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STUDIES AND ARTICLES

STUDIJE I ČLANCI



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## HUME'S THEORY OF SOCIAL CONSTITUTION OF THE SELF

### ABSTRACT

Hume distinguishes between the self of thought and imagination and the self of the passions. He is criticized for contradicting himself as he allegedly attributes fictitiousness to the self in book one of the *Treatise* but later reintroduces the self in books two and three. Hume's account of the idea of the self, however, is not contradictory: he shows the impossibility of a pure associationist-empiricist account of the self. Instead, he proposes a social account of the constitution of the idea of the self and consciousness. In doing so, Hume's account of the self anticipates social-historical theories of the self.

### KEYWORDS

Hume, consciousness, self, subjectivity

### The Humean Riddle

Hume, in his *Treatise*, distinguishes two aspects of the self: “[P]ersonal identity, as it regards our thoughts or imagination.... and as it regards our passions or the concern we take about ourselves” (2006: 165).

Hume is usually criticized for accepting the existence of an idea of the self at the beginning of Book 2, whereas earlier he denies having any such idea. Conceptualization of identity, despite the fact that people are constantly changing, seems almost contradictory. According to Penelhum (2000), Hume's account of personal identity is confusing because he “ascribes to the self (in Book 1) a tendency to confuse invariance and succession in telling us how we come to generate the fiction of continuing identity; such a story seems to ascribe a continuing reality to the mind in the very process of showing how the belief in it can come to exist where there are only successive perceptions to constitute it.” Penelhum maintains that the source of unattainability of a solution to Hume's account of personal identity is Hume's mistaken supposition that taking a succession of similar impressions to constitute the identity of a thing is contradictory (2000: 29-30). For instance, as is with the case of a musical theme made of successive notes, the theme is a single entity made of parts. However, there still remains the problem, which Penelhum apparently ignores: how do we attribute identity to the theme? How do we, at the first place, attribute identity to a note? Hume suggests that if an atomistic logic is

adopted, then we cannot attribute any identity to any entity. Penelhum seemingly assumes the existence of a factor that is responsible for unity and identity of things, but he does not provide any account of it. He thus attributes to Hume the view that a thing remains identical to itself only if the thing remains unchanged (2000: 30). However, Hume's comparison of the state and human's identity of the self, shows that he is aware that we do correctly attribute identity to things despite the changes they undergo. His question is how do we do this? What is the source of idea of identity in general and idea of an enduring self in particular?

Epistemologically, Hume shows that a number of questions cannot be resolved properly within the associationist framework. Causality and the idea of the self are among them.

The emergence of the idea of the self, on Hume's account, is not a process of the socialization of an individual atomic self; human beings are social entities from the outset; they have to be differentiated and individuated as selves against a social background. The view that considers the negative epistemological account of the self in Book 1 and the social-passionate accounts of the self in Books 2 and 3 contradictory ignores this aspect: Hume's account of epistemology is based on his account of society and history; epistemological and metaphysical questions are questions that belong to humans only and humans are social entities; they are concrete beings and not personifications of an abstract human essence or substance. In this, Hume's social model anticipates cultural-historical and socio-historical approaches to the concept of the self.

Hume, presumably, shows that a "pure" epistemological account of identity and many other epistemological problems is not attainable; but this does not exclude the possibility and desirability of a resolution of such problems socio-psychologically. Identity is conceptual, but this does not make it less real. If the social and psychological genesis of concepts and conceptual frameworks is accounted for, then the real source of idea of identity is determined.

The idea of the self is caused by the passions; it is constituted socially via language and the exercise of sympathy. Hence, in the following, Hume's social theory of constitution of the self will be reconstructed within the wider context of his general philosophy pertaining to his views on concept-formation (ideas), language, sympathy, and the passions. According to Hume, pride and humility are indirect passions and their object is one and the same: the self (2006: 182). Although pride and humility are possible only with regard to the self, and despite the fact that the self is the object of these passions, it is not their cause. Pride and humility are passions that are located between two ideas. The first idea, which is the productive principle, causes pride and humility. The second idea is the self, which is the object of these passions and is produced by these passions (2006: 183). Hume enumerates a number of qualities as the causes of pride and humility, such as imagination, judgment, memory, etc., which are not confined to the mind, but also pertain to the body (2006: 183). The social nature of all these qualities is worth noticing; they are realizable and meaningful in a community of shared beliefs, customs and value-judgments. Thus,

Hume includes country, family, children, relations, and property among such qualities (2006: 183). These passions and the related qualities are not mere abstractions, but are related to us materially. For instance, speaking of beauty, Hume states: “Beauty, consider’d merely as such, unless placed upon something related to us, never produces any pride or vanity; and the strongest relation alone, without beauty, or something else in its place, has as little influence on that passion” (2006: 183). Beauty is not conceivable unless it is a property of some object. This object has to be related to us where such relatedness requires that the object is in a world that is defined by beliefs, customs, habits, value judgments etc. Knowledge, even in its purest epistemological sense, is acquirable only within these social relations. Thus, differentiating between the so-called “epistemological” and “instinctive” (“passionate”) selves seems artificial.

The notions of the “epistemological” and the “passionate” selves do not signify two distinct selves, but different continuous stages of a single self. For instance, when deducing the idea of causality through making an analogy with will power, and with reference to pure epistemological data based upon raw impressions of the individual person, Hume argues that our command over our mind has certain limits—we cannot claim total sovereignty over it. Moreover, it is not possible precisely to fix the boundaries of our authority—meaning the boundaries of our individual selves—unless we consult experience: “In short, the actions of the mind are, in this respect, the same with those of matter. We perceive only their constant conjunction; nor can we ever reason beyond it. No internal impression has an apparent energy, more than the external objects have” (2006: 108).

Hume argues that there is no absurdity in reflecting the principle of distinctness and separability of impressions onto external objects (2006: 398). However, the reflexive perception of one’s own self consists of one or more perceptions and what is perceived reflexively is but perceptions. The idea of the self signifies the reflexive consciousness of those perceptions:

We can conceive a thinking being to have either many or few perceptions. Suppose the mind to be reduced even below the life of an oyster. Suppose it to have only one perception, as of thirst or hunger. Consider it in that situation. Do you conceive anything but merely that perception? Have you any notion of *self* or *substance*? If not, the addition of other perceptions can never give you that notion. (2006: 399)

A more accurate account of the Humean theory of the self would be as follows: Hume rejects the essentialist account of identity. On the other hand, in Books 2 and 3 of the *Treatise*, he explicitly proposes the existence of an idea of the self which is not necessarily unchanging. Hume’s reference to the alterability of the self in both space and time is strong evidence that he is working with the strange, paradoxical, and conflicting idea of a changing yet identical self. He dismisses the existence of a substantial self as the basis upon which the idea of an unchanging self is formed; however, he discovers and explains, in a rudimentary way, the idea of a socially constituted self.

Despite efforts to reconcile the seemingly contradictory conceptions of the self in the *Treatise*, many scholars seem to dismiss the question, concentrating on personal identity either as it regards thought, or as it regards passions. Jamie Ferreira (1994) focuses on the latter and dismisses the question of the metaphysical self, touching on the question only briefly, when she tries to define the imagination's role with reference to sympathy. Similarly, Tony Pitson (1986) focuses upon Hume's view concerning other selves as if it is a question in Cartesian tradition: "are the bodies that surround me mere bodies or do they have minds?" Pitson tries to relate the issue of other minds to the question of the content of perception in order to reconcile the two aspects of Hume's consideration of the self. Jane McIntyre (1989) tries to reconcile these two aspects by claiming that the principle of identity, which is discussed in Book 1, does not exhaust the question of personal identity. Donald Ainslie (1999), on the other hand, tries to overcome the tension by drawing a parallel between Hume's "skeptical" account of objectivity and his view on the formation of belief with regard to other selves. Robert Anderson (1966) relates the above-mentioned tension to two Humean principles or premises: 1) "[w]hatever is conceivable is possible" and 2) "[w]hatever is different is separable by thought or by imagination" (3). Conceivability requires clarity and distinctness, where this clarity and distinctness is supposed not to involve any contradiction. Since we have an idea of our self, we should assume that we have an impression of it, even if it is perceived at a time that we are not aware of. The presence of an impression of the self signifies the existence of the self as a distinct entity. Yet another inference is possible: if we do not have an impression of the self, then the idea of our own self must be an illusion, a mere fiction because the lack of an impression of the self signifies its non-existence. Eugenio Lecaldano (2002) addresses the problem of the relation between the epistemological and passionate selves and admits that, in recent Humean scholarship, the interpretation that these two notions are contradictory is no longer tenable (175). Nevertheless, in agreement with Baier and Purviance, he states that Hume abandons the notion of the self as a bundle of perceptions (Book 1 of the *Treatise*) and introduces a new notion of self (Book 2) (2002: 180). However, such a claim, instead of addressing the question that pertains to the relation between these two conceptualizations, aims at eliminating the question by giving up one of the notions.

For Hume, the self is nothing but the bundle of perceptions meaning that the self has no reality over and beyond the series of perceiving acts. It is a bundle of activities, but it does not require an already existing agent. The agency is constituted as the act is actualized. This is to say that the formation of the self as a consequence of perceptual acts is a process of the individuation of the human person, which at the outset is born into social surroundings. It is not the transporting of perception onto an internal realm but the building of the internal realm through and with the perceptual activity. It is a process of interiorization. Meaning that, there is no stage or place prior to *act* of perception upon which the perceptions are located. Rather, the activity and the making of the self are one and the same. Penelhum is right in saying that the

making of the self or the constitution of personal identity is not a logical construction (2000: 112). Yet, this does not mean that Hume simply dismisses the self or considers it a mere fiction. It may be said that Hume tries to show the impossibility of providing a satisfactory account of the self that is solely based on an empiricist, associationist epistemology. He resolves the riddle of the self with reference to passions, sentiments and to social processes. Thus, we do add something to “mind’s survey of the sequence of our perceptions that is not in the objects surveyed but has the mind’s survey of them as its source” (Penelhum 2000: 112), but this is not a consequence of associative mechanisms. Associative mechanisms are unable to explain how the mind comes to perceive an individual perception as one particular perception, which will later resemble another distinct but similar perception. In other words, associative epistemology cannot explain how the very first perception takes place so that the train of resembling perceptions begins.

### The Bundle of Perceptions

In the *Treatise* Hume introduces the idea that internal perceptions are not always simple but are often compound and complex (2006: 157). Hume relates self-identity to perceptions in general, i.e., the mind is supposed to be nothing but a bundle of perceptions. There is no essence to the mind. Hume states, “mankind ... [is] nothing [but] a bundle or a collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement.” He also maintains that there is no impression from which the idea of the self is derived; hence there exists no idea of the self. Our existence depends upon our perceptions without which we may be said not to exist (2006: 165).

For Hume, the perceiving self is not a passive construction of random perceptions and impressions. In the *Appendix*, he states: “[T]he annihilation, which some people suppose to follow upon death, and which entirely destroys this self, is nothing but an extinction of all particular perceptions; love and hatred, pain and pleasure, thought and sensation. These therefore must be the same with self; since the one cannot survive the other” (2006: 399). There is no real constancy and identity of the self; rather, there is an ability or force, which must be involved, for the emergence of the idea. Imagination, by mistaking the resemblance between the successive perceptions for sameness, produces the idea of a substantial, identical self.

Imagination is not alone in creating such an idea; it works together with sympathy:

But this is still more remarkable, when we add a sympathy of parts to their *common end*, and suppose that they bear to each other, the reciprocal relation of cause and effect in all their actions and operations. This is the case with all animals and vegetables; where not only several parts have a reference to some general purpose, but also a mutual dependence on, and connexion with each

other. The effect of so strong a relation is, that tho' every one must allow, that in a very few years both vegetables and animals endure a *total* change, yet we still attribute identity to them, while their form, size, and substance are entirely altr'd. (2006: 68)<sup>1</sup>

The question, then, is whether the multitude of perceptions is really unified by the so-called identity of the mind, or these ideas are only associated by imagination to construct an identity. Hume goes on: "Identity is nothing really belonging to these different perceptions, and uniting them together, but merely a quality, which we attribute to them, because of the union of their ideas in the imagination, when we reflect upon them" (2006: 169). This unity is based upon three principles: resemblance, contiguity, and causation. The most important ones are resemblance and causation.

Hume explains the relationship between the sympathetic and epistemological selves by emphasizing that the formation of impressions requires a value-laden ground that transcends the self:

Whatever other objects may be comprehended by the mind, they are always consider'd with a view to ourselves; otherwise they wou'd never be able either to excite these passions, or produce the smallest encrease or diminution of them. When self enters not into the consideration, there is no room either for pride or for humility. But tho' that connected succession of perceptions, which we call *self*, be always the object of these two passions, 'tis impossible it can be their CAUSE, or be sufficient alone to excite them. (2006: 182)

The nature of the self is changeable and inconstant. For Hume, every perception is a different existence, and he admits that there is no perception of a real connection between these different existences. The self cannot confine itself to one passion only. As Hume states, "[h]uman nature is too inconstant to admit of any such regularity. Changeableness is essential to it" (2006: 186). There is something that organizes the sequence of perceptions without which one is nothing and relates it to the perceptions of external objects. There is a parallel between the external object and the internal self. The apparent constancy of the internal or the mental, i.e., the constancy of the self, is based upon the apparent constancy of the external goods and the perceptions one possesses of these external objects.<sup>2</sup> We should note that other subjects too could be considered sources of the idea of stability. External subjects bring together perception and sympathy as the necessary basis for an idea of the self.<sup>3</sup>

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1 See also 2006: 169.

2 Annette Baier (1979), states: "It is reasonable to expect that attention to external objects, to the heap of possessions of one possessor, will be needed before one can discern an enduring stable person in the continual revolutions of perceptions."

3 Capaldi introduces the precognitive self as the unifying element that keeps the fluctuating self together and refers to it as Hume's great philosophical discovery. "The unity of consciousness as the preconceptual condition or content of conceptualization emerges as a fundamental discovery in Hume" (1985: 278).



Another basic feature of the idea of the self is that it resembles itself. Even though it is in a state of perpetual flux, the idea of the self is associated with itself. This resemblance is based upon certain properties of human nature.<sup>4</sup> Resemblance and contiguity are necessary conditions for the existence of the self. Something which is not presented to us “has no manner of influence on our vanity” (2006: 198). The formative impact of the relationship between sense perception and the perceived object is a reciprocal one; each requires the existence of the other: “Ourself, independent of the perception of every other object, is in reality nothing: For which reason we must turn our view to external objects; and it is natural for us to consider with most attention such objects as lie contiguous to us, or resemble us” (2006: 221).

### The Passions and the Individuation of the Self

Hume states that “ourself is intimately present to us, and whatever is related to self must partake of that quality” (2006: 274). Intimacy is not one’s immediate access to one’s own self. Rather, it is the expression of the existence of the self in a particular space, namely concrete bodily existence, and a particular succession of moments, namely imagination. Hume then states:

[T]he imagination can never totally forget the points of space and time, in which we are existent; but receives such frequent advertisements of them from the passions and senses, that however it may turn its attention to foreign and remote objects, it is necessitated every moment to reflect on the present. (2006: 274)

One’s access to the self, thus understood, is as mediated and external as one’s access to any object. Our concern about our self is the result of spatial contiguity that we have with our body, since “[c]ontiguous objects must have an influence much superior to the distant and remote” (2006: 274). This spatial proximity to one’s own self adds to one’s idea of identity in time because, as mentioned above, distance in space is more influential in determining the vivacity of ideas of objects than distance in time.

The idea of space is the expression of coexistence of certain parts in a certain order, whereas the idea of time consists in the succession of these parts so that not all of them are present to one’s senses simultaneously. This incompleteness provokes the participation of the imagination when the identity of objects in time is at stake. Yet, imagination’s role in forming the idea of identity is not a fantastic one, but a consequence of the logical passing from a present idea to an idea in the future. So, the identity of the self in space and time is determined by the same rules that determine the relation between ideas and impressions in general, because “ourselves [are] existent in a point of time interpos’d betwixt the present instance and the future object” (2006: 276).

We form the idea of ourselves based on the idea of others, through forming the impressions of another’s self. As Hume states: “Every human creature

4 For the explanation of these properties see 2006: 185–186.

resembles ourselves, and by that means has an advantage above any other object, in operating on imagination" (2006: 232). The formation of ideas requires proximity and contiguity together with resemblance. The only place where these conditions can be fulfilled is in society, since there can be no such thing as an impression of my own self, independent of others. In order to form an idea of myself, I need the other to reflect the impressions resembling myself that result in the idea of my own self. As Hume puts it, "[i]n general 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 by insensible degrees" (2006: 236). The object of the perception of self can be another subject as well as one's own self. One knows oneself through others.<sup>5</sup> Sympathy, in this respect, is a lively idea that one has about the other's self, which has been turned into an impression of the self (2006: 248).

A particular self is different from all others due to the fact that it represents a unique bundle of perceptions. The whole critical standpoint of the Humean notion of the self is based on the rejection of any type of essentialism.<sup>6</sup> Hume's answer to this question more or less resembles Locke's consideration of the matter, where Locke addresses the question of the identity of *man*, whose identity consists in the preservation and continuance of the same life (1975: 321-322). The non-substantialist consideration of the self may be named formal-existential: the existence of a particular thing (be it an object or a person) requires the appearance of that thing in a certain form, so that it can be differentiated from all other things. The uniqueness of the particular thing suffices to define the particularity of that thing from all others. As Capaldi puts it, "what Hume needs to be able to use in the accounts of the indirect passions and the mechanism of sympathy is primarily the idea of oneself as distinct from others. This means that Hume has to take for granted that there is some answer to the problem of individuation" (1985: 87). It seems that Hume starts with other selves and that individuation happens only against such a background.

Baier states that "In Book Two [Hume] seems to realize that the best picture of the human soul is the human body, so he can speak of 'qualities of our mind and body, that is self'" (1991: 131). The notion of the body signifies the plural nature of the self. We cannot propose a satisfying answer to this question if we insist on basing our notion of personal identity entirely upon a solipsistic account. Such an account results in an irresolvable tension.<sup>7</sup> The question is as follows: Is there a possibility of forming a notion of the self if I am *the only* existing entity? Unless one presupposes the existence of a substantial self, one cannot claim that one has an impression, hence an idea of the self. It seems that to proceed from a bundle of perceptions towards the formation of the notion of the self is impossible.

5 See also Capaldi 1985: 279.

6 For a detailed discussion, see Capaldi 1975, chapter 7.

7 See Anderson 1996, chapters 4 and 9.

Reflexive impressions or passions that raise sentiments precede the formation of any judgment concerning oneself; they even precede the formation of the idea of the self. So, the line of reasoning that reduces the love for the other into a derivative of self-love proceeds in the wrong direction, since it is only through the reflexive impressions and passions that love is first exercised. One's love always has to be directed towards "some sensible being external to" oneself (2006: 214). In other words, oneself, if taken by itself, is not a truly sensible being but an abstraction only. The common mistake of most people is to consider the self and the other as simple binaries. In such an approach, either the "I" is reduced to the other, or the other is reduced to the "I". However, in such a case, we cannot escape the vicious circle of the absolute dissolution of the self or of the other empathetically. One does not identify oneself with the other; rather he or she constitutes oneself in resemblance to the other; one acts as if the other's perceptions were one's own.

In the section on virtue in Book 3 of the *Treatise*, Hume speaks of the influence of morals over actions and passions. Contrary to morals, reason has no such influence. Hume concludes, "the rules of morality are not conclusions of our reason" (2006: 294). Morality is active, whereas reason is inactive. The inactivity of reason means that it does not exert any power upon passions and actions. All shapes and appearances of reason share this inactivity (2006: 294).

Hume compares vice and virtue to sound, color, heat and cold, pointing that these latter qualities do not reside in the object but belong to the human mind. Like physical qualities that are not produced but only discovered by reason, moral qualities are not produced but are feelings that can only be distinguished. However, like the qualities attributed to objects, these feelings are sentiments that are felt by humans. Vice and virtue are objects of feeling and not objects of reason (2006: 301). This is more evidence for the priority of passions over sensation and reason. This priority, in turn, means that impressions of passion are actualizations of impressions of sensation and reason. Unless actualized, impressions of sensation are mere abstractions that are devoid of any concrete content and meaning. This is another way to explain the tension between reason and the passions, which according to Hume, is responsible for the diversification of a self with regard to others, and for the alterability of that self with regard to itself (2006: 280).

### **Impressions of Sensation and Impressions of Reflection**

Hume divides impressions into original and secondary. This corresponds to an earlier division of impressions into "impressions of sensation" and "impressions of reflection". The former arise directly from perception, whereas the latter proceeds from the former. All impressions of the senses belong to the former; all passions and emotions belong to the latter. Yet, in the final analysis, all impressions are impressions of passion, even those impressions that Hume calls impressions of sensation or direct impressions. This means that even the purest epistemological activities of the human mind are determined

by humanity's social being. For instance, when it comes to the ideas of cause and effect, Hume rejects the view that these ideas are perceptible per se. To the contrary, he introduces experience as particular human experience, and as that factor that makes the understanding of the ideas of cause and effect possible:

'Tis only from experience and observation of [the] constant union [of different objects], that we are able to form this inference [that causality exists]; and even after all, the inference is nothing but the effects of custom on the imagination. We must not here be content with saying, that the idea of cause and effect arises from objects constantly united; but must affirm, that 'tis the very same with the idea of these objects, and that the *necessary connexion* is not discover'd by a conclusion of the understanding, but is merely a perception of the mind. (2006: 261)

Hume maintains that human nature is insufficient by itself, not only for physical survival but also for the actualization of human skills and abilities. Without society, human nature would fail to provide the lively sensations and passions that agitate the spirit. Others communicate their actions and ideas to us and in this way these ideas participate in producing passions that belong to one's own. An idea of a passion is more agreeable than any other idea "because such an idea becomes a kind of passion, and gives a more sensible agitation to the mind, than any other image or conception" (2006: 228). Passions that are agitated by others, and actions that have become habitual due to continual acquaintance and repetition, strengthen the conception of any object. Hume further explains the active role of human interaction by reference to the role of education (2006: 229). This also shows the social aspect of Hume's conceptualization of the notion of the self, which is the object of passions.

In the section "of malice and envy" of the *Treatise*, Hume maintains that human impressions and ideas are not mere epistemological abstractions. He asks the question: how similar impressions and ideas can result into the rise of different judgments concerning the same object? (2006: 240) He is aware that the relation between impressions and objects of impressions, or to put it more clearly, the relation between perceiver and the perceived, is not a simple mechanical reflection of an object upon the mind. Hume admits that the variation of judgments should in principle be caused by some variation in impressions, but the variation of impressions is caused by the variation in reflexive impressions that accompany every impression and idea. In other words, impressions of perception are subordinate to impressions of reflection. Hume states, "no object is presented to the senses, nor image form'd in the fancy, but what is accompany'd with some emotion or movement of spirits proportion'd to it" (2006: 240).

## A (Probable) Humean Theory of Language

Paul Árdal (1977) criticizes Hume's so-called official view to the effect that the meaning of words is a mental image. (Cowley (1968) interprets Hume's view of language along these same lines.) A consideration of Hume's rudimentary

account of language will show that the depiction of Humean philosophy as a kind of individualist atomism is not plausible. In the chapter of the *Treatise*, 'Of Abstract Ideas,' Hume clearly rejects the view that meanings or words are private mental images (Árdal 1977: 53-54).

Even though Hume maintains that ideas are images of impressions, and that there are ideas that are images of other ideas, we should note that the word "image," as used by Hume, does not necessarily signify eidetic entities. That ideas are images of impressions is more likely to mean that they are reflections of, and derived from, impressions. As Hume writes,

[T]he principle of the priority of impressions to ideas must be understood with another limitation, *viz.* that as our ideas are images of our impressions, so we can form secondary ideas, which are images of the primary; as appears from this very reasoning concerning them. This is not, properly speaking, an exception to the rules so much as an explanation of it. Ideas produce the images of themselves in new ideas; but as the first ideas are suppos'd to be deriv'd from impressions, it still remains true, that all our simple ideas proceed, either mediately or immediately, from their correspondent impressions. (2006: 10)<sup>8</sup>

The expression "image," as it is used here, designates the priority of impressions over ideas.

For Hume the correspondence between simple impressions and ideas shows that they depend on one another. "Such a constant conjunction [between impressions and ideas], can never arise from chance; but clearly proves a dependence of the impressions on the ideas, or of the ideas on the impressions" (2006: 9). This adds to the evidence that, for Hume, perceiving is not a passive process where objects influence the mind. Rather, the mind plays an almost equal role in perceiving the objects, by forming impressions and ideas of the object of perception. The causal connection, which the human mind draws between impressions and ideas, is based on the empirical awareness of the precedence of the former over the latter. However, it is not reason that produces the relation of cause and effect between objects. Hume argues that although reason is aided by past experience and continuous conjunction of objects, passing from one object to the belief about the existence of another is not determined by reason. Rather, different objects are united in the imagination so that causality "depends solely on the union of ideas" (2006: 64). This is to say that, it is participation of the mind via imagination that gives rise to the idea of cause and effect. Hume maintains that causation, as the basis of reasoning, is not a philosophical relation but a natural one (2006: 65); in other words, the idea of causation is rooted in human nature. Similarly, in the section "Of the Causes of Belief" Hume makes the social basis of the formation of the idea of cause and

8 Hume goes on to say that "We may observe, that in order to prove the ideas of extension and colour not to be innate, philosophers do nothing but shew, that they are conveyed by our senses... Now if we carefully examine these arguments, we shall find that they prove nothing but that ideas are preceded by other more lively perceptions, from which they are derived, and which they represent." (2006: 10)

effect even clearer, by claiming that belief adds a structural strength to, and enlivens, ideas. Belief changes the form of conceiving of ideas; and it does so with the aid of custom or habit. Belief is founded on a present impression that will become a custom through repetition. Therefore, every belief is rooted in custom. Thus, belief is described as a more vivid and intense conception of an idea, which proceeds from relation to a present impression (2006: 71). Belief, in this sense, is reflexive, since it is an enlivened and enforced idea, and ideas belong to the mind. The whole process of conceiving not only impressions but also notions and ideas is also of a reflexive character. Custom and habit operate upon imagination and other faculties whenever conception and apprehension takes place. Martin Bell (2005) states that, although Hume seemingly aims at founding all knowledge on experience, he is aware that experience as such is not sufficient to account for empirical beliefs. As Hume remarks: "Objects have no discoverable connexion together; nor is it from any other principle but custom operating upon the imagination, that we can draw any inference from the appearance of one to the existence of another" (2006: 72). Yet, Hume admits the precedence of objects of perception over formation of ideas, since it is always the impressions that appear first and then ideas (2006: 9).

Hume argues that "general ideas are nothing but particular ones, annexed to a certain term, which gives them a more extensive signification, and makes them recall upon occasion other individuals, which are similar to them" (2006: 17). In this Hume attributes a regulating role to language; i.e., language is depicted here as a tool that facilitates discovering regularities and generalizations in the world and communicate them to others. Hume's "instrumental" formulation of language conceptualizes language as an auxiliary symbolic system that facilitates manipulation of the external world and the subject's own behaviour. Moreover, Hume's differentiation between ideas and words can be interpreted as an initial effort to depart from a "naturalist" stance that reduces knowledge and action to immediate responses to stimuli and conditioned reflexes.

Language is an apparatus of socialization and humanization. Hume (1998) introduces justice and language as rooted in human convention. By "convention" Hume means "a sense of common interest; which sense each man feels in his own breast, which he remarks in his fellows, and which carries him, in concurrence with others, into a general plan or system of actions, which tends to public utility" (Hume 1998: 172). Language is supposed to be a tool – a "general plan or system" (1998: 72) – that functions for the utility of society. In this, the larger structure should not be ignored; "every man, in embracing that virtue, must have an eye to the whole plan or system" (1998: 72). Hume gives the examples of system of exchange and speech and words and language as activities that are organized through human convention:

Thus, two men pull the oars of a boat by common convention for common interest, without any promise or contact: thus gold and silver are made the measures of exchange; thus speech and words and language are fixed by human convention and agreement. (1998: 172)

This linguistic model signifies a structure – a shared world – that is the historical consequence of particular linguistic acts performed by individual participants. This structure is not only the genetic result of such actions, but is also the common ground upon which new linguistic acts can be performed and against which they can be verified. Moreover, the resulted structure is not a purely formal architectonic, but an open-ended totality that functions with reference to public criteria and social utility.

In a letter to Joseph Spence (1932) Hume argues the case for the forming of ideas that are not directly rooted in sensory impressions. Hume's position suggests a linguistic mediation that makes formation and association of ideas possible. Hume speaks of Mr. Blacklock, a blind poet (1932: 200). In answer to Hume's question whether he has an idea of light or colors, Blacklock says that in his reading of numerous books and poems, and in many conversations, he has met so often with terms expressing colors that he has formed some "false associations" of an intellectual kind. Hume, thus, makes a link between linguistic abilities, verbal thinking, and the formation of meaning and ideas: "I believe, in much of our thinking, there will be found some species of association. *It is certain we always think in some language*, viz. in that which is most familiar to us; and it is but too frequent to substitute words instead of ideas" (1932: 201). Thus, thinking, for Hume, does not require having non-verbal images. The limit of thinking is not set by the limits of imagination. Moreover, it indicates that Hume assumes a regulative function for language when it comes to thinking and the formation of ideas.

Hume states that every idea is annexed to a word that in turn produces the idea upon utterance. Once the word is uttered it is impossible for the mind to prevent the emergence of the idea annexed to that word. Moreover, the relation between the idea and the word is not one of remembering a past experience, or a simple association of a symbol with former experiences, but is one of signification actualized by the mind through imagination to produce the corresponding idea (2006: 65).

Apparently, Hume is aware that the relation between the word and the idea or the entity it denotes is initially contingent and conventional; however, it turns into a necessary relation so that the word, once uttered, as Hume notes, immediately picks out the particular idea or entity it has been annexed to. The meaning of the term is fixed only with the participation of imagination. Imagination in this regard functions as the mechanism that is responsible for the formation of concepts, the essence of which is the unity of word and meaning.

In the section "Of Abstract Ideas" Hume discusses the nature of general and abstract ideas and concludes that the common view, which attributes a general form of existence to abstract ideas, is erroneous. Abstract ideas, like any others, are particular and are finite in number. Thus the question arises, how are such particular and finite ideas general in their representations? Custom is responsible for such a general functioning (2006: 21). Moreover, when discussing the difficulties of attributing a general form of existence to abstract

ideas, Hume emphasizes the symbolic/semiotic nature of such ideas. Considering the idea of the self as a non-substantial concept, or to be more precise as an abstract idea, we can thus infer that the Humean notion of the self refers to some semiotic-ideational entity. Hume, furthermore, underlines the societal aspect of such a semiotic nature when refers to the habitual constitution of such a symbolic order. Hume states,

[W]e have several instances of habits, which may be revived by one single word; as when a person, who has by rote any periods of a discourse, or any number of verses, will be put in remembrance of the whole, which he is at a loss to recollect, by the single word or expression, with which they begin. (2006: 20)

Hume asserts a close link between the progress of thought and language; he also supposes ideas, abstract or particular, to be those elements that thought and imagination use for their development. Consequently, Hume's supposed system of language is a semiotic one that consists of signs signifying abstract and general ideas that are formed in the realm of impressions of passion. Language not only serves to communicate ideas, but due to its symbolic structure, serves the association of ideas and impressions. As far as the idea of the self is concerned, language assists the sympathetic communicating of ideas and impressions that are constituent elements of such an idea (See 2006: 21).

## The Function of Sympathy

According to Hume, sympathy is a feeling we have for those that are similar to us. Sympathy involves entering into the sentiments of others. Therefore we sympathize with those that most resemble us, physically and intellectually. In this sense, sympathy presupposes the existence of the "I" and of others as embodied, intellectual beings that are capable of communicating and conveying their sentiments to each other and understanding one another's states.

David M. Levy and Sandra J. Peart (2004) argue that Humean sympathy is similar to empathy. They base this on Hume's claim that self-love is one of the sources of sympathy. However, empathetic feeling is only one of the moments of sympathy. Sympathy is not only rooted in the passions of pride and humility, but in the opinion of others. What is at stake is not only my own self, as I perceive it internally, but my name as perceived by others. Hume explicitly states that "[o]ur reputation, our character, our name are considerations of vast weight and importance; and even the other causes of pride; virtue, beauty and riches; have little influence, when not seconded by the opinions and sentiments of others" (2006: 206). Sympathy is not a one-way street from one's self to the other. Through sympathy the "I" acquires the sentiments of the other as moments of the constitution of itself. The ideas that are raised due to sympathy, and which are converted to impressions gain such a degree of vivacity and force that they can replace the original passions themselves and produce affections equal to the original emotions.



Hume explains the intensity of sympathetic sentiments as a function of familiarity acquired by habit. The subjectivity of others is necessary for my subjectivity. Hume states that “[t]he stronger the relation is betwixt ourselves and any object, the more easily does the imagination make the transition, and convey to the related idea the vivacity of conception, with which we always form the idea of our own person” (2006: 207). The more I am exposed to the sentiments of others, the more likely it is that I will be affected by their particular ideas and passions; thus the more likely I will constitute an idea of my own self in the image of others.

Familiarity and habit indicate that the other does not signify a conceptual abstraction but an empirically existing human subject. Hence, the other’s opinions and judgments become important to me along with the degree of the importance that I ascribe to them. Thus Hume writes that “[t]he judgment of a fool is the judgment of another person, as well as that of a wise man, and is only inferior in its influence on our own judgment” (2006: 209).

Susan James’ interpretation of the origin of Humean notion of sympathy bases it on the experience of gravity, which in turn affects the imagination (2004: 115–118). In this way, she suggests a naturalist formulation concerning the emergence of the moral and value judgments in Hume. However, she ignores the distinction that Hume draws between objects of one’s perception and other selves as one perceives them.<sup>9</sup> Hume does not treat the force of gravity (or any other natural phenomenon) in this way. Moreover, attributing such values to natural and cultural objects, e.g., to mountains or building blocks, happens only after such values have already emerged as the consequence of sympathetic interaction between human selves. Therefore, the effect of the experience of gravity on the imagination is not qualitatively different than the effect produced, for example, by the perception of a huge building; to the extent that their axiological effects are concerned, both influence the mind figuratively and metaphorically and both are byproducts of feelings of pride and humility.<sup>10</sup>

Hume’s considering of the influence of imagination on the passions provides further evidence regarding the social determination of passions, impressions, and the human subject. Human beings do not choose different actions due to general, abstract maxims. Rather, they make decisions in accordance with their forms of life. Hume states that “[a] pleasure, which is suitable to the way of life, in which we are engag’d, excites more our desires and appetites than another, which is foreign to it” (2006: 273). Appetites, desires, and intentions are not set once and for all. They change due to human beings’ life activity. As Hume states:

9 James notices that “the admiration of other people reinforces our pride while their contempt undermines it, we cannot single-handedly sustain the feeling we have about our own condition and depend on the opinion of others to augment or diminish them” (2004: 114).

10 It is true, as James maintains, that Hume intends to provide a scientific account of human nature (2004: 107). However, such a scientific account does not have to be of a mechanical-Cartesian character.

We may of ourselves acknowledge, that such an object is valuable, and such another odious; but 'till an orator excites the imagination, and gives force to these ideas, they may have but a feeble influence either on the will or the affections... The bare opinion of another, especially when inforc'd with passion, will cause an idea of good or evil to have an influence upon us, which would otherwise have been entirely neglected. This proceeds from the principle of sympathy or communication; and sympathy, as I have already observ'd, is nothing but the conversion of an idea into an impression by the force of imagination. (2006: 273)

The idea of the self is not based on impressions of sensation. Rather it is based on an impression of reflection; the factuality of the self follows from the sympathetically formed idea of the self.

Sympathy is a function, the content of which is material; i.e., it is determined by the material conditions of life, namely human activity, arts, industry etc. For instance, while discussing the scope of certain rights and the idea of justice, Hume attributes beneficence, humanity, friendship, gratitude, natural affection, and *public spirit* and tender sympathy to human nature (1998: 79). Similarly, in his first *Enquiry* (1999) he defines human beings as “reasonable,” “sociable,” and “active” beings, who have to submit to business and occupation (1999: 89). Hume rejects the Hobbesian idea of a natural state of war of all against all (1998: 87, n.11), because “Men are necessarily born in a family-society” (1998: 88). Hume discusses a thought experiment: suppose humans confront rational, but weaker beings, both in bodily and mental terms; dogs, for example. He concludes that the resulting intercourse between the two cannot be called society, as the latter supposes a degree of equality. Rather, it would be a relation of absolute command and servitude. So it would be natural that these rational but lesser beings would be deprived of the right to property. The difference between human nature and that of this inferior animal species prevents the full functioning of sympathy (1999: 107).

For Hume, when more advanced communities confront less advanced ones, a similar “temptation” to consider their members “lesser beings” is at work, leading the members of the former to consider themselves superior to the latter. He maintains that this is also the situation, in many nations, regarding the female sex and thus females are deprived – perhaps unjustly – from certain rights. Yet the similarity of their make-up as human persons eventually gives way to the growth of the idea of justice, so as to embrace them too. This happens, however, only as the consequence of material production, art, industry and the intercourse between humans and human communities, which compose and determine sympathy:

[S]everal distinct societies maintain a kind of intercourse for mutual convenience and advantage, the boundaries of justice still grow larger, in proportion to the largeness of men's views, and the force of their mutual connections. History, experience, reason sufficiently instruct us in this natural progress of human sentiments, and in the gradual enlargement of our regards to justice, in proportion as we become acquainted with the extensive utility of that virtue. (1998: 89)

In his essay “Of National Characters” Hume (1985) sets out to explain the affinities among members of the same community. He rejects outright any role to air and climate, and emphasizes that human social activity is the only factor in determining national character. In animals the common characteristics may be attributed to biological and geographical dynamics. However, when humans are at stake, it is human activity and sympathy, political and social assemblage, and common language that is responsible for such sameness. It also makes the nature of sympathy as a function clearer.

The Human mind is of a very imitative nature; nor is it possible for any set of men to converse often together, without acquiring a similitude of manners, and communicating to each other their vices as well as virtues. The propensity to company and society is so strong in all rational creatures; and the same disposition, which gives us this propensity, makes us enter deeply into each other’s sentiments, and causes like passions and inclinations to run, as it were, by contagion, through the whole club or knot of companions. Where a number of men are united into one political body, the occasion of their intercourse must be so frequent, for defence, commerce, and government, that, together with the same speech or language, they must require a resemblance in their manners, and have a common or national character, as well as a personal one, peculiar to each individual. (Hume 1985: 202-203)<sup>11</sup>

Hume presents the idea of the freedom and necessity of human actions in an analogy with rules that govern the movements of material bodies. In order to explain the uniformity and cohesion of human action, he explicitly refers to civil society and the social nature of human existence:

We must certainly allow, that the cohesion of the parts of matter arises from natural and necessary principles, whatever difficulty we may find in explaining them: And for a like reason we must allow, that human society is founded on like principles; and our reason in the latter case, is better than even that in former; because we not only observe, that men *always* seek society, but can also explain the principles, on which this universal propensity is founded. (2006: 258)

Hume is aware that particular human activities differentiate humans in their manners, behaviors and, in a general sense, their perceptions. Thus he writes: “The skin, pores, muscles, and nerves of a day-labourer are different from those of a man of quality: So are his sentiments, actions and manners” (2006: 259). It is the process of interiorization of these external determinations that identify human beings as members of society who belong to different ranks and classes. This process follows certain universal regulations and is applicable to all humans in a similar way. Thus Hume states that “[m]en cannot live without society, and cannot be associated without government” (2006: 259). Yet, the determining factor that guarantees uniformity of human life is external

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<sup>11</sup> Hume furthers this line of the reasoning as to include the difference between animals: “Even the difference of animals, he adds, depends not on climate” (1985: 202, n. 4).

to individual agent's mind; this factor is the totality of human activity that is governed and regulated by the state:

Government makes a distinction of property, and establishes the different ranks of men. This produces industry, traffic, manufactures, law-suites, war, leagues, alliances, voyages, travels, cities, fleets, ports, and all those other actions and objects, which cause a diversity, and at the same time maintain such an uniformity in human life. (2006: 259)

Human beings become aware of one another's passions and sentiments by sympathy. They are social animals. Without others there could be no enjoyment. With the aid of imagination, we produce ideas resembling impressions of others' and partake in their pleasure and satisfaction. This is possible because our minds "are mirrors to one another" (2006: 236).

### The Texture of the Self

Hume's idea of substance anticipates his rejection of the idea of substantial self. Hume asks whether the idea of substance is an idea of sensation or reflection. He reasons that if it is an idea of an impression, then it should be a color, a taste, an odor, or a sound etc. However, it seems obvious that substance is neither of the aforementioned. Thus he concludes "the idea of substance must therefore be deriv'd from an impression of reflection, if it really exists" (2006: 16). Since impressions of reflection are resolvable to passions and emotions there can be no immediate and purely perceptual representation of any substance. Thus, Hume concludes, the idea of substance is nothing but a collection of particular qualities.

Although the idea of substance does not correspond to an existing thing, it signifies something real as the representation of a collection of qualities. Moreover, Hume provides the basis for answering the question how atomic impressions or sensations are to be related: the association of impressions and ideas are possible only based on impressions of reflection. Impressions of sensation are only resolvable to atomic perceptions. The idea of a totality, such as an idea of a particular object, that makes associating of particular sensations into an idea of that particular object possible, emerges only in realm of impressions of reflection. In this sense, all impressions are derived from impressions of reflection. Thus, Hume states, "The idea of substance as well as that of a mode, is nothing but a collection of simple ideas, that are united by the imagination, and have a particular name assigned them, by which we are able to recall, either to ourselves or others, that collection" (2006: 16).

Hume rejects the idea of the self as a purely epistemological entity that is based on impressions of sensation. However, the self as a product of passions and sentiments, and as a moral agent, is affirmed. For Hume, the self is the product of passions of pride and humility, and the moral existence of the self is reinforced by sentiments through sympathy. Epistemologically, Hume

distinguishes between understanding, imagination, and the passions. However, these faculties are conjoined in the science of human nature which Hume intends to construct. It is important to distinguish between different levels of abstraction where Hume addresses a particular issue. For instance, the rejection of the idea of an epistemologically constructed self is not in tension with admitting the existence of the self as a product of the genetic processes rooted in the social and moral environment. What Hume rejects is the possibility of an associative construction of the idea of the self out of raw, distinct, atomic sense-data. There is no substantial and qualitative difference between perceptually acquired impressions that enable us to conclude that the idea of the self refers to such impressions. Therefore, the existence of the self must be rooted elsewhere. The empirical fact of, say, Hume's own standpoint that criticizes the idea of a pure epistemological self signifies the existence of a totality, which in this particular case designates Hume's personal self. The existence of the idea of the self is already affirmed through the negation of the idea of the self via a particular self (in this particular case, via David Hume's self). The existence of an empirical (social and moral) interpretive self is a necessary condition if any meaningful criticism of the idea of the self is to be realized. Hence, Amelie Rorty's (1993) characterization of Hume's philosophical project in the *Treatise* as a "British proto-version of *The Phenomenology of Spirit*".

Hume's non-Cartesian dualism also helps us to appreciate his rejection of the idea of a substantial self. The incorporeality that he attributes to mind does not denote the mind as a different substance but signifies the "ideal" texture of its composition. This "ideality" signifies the unity of thinking and bodily activity of human as the psycho-physical unity.

In the essay, "On the Immortality of the Soul," Hume argues that what is designated by the term "soul,"—that is, consciousness and memory—definitely undergoes change. The mind, with the body, is generated, degenerated, corrupted, and eventually vanishes into nothingness (1985: 591–592).

In order to justify his argument Hume makes a number of assertions: First, substance, be it material or ideal, is a composition of different qualities, i.e., it is a *name* that signifies a particular totality of a number of qualities. Hume accentuates this line of reasoning in the *Appendix* of the *Treatise* stating, "Philosophers begin to be reconciled to the principle, *that we have no idea of external substance, distinct from the ideas of particular qualities*. This must pave the way for a like principle with regard to the mind, *that we have no notion of it, distinct from the particular perceptions*" (2006: 400). That is, the mind or soul just is a composition of ideal properties. Moreover, this composite mind or soul is closely related to the individual body. Both are subject to change. By analogical reasoning, therefore, the soul is not immortal. It changes and vanishes just as the body dies, and as the person ceases to be. The alleged independence from activity (perception) attributed to the idea of the self, thus, is just an abstraction of mind, just as the idea of substance independent from determinate qualities is such an abstraction.

The immateriality of the soul follows from the impossibility of reducing mind or consciousness to a *simple* substance. This form of immateriality can only be conceived in terms of action and activity. It is the social composition of the human species that determines the degree of development of consciousness. Hume considers mind (soul) and body neither identical nor contradictory. In this, he comes close to monism holding that body vs. mind or body vs. thinking is a fallacious abstraction. It is the human body *itself* that thinks. Thinking is always an action performed by a natural and so by a spatially determined body. It follows that it is an action expressed/realized spatially.

Hume's account of the mind is a response to both substantialist and physiological approaches. The soul cannot be reduced to the sum of physiological or mechanical bodily movements. There is a correspondence between certain bodily states and consciousness. However, the two are not identical, since consciousness is not physical in its texture.<sup>12</sup>

There is no substance to the mind; there is no substratum that holds the perceptions together. Rather, the mind is a system the content of which is determined by the passions.<sup>13</sup> The passions are not mere reactions to external forces. They are the primary source of action. The idea of the self vis-à-vis the passions is therefore real and expandable so that it determines the idea of the self with regard to thought and imagination. Passions are determined socially and so are their outcomes. Moreover, there is no opposition between the passions and reason; on the contrary, the two are complementary and reason is limited by the sentiments and therefore it is determined socially and in praxis. As Rorty puts it, "unless [reason] is supported by sentiment, habit and custom, [it] can only provide a criterion to determine the propriety of the intentions of the will: it is too general to command specific actions, indeed too general to provide specific intentions" (1993: 179). Reason discovers the idea of the self, as is with the case of reason discovering the relation between ideas (2006: 295-296). So, the existence of the self with respect to thought and imagination is constituted. The existence of the epistemological self is not based upon immediate, atomic impressions. The idea of the epistemological self is not rooted in the formality, vivacity, and immediacy of impressions but is an abstraction based on the idea of a passionately constructed self that is continually enforced via sentiments and through sympathy.

### **Conclusion: The Paradox of the Self, the Intimate Externality**

Hume's theory of the self can be considered a prototype of a historical-genetic approach that defines the self as an "ideal". The non-substantiality of the Humean self designates not the unreality of its being but this distinguishing texture. As an ideal, the self is not only a part of reality but reflects and

<sup>12</sup> This conclusion is also found in the *Appendix*. See the quote above in section 1 of this paper, 2006: 399.

<sup>13</sup> See 2006: 414.

refracts reality by assuming a unique position in it. By definition, the self has a meaning that signifies something other than itself with the use of signs. The system of signs the self uses as a mean of signifying the real is basically verbal and linguistic.

Traditionally, philosophy locates mental phenomena *in* consciousness; by committing the same error of localizing mental phenomena in consciousness, and studying the latter in isolation from the real conditions of their being, both idealism and empirical psychologism reduce the study of the self to the study of isolated consciousness and its laws. In this way, they treat consciousness either as transcendental or as an amalgamation of empirical data. In the former case, consciousness appears everything; in the latter, it amounts to nothing.

We can interpret Hume's rejection of substantial being of the self as a first formulation of the process of the formation and emergence of the idea of ideational self or the reflexive consciousness. Hume's treatment of the self in Books 2 and 3 of the *Treatise* hints towards a possible solution of the question concerning the self as a social and objective, but non-substantial phenomenon.

Consciousness requires an objective and real medium for actualization and the word (language) provides consciousness with that reality. Therefore the problem of consciousness appears as the question concerning the inner word.

When setting up the psyche or human consciousness as an object and as a part of external reality, the question arises how to define the inner experience in external, objective terms. The basis of the answer is that the reality of the psyche, the inner experience, is the reality of the sign and human activity. The psyche is not reducible to physiological and nervous processes. The subject, the consciousness or the psyche, resides in the borderline area that separates the organism from its surrounding world. This is the paradoxical mode of the existence of the self which is also designated by the Humean notion of the self: the internality of the self or consciousness is based upon external reality. Although there is no immanent substance of the self, and although the self is totally based on external reality and experience, there is, nonetheless, a sense of intimate access to the self. In fact, there is a self, even though not internally and intimately founded, that is internally and intimately accessible. The riddle of the self that is put forward by Hume can be interpreted as a variation of this problem.

The connecting point between the self of Book 1 and the self of Books 2 and 3 is the paradoxical structure of the self as an entity that is constituted externally but is accessible to the person intimately. The negative position of Book 1 aims at rejecting the notion of the self as a substantial being prior to any action or activity. Meanwhile, this negative conclusion signifies a positive resolution of the matter put forward in Books 2 and 3. The self, by its constitution, does not need an internally and inherently existing core or substratum; the self is rooted elsewhere, that is, in the external world, in our social surroundings. In the absence of such an environment, the idea of the self cannot be conceived through associating ideas in the abstract. This is not due to some shortcoming in the cognitive faculties of the agent of perception, but to a particular kind

of sense-perception that is required for the constitution of the idea of the self. Such impressions cannot be achieved at the highly abstract and formal level of epistemology as Hume indicates it in Book 1 of the *Treatise*. Unless both the difference and interconnection between these two realms is admitted, and the social-moral constitution of the self is properly considered, the resolution of the Humean riddle seems impossible.

The concluding remarks of Book 2, part 3, section 8 of Hume's *Treatise* not only show that all impressions are reducible to impressions of reflection, and that the passionate self is also the basis of the so-called epistemological self, but also provide a condensed explanation of the formation of sympathetic self and its differentiation from itself and from others in time and in space. Hume clearly explains that both passions and reason are affections of the mind; the former is a violent passion and the latter a calm one. We had formerly been said that passions yield the idea of the self, and, that the causes of passions, being different from their object – the self – are variable. Notwithstanding the fact that difference between calm and violent passions is a difference of degree rather than a difference of quality, these passions can change into one another. The tension between reason and passion explains the diversity of human selves as well as the diverse nature of one particular self. Hume states: "Upon the whole, this struggle of passion and of reason, as it is call'd, diversifies human life, and makes men so different not only from each other, but also from themselves in different times" (2006: 280).

Thus, the fictitiousness of the idea of the self with regard to thought and imagination, in contrast to the factuality of the idea of the self with regard to passions, is a reflection of the aforementioned tension between calm and violent passions that results in differentiation of human beings with regard to each other and themselves. Moreover, this tension and diversification represent the paradoxical being of the self as something subject to great and small revolutions, yet supposed to have spatio-temporal identity. Unless the objectivity of the self is admitted, the paradoxical existence of the self cannot be conceived and the tension between the epistemological and passionate selves will not disappear. Since the self is external to itself, it is subject to the same logical rules that direct the passing from one idea to another, regardless of how close or distant in time and in space these ideas might be. It is through this passage that the identity of the self in space and time is attained. These diverse and numerous ideas that are caused by calm and violent passions can be related to each other as elements of an unfinalized whole to assume an identity called "the self". Therefore, what guarantees the identity of the self and makes intelligible the idea of the self, is the paradoxical mode of the existence of the self as something objective, yet apprehended as if intimately.



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## Sijaveš Azeri

### Hjumova teorija društvene konstitucije sopstva

#### Apstrakt

Hjum razlikuje sopstvo misli i uobrazilje i sopstvo strasti. Kritikuje se jer protivreči sebi zbog toga što navodno pripisuje fiktivnost sopstvu u prvoj knjizi *Rasprave*, a kasnije ponovo uvodi sopstvo u drugoj i trećoj knjizi. Hjumovo razmatranje ideje sopstva, međutim, nije protivrečno: on pokazuje nemogućnost čisto asocijaciono-empirijskog razmatranja sopstva. Umesto toga, predlaže društveno razmatranje konstitucije ideje sopstva i svesti. Čineći to, Hjumovo razmatranje sopstva anticipira društveno-istorijske teorije sopstva.

Ključne reči: Hjum, svest, sopstvo, subjektivnost