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FIFTEEN YEARS OF A CLASSIC: NEW HUMEAN STUDIES

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Next year, we celebrate the 15th anniversary of *Novos Estudos Humeanos* (henceforth *NEH*) - the "most complete" book written in Portuguese on Hume's epistemology³. The occasion of this special issue of *Prometeus*, devoted to the Scottish philosopher's thought, could not be better to pay a tribute to its writer. Moreover, the present critique of *NEH* is an attempt to make up for the absence, in the main national journals, of reviews dedicated to the book at the time of its publication. By the bye, *NEH* may be the most important book of Monteiro's career⁴, for reasons that will become clearer later on. It is the first book that Monteiro published after that which can

¹ In 2017, it will have been one year since the death of João Paulo Monteiro, an irreparable loss to the studies concerning David Hume's philosophy. Monteiro played a fundamental role in its dissemination, especially in Brazil and Latin America. This text is an homage to the 15 years of *Novos Estudos Humeanos* (or *New Humean Studies*, in a literal translation to English) and also a posthumous tribute paid by me to Monteiro, through this critique of the book which represents one of the major interpretative turns on the philosophy of Hume ever made by him. I have taken the freedom, in the subtitle of this text, to translate the title of the book here reviewed. Also, I shall often allude to Monteiro's more famous book: *Hume e a Epistemologia* (2009, 2nd Ed.), along this tribute.

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³ *Hume e a Epistemologia* (2009) is another important book that Monteiro published on the subject. In it, besides epistemology, Monteiro does comparative studies and discusses other themes of Hume's philosophy. Incidentally, in a review about first Brazilian edition of *Hume e a Epistemologia*, Ferraz classified *NEH* as one of the three most important works on Hume ever released in Brazil. (Cf.: FERRAZ, M. C. Hume e a Epistemologia, de João Paulo Monteiro, *Princípios: Revista de Filosofia (UFRN)*, vol.16, no.25, p. 283-294, 2009)

⁴ In Latin America one of the most extensive works on Hume's thought is that by João Paulo Monteiro, who dedicated most of his academic life to the Scottish thinker. But the greatness of Monteiro's performance is not only justified by his workload. In addition to the volume of his work, the main contribution of this commentator of Hume is, in fact, the innovative interpretation he launched on Humean philosophy. As he points out in the second edition of *Hume e a Epistemologia*: "I have proposed radical changes to Hume's understanding" (MONTEIRO, 2009, p.7).

be considered one of the greatest revolutions of his reading on the Hume's philosophy. Monteiro's main interpretative shift presented in *NEH* consists of his reading about what he would only then come to recognize as "an old legend about Hume's philosophy" (NEH, p. 9). Such a "legend" concerns the conception of *induction* attributed to Hume by Russell. According to Monteiro, although it has widely been followed by tradition it is erroneously imputed to Humean philosophy⁵. By the way, the realization of this mistake, which Monteiro also confessed to having committed for a long time, certainly contributed decisively to subsequent publication of the second edition of *Hume e a Epistemologia*. In this book, Monteiro points out that such an unique interpretative change was in itself sufficient for him to modify "numerous pages, especially in the first, fourth and eighth chapters, but also occasionally in others" of the Portuguese edition, which is the first one.

This new interpretation about the (im)possibility of a supposed "theory of induction" in Hume's thought is presented in *NEH* only at chapter five⁶. But already in his introduction Monteiro (NEH, p. 9) makes it clear that he is not concerned with the traditional interpretations of Humean philosophy⁷: "an old legend about Hume's philosophy is that it took empiricism to the last consequences, that is, to scepticism, or something even worse". According to him, this interpretation lost so much space that it allowed the emergence of theses such as Wilson's, which imputed to Hume an "authentic defence of causal inference" (NEH, p. 9). However, even disagreeing with Wilson's thesis, Monteiro proposes something else. He comes up with idea that in Humean philosophy, although there is no proper defence of causal inference, there is "a proposal for an explanation of *causal inference* and *causal belief*", bearing in mind that *causal inference* and *causal belief* are antagonistic.

⁵ Although this change had first appeared in his books at *NEH*, only in the second edition of *Hume e a Epistemologia* (p. 8), it was pointed out by Monteiro as the "most radical change" in his studies of Hume. It is worth to say that, although *NEH* is the first BOOK where Monteiro presents his interpretative change, it had appeared previously in *Russell and Humean inferences* (Florianópolis, *Principia: An International Journal of Philosophy*, 5, v. 1, 2001, Pp. 55-72). In any case, only in the preface to the second edition of *Hume e a Epistemologia* would Monteiro come to make his self-criticism about this interpretative change.

⁶ I will come to that later.

⁷ In order to prevent the reader's imagination from becoming too distended, to the point that this honour becomes tiresome, I will dwell more fully on this text on the chapters which I believe are crucial to understanding the greatness of *NEH*. They are *Association and causal belief in David Hume* (essay 1) and *Russell and the Humean inferences* (essay 5).

NEH comes to this subject already in its first chapter. This subject gets back to the point of an article that Monteiro had published no more than 3 years before⁸, with few modifications. There, Monteiro fights the notion that *causal belief* is a "product of an associative mechanism" (*NEH*, p. 15). This is tantamount to saying that Monteiro crosses swords with the majority of tradition, which often "accuses Hume of having an associationist conception of causal belief" (*Id. Ibid.*, p. 15). Indeed, this same mistake occurs, according to him, at least since the "most consecrated issue of *Enquiries concerning Human Understanding* (EHU)"⁹. In fact, according to Monteiro, this edition was responsible for disseminating what he calls a *misunderstanding* about Hume's philosophy¹⁰. In his own words, "what happened was that some crucial passages of this work [EHU] were misinterpreted by those responsible for the editing of this work in 1902, and that in the revised 1975 edition P. H. Nidditch did not correct such an interpretation" (*NEH*, p. 17-18).

Monteiro argues that the *causal relation* that leads to the development of *causal belief* has been confused with the *associative relation by causation*. Thus, he calls a spade a spade when he asserts immediately afterwards that: "The theory of causality presented in the investigation has nothing to do with any form of associationism" (*NEH*, p. 19). According to him, the *causal belief* theory "advocated by Hume in EHU is not an associationist theory", because "there is no shadow of dependence on any kind of associative mechanism" in it. And, going further, he states that "it is impossible to produce causal beliefs by the association of ideas" (*NEH*, p. 18). The thesis of the supposed derivation of *causal belief* from the *principles of association* seems absurd for Monteiro on the grounds that:

⁸ Cf. MONTEIRO, J. P. Associação e crença causal em Hume. *Revista Manuscrito*. Campinas, v. Jan.-Abr., n. XXIII, 2000, pp. 99-120.

⁹ Monteiro reports on the Selby-Bigge and Nidditch edition. (*Inquiries concerning human understanding and principles of morality*, L. L. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Nidditch, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975)

¹⁰ A curious fact brought by Monteiro in this essay is relation made by him from his thesis to the Kantian criticism. It can be said that Monteiro points to Kant as the predecessor of the thesis that he maintains about the subject. According to Monteiro, Kant wrote about a "öftern beigesellung" existing in the Humean philosophy. However, the term was translated in the twentieth century as "frequent association" rather than "frequent concomitance" as translated into English by Max Müller in the nineteenth century. And the latter is, according to him, the best way to translate the Kantian term: "the influence of the associationist interpretation which I seek to criticize here is such that even Kant became a victim of it" (*NEH*, 36).

In EHU, causal belief derives first from the frequent conjunction referred to by Hume in § 40, and certainly also from that principle of human nature which he called "custom or habit" in the first part of section V (p.43 ff.). The new argument adds only that the same belief is presented as "a more lively, vivid, strong, firm, and stable conception of an object" (§ 40), that is, from the idea of the effect we expect to follow its cause, and that this new vigour is received by this idea of the impression the present cause, a mental process which is analogous to some instances of association between other impressions (or memory ideas) and previously tenuous ideas which resemble either are contiguous to them or are considered their causes or effects (NEH, p.17).

Thereupon Monteiro goes over with a fine-tooth comb: "How is it possible that this has been confused with an alleged 'production' of causal beliefs by the mechanism of association?". As implied above, the solution he found to this issue was to blame the most famous edition of *EHU*. And in fact, at first, this lateral thinking presented by Monteiro against that interpretation seems rhetorically weak to face a whole tradition¹¹. However, what should be open-and-shut is that it is a sure bet he does not do that without a good reason. In my view, this *quasi-response* would be an eloquent way, found by Monteiro, to expose that the foundation on which the associationist interpretation would be grounded is actually fragile. In other words: after all his exposition, Monteiro made use of a *literary resource* to say something along the lines of: "see how ridiculous the only possible foundation of an associationist interpretation is!". The *resource* was used to say exactly that, but without using those words. Instead of them, what is found in Monteiro's essay, through his *literary artifice*, is the elegance and wit that had always been the hallmark of his texts.

¹¹ As Monteiro himself agrees (NEH, 29), the traditional defence of the associationist thesis, which he confronts so much, counts on great names of the Humean tradition among his adherents, such as: I) John Passmore, who dedicated a Chapter of his *Hume's Intentions* to what he presents as the "associationist" Hume, and wrote in the same chapter that for the Scottish philosopher the "causal connection" could not even be part of our own universe if there were no influence of the *principles of association*. II) Alfred Ayer, who in his book *Hume* sees in Humean philosophy a difference between the first two principles of association and the third. Precisely, while resemblance and contiguity offer the basis for the movement of our attention, causal association, in turn, is the primary source of supply of our factual beliefs. III) William Kneale, who, according to Monteiro (Id. Ibid.), was shocked by Hume's supposed assertion that "induction can only be an association of ideas without rational justification". IV) Antony Flew, who maintains in *Hume's Philosophy of Belief* that in Hume's philosophy the idea of association is crucial to the whole explanation of learning by experience. V) James Noxon (see note 11), according to whom "Hume explained certain mental phenomena, notably belief, as effects of association".

The union principle (*habit*) does not have its origin in the principles of association: on this issue, I completely agree with Monteiro's critique (NEH, p. 26). But what I think not at all easy to do, as Monteiro did, is to sustain the idea that *causal belief* prescind the *association of ideas*. Despite my partial agreement with Monteiro's critique of the irreducibility between *belief* and *causal* association, I see his dyed-in-the-wool denial in the matter of relationship possibility therebetween as excessive. I tend to agree with more dialectical positions such as Noxon's¹² (1975, p. 82) who, even being a critic of the approach of the two concepts, writes the following: Hume explained certain mental phenomena, notably belief, as effects of the association. And, going further, I say that belief is a *feeling or sensation* aroused by two factors: *habit* and the *association of ideas*, but it does not arise either from one or from other singly, each one is a part of a process that involves both. Therefore *habit* is an underlying principle which acts upon reasonable beings¹³ during their observation of *constant conjunctions*, in such a way that imagination can *associate* ideas only through this *principle* acting in the mind. However, as I have already stated in another text¹⁴, such an association realized by the imagination will catch up to its *certainty status* just with the emergence of a *feeling* which imputes *necessity* to what is instead merely *contingent*. Such a *feeling* that causes *contingency* to become *necessity* is nothing but *belief*. Be that as it may, one must understand what Monteiro means by *habit* to understand why Monteiro imputed such a drastic separation between the two main concepts discussed in chapter 1 to Hume's philosophy.

Therefore, it is in the following chapter, whereupon Monteiro proposes the refusal to any psychologism connected with the idea of *custom*, that he defines what he exactly considered "*habit*" to be in Humean philosophy. In his own words, "my concept of habit is simply, I suppose, the common concept: the concept of a willingness to acquire capacities or tendencies by the action of time in our bodies, in our minds, or both" (NEH, p. 47). But what lies behind this definition of *habit* is actually a quite distinct conception of *Hume from reason as the slave of passions*: "the Humean

¹² In *NEH* Monteiro contrasts exactly with this same quotation from Noxon. (See NOXON, J. Hume's Philosophical Development, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

¹³ Like men, other animals are also affected by the force of habit. Moreover, it seems reasonable to me, having as background the Humean articulation, to affirm that this principle is valid for every being endowed with reason: be it man, beast or any other being.

¹⁴ Cf.: HOLLANDA, L. Realismo ontológico e antirrealismo epistemológico na problemática do mundo externo em Hume. In. CONTE, J., ZIMMERMANN, F., FERRAZ, M.C. (org.). Florianópolis: UFSC / NEL, 2016.

operation of reason's 'humiliation' was not a step in the direction of irrationalism, but simply an identification of the limits of this faculty and of its place in the general scheme of human cognition" (NEH, p. 47). Therefore, according to Monteiro, "a belief or inference can be accepted as a legitimate example of the influence of habit simply because it derives from repetition". On that account he said there is in Humean philosophy "an extended concept of habit understood as a disposition to be influenced only by time, or only by repetition, or by both" (NEH, p. 48). With this, it becomes cut and dried how far Monteiro is from a "passionate/affective" interpretation of human nature, such as Deleuze's. He leaves no room for doubts on that subject¹⁵ when he peremptorily stated: "Hume's principle is, I believe, a clear principle of rationality". But to be fair to Monteiro, what has to be out in the open is that he is not proposing that Hume is a follower of the rationalist tradition. This rationality asserted by him is not the same moderns generally grasped. Thus, according to Monteiro, Humean philosophy would, in fact, provide "a new source of rationality to replace the old source, which others thought to have found in classical reason" (NEH, pp. 63-64).

J.P. Monteiro, in chapter 1, separated *causal inference* from *causal belief* by asserting that they are not relatable because the former is within *reason* and the latter is the result of *habit*. In the following chapter, he discussed the relationship between *habit* and *belief* avoiding drawing from this relation a *sensualist* theory of *human nature*. According to Monteiro, the principle is not *passionate* but *rational*, although such a *reason*, in the philosophy of Hume, is founded under the aegis of a new aspect. However, as you can see, it keeps the analysis of *causal inference*, which he had put on the opposite side from *causal belief*, outside Monteiro's Humean studies. This fault will be supplied precisely in the next chapter. Thus, having already established in the previous chapter the "rational principle" of human nature in Hume, Monteiro will seek, in the third chapter, to explain the importance of *inferences* derived from *conjunctions*. And he does that without forgetting they involve reasoning, just as he tried to show in the first essay of the book. The main problem about Hume's philosophy that Monteiro

¹⁵ In order to distance himself as much as possible from a *sensualist* reading of human nature, Monteiro even proposes that if we want to catch on his interpretation we have to figure a "notion of a cerebral mechanism specialized in the conversion of the *input* resulting from observation of repeated conjunctions in an *output* consisting of predictions of identical conjunctions in the future" (NEH, p. 58). Whether or not we agree with this kind of interpretation, what we can not fail to notice is his argumentative ingenuity.

seeks to solve¹⁶ in chapter 3 concerns the production of *causal inferences* through singular experiences. For how could an experience without repetition produce inferences?

This obstacle arises in Hume's philosophy from his classic example of the child who, by an experience of pain, occurred when it touches the flame of a candle, will never again lay his hand upon it¹⁷. The main argument which Monteiro will attempt to clarify is that the statement of "*inference from singular experience*" is as possible as legitimate (NEH, 81). And precisely in the attempt to offer a solution to this problem, Monteiro affirms to be necessary to take "a consequence that Hume did not take away from the premises contained in his philosophy". In an ingenious blend of *Humean philosophy* with *Newtonian theory*, J.P. Monteiro offers the following solution:

We can conclude that what makes inference about candle possible is the application of the Newtonian rule to a case where simple observation could not reveal to a child, without any experience of the dangers of flames yet, that this bright and colourful object would cause pain; and that at the same time the class of relevant phenomena lends itself to the application of this rule, only with the help of a singular experience, without the need for repetition. What kind of phenomena? It can only be a larger whole than that of candles and flames - a class from which these may be, in the face of the child's earlier experience, enclosed as private. This class may be something like the "touched objects" that populated this experience. It is to be supposed that the child has touched several objects and that the class consisting of the latter includes a type formed by those which did not produce any pain (the negative type) and a type formed by those which produced some kind of pain. (...) From this "empirical base", which is undoubtedly composed of repeated experiences, an elementary and almost automatic operation is sufficient to arrive at an inductive conclusion based on this unique and unique experience. If the flame causes pain, it obviously does not belong to the negative type. It, therefore, belongs to the positive type; whose limbs always cause pain. From where it follows, now deductively, that the flame that once caused pain will continue to do so to whom it touches. (NEH, pp. 83-84)

Hereupon, Monteiro will dedicate the following chapter to the elucidation of that theory of *causal inference*, which is derived either from a singularity or from the

¹⁶ Monteiro (NEH, p. 67) refers to the refutation of Thomaz Brown to Hume in *Observations on the Nature*, wherein he argues be essential the repetition of experiences to constructs inferences.

¹⁷ In the second part of Section IV of EHU, you can read: "When a child has felt pain from touching the flame of a candle, he will be careful not to put his hand near any candle, and will expect to similar effect from any cause that is similar in its appearance". (HUME, *Inquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning Principles of Moral*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

repetition of an experience, and could never lead to *relativistic perspectivism*. It is important to note what this last expression means: in chapter 4, Monteiro (NEH, p. 100) argues that although *perspectivism* can be understood in a variety of ways, none of that which be confused with "a primary scepticism or sterile relativism" may be imputed to Hume. For the very notion of causation, as seen by Hume, renders "any radical perspectivism that is intended to be inspired by Nietzsche" infeasible (NEH, p. 11). The reason Monteiro uses the expression "that is intended to be inspired by Nietzsche" in his preface becomes clearer during the fourth essay. In it, Monteiro proposes to solve two problems in one same text: to explain why there is no way that this *supposed Nietzschean perspectivism* could be imputed to Hume as well as to Nietzsche. Monteiro's way of defending this will be to explain that "there is a minimum of realism"¹⁸ which is inseparable from the starting point of both (NEH, pp. 98-99). That is to say, for Monteiro, when Hume¹⁹ says that the opposite of a *matter of fact* is always possible, he is pointing out to "the situation of a statement whose negation does not imply a contradiction, but this possibility of non-occurrence of a regularity predicted by a causal inference appears as a real possibility, and not just a logical possibility". And therefore "causal action may have a necessary character within a causal system, but nothing can guarantee that each of these systems is closed in the sense of never opening itself to the intervention of a cause outside the system".

On the fifth chapter, Monteiro will continue writing about *causal inferences*. However, if at the end of the previous essay he – no strings attached – upholds that the only perspectivism possible of attribution to Hume²⁰ is one that does not lead to skepticism; in chapter 5 he will explain the reasons for this refusal of skepticism. Or more specifically, he will try to show "the misconceptions generated" from the attribution to Hume of "a sceptical theory of induction," when Hume, in his view, "dealt only with causal inference and not with induction in general" (NEH, p. 11). But the attribution of this thesis to Hume, with which Monteiro strongly disagrees, has a very clear precursor according to him: Bertrand Russell. Now, if immediately in the preface of *NEH* Monteiro makes clear his that his position is opposite to Russell's, that did not happen for many decades in which he shared the opinion of the latter. As I said at the beginning of this text, *NEH* is Monteiro's first book - and the last - released after his last

¹⁸ Monteiro (NEH, p. 99) uses the same expression as Galen Strawson in *The Secret Connection*.

¹⁹ In the first part of Section IV of Investigation.

²⁰ As well as to Nietzsche, according to Monteiro (NEH, p. 100).

interpretative turn on Humean philosophy. After that, certainly owing to the great influence of this *interpretative turn*, Monteiro decided to launch the second edition - with innumerable²¹ changes - of his most famous book, *Hume e a Epistemologia*. As even the author acknowledges (op. Cit., p.14), if one were to compare the 1984 version of this book with the 2009 edition, one would find out there is no essay to which Monteiro had not made any changes, each and every one of them motivated by what I have called an *interpretative turn*²².

Although the changes in Monteiro's thought, motivated by this turn, had already appeared since the late nineties in several papers, they would only be compiled in 2003, with the publication of *NEH*. But Monteiro's reasons for doing so only came to light six years later, in the preface to the second edition²³ of *Hume e a Epistemologia* (2009). Specifically, regarding the concept of *induction*, which is in *NEH* the theme of chapter five (the one I'm addressing right now), Monteiro begins by clarifying that the *change of perspective* on such a concept made him "needs to make numerous changes". The thesis held by Monteiro (2009, p. 12) is based on the argument that the use of the term *induction* to speak about Hume's philosophy is not only problematic "inasmuch as not even once does it appear in his works as a synonym of 'causal inference', but that, after all, Hume never dealt with inductive reasoning in general, only with causal reasoning". He further argues that although "causal inference may be regarded as a form of inductive inference" it does not mean that Hume took into account the concept of induction in his epistemology (2009, p. 12-13).

In order to understand Monteiro's conceptual distinction, the semantic field of the concept of induction must be appreciated more broadly. Monteiro stresses the need for the discernment required to trace this typified relationship existing in what he calls the "inductive field". Therefore, he argues that, although a *causal inference* can be regarded as an *inductive inference*, not all *inductive inference* can be considered a *causal inference*. In this way, in the inference "all crows are black" the reasoning "left the 'sample' of a natural phenomenon to conclude that its characteristics are common to

²¹ In this regard, J.P. Monteiro (2009, p. 14) writes: "I did not consider it useful to indicate these changes that I had to make, as this would result in a too tedious reading given the large number of alterations".

²² From the Portuguese to the Brazilian edition, not even the titles of his essays remained unharmed. To be more specific, chapter number seven - the same in both editions - was the one that suffered the most changes. In its case, not even its title escaped the modifications promoted by Monteiro. In 1984, it was titled *Induction and Natural Selection*, but in the Brazilian edition, in 2009, it was called *Causality and Natural Selection*.

²³ It was released only in Brazil.

all members of this class of phenomena" (2009, p. 12). From this, you can now specifically understand what Monteiro meant by "inductive reasoning in general", which Hume never dealt with since he was restricted to *causal inference*. However, it can be argued that Hume falls back on inferences such as "all crows are black". Notwithstanding, Monteiro (2009, p. 13) argues that all instances in which examples of the latter type are found in Humean philosophy, they are not conceived of as inductive inferences but as "discoveries of the sensible qualities of objects". In his own words: "I maintain that Hume never speaks of inductive inferences, in any fully comprehensible sense, simply because the very concept of induction is generally not taken into account in its epistemology" (2009, p. 13). This is because according to Monteiro:

Any relation between an object and its sensible qualities, which are not a causal relation, do not take a part of Hume problem. For it the typical examples of Humean inferences are of the genre "fire produces heat", and not of the genus "all swans are white." What Hume is at least to discuss directly are causal dispositions, such as the provision of snow to produce cold, not sensitive qualities, such as the fluidity of water or the consistency of bread²⁴ (NEH, p. 103).

In chapter five, Monteiro brings to light the problems encountered by one who wishes to ascribe a *theory of induction* to Hume. He argues that there is only in Humean philosophy the problem of *inference* or *causal induction*. However, it is only in the next chapter that he will deal more specifically with this last type of inference. For that, he expands its semantic scope and it thinks about a *causal inference* new way conception. For it explains this new "conception" of *causal inference* is necessary to take it as meaning a result from the elimination of *chance* or *fortuity hypotheses*. He argues that this new conception may be latent in Humean philosophy. But what the six essays in *NEH* offer the best for its readers is the opportunity to see J. P. Monteiro moving away from the Humean exegesis, which consecrated him, and approaching the philosopher's exercise.

But if, in chapter six, Monteiro offers a conception of causal inference as a result of "elimination of chance hypotheses", he has yet to deal with the statute of *causal inference*. And he does it in the following chapter, the seventh of his book. In this text,

²⁴ In preface of *Hume e a Epistemologia*, where he takes over the subject of chapter five of *NEH*, Monteiro concludes: "As we can see, the discovery of non-dispositional, therefore non-causal qualities of sensitive objects is treated as a mere statement empirical, without raising any reasoning or inference".

right before the last one, Monteiro explains the *inference* earlier conceived by him as the product/result from the *repetition of conjunctions*. Of course, if the definition of *causal inference* given in Chapter Six transcends Hume's philosophy, the explanation of its *statute* could not be imputed to the Scottish philosopher. Thus, as in the previous chapter, Monteiro will approach Hume's concepts, but will go beyond from scope of the latter; once again, exercising its own philosophical facet. Monteiro must, therefore, be asked: if the causal inference – which he advocates for – is a result of the *repetition of conjunctions*, what does he mean by that last term? The answer is found in the same essay: "an innate capacity of great adaptive value, preserved by Darwinian natural selection throughout the evolution of species" (NEH, p.156-57). Now, as you can see, that all-out denial of a psychological analysis²⁵ of Humean epistemology, presented by Monteiro in Chapter Two, is repeated when he traces the general lines of his own theory.

Finally, in the eighth and final chapter, J.P. Monteiro departs from the themes of Hume's epistemology and approaches his moral philosophy. In this last essay, Monteiro will seek to examine, through ingenious argumentation, *gender questions* in the eighteenth century. And it is precisely the discussion of such an important contemporary theme, based on the perspective of an eighteenth-century philosopher, that makes *NEH*'s last chapter so interesting. There, more specifically, Monteiro comments on Hume's analysis of male privileges in the eighteenth-century faced to the situation of women's social subjection. He argues that the Scottish philosopher cleverly uses humour as a *literary device* to deal with a theme so unheard-of for his time. The final essay is – certainly in order to be fair to Hume's philosophical spirit – an exception to the rule of the theme dealt with in the earlier ones. Therefore, it is the finishing with a flourish of the “most complete” book on the Hume epistemology ever written in the Portuguese language. Beyond all the criticisms that may be pointed out to it, what is undeniable in *NEH* is the singular way in which this book hold up to the spirit of Hume's philosophy, as few ones have managed to do. It is, of all Monteiro's works, the one that marks his *final interpretative turn*, which culminated in the publication of the second edition of *Hume e a Epistemologia* (2009), which only in some respects recalls the Portuguese edition (1984).

²⁵ See footnote 15.

CITED MONTEIRO'S BOOKS:

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