllogism : All cases of *X* are cases of pain. This is a case of *X*, therefore, this is a case of pain. Sympathy is no ground for inference ; it allows no mediation. It transcends our egoistic boundaries and this transcendence is an immediate natural process. There is involved a leap which we may term 'sympathetic-leap'. But this is again no leap of the inductive sort ; it is a direct going out to others and attending to them.¹⁷

Hume recognizes that all kinds of orientations in morals come not from thought, understanding and reason, but from the original propensity of 'Humanity' and 'Sympathy'. Man is by his very nature 'philanthropic', which Hume calls 'natural philanthropy'. Hume writes : "... We are always from our natural philanthropy to give the preference to the happiness of society, and consequently to virtue above its opposite."¹⁸

Hume is generally classified as one of the utilitarians. The question, whether or not, Hume should be called a 'utilitarian' occurs to us naturally. Surely Hume envisages the principle of utility as the sure foundation of morals and social virtues. The essence of utilitarianism is the inseparable relation between the 'principle of utility' and 'the principle of the greatest happi-

¹⁴ Hume's *Treatise*, p. 365.

¹⁵ See, Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*.

¹⁶ Hume's *Treatise*, p. 183.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 340-41.

¹⁸ Hume's *Enquiry*, p. 227.

ness'. This is how John Stuart Mill formulated the thesis of utilitarianism a century later. Hume never goes on to link the 'principle of utility' with the 'principle of the greatest happiness'. In the search of a more ultimate principle beyond the principle of utility is mentioned the principle of the 'greatest happiness.' But Hume, on the other hand, going beyond the principle of utility mentions the principles of 'Humanity' and 'Sympathy' native to human nature. Hume is thus nearer to the ancient ethical writers than to the modern hedonists and the utilitarians. Professor C. W. Hendel in his introduction to Hume's *An Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* says that "Hume's affinities remain to the end with the old Greek and Latin writers and not with the modern hedonists..."¹⁹

Thus is clear that ultimately the principle of utility is also based on the principle of sympathy. Sympathy is the mother of that natural philanthropy which expresses in our life as follows : we feel happy in the happiness of others. We take natural interest in the sorrows and pleasures of others. Even persons, who due to their selfish and egoistic ends and motives cannot further the good of society, are in principle and public the advocates of the welfare of society. Uniformity of human nature is the basis of the universality of sympathy and humanity. What pleases one may not please the other. But in all such cases, selfish and egoistic tendencies colour our moral behaviour. Since there cannot be more than one 'humanity' and 'sympathy', Hume's concept of man is unified under this unitary principle of humanity or sympathy. Being common to all of us, sympathy can be the foundation of morals. The same object touches this propensity of humanity or sympathy in all of us. Sympathy thus is the foundation-stone of the edifice of moral philosophy. It is the source of our transference of passions from one man to another. It is the principle of attraction among men. In his account of the origin and nature of justice, Hume is very cautiously steering between different old theories to avoid any side-track in his own *empirical inquiry* of the origin and nature of justice. The rationalistic theory of justice advocates justice to be founded on the faculty of reason. Hume does not spare even such an illustrated writer as Montesquieu, for his view of the right as founded on

¹⁹ Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, Edited with an introduction by Charles W. Hendel, xxxvi,

relations. The innate theory of justice takes it to be an innate or natural instinct. Another prevalent theory, very near to the sophistic school of ethics believes that justice is a matter of convention. This theory is also criticized by Hume of not being true to the facts of empirical moral life. Artifice of education is taken to be a source of our abiding with the conventional justice.

All virtues, according to Hume, are divided broadly into two groups : the natural and the artificial. They differ mainly in their sources of origin and not in their quality of being morally good actions of approbation, praise and obligation. The natural virtues originate in sympathy and humanity as love and kindness, etc. whereas the artificial virtues are the products of our rational faculty. Justice is approved ; for it aims at social good. It is approved by human nature because it possesses utility. Its tendency to public good raises it from individual to social justice. Although reason is originative of this moral virtue of justice, still the approval of it comes from sympathy. Thus, all artificial virtues get natural approbation. There cannot be any artificial approbation and disapprobation. Justice being founded on public utility is a means to certain end, namely, the good of the society. Since it betokens this tendency to public good, it is taken to be one of the moral virtues. It is really an artificial, *i.e.* to say rational invention to that end. The source of esteem paid to all virtues including artificial ones is, says Hume, the faculty of sympathy.²⁰

Hume goes to analyse the problem of utility still deeper by putting up the question : Why does utility please us? Can useful be also unpleasant? Utility pleases us because it interests us. All that interests us is agreeable. And the agreeable is always pleasant. Our interest in the nobility of an end is the source of our interest in the means of attaining it. Where we are indifferent to an end, the means are hardly interesting. It is in this context that Hume says that utility is only a tendency to a certain end which is preferred by human reason.

Before we conclude this chapter, let us examine the place of reason in the moral philosophy of Hume. Hume's treatment of reason in the beginning of his *Enquiry* seems to be a great promise in favour of reason. There Hume says : "I am apt to suspect ...that reason and sentiment concur in almost all moral deter-

²⁰ See, Hume's *Treatise*, p. 577.

minations and conclusions" (Section I). One of the principal foundations of moral praise is supposed to lie in the usefulness of any quality or action, it is clear that reason enters in such decisions and has a considerable share in instructing us about the beneficial tendencies of these acts. Although reason instructs us in the pernicious or useful tendency, it is not enough, says Hume, to produce any moral system of blame or approbation. It is requisite that sentiment must come into play to give a decisive preference to the useful above the pernicious tendencies. "Reason instructs us in the several tendencies of action, and humanity makes a distinction in favour of those which are useful and beneficial."²¹ Thus it is evident that ultimate ends of human actions can never be accounted for by reason. Hume does never appear to attribute to reason any originaive role. Now the interesting question is whether reason plays the part of an outsider doing a serviceable job by concurring in almost all moral actions. Reason, besides being an instructor is not only an outsider, it also works as an insider giving weight to and influencing the morality of action. The question ultimately is not whether value-judgments may be called rational, for the whole problem is merely verbal. The main question is that of the function that is performed and that is important and not the faculty. And Hume is here, beyond all doubts, of the opinion that a motive-character is always there at the back of all our value-judgments. But still the problem remains how can reason and reflection enter into our moral determinations unless they also enter into the motivation of human behaviour and sentiments. Writing in 'Reason and Conduct in Hume's *Treatise*', Rachel Kydd says "Our general conclusion is that he (Hume) does in fact allow, both explicitly and implicitly, a far greater power to reason than is often supposed. He makes it perfectly plain that theoretical judgments both empirical and apriori have a very great influence on action, and that this influence is a common one which partakes in the determining, if not all, yet at least of a great many acts ..."²² The view that our moral conduct is solely dependent on reason, has been completely destroyed by Hume. Our moral duties are dependent on practical judgments which are empirical in nature. What they assert depends materially on our natural disposi-

²¹ Hume's *Enquiry*, p. 286.

²² *Reason and Conduct in Hume's Treatise*, see, Chapter iv and p. 138.

tions. What generally goes by the name of rational duty must be conditioned by the empirical nature of man. Thus human nature is the last judge in all our actions whether moral, rational or epistemological. To the question whether moral judgments are cognitive in character, the answer given by Hume appears to be more in favour of the thesis that all moral judgments are non-cognitive judgments. Moral judgments are no judgments of 'apprehension' and cognition but only of 'appreciation' and approbation. If reason is allowed to occupy such an important place in Hume's philosophy, then the question of the interrelations of feeling and reason must be viewed completely differently. Hume's ethics being integral to his general philosophical outlook, we have to accept that reason in the last analysis cannot be the basis of any moral system of praise and blame.

In the concluding comment of his book *The Philosophy of David Hume*, Norman Kemp Smith writes as follows :

Should judgments genuinely cognitive in character have to be recognized as entering into belief—as ultimately, by implication, Hume himself admits is the case—the capital positions in his ethics, no less than in his general philosophy, will at once be endangered. For if, as then follows—a further step than Hume has given any sign of taking—judgments cognitive in character has similarly to be allowed as entering into all judgments of moral approval and disapproval, *i.e.* if moral judgments involve judgments of *apprehension* as well as of *appreciation*, the whole question of the interrelations of feeling and reason—so fundamental in his ethics, and from his ethics carried over into his general philosophy—may have to be very differently viewed. The problem, too, of moral obligation may then be found to demand a quite different answer from any that Hume has been able to give. On these, as on other questions of *theory*, Hume's ethics is integral to his general philosophical outlook, and stands or falls together with it.²³

Thus the role of reason in Hume's ethics as well as in his whole philosophy being secondary, feeling and sentiments become the real basis of his ethical philosophy. As 'the principles of belief and of imagination' are the last principles in the theoretical

²³ *The Philosophy of David Hume*, pp. 565f.

philosophy of Hume traceable to human nature, so also sympathy and humanity are the last principles in his practical, *i.e.* to say ethical philosophy. Human nature being the real source of all these principles, Hume's science of man (his anthropology) becomes a delineation of human nature with the help of the methods of *experimental reasoning* and sincere empirical observation of the life of man in society. What is very novel and important in Hume's treatment of human nature is his use of it as the last principle of explanation. To recapitulate the whole chapter, we may conclude as follows :

Hume's conviction regarding human nature as the most appropriate object of study of all humanistic sciences is the basis of all his philosophizing. Morals, according to Hume, are the phenomena of the life of man as a social active being. These morals are regulative of the life of man and are praised in society. They govern human life but not in the sense of law and government. The latter's control is from without praising or blaming actions as legal or illegal respectively as they are in accordance with the law or not whereas the morals govern human life from within. The function of reason, according to Hume, is not originative in morals as well as in theoretical philosophy. Still he allows reason a function of determining and influencing our tendencies in favour of the morally good actions. Hume is no moral sceptic ; for he accepts the distinction not only of moral actions as good and bad but also believes and talks of the persons of others. Hume draws the all-important distinction between judgments of value and matters of fact and existences. The former differ from the judgments in the field of 'relations of ideas' where the truths can be demonstrated. These moral value-judgments also differ from the judgments regarding the matters of fact and existences in that they do not assert any matter of fact relation on the conviction of human reason as beliefs. In other words, they are neither demonstrative truths nor truths based on the principles of 'belief', 'habit', etc. They form a third group of judgments altogether not reducible to any of the two types of judgments. Their essence is to value the character of the persons and their actions. The two principles of human nature, *viz.* the principles of 'humanity' and of 'sympathy' are the basis of Hume's ethics. Sometimes Hume seems to use both these principles as if they were interchangeable. But in the appendix

of his 'Enquiry' he means by sympathy an affective operation wherein the sentiments of men are communicated, whereas by humanity is meant a 'concern for other', or the 'fellow-feeling'. Humanity betokens an active interest which outgoes and attends to others so that sympathy, in its turn, can come into play to communicate the emotions and passions from one to another. These two important operations take place naturally; for they are the natural qualities of human nature.

A question cannot fail to have occurred to the reader long before, is the question regarding the problem of human nature itself; for we have always traced back everything ultimately to human nature in our search for a more ultimate and supreme principle. In the next chapter to follow, an attempt will be made to discuss in fair detail the all important problems of human nature.

CHAPTER EIGHT

HUMAN NATURE

THE starting-point of Hume's philosophy is his firm conviction of the veracity of human nature. This human nature is the only sure foundation of all humanistic disciplines, theoretical as well as practical. It is the alpha and omega of his whole system.

In the introduction to his *Treatise*, Hume writes that human nature is the only science of man and thus an explication of the former is at the same time an exposition of the latter. Human nature is also the measuring-rod of our progress in different disciplines. Hume opines us to give up age-old method of philosophy, namely, of thinking in abstract terms and go on constructing system after system that promise to explain and describe the empirical life of man. He recommends the method of observation and experience—*his experimental method of reasoning*. A good observation of human behaviour along with a faithful description of it is all that is needed and demanded of a healthy science of man. Explanation usually implies explanation in terms of construction whereas description implies a clear-cut observation of the *given*.

The only hope Hume entertains is that he may contribute a little to the advancement of knowledge by giving in some particulars a different turn to the speculation of philosophers. He also points out more clearly those subjects where alone one can expect assurance and conviction. "Human nature is the only science of man".¹

All other sciences, whether moral or natural, depend to a certain extent on this science of man. The degree of this dependence may vary from one to the other. All of them take their start from this foundational science of man. Unless we have worked out a sure science of man, very little assurance and success may be expected in other disciplines.² The explanation of all

¹ Hume's *Treatise*, p. 273.

² Cf. Hume's *Treatise*, 'Introduction', xix.

explanations is human nature itself. In the moral sciences, not reason but instinct and feeling are the guiding principles. Hume is always aiming at a science of man. His originality lies in his bold attempt to follow his conviction regarding human nature as the surest foundation of all humanistic studies. Different names, he gives to his 'science of man'—*Anatomy of Human Mind*, *Mental Geography*, and '*Delineation of the distinct parts of the Human Mind*'.³

'Moral philosophy', 'the science of man' is divided into two species. His division is in accordance with the two chief aspects of the human nature. Man is a reasonable being, and as such receives from science his proper food and nourishment. Man is a sociable, no less than reasonable being. Man is also an active being. Man as a sociable and active being is the concern of the 'moralists'. Moral philosophy searches for the common principles so that it can explain the diversity of our moral sentiments. Such a search is an expression of our expectation to find some general principles. The term 'Moral' covers all the phenomena of human nature which are the concern of the moralists as well as of the moral philosophers. To start with, Hume takes man to be a social animal not by way of a social contract (Hobbes) but because the character of sociability is a quality of human nature. Hume differs from Hobbes and opposes his *speculative method* proclaiming his own 'experimental method of reasoning' as the true method of philosophy. To be altruistic is man's nature. Hume's *natural altruism* stands in clear-cut opposition to Hobbes' *egoism or forced altruism*. The society is both original and natural. Hume rejects the speculative postulate of a lawless state of nature in which man found himself in the beginning. It is fiction says Hume. Man is never bellicose by nature. "This state of nature (lawless state), therefore, is to be regarded as a mere fiction".⁴

Nature can be understood in two different senses : (a) Nature in the broadest possible sense, and (b) nature in the narrower sense of 'human nature'. By the former, we mean nature as the totality of all that is and that can and may be there. This concept of nature is discussed and analysed from different points of view, e.g. the point of view of physics, of chemistry, of biology, of

³ Such expressions betray that Hume is still under the spell of Newtonian atomistic physics.

⁴ Hume's *Treatise*, p. 439,

zoology, etc. In this sense of the term, nature includes 'human nature'. What we here propose to study is the 'human nature'. Hume's science of man is the result of his delineation of human nature. Convinced of the veracity and authority of human nature we may either accept human nature as a *metaphysical-rest* in the sense of something which is (i) not further analysable, and (ii) the explanation of all explanations ; or one may try to approach an understanding of human nature through the different principles of the same. It is the latter procedure that is explored by Hume in his 'science of man'. Human nature in itself may be purely enigmatic, its ways of working are given to us in the sense that they are the guiding principles of our life.

We may touch upon here the idea of human nature as it is to be found in Hume's *Treatise*, and *Dialogues*. The theistic idea of nature—nature as goddess—which was so very much prevalent in Hume's time is just mentioned by Hume and he passes over it without much discussion. In his *Dialogues*, he gives up the theistic idea of human nature and instead takes it to be a guiding principle in human life. It is something determined. Nature is some type of dictation. Not only that it is determined but it also determines us and dictatates us.⁵ Nature in us is all that is important in us ; for it is the most original and primary. Nature is mightier than *nurture*, reason in so far as it is a constructive force in human life is always in the service of nature. It is this sub-ordination of human reason under human nature and its principles of belief, imagination and sympathy which makes Hume stand in the line of the 'Philosophers of the Irrational'. Hume says that 'nature is too strong for principles'.⁶

Hume takes nature to be an authority which we have neither the power nor the right to challenge ; for, in that case, human life would cease to be. Human nature is like an organic field which suffices itself with its principles. Always accepting the guidance of nature, human reason only tries to justify and instruct. A thorough consideration of human nature is the main thesis of his first great book *Treatise*.

To start with, we have to accept that *there is a human nature*. We have also to accept that it works through the help of its

⁵ This 'necessitarian view of nature' is a stepping-stone to Hume's 'naturalism', or 'deism', as some call it.

⁶ Cf. Hume's *Enquiry*, p. 137.

different principles which, as guiding-forces are given to us. This Hume ascertains on the ground of 'experimental-reasoning'. What is immediately known to us about human nature is simply *a bent of mind* ; a tendency to do things as we in fact do. We may also profitably compare nature with instinct that is innately but wisely there from the start. The instinct as a general tendency is taken by Hume not only as a principle guiding human life, but he also sometimes identifies it with human nature itself. Hume also takes nature to be very friendly and motherly. He feels warmth in the hands of nature ; nature, says Hume, consoles us after the disturbances of reason. If reason is the sole guide in human life, anything may be thought of without the least fear of contradiction ; for real contradiction is a matter of life and not of thought, it is in this sense that we may say that all the laws of thought are derivative ; for they are read off from the life that is lived and experienced. Reason never takes any decision. All that it does is to lay its full weight on one side of the balance and influence us in favour of the one rather than the other. Thus, it is not reason but nature that guides us in our life. Hume, thus, seems to conclude from all this that *the real is natural* ; nay, it is the real everywhere. Nature is self-sufficing and self-dependent. We cannot and need not always differentiate between human nature and its self-sufficiency principle. The human nature thus nearly becomes a synonym for human life.⁷

Human nature being the foundation of all our knowledge of things and beings guarantees the unity of Hume's philosophy by making human nature the *de facto* principle of Hume's anthropology. A question that must have occurred to the reader is : how is it that human nature guides us both in our theoretical as well as practical life ?

In Hume's theoretical philosophy, we have already seen that there is some kind of primacy of feeling over reason. We have also noted there that in Hume's epistemology belief and imagination are more important than reason. In his practical philosophy, on the other hand, we have found out the principles of 'Humanity' and 'Sympathy' on which our moral life is founded. Humean ethics is grounded in the natural propensity of sympathy. Now we shall try to see that these two master-principles namely,

⁷ It is here that Hume comes very near to Wilhelm Dilthey who tries to understand life in terms of life itself.

imagination in his theoretical philosophy and sympathy in his practical philosophy, are the two manifestations of the selfsame human nature.

The principle of belief is a characteristic quality of human nature itself. There is a feeling of belief as well as a feeling of sympathy. As the feeling of belief validates and invalidates our knowledge in the 'matters of fact sciences', so also the feeling of sympathy is the ground for deciding the merits and demerits of moral judgments. Value-judgments are neither rational nor cognitive. Reason being cool in all matters of valuations cannot be the source of value-judgments. Reason is not only cool but it is also indifferent to all our moral questions. Since moral life is never a matter of indifference, reason can never be originative of our moral notions. Moral life is a life of engagement ; it is a life of passions that matters to us. All that reason can do is to inform us about the tendencies that are different in different cases. Approbation and disapprobation are the results of an active internal feeling or impression regarding an act of value-judgments.

Thus it appears, says Hume, that there is a tendency in us to the public good. This is really the call of humanity in us. This again begets the principles of harmony and order in society. Thus human nature leads us to social virtues. It refrains us from vices. Human nature is nearer to feeling than to thought. All actions, therefore, are the results of human nature. Human nature not only produces them but also sustains them. To doubt the principle of sympathy and fellow-feeling in us is also to doubt the very possibility of human society. But Hume's procedure seems to derive the possibility of society from the presence of the principles of humanity and sympathy and not backward from the reality of society to the presence of these principles : for the latter procedure would be more speculative in nature. The principle of sympathy is an *a posteriori* principle ; for it is experienced in our life.

Hume is convinced of the importance of a thorough study of human nature. Such an undertaking is not very easy. Human nature has always been taken either as self-evident or as something in need of explanation. In the former case, it is obvious whereas in the latter case it is explained with the help of other principles that are constructed to that end. Hume occupies a

great place in philosophy not only and not mainly because he so greatly aroused such a great German philosopher as Kant out of his dogmatic slumber but because it is he who, for the first time in the history of philosophy tried to work out a foundational 'science of man'. Hume's use of human nature as the most authoritative and authentic explanation of all explanations is not only very original but also very novel.⁸ All that we in fact are is our nature : we live our nature, nay, we are our nature.

Hume's moral system is not based on speculation but on observed facts of our empirical life. One of the most important determining factors in the whole of Hume's philosophy is the thorough-going subordination of reason and understanding under feeling and instincts. Prof. N. K. Smith writes : "My general conclusion will be, that the establishment of a purely naturalistic concept of human nature by the thorough subordination of reason to feeling and instinct is the determining factor in Hume's philosophy".⁹

Hume considers speculative metaphysics and physics questionable. According to him, there is no knowledge in such fields of enquiries. Real knowledge should always be an additional information in life. Hume aims at working out a metaphysics of experience. In this concept of 'metaphysics based on human experience', Kant is indebted to Hume. Hume, solely on the ground of thought, reason and understanding, is to scepticism. But his faith in the veracity of human nature makes him work out a 'science of man' which works as a counterbalance to his scepticism. Hume's central hypothesis is, as he himself says, "that belief is in reality an act of our sensitive rather than of the cognitive part of our natures".

Human nature is everywhere the same. It is known to us through her different principles which are not the objects of reason. They are, strictly speaking, no principles ; for they are the different ways our human nature takes. Hume's method of approach is phenomenological in the sense that he lets the objects speak themselves, for explanation observation and description

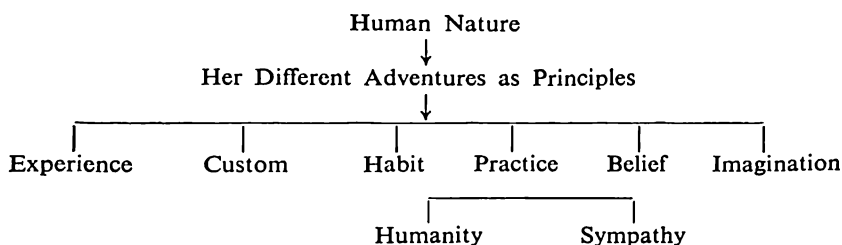
⁸ In a sense, Hume anticipates some of the recent trends in modern philosophy, e.g. *life-philosophy* (Dilthey), *philosophical anthropology*, and *phenomenology*. Husserl finds in Hume the *Vorform der Phänomenologie*.

⁹ See, 'Naturalism of Hume', in *Mind*, 1905, p. 105.

are only needed and no construction. The world of experience reveals its own laws to a faithful human observation.

The mental processes in Hume are more of adaptive nature than of mechanical character. They are very much similar to the biological processes. In the last run, everything is dependent on human nature. We are in the habit of using our past experience as a guide to our future. This we do very naively and realistically. This is an adventure of human mind which is generally not frustrated because human nature is the source of all these undertakings. The maxim that always guides us in our life is : the most usual is the most probable and as a result of that for all practical purposes the most real. The most usual leads to habit-formations and these habits lead in their turns to action. The life of action in Hume is more a life of natural principles like 'habit', 'custom', 'imagination', 'belief', and 'sympathy'. Wherever there is an opposition of arguments the more probable which is the result of repetitive experience is more convincing. The different principles through which our human nature is known to us are not and cannot be finally determined and fixed up.

There is a difference between 'human nature' and its principles ; one is not the other. Nature as a principle is an ultimate, a 'metaphysical-rest', but the principles of nature are grounded in nature ; for they are read off from the life which is a play-ground of human nature. In a sense, these principles are derivative in nature. In fine, we may attempt the following schematic representation of nature and her principles.



It is on the ground of experience that the past is transferred to the future with a tacit naive belief that *future will always resemble the past*. This is really the core of the problem of causality. All our inferences in the field of 'matters of fact sciences'

are based on experience. Since they are based on experience, they are probable in nature. Experience gives us probability and no certainty.¹⁰

Hume also takes experience as a *regulative* factor in human life. It is in this role of it that it becomes the great guide of human life. Nature expresses herself in and through all these principles. The real mystery that lies at the back of all our activities is completely hidden from us. Regarding very important decisions of life, nature without disclosing her secrets to us has provided us with certain principles which we must have to follow. For example, we cannot doubt the principles of experience, habit, causality, etc. Hume says that as nature has allowed us to breathe so also it has allowed us to infer a similar future from a similar past. Another characteristic feature of the Humean concept of nature is that it is defined by necessity and regularity. What we can never succeed in denying is the right and the might of nature. The regularity in all these principles is an expression of the fundamental regularity of nature. What we in no way can deny must in some way be real ; *undeniability is a characteristic sign of reality*.

Human nature is also unique, without any parallel. If we oppose nature to reason (reason in the analytic and discursive sense) or nature to nurture there arises an opposition between the teachings of the two. Reason opposed to nature is not natural; it is thus an invention of man. G. von Herder, the German philosopher, says that *man comes to learn reason here on earth*. Our reason teaches us : perceptions are the sources of knowledge. They are all transitory and changeable. There is no world that lasts after and beyond these perceptions. Sense-perceptions are 'gappy' and as such the world they inform us about is also 'gappy' and transitory. Our nature, on the other hand, lets us believe in an independently existing world of things and beings. But in the last run, our nature prevails over our reason. "Nature will

¹⁰ Hume and Kant solve the problem of causality in relation to experience using two different types of syllogistic reasoning : Hume's procedure : Experience has no necessity, the principle of causality is based on it, therefore, the principle of causality possesses no necessity. Kant's procedure : Experience has no necessity (but) the principle of causality is necessary, therefore, the principle of causality is not based on experience. But how does Kant know that the principle of causality is necessary?

always maintain her rights and prevail in the end over any abstract reasoning whatsoever.”¹¹

In the idea of nature there is something of the nature of undeniability ; nature sometimes is a feeling of bare necessity. This necessity may be understandable with the help of human reason but this is what matters very much in our life. If we could have really the power to oppose nature in life we would have either vanished long long ago or the picture of the world along with that of man would have been altogether different than what it is now. But this necessity is no logical or thought-necessity ; it is the necessity of a much needed function in life. It is also no conceptual necessity. It is a felt-necessity, a ‘life-necessity’. It is analogous to the necessity found in the organic arrangements. It is a necessity for the very subsistence of human beings. It is to this undeniable necessity that everybody has to yield. Nature is also defined through the concept of absolute. Nature’s necessity is not only undeniable but also uncontrollable.

Summing up, we may say that nature makes her way in all our activities. The first and the foremost principle of Hume’s science of man is the primacy of human nature. Nature is the first in our way of actions and last in our way of knowing it. Thus, we find that nature which is the only science of man is, in the last analysis, a *known-unknown*.

Nature is *known* in the sense that the principles through which it guides us are known to us. These principles are more of an irrational character than rational one because they are not grounded in reason. They are the different manifestations of human nature. They are instinctive and natural. They are innate as instincts in us. Through the principles of belief and imagination in our theoretical life and through humanity and sympathy in our practical one, the self-same nature rules and guides us. Nature is known to us through the effects of it.

Nature is *unknown* to us in the sense that it is itself the explanation of all explanations. As an ultimate and as a *metaphysical rest*, it is never understandable but only to be accepted on the pure and simple grounds of practical success in life. Non-acceptance of it leads to troubles both in our theoretical as well as practical life. One can rightly differentiate between the principles of nature

¹¹ Hume’s *Enquiry*, p. 41.

and nature itself. It may not be enough simply to know the different principles of nature. The natural question that crops up is : Why things are so as they are? Modern philosophical anthropology considers man under the view-point of a *questioning-being*. The same conviction about human reason was expressed by Kant when he said that human reason has the peculiar fate of being incessantly troubled by questions which although put to it by itself hardly admit of any answer. Man, thus, as a *questioning-being* asks for the condition of all that is. But the same *questioning-being* in his other aspect as *believing-animal* is happier ; for nature guides him without disclosing her secrets to him. Man as a *questioning-being* and man as a *believing-animal* are compensatory to each other with the primacy of the latter. Had the world been otherwise, or as a matter of that, all that is there in the world would have been otherwise than what it is now, still man would have put up the question why so and not otherwise. Man seems to be in possession of the bewildering power of asking for the opposite of all that is, including future actualities as modes of possibilities.

By way of a suggestive answer, may we not maintain that the things of the world or as a matter of that the world itself is so as it is, because it is as it is, in the sense that otherwise it may *merely* be thinkable and not existable. So far as man accepts the dictates of nature, he is an 'elder brother' of the animals. The world of man differs from that of the animals in that the former is guided by attitudes based on the long tradition of human culture and history. Max Scheler, the German philosophical anthropologist, rightly maintains man to be an animal 'capable of saying no'. He is a *Neinsagenkönner*, *no-saying-animal*. It is in this context that we can follow the characterization of man as a *lacking-being* (*Mangelwesen*). The activity of asking questions is meaningful and useful only in the absence of the non-presence of a lack in man. It is only man who can image himself in a state of having something what he does not have and of denying something what he has. The origin of such an attitude seems to lie in the system of his 'likes and dislikes'.

Hume thus appears to conclude that the ultimate is nowhere explicable. The reason 'why milk is healthy' is as mysterious as anything. Hume asks : if it is taken to be a flaw or unpardonable defect in his 'science of man' that it is unable to explain

the ultimate 'why' of all things, it is shared by all other enquiries as well. Since it has a universal character, it is no longer a flaw. Hume writes : "But if this impossibility of explaining ultimate principles should be esteemed a defect in the science of man, I will venture to affirm, that 't is a defect common to it with all the sciences and all the arts".¹² Not only that, such a defect is but natural to human enquiries, but our principles only aim at universality ; for they can never go beyond experience. Hume writes again : "... any hypothesis that pretends to discover the ultimate original qualities of human nature, ought at first to be rejected as presumptuous and chimerical".¹³

That the science of man is not only important but also very valuable is clear from the fact that all other disciplines depend on it. But by this it is not meant that other sciences are less valuable. It is just a question of the difference in the grades of their importance and value. For an overall success, Hume thinks it very necessary that we should work out the foundational science of man. From a right and well-oriented science of man, we can expect more than from any other science. Our observation should be the observation of the common course of life and the world. Nothing should be constructed to explain the observed. Observation is its own explanation through the description of the observed. Hume very strongly and rightly hopes to establish a science of man upon these observational data. Such an adventure would not be inferior to any other disciplines in certainty and would be much superior to them in utility.¹⁴

It is in this particular sense that Hume considers this 'science of man' as the science of all sciences. Man is the most important object of man's enquiry, and the amount of success achieved here would be the measuring-rod of our success in all other human enquiries. Hume's firm conviction that man is the only problem of man lets him stand in the line of the most modern thinkers of our time. What Hume expresses through this conviction is very near and similar to the idea of Max Scheler that 'the most uncertain and the urgent problem before man

¹² Hume's *Treatise*, (Introduction).

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. XXI (Introduction).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

to-day is the problem of man himself'. Man was to man never so enigmatic as he is to-day.¹⁵

In the 'science of man', Hume maintains the undoubted predominance of human nature. A thorough enquiry of the latter is the sure key to the former. In fine, we may mention the following characteristic features of human nature. The list, in no way, claims to be all-inclusive and exhaustive. Nature is characterized by : regularity, unity, power, necessity, friendliness, primacy, originality and irrationality. This nature expresses itself in our life in different ways. All that is not the logical operation of our mind or reason is the work of our nature. Human nature is a process ; it is most original constitution of man in general. It is a determinant of our world-views (Weltanschauungen) but in itself it is undetermined. Nature is not only original but also 'arbitrary'. The condition of human nature is unique.

A question of much weight must have occurred to the reader long ago, namely, the question of 'Hume's philosophical anthropology'. Philosophical anthropology stands for the science of man considered from the philosophical point of view. A philosophical point of view consists in the conviction of man to be able to work out the most fundamental and universal principles of human nature. Man is neither animal nor angel.

It is the force of such a conviction which led Hume to attempt a foundational science of man which he is not always sure of that it can be adequate.

In the chapter to follow, an attempt will be made to delineate Hume's concept of man—anthropology.

¹⁵ Cf. *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos* by Max Scheler,

CHAPTER NINE

HUME'S ANTHROPOLOGY¹

As a material form of life man, in the first place, belongs to nature. Man belongs only secondarily as thinking being to history. Everyone of us is a philosopher ; for every one has a philosophy in that everyone philosophizes. To philosophize means to have certain convictions regarding the nature of the world, its origin, nature of man and its principles, etc. The common man philosophizes as follows : The span of life is like the span of a day. Man sees the light of the day as if it were the morning in and of his life, becomes young as the noon and slowly but surely the old-age of evening vanishes in the death-darkness of the night with the hope of immortality or rebirth. In so far as one is a philosopher, one is also an anthropologist ; for anthropology is the basic discipline for all other human enquiries.

Although the term *anthropology* does never occur in the philosophical literature of Hume, still his philosophy implies one. Every kind of philosophy, good or bad, rational or irrational, conceives man in certain particular ways so that whatever it announces might at least be applicable to that conception of man. Hume, too, views man and human nature in a particular way. It would be this particular way of Hume to conceive man which is termed here his *anthropology*. Philosophical anthropology is a theory of man, a picture of him and a concept of him. There are two questions regarding man and his cosmos : what is man as such, *i.e.* to say what type of being he is, and what philosophy is about ? It is the first question which philosophical anthropology is interested in. The answer to the second question is dependent on the answer to the first.

A total understanding and comprehension of man and nature is what anthropology aims at. As a science of man, it tries to

¹ See, 'Introduction'. The term *anthropology* stands for philosophical anthropology unless otherwise specified.

work out the fundamental principles lying at the back of behaviour. Anthropology also determines the place of man in the cosmos, his relation to the other things and beings of this universe.

Every philosophy can be rewritten in terms of an anthropology. Prof. Michael Landmann says that as the same piece of music can be played on different instruments, so also every philosophy is convertible into an anthropology.² The first man who enquired about man for the first time was the first anthropologist. The wise advice of the Greek philosopher and moralist Socrates 'know thyself' is in a sense the main aim of all types of anthropologies, in particular, of philosophical anthropology. The question about man differs from all other questions about other things ; for man here is the questioner and the questioned. The faculty to know that we know, *i.e.* to have the knowledge of knowledge seems to be a prerogative of human beings.

Man occupies the central position in all types of anthropological research. There are different types of anthropologies. These different branches of anthropology represent the different points of view from which the phenomenon man is studied. Man studied from the biological point of view, *i.e.* to say man as a stage in the evolutionary process, is termed *biological anthropology*. *Historical anthropology* studies man as a historical being ; a being having a history, a being who is at the same time made by and the maker of history. This branch aims at an understanding of the phenomenon of the 'historicity' of man. Man-in-society as a social creature is what *social anthropology* is interested in. *Cultural anthropology*, on the other hand, tries to work out a unitary science of man by patiently studying the different peoples in the different cultures. In the *philosophical anthropology*, the question of a science of man is of far-reaching consequence. Man's place in the cosmos, his relation with other things and beings form the central discussion of it. A thorough explication of human life is what philosophical anthropology aims at. It is no summarization of the results of different branches of anthropologies ; it is, on the other hand, the most foundational discipline among all of them. The condition of man is unique. Man, which we ourselves are, seems self-evident but is the most enigmatic

² Cf. *De Homine, Der Mensch im Spiegel seines Gedankens* by M. Landmann,

of all things in the world. Under what dimensions, a satisfactory comprehension of man is possible is not known to us. The crucial element in all the definitions and descriptions of man is lacking : man is not a being who always recurs in the same particular types ; he is, as Nietzsche says, the *indeterminate animal*.

In our delineation of Hume's anthropology, following three questions will be of interest to us :

(i) What is Hume's concept of man?, i.e. to say what type of being man is?

(ii) How far and in what way does man differ from animals? and

(iii) Is man at all in a position to answer the question about his own being? In other words, is not man a *metaphysical rest* following his instincts and feelings? The conviction that *man is the problem of man* is the basis of anthropology.³

To answer these three questions is the task of Hume's concept of man. Hume's science of man and his philosophical anthropology are taken to be synonymous here. There are two perspectives of any observation—subjective and objective. In the latter, we are far from our active engagements in the world. It is blind to any active influence of the exercise of human power. It is interested in the objective uniformities along with their functional relationships expressed in terms of different laws of our thinking. In the former, there is a human contact and exercise of power. One is actively engaged in the *life-world* (*Lebenswelt*). It is a philosophy of involvement. Humean anthropology begins after he had shown with penetrating clarity and power of observation that there is no place for human influence in the abstract objective perspective. Hume thus cries out in the famous passage of his *Treatise* : "Where am I, or what? From what cause do I derive my existence, and to what condition shall I return....? What beings surround me? and on whom have I any influence, or who have any influence on me?"⁴

In these outbursts of Hume which sound existential in tune

³ One may observe here that *philosophical anthropology* and *existentialism* are really two sister-disciplines studying man from two complementary points of view. They differ regarding the emphasis they lay on man—the former tending to a description of man in the 'third person' (what the *man* is) whereas the latter to first person what I am.

⁴ Hume's *Treatise*, p. 269,

are full of anxiety, care and involvements in the world. These questions together point to Hume's anthropology. Hume has a certain picture of man which he develops into his own science of man, *i.e.* to say his concept of man. Hume's theory of man possesses much of the modern conceptions of man. There seems to have taken place a crisis in modern times in human reason in favour of the irrational (not to be explained in terms of reason) factors in human nature. The irrational element in man is powerful than the rational one. The latter, says Hume, is always in the service of the former. Whenever reason acts against feeling and instincts it gets defeat. Reason is a species of human feelings and instincts in the sense that it subscribes to human instincts. This we have seen in the foregoing analysis of Hume's philosophy how reason works as an instructor in the field of morals. Reason is not the master-principle in Hume's science of man. Hume sides here with the tradition of the irrational in philosophy ; for he, too, maintains that nature is more than nurture.

The motivating and guiding forces of and in human life are the forces of belief, imagination, instinct, humanity and sympathy. Man begins his life with experience, guided, assisted and strengthened by the principles of customs, habit, belief and imagination. These principles themselves are grounded in human experience. In the absence of any guidance from these principles, human experience loses half of its originality and guiding tendency in human life. We really learn the use of experience through the principles of custom and habit. It is a mental determination in the sense of a mental habit that we believe that future will resemble the past and thus we transfer the past to the future. It is the same determination which explains the problems of an independent world, causality and other persons. All this is facilitated with the working in us of the principle of imagination.⁵ Imagination enlivens the future imaging the experienced past beforehand with the force and vivacity of perceptions and impressions. Imagination is not only a constructive principle of and in human nature but also regulative of our life. It is universally present in all of us. Even animals possess this faculty of imagination. Imagination provides human life with a structural unity which

⁵ Cf. Chapter on *Imagination*.

reflects the absolute unity and uniformity of human nature.⁶ Imagination itself is grounded in human nature ; for ultimately it is a predisposition, a tendency of human nature in us.

In the very introductory chapter of his *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, Hume writes : Man can be considered from two different points of view—man as an active being and man as a rational being. The former implies an irrational concept of man whereas the latter is a rational theory of man. Since human behaviour, in the last analysis, does not spring from reason Hume's own theory of man is in favour of an *irrational picture of man*. Man is a mixed nature with primacy of feeling over reason.

Hume's moral philosophy is not only a gateway through which he enters his philosophy but it is what also provides his philosophy with a foundational 'science of man'. In the problems of morals lies Hume's interest. He says : "Moral philosophy or the science of human nature may be treated after two different manners. The one considers man chiefly as born for action ; and as influenced in his measures by taste and sensibility ; pursuing one object and avoiding another, according to the value which these objects seem to possess and according to the light in which they present themselves The species of philosophers consider man in the light of a reasonable rather than an active being, and endeavour to form his understanding more than cultivate his manners. They regard human nature as a subject of speculation".⁷

Reason is a cultivated ability of abstract speculation whereas instincts and feelings are inborn ways of human nature. The study of human nature can be better pursued with the help of empirical method of observation and experiment. It is thus that we can arrive at the real conditions of human behaviour. A philosophy that considers man to be born for action (*handelndes Wesen*) and not for mere speculation is preferred by all of us. It is more useful, because it is nearer to life and experience. It aims at working out the main principles of human nature as the real sources of human behaviour. It is this sort of philosophy which Hume calls *obvious philosophy* in contradistinction to the *abstruse philosophy* which lays more emphasis on reason than

⁶ This structural mental unity seems to correspond to the physical or better physiological unity of our organism which expresses itself in and through the various activities of our human organism.

⁷ Hume's *Enquiry*, pp. 5-6.

on feeling.⁸ A purely *academic philosophy* is a bad target in philosophy ; it is the sign of a sophisticated taste in philosophy. Hume's own theory of man is a dethronement of reason in favour of instincts. Man is an active sociable being. He is no *homo sapiens* but *homo faber*. He is more nature-guided than reason-guided. The thorough subordination of reason under feeling and instinct is exemplified in our irrational acceptance of the dictates of nature. Reason appears to be a powerless but still a helpful principle in human life. *We may liken reason to a beautiful maiden fighting to surrender after much ado, and that too under the disguise of rationalization.* If reason leaves the field defeated it cannot produce reason for its defeat. This is why reason always contrives unnatural and unconvincing ways. The essence of man as a social being is activity. Reason is an assistance and no guide in our preference of one way rather than the other. Hume's science of human nature is a theory of man—novel and revolutionary. His revolution consists in the fact of his conviction that man lives his life without having any strict logical foundation for his activities in reason. Reason is no explanation of what we do and why we do what we do. It produces, at the most, tendencies in us which weigh more in favour of one than the other choice. Hume relegates human reason in the 'matter-of-fact-sciences'.

Reason has three tasks—it abstracts, it constructs and thus it explains. Rational explanation is always an explanation in terms of abstraction through construction. Two things man knows for certain : (i) he cannot deny something even if he so wishes, and (ii) he cannot always act otherwise than the way he acts and has acted. What man can do in such circumstances is to reason in the opposite direction. The most that reason can arrive at is to modify but never change our decisions. What bewilders Hume most is the unending debate between reason and instinct. Although reason is never ready to leave the field, it is made to do so. Our natural and instinctive beliefs in an external world, in the principle of causality, in other persons are *life-realities* in that they are the preconditions for the very possibility of our social intercourse. It is acting inconsequently if we deny these natural beliefs. Sceptics are mere characters. They are simply the phantoms of lecture-halls. Practice heals the disease

⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

of scepticism which, if pursued unreserved and undaunted makes life impossible.

It is with the entrance of reason that scepticism creeps into philosophy. A mild scepticism is always academic in nature and is always conducive to philosophical growth. But no sound philosophy can be based on the unsound and unreal piers of scepticism. Those sceptics who, being sceptical in the extreme, disown any philosophy as their own, claim to be at least in the position to criticize all that passes their notice. But this claim is either empty or a sign of the uttermost disregard to any responsibility in life. The dictum *nothing is certain, including the phrase itself cannot be the basis of any serious and meaningful discourse*. Thus we may observe that Humean man is no sceptic in this negative sense of the term. The nurture of the culture of scepticism is limited. With much labour, says Hume, can philosopher afford to deny the natural and instinctive beliefs guiding human life? Even if they succeed in doing so, it is always at the cost of consistency. It is a natural conviction in which we have an instinctive faith that we should be consistent and sincere in our talks in life. Since denial is never the basis of action, scepticism has ever been theoretical in nature. There are different kinds of certainties. The particular certainty to be found in these natural beliefs of man is neither the demonstrative certainty of mathematical sciences nor the perceptive certainty of our 'sense-perceptions.'⁹

Another characteristic and important feature of Hume's anthropology is that *man is a believing-animal* (glaubendes Wesen).¹⁰ The central position of belief in Hume's science of man is elucidated in our native acceptance of an external world, of other persons, etc. What time is to 'Dasein' in Heideggerian analysis of human existence, belief is to human life in Humean concept of man. Belief is structural to human life in the sense that life is possible only through the help of this principle. Hume in his own way works out the different categories of human life with the help of his method of 'experimental reasoning'. The categories of experience are never limited in number, they are an open field of possibilities. Belief is not only the guide of human

⁹ See, Chapter on *Belief*.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

life but also of the life of animals. In the debate—knowledge or belief—Hume gives primacy to the latter. Strictly speaking, there is no knowledge possible in the field of ‘matters of fact and existences’ ; for experience never leads to certainty which is a characteristic mark of knowledge. Since these principles are also the guiding-forces in the life of the animals, Hume finds it most ridiculous to deny them in the animal kingdom. Hume’s method of ‘experimental reasoning’ includes the observation of the life of the animals also. Hume writes : “. . . . and no truth appears to me more evident, than that beasts are endow’d with thought and reason as well as men”.¹¹ That animals are in many ways similar to us is inferred by the resemblances of animal actions to those of human beings. If sympathy is accepted to be a force in the life of animals, as Hume seems to advocate for, one may feel tempted to read in him an *idea of an animal-ethics*.

Another feature of Hume’s anthropology is the *natural altruism* of man. Hume’s ethical theory is opposed to the selfish theory of Hobbes and to a certain extent it also differs from the theory of Locke. Hume’s ethics is based on the native, universal and natural principles of ‘humanity’ and ‘sympathy’. In other words, what Hume really wants to convey is that we cannot be egoistic without being unnatural and artificial at the same time. We *learn* to be selfish. Grounded in his ‘self-love’ theory, Hobbes’ theory of morals is egoistic in nature. It views human nature originally bellicose and selfish. We build up a society after a mutual agreement of gain by doing so. Civilization is a learnt process. We help others only in so far as and in view of the fact that it pays us. ‘Other-service’ is either a cheat or a disguise ; it bears the character of a means to an end, namely, the end of ‘self-service’. Hume in his *Enquiry*, simply pities those persons who consider all morality an artificial structure in the sole service of ‘self-love’ ; all friendship a cheat or a show ; all benevolence mere hypocrisy ; public-spirit a farce, fidelity a snare to win confidence.¹² For Hume, it is natural to love and unnatural to hate.

Another feature of Hume’s ethics is its acceptance of *disinterested passions*, i.e. to say of passions which are by them-

¹¹ Hume’s *Treatise*, p. 176.

¹² Cf. Hume’s *Enquiry*, pp. 294-95.

selves non-egoistic. Hobbes' theory of morality is based on the assumption that passion is an indirect means to further the end of 'self-love'. 'Self-interest' is primary. All so-called moral conducts of human beings are different modifications of this original 'self-interest'. Hume gives the name of 'selfish system of morals'¹³ to such theories advocated and maintained by Hobbes and also by Locke.

Let us warn lest one may understand Hume as one who does not give any place to egoistic tendencies in human life. If that is the case, it would be abstraction. What Hume maintains is : although egoistic interests cannot be the basis of the moral life of man, they play a great role in human life. Hume gives the due to our selfish motives in life but he does not crown them as the foundation of our morality. This is how Hume without denying the place and part played by selfish motives in human life avoids the 'selfish system of morals'. What is hypothetical in nature is not the theory that we are selfish, but the theory which makes this theory the basis of the system of morality. That is why, Hume says that this selfish hypothesis is unnatural ; for it goes against that common inter-subjective possession of a natural feeling which goes by different names of 'humanity', 'sympathy', 'fellow-feeling', etc.

Hume further remarks that even the staunch believers in the *selfish system of morals* have enjoyed a non-selfish and sincere friendship, have suffered for others for no gain of their own and so on and so forth. It is futile and ridiculous to take much pains to defend an unnatural theory of morals. There is very slight difference between animal and human behaviour ; for animals as well as men derive much from the original hands of nature. The method of 'experimental reasoning' itself appears to be a species of an instinct in us working in us but unknown to us.¹⁴ Instincts in men differ from the instincts in animals not in that they are a different species of instinct but only in that they are modified under the constant culture of human reason and understanding. Man is by nature moral ; for he is by nature sympathetic. Since the principles of humanity and sympathy are natural and native to man, Hume's theory of morality may better be termed

¹³ See Hume's *Enquiry*, p. 296.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 107-8.

the *theory of natural morality*, it is naturalism in the field of ethics.¹⁵ Everyone respects the person of others. Had it not been so, no morality would have been possible. Man by his very nature is philanthropic.

Man is not only a 'self-care-taker', but he also takes care of others. The natural tendency of our love, care and concern for others is originaive of morality. Hume's observation of human nature leads him to the firm conviction that it is impossible ever to think of human nature purely in terms of egoism. Since we all (I, you and he) share the same, common-to-us-all humanity we cannot but be interested in the welfare of others. The presence of such a tendency in all of us is termed by Hume 'concern for others'. It is this principle which engages us on the side of the social virtues. Sympathy is a faculty of an active involvement in that we take an active interest in our fellow creatures.

For a being like man, whose breast is full of the milk of human kindness it is well-nigh impossible to be purely indifferent to his fellow-beings. Although the complex human life seems to be motored by a pair of opposite tendencies, e.g. love and hate, goodness and badness, altruism and egoism, etc. it is the principle of benevolence which alone can be the basis of any system of morality. Life is dialectical in nature with a plus on the side of good. This is why we may say that the antinomies of human reason are derivative in nature ; they are simply the shadows of the real antinomies of life. Hume writes : "And though the affection of humanity may not generally be esteemed so strong as vanity or ambition, yet being common to all, it can alone be the foundation of morals, or of any general system of blame or praise."¹⁶

It is through the propensity of sympathy that we are able to feel other's pain and pleasure as our own. This we do by imagining ourselves in the situations of others. This feat is accomplished by the faculty of imagination.¹⁷ Although the principles guiding human life are, to a large extent, the same that guide animal life, still men are not animals. The main difference between these two kingdoms of animals and men is the different use made of these principles in the hands of men. Men as animals born with a set

¹⁵ See, Chapter on *Sympathy*.

¹⁶ Hume's *Enquiry*, p. 273.

¹⁷ See, Chapter on *Imagination*.

of ready-made instincts learn reason in the process of their development whereas the animals remain instinctive throughout their whole life. In other words, men reason out things whereas animals do not. We are born with instincts but not with reason. Instincts we 'get' or 'have', whereas reason we 'learn' or cultivate.

The question : whether Hume is a utilitarian, is difficult to answer without qualification. But his ethics is nearer to John Stuart Mill's ethics than to that of Bentham's utility is taken to be the guiding force in consideration of moral problems, but it is not the ultimate goal moral conduct aims at. It is a means to decide what is morally good and bad. Approbation and disapprobation are the results not of utility as such (Hume thereby does not underrate the importance of the principle of utility) but of sympathy. Hume's theory of utility culminates not in the utilitarian's dictum of the 'greatest good of the greatest number', but in the principle of sympathy. Sympathy is like an instinct in man. It is original and native as the instincts. We cannot succeed in explaining ultimately as to why there is the propensity of sympathy. It is enough, says Hume, to note that such a principle is there. In many cases, the reason for the being of a thing is simply the experience that it is there. That the faculty of sympathy should and must be there, can be proved by a backward analysis from the effect to the cause, namely, from the sociable nature of man to the presence of the faculty of sympathy. Every science has to stop, says Hume, in its search for the ultimate principles. Sympathy is one of the ultimate principles in human life. "It is needless", says Hume, "to push our researches so far as to ask, why we have humanity or a fellow-feeling with others. It is sufficient, that this is experienced to be a principle in human nature. We must somewhere stop in our examination of causes . . . and we may here safely consider these principles as original".¹⁸

The very possibility of a human society is fatally linked up with this sympathetic nature of human beings. In the absence of such a principle, human life would have very little charm and hardly any sense and purpose. In sympathy, it is not our own person which is the object of esteem and love or of any passion, but the person of others. Sympathy is an 'indwelling but outgoing principle'. Other-consciousness is a precondition for the cons-

¹⁸ Hume's *Enquiry*, p. 99.

sciousness of self. "Ourselves, independent of the perception of of every other object is in reality nothing" ¹⁹ Thus the insight of Hume : 'to be man means to be member of a social group'. To sympathize means to sympathize with somebody. The very original principles of human nature are all against any scepticism in human life. ²⁰ Reason begets doubt, instinct begets certainty.

Thus Humean man is a mixed type of being. He is a sociable, active, practical, believing ; asking, irrational and sympathetic being. He is also partly but secondarily rational. By emphasizing the place of irrationality in human life, Hume does not underrate the office of reason. What he really wants to convey is that reason is not the 'master-principle' in human life. Hume's philosophical anthropology is thus more irrational in colour than rational ; it is more natural and practical than speculative. Hume's anthropology is opposed to the speculative anthropologies of Hobbes and Locke. In so far as man is a rational being, he receives his 'food from reason', but reason (synthetic or practical) very soon becomes conscious of the limits of reason. ²¹ 'Abstruse philosophy' based on the discursive faculty of reason is never allowed to run to a dangerous extreme of losing all touch with the empirical real life. Nature punishes very severely every extravagance in thought. By extravagance is meant excessive abstraction of thought in life. Hume writes : "It seems, then, that nature has pointed out a mixed kind of life as most suitable to the human race Indulge your passion for science, says she, but let your science be human, ²² and such as may have a direct reference to action and society. Abstruse thought and profound researches

¹⁹ Hume's *Treatise*, p. 340.

²⁰ Humean analysis of human nature comes here very near to the analysis of human existence in modern existentialism by Heidegger in his book *Sein und Zeit*. Man is 'in-the-world and with-the-world'. Every scepticism is a luxurious pastime.

²¹ It is here that one may venture to interpret Kant's idea of pure reason in his *Critique of Pure Reason* as reason being conscious of its own limitations. The reason that reflects and the reason that is reflected upon are two different ideas of reason. The former is a reason synthetic and practical.

²² This warning of Hume hears very modern ; for the development of the modern science has ended into a 'crisis of sciences'. (Cf. Husserl's "Die Krisis der Europäischen Wissenschaften und die Transzendente Phänomenologie"). The more we abstract, further we go from the 'life-world' (Lebenswelt).

I prohibit and will severely punish Be a philosopher ; but amidst all your philosophy, be still a man".²³

Hume followed the same mission of being a philosopher who was always nearer and faithful to the realities of life and society. Human thinking should be concrete than abstract. A Socrates is more useful to philosophy than a Hegel. Man should always avoid falling into any kind of extreme. Excess of everything, even of good qualities is bad. Abstruse thinking is pernicious to life and leads to scepticism, pessimism and inaction in life. It is human nature which comes to the help of human reason when the latter poses problems beyond any rational solution.

Hume's theory of man is a natural picture of man. It is more 'bio-oriented'. To-day the general tendency among the anthropologists is to understand and explain the most enigmatic phenomenon 'man' more in terms of his animality than rationality. Man to-day is considered scientifically as an animal who simply explains and justifies his behaviour originated in feelings and instincts with the help of reason. Man is the bigger and the cleverer brother of the animals. The first and the foremost characteristic mark of Hume's anthropology is the overall primacy of nature. In fine, we may characterize human life as follows : man begins his life with experience which is 'much impression, perception and memory'. This experience is assisted by the principles of custom, habit, belief and imagination, etc. All inferences in our life are simply the transformations from the experienced past to the unexperienced future. What lies at the back of this activity of transformation is our 'natural belief—that 'future will resemble the past'. It is imagination that paints future so lively as to fuse it with the qualities of impressions and perceptions. This is how belief comes into the picture.

There is a slight difference of emphasis between the concepts of man in Hume's 'Treatise' and 'Enquiry'. In 'Treatise' the picture of man is a mixed one which is still more emphasized in his 'Enquiry'. The most dominating and stimulating force for Hume in his 'Treatise' is his dream of becoming the Newton of mental and moral philosophy by discovering the law of 'association' which Hume hopes at least, is as central to philosophy as the law of 'gravitation' to physics. Coming to his

²³ Hume's *Enquiry*, pp. 8-9,

'Enquiry', Hume is very much critical of the success of a thorough going mechanistic process of association in the field of morals. The mechanistic theory of association is half-heartedly rejected in favour of a whole-hearted support of a natural and biological conception of association.²¹ In morals, Hume discovers the principles of humanity and sympathy as the basis of moral life. Hume's ideas are very important not only as a mirror of his personality but also as a very modern theory of man in which the part played by irrational, instinctive, natural, impulsive factors is more emphasized. The same path is followed by other philosophers of the 'irrationalism' like Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and the modern existentialists more acutely and in their own characteristic ways.

Coming nearer to a summary of Hume's 'philosophical anthropology', following two characteristic features may be worked out. (i) It is critical of all sorts of anthropologies which are either dogmatic or purely speculative in nature, and (ii) It is descriptive and follows the phenomenological method of research. It tolerates no interference from the side of human reason and intellect in forms of hypothetical explanations of human nature ; it lets the phenomena 'speak for themselves'.

(i) It is critical in that Hume analyses his observational data of human life critically. In doing so, he also limits the power of reason. In his philosophy, reason and instincts seem to have exchanged their roles. In his moral philosophy, Hume severely criticizes those 'system-builders' who, with the magical help of their rationally constructed ideational ethical systems, pretend to explain the world of concrete moral facts. Hume is a dead enemy of academic moralists who construct ethical systems according to their own a priori conceptions without any reference to real empirical data. This approach is not only unnatural and artificial but also fallacious ; for it tries to explain the dynamic and concrete moral facts with the help of abstract and static law. Hume's critical spirit is as stark and bold in his epistemology as in his moral philosophy. Any system of morals is a real empirical system of blame and praise, approbation and disapprobation which can be better experienced in terms of real observational data than thought of in abstract terms. Abs-

²⁴ See, the 'Conclusion'.

traction is anything but life. Hume here comes very near to Max Scheler who champions the cause of a 'material ethics of value' (materiale Wertethik) in contradistinction to formalism in ethics. Moral discourse by its very nature cannot be purely abstract, formal and theoretical ; for it has to take into account and keep pace with the dynamic nature of moral conduct.

(ii) After a critical observation, a faithful description. This description is of the real empirical life as lived and experienced. The 'picture of man' drawn by Hume is thus descriptive in character. The process of description proceeds in terms of different principles of human nature. It is these principles which guide human life. These principles are discovered with the help of the method of 'observation and experimental reasoning'. Hume's anthropology does not pretend to explain as to why we do what we do but simply describes as to how do we do what we do.²⁵ Psychology implied in Hume's anthropology is descriptive in nature. A truer guide to an understanding of the phenomena of life is through description rather than explanation. Explanation always tends to be hypothetical in character.

This critico-descriptive philosophical anthropology of Hume combats successfully the dogmatic, explanatory and speculative anthropology found in Hobbes and Locke. Hume's anthropology faces its object, namely, 'man' with the same difficulties that are to be found in any 'matters of fact science'. The fact of 'human nature' itself is not explained by Hume. This Hume does not also claim to do. Human nature is no object of explanation ; for it is itself an 'explanatory-principle'. One of the main drawbacks of the ancient and mediaeval anthropologies is their attempt to explain human nature. This they have succeeded in doing but only at the cost of concreteness. To try to explain human nature is to take help of some other principle. This other principle cannot itself be any principle of human nature. Thus there results artificiality and construction in any such attempt. All such claims, therefore, are pretentious. Man remains for Hume as also for Kant, in the last analysis, a 'noumenon'. Hume seems not to

²⁵ Hume's method of approach is very much phenomenological in spirit ; for he, too, accepts, firstly the right of acceptance of the given, and secondly the right of phenomena speaking for themselves. It is thus that the move 'back to things themselves' is practised. The later Husserl and Dilthey are more in favour of such a move.

differentiate between the disposition and sentiment of humanity on the one hand and morality on the other. Originally, says Hume, they are the same. Humanity is the only morality of humanity which is nothing but a sentiment or disposition of humanity.

Hume's treatment of the problem of 'justice' indicates to a still further characteristic of his anthropology. It is an anthropological question as to how human beings come to the knowledge of the utility of justice. That justice is useful and good are two things. Not the origin but approbation of the virtue of justice is natural. Justice is an artificial virtue with a natural support. All that is useful is in some sense just and all that is just must be in some sense useful. We hear an echo of the socio-ethical pragmatism of James in Hume. Hume tries to answer the question of justice not with the help of speculation making justice a matter of thought than experience. The different theories of a 'social contract', 'original contract' which are so important for a Hobbes and a Locke are simply convenient fictions in the eyes of Hume. Society is not an object of intellectual arbitration. "The poetical fiction of the golden age" says Hume, "is in some respects, of a piece with the philosophical fiction of the state of nature. . . ."²⁶ Considering these comments of Hume, we may denominate Hume's philosophical anthropology 'experimental' and 'experiential' (empirical) in contradistinction to the speculative and abstract anthropologies of Hobbes and Locke.

In the end, we may also briefly touch upon the problem of the relation of man to animals. Man, on the one hand, is related to the animals and, on the other hand, to God. Man occupies a mid-way position between these two limits ; for he is neither of the two wholly.

Compared with the animals, on the one hand, and with God, on the other, we realise the unique position of man in the scheme of things and beings of the cosmos. Man seems to be nearer to the animals than to God. Animals are a kind as man is but God is just an idea, a perfect one, of man which he may or may not realise. God is man in his real image ; for man is a creation in the image of Him. Others maintain 'not that man is created in the image of God but God is conceived in the image of man'. Religion is not simply a thing of human imagination and his

²⁶ Hume's *Enquiry*, p. 189.

phantasy, it is primarily an object of human feeling, his desires and wishes. As the practical problem of morals arises because of the conflict in our different desires, so also religion originates in the conflict which is there between the two levels of our aspirations, namely, 'the real and the ideal'. Man wants to procure what he does not have and wants to get rid of or do away with what he has. Man is a peculiar mixture of reality and phantasy ; he lives and suffers 'prose' and enjoys 'poetry'. In a sense, half of the troubles of mankind are due to the fact of the image we project of our own selves. Thus, the idea of God becomes a picture of man's own perfection. Its truth depends on the fact of its realization. The question whether it is a genuine wish or simply a phantasy on the part of man to be God, is difficult to decide purely theoretically.²⁷ Hume remarks : man comparing himself with God does not compare himself with a reality as his own or his type (this he can do in relation to animals) but the reality of a possibility (a possible reality), *i.e.* to say his future possibility of attaining that perfect ideal of becoming a God pictured and projected by him. This is why Hume wants us to treat the naive mediaeval and renaissance anthropology very cautiously and critically. Whether man is an 'image of God or not' is a question either for the abstractionists or mystics. But that 'man is a shadow of his own nature' is a matter of clear-cut observation. What, Hume really wants to affirm is that we should place human nature above all and try to see and interpret everything in the light of the same. Theism may be a matter of debate but naturalism is a truism. Hume's message is to accept this truism and act accordingly.

Hume's 'science of man' is what we mean here in this work by his 'philosophical anthropology'. The science of man, claims Hume, is the science of all sciences ; for all other human enquiries depend on it.²⁸ Man is a natural creation—a creation of nature. Man remains far behind his own idea of perfection than animals

²⁷ Sartre defines man as a 'useless passion' ; for man's passionate wish to be God is useless. It is useless because the very idea of God is contradictory. The idea is contradictory ; for in the case of God the essence precedes existence.

²⁸ Cf. *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos* by Max Scheler. Scheler raises the status of this most fundamental discipline to the level of designating it 'Meta-anthropology' (Meta-Anthropologie). Hume's claim essentially is also nearer to Heidegger's Fundamentalontologie. Cf. *Sein und Zeit* by Martin Heidegger.

do of man. Hume writes : "Man falls much more short of perfect wisdom and even of his own idea of perfect wisdom, than animals do of man" ²⁹

Man is a rational animal but he is not that rational as to have no relationship with animals. Since man is basically an instinctive being, he constantly keeps his animality under the control of his rationality. Man is secondarily a 'reflective being'. ³⁰

Hume's philosophical anthropology borders on the concept of 'religious anthropology'. His concept of man does not necessarily imply an atheistic picture of man. 'Deus', or 'no Deus' is not the main question for Hume. Humean man, not knowing how do we really come to theism, remains at the level of 'naturalism'. Hume demands a justification of a theism that places an unknown authority above man. Hume starts his book *History of Natural Religion* with the very remark that 'nature' seems to point to an intelligent cause. Hume always betrays his mental state of indecision between theism and atheism. He has never asserted, as certain positivists do to-day that metaphysical problems like 'God', 'Soul', etc. are pseudo-problems. ³¹ 'Hume was a good Christian' in secret, maintains Boswell. ³²

As Hume retains and occasionally speaks in the terminology of theology, we cannot stamp him simply an atheist. Hume fails to decide between the rival claims of theism and atheism. He does not discuss the question whether or not there is an intelligent principle at the back of all natural processes. He is busy in finding out the way leading to such a conviction. If he stops with nature as the most universal principle (as he seems to have done) we may term it 'naturalism' but not 'atheism'. Hume was inclined to believe in some type of natural religion.

Another question of not less importance is whether God is a knowledge or belief. Hume would like to decide in favour of the latter alternative, if he at all accepts this way of putting the issue. In his *Dialogue Concerning Natural Religion*, the character, Philo, represents the sceptic. To begin with, Hume speaks through this character but, in the end, he accepts that

²⁹ Hume's *Essays* Edited by Green and Grose, p. 133.

³⁰ Cf. *The Philosophy of David Hume* by N. K. Smith, pp. 130-1.

³¹ It is at such places that the hypothesis of Hume's being a predecessor and protagonist of modern positivism is cast doubt upon.

³² *The Life of David Hume* by E. C. Mossner.

Philo is not doing philosophy seriously. At least, Hume seems to accept that the whole problem is more of a verbal nature. That this is so can be read off from a letter of Hume written to Strahn hardly three months before his death.

I there introduce a sceptic ; who is indeed refuted, and at last gives up the argument, nay confesses that he was only amusing himself by all his cavils ; yet before he is silenced he advances several topics, which will give umbrage and will be deemed very bold and free as well as much out of the common road.³³

In order to be a sound Christian, the most essential step, says Hume, is first to be a 'philosophic sceptic' or 'academic sceptic'.³⁴ By this phrase, Hume means a mild scepticism as a healthy check to the abstract flights of human reason.

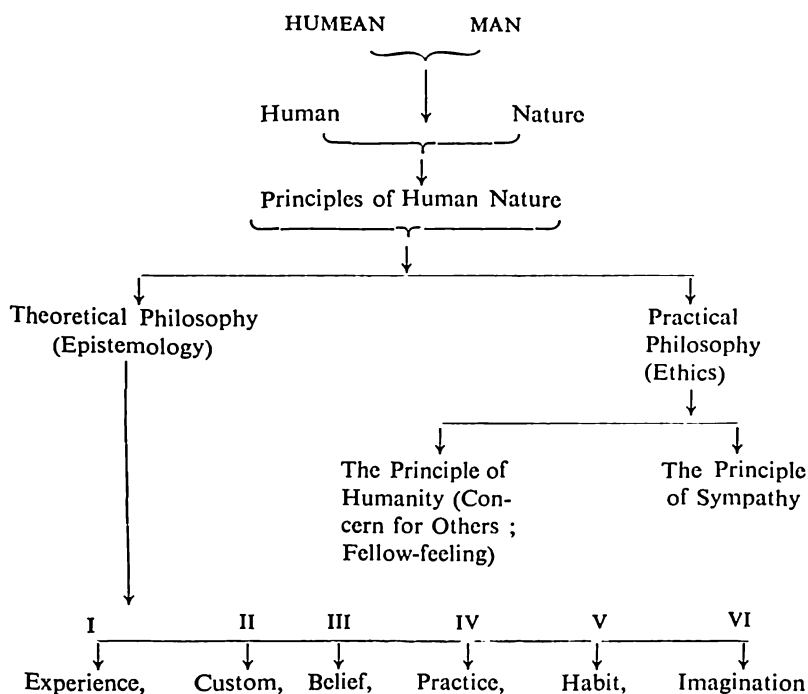
The dispute between Philo and Cleanthes (between a sceptic and a believer) is, in the last analysis, merely a verbal one ; for both of them differ only in the degree of the intensity of doubt and certainty regarding the same problem of the existence of an intelligent principle , namely, God. The sceptic is a critic of the certainty of the believer, whereas the believer is a critic of the certainty of the doubt of the sceptic. They are certain in one point, namely, 'such a principle does not exist', and 'such a principle does exist' respectively. One doubts what the other is sure of.

Hume has thus developed an ethically oriented, non-speculative, critico-descriptive experimental (experiential) and empirical anthropology. It is more irrational than rational in tone, in that it is more instinctive and natural. The beliefs guiding the life of man are all 'natural beliefs'.³⁵ It is this concept of man which is at work in Hume's theoretical as well as practical philosophy. Hume's anthropology being naturalistic in character accepts human nature as the last point of reference in all types of disputes whether of reason and instincts or of opposing passions. Since nature is an arbiter it is authoritative, too.

³³ Hume's *Letters*, by Stendal, p. 305.

³⁴ Cf. *Dialogue*, pp. 70-71.

³⁵ Cf. Chapter on "Belief", *The Theory of Natural Beliefs*.

SCHEMA OF HUME'S CONCEPT OF MAN.³⁶

³⁶ In Hume's concept of man theoretical is subordinated under practical. This is why there is the primacy of feeling and instincts over thought and and reason. Places where Hume relegates reason altogether are to be taken as the expression of the tendency of man to exaggerate that which is weak and secondary in human life.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

THE central-most problem of Hume's philosophy is the tough opposition between knowledge and belief. He wrestled with such oddities of life and philosophy in all the years he lived. There is a cleavage between nature and reason, between practical beliefs and theoretical justification of the same. Hume painfully experienced and suffered many a setbacks in his literary life, e.g. his first book *Treatise* fell dead born from the press, his 'Enquiry' could not receive the attention it deserved and so on and so forth. But Hume possessed such a philosophic spirit that he never thought of blaming anyone but himself. The manner in which Hume reacted to his disappointments deserves all respect from us. It was not the public but he himself to be blamed for all his shortcomings and failures. Norman Kemp Smith pays a tribute to Hume's philosophic spirit in a similar way.

Hume's first and foremost adventure in philosophy was in the field of ethics and morals, particularly, in the philosophy of Francis Hutcheson. N. K. Smith in his 'Concluding Comments' maintains that 'Hume's ethics is integral to his general philosophical outlook and falls together with it'. Hume's theory of man is a 'natural interpretation' of man. Human nature as the ultimate principle of explanation forms the basis of his anthropology and thus provides his system with a unity. It is human nature that is at work in his epistemology (theoretical philosophy) under the name of belief and imagination and in his morals under the name of humanity and sympathy. Hume's philosophy thus seems to imply neither a strict theism nor an atheism. It is no deism as well. It is all naturalism pure and simple.

The acceptance of the fact that Hume enters his philosophy through the gate-way of morals prepares a better ground for an understanding of his philosophy.¹ In moral sciences, Hume discovers and establishes the primacy of feeling and instinct

¹ See 'Introduction'.

over reason and thought. Being convinced of such a primacy, he extends the same to the whole field of his philosophy. This thesis he learns much by his study of the moral philosophy of Francis Hutcheson.² It is this primacy of feeling over thought that provides his philosophy with a 'master-principle'.³ Man as a 'knowing-being' and man as a 'believing-and moral being' is guided by the same unitary principle of human nature which expresses itself differently.

It is something very revolutionary and novel in Hume that it is he, who, for the first time, consciously uses the principle of human nature as an explanatory principle and not as an object of explanation. Other systems of philosophy attempt an explanation of human nature either with the help of something which is not related to human nature or with the help of some artificially constructed system. In both the cases the explanation remains no longer natural. Hume takes both imagination and sympathy to be natural.⁴

Hume's philosophy points to a system of hierarchy of belief enlivened with different grades of vivacity and certainty. Our simple impressions and sense-perceptions are certain to the extent they acquaint us with things and beings. There is belief in our principles of customs and habits.⁵ Lastly we believe in an external world and other persons etc. This line of belief is marked by the characteristic of certainty which differs only in degree and not in kind. Starting from our belief in our sense-perceptions, it passes through the different principles of customs and habit and lastly develops into our belief in an objectively existing independent world.

Hume's scepticism is another target for the critics of his philosophy. The strength of Hume's philosophy is that it guards itself with a mild academic scepticism which is so beneficial to all philosophizing. It is the same strength which is mistaken to be a weakness of his philosophy by the critics. Hume was really at a loss to decide with certainty between the rival claims of reason and instinct. Failing to do so, he could not side with any one of them fairly reasonably. But life as lived in practice is unable

² See 'Introduction'.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ See, chapters on 'Imagination' and 'Sympathy'.

⁵ See, chapter on 'Custom and Habit'.

to be explained in terms of reason. It is this fact of the paucity of human reason that led Hume to decide for and side with the latter. It is the self same attitude which defines his scepticism.

That 'Hume is a sceptic without qualification' is a bad criticism of his person and philosophy. With his discovery of the theory of natural belief⁶ he restores his belief in causality, the existence of bodies, of other persons etc. which he suspended while enquiring about their truth and validity purely in rational terms. Hume never really doubted, not even for a moment, the existence of an independent world, of other persons etc. (Hume seems here to practise the Husserlian theory of 'bracketing' and 'suspension' in his own way, *i.e.* to say Hume does not put into brackets as Husserl does the 'natural attitude' in order to work out a foundational science of pure essences. Hume, finding that human reason destroys our belief in an objective and independent world of things and persons pretends it to be not there and goes on to search for the real origin somewhere else.)

Hume may be taken to be a sceptic in the sense that in his science of man reason is doubted and subordinated to feeling and instinct. He is no sceptic in the sense of "Pyrrhonism"⁷ which doubts each and every thing being in the last run 'self-sucidal'. Hume is an academic sceptic doubting the powers of human reason. When the limits of reason are laid bare, *i.e.*, to say when reason is fully exposed to us, what comes to our help is not reason but some other principle of human nature. If we still term that principle reason it is simply a matter of naming. Reason, when troubled by reason, betrays reason. Hume's scepticism is a healthy enthronement of belief and dethronement of reason. A consistent sceptic is either a character or a contradiction ; for he continues to doubt, reason and believe. Hume writes :

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, tho' he can not pretend by any arguments of philosophy to maintain its veracity, We may well ask, what causes induce us to believe in the existence of body? but

⁶ See, chapter on 'Belief'.

⁷ See, chapter on 'Custom and habit'.

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 reasoning.⁸

Hume maintains that all our explanations of our natural belief in the existence of body and other persons in terms of reason are either vacuous or pretentious. These beliefs are natural to us. Thus, Hume, far from being a sceptic is a naturalist and a realist.

The critics of Hume have stamped his *Treatise* as a 'patchwork'. Hume partly accepts this charge and partly tries to meet it by showing the causes giving rise to such an impression in the minds of readers. Hume accepts his haste in going to the press with his *Treatise* too early. He repents this mistake of his over and over again. He also recognizes *Treatise* to be a product of a very young immature mind and as such it is liable to be defective. N. K. Smith informs us about Hume's attitude towards his *Treatise* : 'Had Hume got all the existing copies of *Treatise* all the world over, he would have happily committed them to the flames'. It is the same attitude which not only seems to disown *Treatise* but warns the reader to read off his philosophy by making this book representative of his philosophical outlook. But, how sad, that even after Hume's warning the posterity has made this book representative of his philosophy. One can hardly gather from records what Hume would have said about the relative importance and merit of his two most representative books, namely, the *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, and the *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. Hume wanted the world to depend upon the *Dialogues* as to the meaning of his philosophical attitude to life including the problem of scepticism and upon the *Enquiry* for the positive principles of moral philosophy.

In a letter, Hume writes : "So vast an undertaking (*Treatise*) planned before I was one and twenty and composed before twenty five, must necessarily be very defective.⁹ I have repented my Haste a hundred and hundred Times."¹⁰

Hume is notorious, rather famous in the world of philosophy not so much for his solutions but for his problems he posed

⁸ Hume's *Treatise*, p. 187.

⁹ See, chapter on 'Traditional Interpretation'.

¹⁰ 'Hume's Letters by Grieg, p. 158.

namely, what is the real basis of human behaviour—reason or instinct ; feeling or thought ; nature or nurture. There is an universal urge to monism in man. The solution of Hume may be an object of dispute but his problem is ever new and fresh. The problem posed by Hume has ever since been the 'home-task' of many a philosophers of rank after him.

Hume's firm conviction is that any philosophical system, in the absence of the principles of belief and imagination in theoretical philosophy and of the principles of humanity and sympathy in the practical one is either purely formal or vacuous ; for reason cannot defend reason in the last analysis. It is in vain to ask whether there is body or not ; for that is a point which we have to accept in all our reasoning. Man is an 'asking-being' (*fragendes Wesen*) and it belongs to his very nature ; it is a mode of his being. That which is sought guides our search beforehand. It is as if every enquiry lived in the understanding of its solution. Every seeking has a sense of direction which is determined by both-the seeker and the 'sought-for'. The sole function of reason lies in its service to feelings and human instinct. That is why Hume maintains reason to be 'a wonderful instinct in us'.

There is an opposition between the verdicts of reason and imagination. Both of them paint life quite contrary to each other. Hume is at pains to note that this philosophical system is a 'monstrous offspring' of two principles, namely, of imagination and reflection ; belief and reason ; nature and nurture. Both are contrary to each other and are accepted by the mind at the same time. Both being equally obstinate, none can destroy the other nor can be defeated by the other. But still, says Hume, the former produces in us a strong feeling of acceptance ; for it is nature whose obstinacy gets the upper hand in this duel and prevails in the last run. The 'monstrosity' of the system is : the principle of imagination informs us that perceptions resemble each other and are continuous uninterruptedly. To put the same in the modern philosophical terminology, imagination allows us to believe in the 'unsensed sense-data' (unsensed sensibilia). Reflection, on the other hand, informs us that perceptions are not only different from each other but they are also discontinuous and are interrupted. They are transitory and cannot be the basis of our natural belief in the existence of an independent world. This trouble is termed by Hume as the 'opinion of the double

existence'. By the phrase 'double existence', Hume means what has become so acute in modern philosophy, namely, the objective world of science and reason on the one hand, and the 'life-world' (Lebenswelt) of experience (Erlebnis) on the other. Science, too, although it claims to be empirical in spirit, abstracts. It is this abstraction which ultimately leads to formalism in science which is worshipped as universal objectivism. Hume through these remarks anticipates the modern disciplines like 'phenomenology' and 'life-philosophy' of Husserl and Dilthey respectively. Nature is the principle of concreteness in life. Hume writes :

Nature is obstinate and will not quit the field, however strongly attacked by reason ; and at the same time reason is so clear in the point, there is no possibility of disguising her Were we fully convinc'd, that our resembling perceptions are continu'd, and identical, and independent, we shou'd never run into this opinion of a double existence ¹¹

The problem here is the same age-old problem of unbridgeable gap, the discrepancy between faith and reason, between reflection and imagination, between living and thought. The decision taken by Hume is not stated very clearly by him in so many words. But one can safely read off his decision in favour of imagination than reflection. Reason is silenced ultimately but before it is done, reason poses problems for which there is no reasonable solution. Reason quits the field but leaves us in doubt.

The central theme of Hume's philosophy is the relation between reason and belief. His central thesis is the subordination of reason to feeling and instinct. His central thesis, he discovers first in the field of morals. This subordination is practical and unconditional in that reason¹² (analytic or discursive) is not in a position to guide our life ; for it fails to decide. The principle of human nature works as a check against reason in its negative role and in its positive role it guides our human life through

¹¹ Hume's *Treatise*, p. 205.

¹² The author strongly feels that Hume maintained a distinction between two types of reason, namely, analytic and synthetic ; for he sometimes talks of reason as a 'further unexplicable wonderful instinct' in us. Cf. Kants idea of 'pure and practical reason'.

its different principles. Human nature is the principle of all principles.

The name of Hume in the world of philosophy is attached very much with the problem of causality. The whole polemic of causality reduces itself to the question of the transference of the past to the future with the tacit presupposition of future resembling the past. Since, according to Hume, this tacit presupposition gets its support from our experience, causality becomes empirical in its origin and nature. Hume shows at length that reason is either vacuous or non-informative ; for it either analyses or repeats. Imagination, belief, humanity and sympathy are the principles of actions not based on reason but on nature. Truth is in life and not so much in theory. Hume would like to say like William James that "conceptual systems which neither began nor left off in sensations would be like bridges without piers.... Only when you deduce a possible sensation for me from your theory, and give it to me when and where the theory requires, do I begin to be sure that your thought has anything to do with truth".¹³ Hume's main slogan is : 'back to experience', back to things themselves. But in this process of back to experience, may be, that we may not leave off every point of a conceptual system in sensation.¹⁴ There seems to be a discontinuity somewhere from experience to thought. It is bewildering that reason is creative of pure forms which can be thought out but can never be represented sensibly. This has ever been the most disturbing phase of every philosophy in all periods. The main trouble is : how to remain faithful to our empirical spirit without degenerating into reductionism. The fact that there is a close and inseparable connection between the concreteness of experience and the abstraction of thought should not be forgotten. The 'Lebenswelt' is not only primary but the only point of all authentic references.

Hume's main field of interest lies in humanistic sciences, which are more a discussion of the role of morals in society. The first step, then, to understand Hume's philosophy is to gain an adequate idea of his use of the term 'morals'. Morals are phenomena of man's life in a society. As an active being, man behaves and develops a system of praise and blame. The term 'morals' thus

¹³ *The Principles of Psychology* by W. James, Vol. II, p. 7.

¹⁴ *Edmund Husserl's Theory of Meaning* by J. N. Mohanty, Cf. Last Chapter "Back to Experience".

covers all the social and active phenomena of human nature which are the concern of moralist and moral philosopher at the same time. Without a natural morality, society as a natural phenomenon is not possible. Since society is a systematic regulation, morals are regulative in character. The qualities which we praise in the person of other are also included under the term 'morals'. Thus the system of morals contain all those concepts which comprise, besides regulative moral laws, also the moral distinctions, virtues and vices and the rules of conduct. The field of morals is a complex one.

Hume thus strives in his moral philosophy to reach the foundation of ethics and find out universal principles. As a representative of the British School of Moralists, Hume concentrates his attention on the phenomenon of normal moral consciousness in a cool and impartial manner. This manner reminds us of Aristotle than any other moralist in the recent time. An impartial psychological analysis is the basis of all moral and philosophical theories. This Hume thinks, saves ethics from being purely a formal and abstract discipline. Taste and sentiment are the sources of moral virtues. For Aristotle, virtue certainly depends upon reason but it does not really originate from it. Virtue is a disposition to action 'in the mean'.¹⁵ Morals are the habits of human nature. The genesis of virtue, as described in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, is from the customs and conventions in society. Aristotle was mildly criticizing Plato's theory of morality which stresses more on reason. Aristotle stressed this point by saying that "a law derives all its strength from custom and this requires a long time to establish".¹⁶

Hume is no moral sceptic ; for he accepts the reality of moral distinction. Morals are neither arbitrary nor accidental to man, but purely natural to him. Hume's views on the problem of the relation between language and ethics seems to be far reaching. No serious moral study can be possible simply by investigating the language and logic of the moral phenomena. Hume's own treatment of language is instrumental. Language is a means of diagnosis. Expressions of praise and blame are found in every language and they pertain to qualities and are

¹⁵ See, Aristotle's, *Politics*, Bk. II; Translated by William Ellis (Everyman's Library).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

habits or sentiments. Hume discusses the question of "verbal disputes", in his fourth and final Appendix where he writes : "Nothing is more usual than for philosopher to encroach upon the province of grammarians, and to engage in disputes of words, while they imagine that they are handling controversies of the deepest importance and concern". His own procedure is very simple, namely, to collect a list of those mental qualities which are the object of esteem and form a part of personal merit and to work out a catalogue of those qualities which are the object of reproach. Language, for Hume, is thus only of secondary importance ; it is a means of recording moral judgments.

Man is a natural being in possession of a natural altruism. It is not reason but the feeling of sympathy which explains the problem of our morals. Sympathy is the name of a natural force in us ; it is a natural propensity in all of us. Hume seems to think of human nature as 'human inclination'. Reason may help us in our ethical deliberations, choices and tendencies to approbations and disapprobations but it can never produce them. What causes troubles to readers of Hume is his 'uncritical', 'loose' use of certain terms 'without previous explanation'. For example, the term 'feeling' stands for all different sorts of manifestations of our sensitive nature. It is sometimes belief and sometimes a propensity or a passion and so on and so forth. There is general complaint against Hume that he is not very consistent and cautious in his writings. The author feels that this complain, although partly justifiable is more true of his *Treatise*. Starting to understand Hume's philosophy from his *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* makes a better sense ; for it clears out many a misunderstandings arisen due to his *Treatise*.

What sounds like a contradiction in Hume is probably the result of two influences which he is working under. The first adventure of Hume in morals was a study of Francis Hutcheson. Hume was not less facinated by Newton's discoveries in physics. These two influences, we can formulate as follows :

(i) All moral judgments are based not upon reason or understanding but primarily and mainly on feeling. 'Morals' is a field of 'taste and sentiments'. Moral determinations and determination of our reason and understanding are different. In section I of

his *Enquiry*, Hume says, "Modern enquirers have commonly endeavoured to account for these (moral) distinctions by metaphysical reasonings and by deducing from the most abstract principles of the understanding". In the eyes of Hume, the most besetting vice in morals is abstraction and formal deductions. The thesis that 'morals are founded on sentiments' is not new or very original with Hume; for Hutcheson already formulated such a theory before Hume.¹⁷

(ii) Hume, on the other hand, fascinated by Newtonian physics attempted to work out a "geography of human mind". In his attempt to do this, he patterned psychology after the model of physics. Hume aspired to be 'the Newton' of psychology by the discovery of the laws of association which is as central to psychology as the law of gravitation to physics. This is why the theory of association plays such an important role in his philosophy, mainly, in his philosophy of the *Treatise*. The psychology implied in Newtonian physics is purely mechanistic atomistic and elementaristic. In his search for 'psychological atoms' he arrived at the concept of simple sensation and impression (simple ideas). Hutcheson's philosophy, on the other hand, implies a psychology more of a 'biological nature i.e., to say, psychology which accepts the laws of human mind as the natural ways of working of human nature. Being mental habits, these associative laws become natural as if there were a 'natural association'. To associate is as much a part of our nature's plan in us as to laugh, breathe and feel.

The author strongly feels that Hume became conscious of the incompatibility of these two types of psychology very late in his life. This seems to be another reason why he wished the readers to forget that there exists such a book as *Treatise*. Hume was turning towards the latter type of psychology slowly but surely. This we can very well establish if we try to observe a little more carefully his treatment of 'association' first in his *Treatise* and then in his *Enquiry*. There is a touch of artificiality in his treatment of association in his *Treatise* which gave place to a naturalistic treatment of the same in his *Enquiry*.

¹⁷ See extensive and detailed discussion of Hume's relation with Hutcheson in N. K. Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, Chapter II and also *An Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* edited with an introduction by Charles W. Hendel, Introduction.

In Hume's own opinion, the central part of his philosophical literature consists of moral problems. Although Hume has invited much trouble with the introduction of a mechanistic psychology, his philosophy later on is no longer mechanistic in its implications. Association becomes a natural way of combination. This we see when Hume tries to explain the feeling of sympathy mechanistically in his *Treatise*. In his *Enquiry*, he gives up the idea of a mechanistic explanation.¹⁸

Human nature is the source of all orientations in philosophy, theoretical as well as practical. The conflict in human thinking is a shadow of the experienced conflict in human life. Nothing worth the name, is fully abstract. The least concrete is the most abstract. The real, in a sense, is always the experiential. Hume seems to be always conscious of the problem of the discrepancy of the 'many-world-views'. There are, for Hume, mainly two worlds, the world of reason and the world of natural human belief. This, we may term as a state of 'war of worlds'. Being very much conscious of the 'warring-worlds', Hume desperately tried to bridge over the gap between the abstract and the concrete, reason and belief, theory and practice, thought and deed. Reason demands explanation for the life as we live it. Not finding any satisfactory explanation of the problem, reason quits the field by delivering a restless scepticism. The best and the most powerful explanation in the sense of justification of the life as it is lived is that it is *so* lived. Practice is the guarantee for a theory deduced from it.

Thus the crucial problem for Hume is to explain the intercourse between the 'world process' and 'world idea'. The intercourse is a successful one. On what does it then depend? Are the secrets of nature open to us? Do we at all possess the right to ask such questions? Is not man a 'useless passion', to borrow a phrase from Sartre to strive for something which by its very nature is not possible? Therefore, modern anthropology, sometimes defines and describes man as a 'questioning being' (*fragendes Wesen*). Hume seems to have given up the claim of meeting this very challenging problem. He, nevertheless, like Leibniz, tries to justify such a practice on the ground of a 'pre-established harmony' between the 'course of nature' on the one hand, and

¹⁸ Cf. Chapter on 'Sympathy'.

our ideas on the other. The laws of nature seem to possess a minimum degree of basic resemblance with the laws of our thought. Thus, these laws of thought are basically laws of things. This being so, our behaviour is put into harmony with the world-process. After all, human nature is a species of the genus nature. The generality of the genus is shared by the species providing a common basis for a successful intercourse between the world of nature and the world of human behaviour. Hume says 'although the forces of nature are not known to us, still our behaviours find an echo in them'.

Here, then, is a kind of pre-established Harmony, between the course of nature and the succession of our ideas, and though the power and forces, by which the former is governed, be wholly unknown to us, yet our thoughts and conceptions have still, we find, gone on in the same train with other works of nature.¹⁹

Hume was convinced of an affinity between reality as a process and human nature as a process, nay, human nature is a part of that greater nature. The impasse between the nature and the nurture is solved by Hume by patterning the latter on the former. One cannot arrive at human nature, one starts from it.

¹⁹ Hume's *Treatise*, pp. 54-55.

APPENDIX

REDUCTIONISM AND PHILOSOPHIZING

My purpose in this appendix would be to show briefly phenomenologically a practice in philosophy (other disciplines are not excluded) which is a matter of necessity.

Broadly speaking, there are two ways open to us in deciding a problem in philosophy. We may either determine a thing by defining it or we may first point at the *states of affairs* somehow and somewhere present in human behaviour and then give it a name. I propose here to follow the second alternative because of the fear that the first in cases more than not leads to unhealthy philosophical abstractionism, arbitrariness and sterility. The lived life is a living reflection of the ambiguous but real unity of form and content. A healthy philosophical practice thus should consist in borrowing the content from the life lived in its manifold modes of given. Although man hardly ever *lives* all the modes, still he somehow or other feels the *centrality* of his position *hic et nunc*.

Etymologically and literally, reduction means reducing to . . . , tracing back to . . . , leading to . . . , pointing at . . . , etc. It is an ever present and practised *follow-up* method. Even the most primitive beings practised in this sense reduction which consisted in their practice of looking at themselves either from the point of view of the cosmos, or from their own or both together. The meaning of the world around them was determined for them in terms of the needs and deeds. This determination of meaning remains an ever open system in the sense that the phenomenon called human reality is itself a matter of constant exploration. Man *lives* his animal faith, no doubt, but he rises above it and becomes an unfixed phenomenon.

By reductionism I mean nothing negative. It is *more* than *ego-centric* predicament. This *more* consists in dropping the adjective *ego-centric* while maintaining the noun *predicament*. This predicament, phenomenologically speaking, consists essen-

tially in our doing philosophy already always from this or that *point of view*. In other words, all that I wish to affirm is simply this : As we are born in this world with our body and form a part of the same, so also all that we do is necessarily in terms of a point of view, nay, our body as such is the necessary imposition of a point of view. Thus the sense in which the term *reduction* is used here is the name given to our practice of doing philosophy (philosophizing) either *in the name of* , or *for the sake of* , or *in terms of* , or *from the point of view of* , etc. These different italicized expressions mean *essentially* one and the same states of affair, namely, that we are bound to do philosophy always *from a point of view*. It points to the necessity of *having a focus*, no doubt, this focus may be different for different persons. The whole history of philosophy (eastern as well as western) bears witness to what we have just now asserted.

I have not discussed Husserl's phenomenological theory of reduction which is an incessant attempt of going-beyond in search of a still deeper foundation. Bracketing the natural world is followed by another reduction of psychological ego which again in its turn is reduced and gives place to a transcendental ego. This transcendental ego again being mine or yours is reduced and thus there emerges in the last the transcendental intersubjectivity—the basis of *we*, *objectivity*, constitution, etc. Husserl's theory of *eidetic* reduction is bracketing the existence of the world in search of the essence of the object. Human life seems to be the meeting-ground of different reductions taking place at different levels. For everyone of us the primary objective world is our *Lebenswelt*. The rest which cannot be reduced to this *Lebenswelt* is secondarily objective and transcendent.

I propose here to discuss : (i) that there are different types of points of view, *i.e.*, reductions, (ii) that they all have been more or less exemplified and explicated in the history of human-thought, and (iii) that my sympathy lies with what I have termed here *the anthropological reduction*.

Following are the certain main types of reduction :

- (i) Cosmological reduction,
- (ii) Theological reduction,
- (iii) Sociological reduction,
- (iv) Anthropological reduction,

- (v) Existential reduction.
- (vi) Naturalistic reduction.

By *cosmological reduction* I mean the reduction of man along with his diverse relations with the world of things and beings to the cosmos. Man is here understood in terms of the whole that decides and determines his position, meaning, destiny, etc. Hegel may well be taken to be the best representative of this type of reduction. His talk about a 'Weltvernunft' (world-reason) is nothing but a case in point. In a sense, the Vedic 'poet-philosophers' may also be said to have practised this reduction in so far as they, too, tried to understand and interpret man in terms of the vast universe.

Theological reduction consists in the practice of doing philosophy in the name of God. Man is created here in the image of God and his meaning and destiny, rights and duties have been laid down once and for all by a divine 'arbitor'. Medieval philosophers in general did philosophy in terms of this reduction. Interestingly enough we may put Kierkegaard, too, under this head. The man in Kierkegaard is essentially doubly related : he is related to the world of things and beings, on the one hand and on the other hand, he is also related with the Absolute, God. Kierkegaard sees nearly everywhere an *either/or* problem. Here, too, he somehow finds that relations with other *objects* (i.e. persons) of the world stand in the way of his relation to God. Many maintain his this conviction to have been the real cause of his breaking up with his fiancée Regine Olsen. Whatever may be the case, this much seems to be sure that Kierkegaard prizes relation to God on the march of spirit's journey to Him through three main life-stages, namely, aesthetic, ethical, and religious. The third is achieved through a *leap to faith* which is as *risky* as *important*.

Sociological reduction reduces man to the world of men—society. This reduction has much in common with Hegel's cosmological reduction, but it differs sharply from that in that it replaces the 'Weltvernunft' by man as a productive agent in relation to production in society. Marx may be said to have practised this type of reduction in his social philosophy. This reduction is deadly opposed to what we may term *individualistic reduction* which may be practised in different ways as it forms part of Kierkegaardian *individualistic-theological reduction* or,

we shall see, of an *individualistic-existential reduction* after the manner of Heidegger or Sartre. By way of criticism we may say that both these reductions (sociological as well as individualistic) taken in themselves are massive abstractions: for the reality of man is both social and individual at the same time, which is the reflection of man as *Erlebnis* in living relations with the men and the society. Sociological reduction may also be termed a 'collectivistic' one; for the individual loses his identity and importance and lives simply as a part of the whole.

By *anthropological reduction*, I should mean not any reduction to an individual 'I' (as it is the case with some of the existentialists) but to the *anthropos*—the man, a *he*; a concrete reality of *I* and *thou* as Martin Buber conceives it. It is this man which is the beginning and end of all philosophizings. Feuerbach's philosophical anthropology may be said to have practised this reduction. The man as he understands him is the name given to a living unity of man in society where neither man nor society is unduely emphasized. It is thus that anthropological reduction avoids abstraction and still does philosophy in the name of man.

Existential reduction is accomplished when man is considered essentially in relation to himself. His relation with the world of objects, on the one hand and with the world of human beings on the other is no doubt recognized but the former as a relation of *Besorgen* whereas the latter as *Fursorge*. Both the relations according to Heidegger are necessarily there with the *Dasein* but Heidegger seems to maintain that none of them exhausts the essence of *Dasein*. It is in this sense that I would prefer to put Heidegger under this head. Even in Sartre, one may, I suppose, show the same tendencies. Sartre's man essentially is the *consciousness of lack* which sometimes culminates in our sense of an ever alienated *other*. The other is an existent which my consciousness can neither *digest fully* nor can afford to *vomit it out*. It is in this sense that we may characterize man as a *digested indigestible*, a phrase used by Sartre himself but slightly in a different context in his *Being and Nothingness*.¹

The execution of *naturalistic reduction* seems to be the vaguest but the most frequent among all that we have counted here. This reduction is practised by those philosophers who somehow or other maintain the thesis: it is *natural* that the reality of man

¹ See, Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, part four, chapter two,

is as it is. A state of affair is as it is because of *nature*. Hume seems to have given the classical expression to this in his conviction that "Nature, by an absolute and uncontrollable necessity has determined us to judge as well as to breath and feel. . . ."²

What I have to say against this reduction is that it is as ambiguous as important. Its great risk is counterbalanced by its as great an importance, if not more. In case of Hume it is difficult to work out his theory of nature ; for he seems to use the term nature in so very many senses. Sometimes it is nature in a sense of an all comprehensive nature including all *that is*. Man here forms a part of this nature.³ Sometimes Hume uses the term in the sense of *human nature alone*. This naturalistic reduction may be said to have been formulated in different ways. The world is reduced to atomic facts in terms of *truth-functional* logic. Scientific empiricism, physicalism, and behaviourism are some other ways of formulating the same reduction.⁴

The same theory of the practice of reduction is meant when certain philosophers talk of doing philosophy either in the name of God, or man, or nature, or society, etc. Keeping in view the fact that man is a many-sided phenomenon living at different levels theoretical as well as practical, I would put forward my arguments in favour of one without meaning thereby that others may be false. Anthropological reduction as explained above is preferable because : (i) it avoids the massive abstraction done by the individualistic as well as sociological reductions ; (ii) it also avoids reducing man to God as it is the case with the theological reduction ; (iii) it steers clear through the naturalistic reduction of Hume and the existentialistic one of Heidegger ;

² Hume's Treatise, p. 183.

³ See chapter on *Human Nature*.

⁴ Max Planck in his *Der Kausalbegriff in der Physik* maintains that some sort of reduction is always being done—be it in the world of sense (Sinnenwelt) or physical world or the relation between the two. "Während in der Sinnenwelt die Voraussage eines Ereignisses immer mit einer gewissen Unsicherheit behaftet ist, verlaufen im physikalischen Weltbild alle Ereignisse nach bestimmten angebbaren Gesetzen, sie sind kausal streng determiniert. Daher wird durch Einführung des physikalischen Weltbildes—und darin liegt seine Bedeutung—die Unsicherheit in der Voraussage eines Ereignisses der Sinnenwelt reduziert auf die Unsicherheit der Übertragung des Ereignisses aus der Sinnenwelt auf das Weltbild, sowie der Rückübersetzung aus dem Weltbild in die Sinnenwelt" p. 10.

(iv) man in this reduction is taken in his full reality of existence which is nothing but the living life full of living relations in relation to all *that is* ; (v) all problems from the most simple to the most complex and from the most concrete to the most abstract are the problems *due to, of, for man*. What I wish to affirm here is that man is everywhere—in the activity of a farmer as well as of a mathematician and artist ; (vi) it uses man more as an *explaining-principle* than something to be explained ; (vii) anthropological reduction starts with the *concrete man* who is as much the creator of society as created by it ; (viii) although man lives at different levels and a genetic approach is as pressing as a systematic one still man is the source of unification expressing an inter-systematic unity.

My thesis in other words may be put as follows : I am never given to myself, that is I am never present to myself as a *pure I* in a contentless abstraction as was the demand of the German idealism regarding the transcendental I. Platonic tradition in so far as it claims some such pure presentation in its diverse forms suffers from the defect that it is never so given. No I however pure and reduced it may be can be without body. Man is inextricably and genetically originally a socialized being. There are philosophers who may and do maintain that this observation is self-evident, profoundly true and trivial. But they forget that an understanding of this *matter of course* is of far-reaching importance to philosophy theoretically as well as practically. Husserl emphatically says that phenomenology in our sense is the science of *origins*, the *mother* of all knowledge. It is also *mother-earth* of all philosophical methods. This is what Husserl meant by his genetic phenomenology that really explains the possibility as well as understandability of the transcendent world through a reduction to the transcendental abilities of the transcendental ego.

Before Kant it is David Hume who maintained vaguely but constantly and insistently that *man is a mixed type of being*. It goes fully to the credit of Kant to have so sharply formulated in an unprecedented way the four major questions regarding man :

- (i) What can I know?
- (ii) What should I do?
- (iii) What should I hope for? and
- (iv) What is man?

discussed and determined by epistemology, moral philosophy, religion and anthropology respectively.

Before we go to show that Kantian anthropology promised much, should I say, in the name of Copernican revolution than fulfilled, we may see in analytic details what these much celebrated Kantian questions stand for.

The (i) *What can I know?* seems to mean : (a) that *I know* precedes *what can I know* in the sense of a life-attitude or *Lebensform* ; (b) that *this I know* does not seem to fall under *what can I know* ; (c) that *I do not know all* as well seems to precede *what can I know* in the sense of how far can I go in my knowledge ; (d) that *what can I know* (in the sense of how much) can be known in its full denotation and conotation if the question *what is man* is known to us.

The (ii) *what should I do?* seems to mean : (a) that *I do* precedes *what should I do* ; (b) that *I am* in that I already always do something ; (c) that this *I am in that I do* does not fall under *what should I do* ; (d) that I cannot do all that I wish to do, i.e., I am not all-powerful ; (e) that within the limited sphere of what I can do there is another sphere of *what should I do* in the sense of what is good for a being like man ; (f) that why or what for must I do what I have decided I should do ; (g) that *what should I do* bears an essential relation to the determination *what is man* ; (h) that *I do* precedes also the question why or what for.

The (iii) *What should I hope for?* seems to mean : (a) that *I hope* precedes *what should I hope for* ; (b) that as I am in that I do or act so also I hope in that I am or vice-versa ; (c) that this *I do hope* does not fall under *what should I hope for* ; (d) that much that is hoped for should not be hoped for ; (e) that I should hope for certain things seems to be suggested and determined by the fact *what should I do* ; (f) that *what should I hope for* gets its proper meaning in the light of a full-fledged science of man, namely, the answer to the question *what is man* ; (g) that the phenomenon *man* that I am is always conscious of lack which works as an extra incentive to our act of hoping for.

The (iv) *What is man?* seems to mean : (a) that *man is*, is a revelation as if at an animal faith level preceding the problem and the question *what is man* ; (b) that man is an anthropological

problem in the sense of his being problematic from time immemorial ; (c) that *What is man*, besides its being an anthropological problem, is an anthropological question meaning thereby that the phenomenon man may be determined keeping fully in view his relation to the world of things and beings ; (d) that unless this phenomenon *man* is known to us as to what it is the rest three questions may not be answered properly well ; (e) that the answers to the first three questions facilitate an answer to the fourth one, namely, *what is man* ; (f) that *what is man* may be explicated either (i) be relating him to himself, or (ii) by seeing him in relation to the world of things and beings, or (iii) by putting him in relation to an Absolute or God or (iv) by taking him at the same time the meeting ground of all these relations ; (g) that it is really question of the finitude of man. This is what Heidegger maintains while discussing *Kant and the problem of metaphysics* ; (h) that man's finitude in all other spheres—epistemological, moral, religious etc.—reflects the original finitude of the very being of man ; (i) that whatever man does he carries the essence of his being along with him.

Kant seems to have been well aware of the profound truth and relevance of (d) in the above (iv) as well as of its insurmountable difficulty. This may, perhaps, go to explain why Kant's anthropology remained imperfect and mostly pragmatic and psycho-genetic. The same thesis may be translated into the language of those philosophers who take Kant to task for his betrayal of Copernican revolution. Kant thus seems to have started doing philosophy by accepting in all openness (e) of the above (iv) but without being at the same time, I suppose, conscious of the fact that by so doing he drags in subconsciously many presuppositions which make his philosophy less radical than he claims it to be. This and some other considerations lead Husserl to pronounce that Kant's philosophy is less radical than what it ought to be. Not only the question *how synthetic judgments a priori are possible?* but many others get their meaning as if the classical physics were eternally true.

Any student of philosophy with much patience and insight can work out in fair details the answers to all the Kantian questions, particularly to his question *what is man* keeping in view the different types of reductions discussed here. One and the same question of epistemology or of moral philosophy gets

on a different colouring as it is seen in the context of different reductions.

Hume may be said to have worked out a simple but more developed anthropology by pointing to the different principles of human nature guiding human life. In this respect Hume's views seem to be saner than those of Kant and Hume's theory of man has a more modern look than that of Kant. So long as man remains a mixed character the fate of philosophy would ever remain an attempt of *learning* and *re-learning what is man* in proportion to our exploration of man in the world. Every human discipline has to remain more or less man-oriented.

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SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

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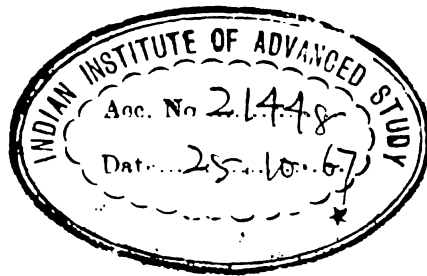
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INDEX

- Abstraction, 2, 5, 9, 16, 132-33
- Anthropology, ancient, 133; branches of, 2-3, 120; comparative, 61, 84; Kantian, 157, medieval, 8, 133; meta, 15, 17; philosophical, 1 ff., 116, 118-19; pre-philosophical, 5; pre-socratic, 7; religious, 136-37
- Anthropomorphism, 5; theomorphism 5, ethnocentrism, 5; antisemitism, 6
- Aristotle, 6, 146
- Association, 24, 131, 149; biological, 132; mechanistic, 132; natural, 148
- Belief, 62 ff.; natural theory of, 63: natural, 67
- Beattie, J., 26-27, 31, 33-34
- Besorgen, 154
- Berkeley, B., 23-24, 28, 31, 34, 58
- Berkowitz, L. 53
- Boswell, 136
- Buber, Martin, 154
- Causality, 44-45, 46-47, 48; natural explanation of, 75, 79, 113-14, 145; power theory of, 50, 54
- Cause, 60, 62, 69, 75
- Certainty, 65
- Cicero, 7
- Comte, A., 7-8
- Contradiction, 110; law of, 19; lived, 14
- Copernican revolution, Hume's, 81; Kant's, 81, 158
- Communication, 94, 97, 99-100
- Culture, 7-8
- Custom, 55 ff.
- Dasein, 154
- Descartes, R., 8-9, 12
- Dilthey, W., 2, 4, 8, 21, 133, 144
- Diogenes, 6
- Eliot, 29
- Epistemological transcendence, 86
- Erlebnis, 154
- Euclid, 43
- Existentialism, 13-14, 100, 121, 132
- Feuerbach, 8-10, 154
- Flew, A., 43
- Freud, S., 13
- Fürsorge, 154
- Gasset, Ortega Y, 3
- Gehlen, 3, 11
- God, 9 ff., 135
- Goethe, W. von, 5
- Habit, 55 ff.
- Heidegger, M., 3-4, 130, 153-54, 155, 158
- Hesiod, 5
- Heraclitus, 7
- Herodotus, 6
- Herder, G. von, 8, 114
- Hegel, G., 18, 131, 153
- Hendel, C. W., 18, 57, 59, 83, 101
- Herbart, 72
- Homer, 5
- Hobbes, 37, 51, 58-59, 94, 98, 108, 126-27, 133-34
- Human nature, 107 ff.
- Husserl, E., 130, 133, 141; his theory of bracketing, 141, 144, 156, 158
- Hutcheson, 24, 32, 36-37, 38-39, 139-40, 147-48
- James, W., 14, 145
- Jaspers, K., 3, 14
- Judgment, aesthetic, 39; analytic,

- 43, 67 ; moral, 104, 147 ; value, 38, 103
 Justice, innate theory of, 102 ; rationalistic theory of, 101
 Kant, I. 8-9, 18-20, 26, 34, 41, 44, 46-47, 54, 63-64, 67, 72, 80, 82, 89-90, 93, 98, 112, 114, 116, 130, 133, 144, 156, 158, 159
 Kierkegaard, S., 13, 132, 153
 Knowledge, 21, 64, 69, 112
 Kydd, R., 103
 Landmann, M., 8, 120
 Language, 146-47
 Lebensphilosophie, 12
 Lebenswelt, 13, 121, 152
 Leibniz, 60, 149
 Lenz, W., 84-85
 Locke, John, 23, 25, 27, 34, 94, 124, 127, 133-34
 Locke-Berkeley tradition, 26 ff., 31 ff., 67
 Litt, T., 3
 Man, as *homo sapiens* and *homo faber*, 4, 7-8, 10-13, 15, 17, 19-20, 36, 124 ; as an anthropological problem, 157 ; as an anthropological question, 157-58 ; as a believing and moral being, 67, 116, 140 ; as an asking being, 143, 147, 149, 151, 153, 154, 156 ; compared to animals, 134-35 ; compared to God, 134-35 ; as a knowing being, 140 ; as a lacking creature, 71, 98-99, 108, 116, 130, 133 ; natural interpretation of, 139
 Marx, K., 13, 153
 Mead, G., 11
 Meleker, M., 81
 Metaphysical rest, 109, 113, 115, 121
 Mill, John, Stuart, 101, 129
 Mill, B., 129
 Mohanty, J. N., 145
 Montesquieu, 101
 Montaigne, 58-59
 Morals, Aristotle's theory of, 146 ; benevolent theory of, 37 ; moral sense, 38-39, 105, 145 ; Plato's theory of, 146-47 ; selfish theory of, 126 ; natural theory of, 128
 Necessity, logical, 21, 125 ; psychological, 48 ; life, 115
 Newton, I., 53, 147-48
 Nietzsche, F., 3, 13, 41, 121, 132
 Occam, 72
 Olsen, R., 153
 Other, 154
 Passmore, J., 53
 Pascal, B., 8
 Plessner, 3, 10-11
 Philosophy, 1, 159 ; obvious, 123 ; obtruse, 123 ; academic, 124
 Philosopher's fallacy, 35
 Plank, M., 155
 Platonic tradition, 156
 Portmann, A., 12
 Protagoras, 7-8
 Plato, 8
 Price, H. H., 77-78, 80
 Phenomenology, genetic, 156 ; method, 32, 96, 112, 132, 151, 156 ; Psychology, descriptive, 2, 133 ; explanatory, 16, 95-96 ; psychologizing, 16
 Quast, O., 66
 Reason, 32, 36, 37, 49, 68, 71, 76, 79, 102, 111, 114, 122, 130, 141, 144, 147 ; analytic, 44 ; a priori, 49 ; natural, 39
 Reduction, 151 ; anthropological, 154-55, 156 ; collectivistic, 154 ; cosmological, 153 ; existential, 153 ; eidetic, 152 ; individualistic, 153 ; Husserl's phenomenological theory of, 152 ; naturalistic, 154-55 ; sociological, 153-55 ; theological, 153, 155
 Reid, 25-26, 27, 33-34
 Russell, B., 19, 47, 86

- Sartre, J. P., 6, 17, 135, 149, 153-54
 Scheler, M., 4, 10-11, 15, 96, 98,
 116-17, 133, 135
 Schiller, F., 6
 Schopenhauer, A., 13, 72
 Sigwart, 52
 Sophists, 6, 8
 Socrates, 7, 83, 92, 102, 131
 Smith, N. K., 17, 24, 30, 36, 39, 54,
 87-88, 104, 112, 139, 142
 Stephen, L., 23-24
 Shaftesbury, 24-25
 Stewart, 33
 Strahn, 137
 Sympathy, 92 ff.
- Thought, 1-2, 12-13
 Thucydides, 6
 Traditional interpretation of Hume,
 23 ff.
 Uekesul, 1
 Universal, 59
 Vaihinger, H., 11
 Wallace, 18
 World-openness, 11
 Xenophanes, 5



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