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## **THEORY OF TRANSCENDENTALS AND THE BASIC FURNITURE OF MIND HYPOTHESIS**

This paper is devoted to one of the most intriguing theory that was invented by medieval theologians and philosophers in order to explain the nature of God. I am not personally keen on the theological dimension of this idea, I would rather like to focus on its promising philosophical usefulness and its explanatory power. For the very long time I was hesitating what aspect of this theory to choose as the most interesting and most illuminating. I eventually made a decision that there is still a very important and unsolved problem with 'pure experience' that has nothing to do with any concepts and theories; that is totally direct and devoid of any mediating factors. It seems to be very interesting to shed a little bit of light on it and combine it with what is at first sight such an old-fashioned theory as the theory of transcendentals.

My paper is divided into three sections. In the first of them will consider some difficulties connected with the problem of pure experience. In the second part the theory of transcendentals is outlined. The third section contains the application of the theory of transcendentals to the problem of pure experience.

### **Some Difficulties with the Problem of pure Experience**

Donald Davidson in his very famous paper 'On the conceptual schemata' says that there are three not two dogmas of empiricism. Two of them W.V.O. Quine picks out in the paper 'Two dogmas of empiricism'; Davidson adds the third dogma that strictly relates to the

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problem we are considering now. It is the dogma of uninterpreting data that is in fact the problem of the existence of pure empirical experience in which no conceptual factor is involved. Though I am not very interested in arguing for the extremely empirical approach, it is necessary to point out some crucial ideas of this view in order to better understand what kind of solution the theory of transcendentals does offer.

Let start with drawing up the main problem that was formulated in a very good way by Bas van Fraassen in his book *Scientific Image*. He says ([1980], p. 57): „to accept a theory involves no more belief ... than that what it says about observable phenomena is correct. To delineate what is observable, however, we must look to science ... and possibly to the same theory.” This problem is called ‘the problem of the hermeneutic circle’ and there have been many attempts to solve it. This name expresses a kind of trap in the human cognitive process and indicates that any data seem to be interpreted in some way.

The dogma of uninterpreting data sparkles many shades but what is the most fundamental in it is the thesis about direct experience which seems to be simply the thesis about direct sensual perceiving. Robert Hudson ([2000], p. 357) formulates this thesis in the following manner:

(Df) Direct perception is the process of perceiving an object without the mediation of concepts. (Hudson [2000], p. 357).

The object given in direct perception is a so-called ‘concept-less’ or ‘theory-free’ object. The question is ‘is there such an experience?’. First I will show three main arguments for this position and then some their defects which cannot be removed without additional assumptions having a pre-conceptual and pre-propositional character.

Three main arguments are as follows:

(1) The first is named the argument of the independency of routes and since it is a positive one I will not explain it in detail. It says exactly „claims made about an empirical object are more objective, are more valuable epistemically, if the claims are produced by different, although relevantly similar observational or experimental procedures”. This position is taken among others by S. Woolgar [1988].

The next two arguments employ the idea of identifying direct experience with experience that occurs without mediation of any descriptive beliefs. Dretske ([1969]); [1993] and earlier Warnock try to convince readers that one should make a distinction between thing-awareness and fact-awareness (Dretske) or, in terms of empirical experience, seeing things and seeing facts (Warnock). Thing-awareness is done directly, without any mediation of concepts or theories while fact-awareness requires some sort of theory. These distinctions offer us two kinds of experience (perception): direct and indirect. Robert Hudson argues for the possibility of the first in two steps.

(2) In the first step he takes 'the argument from no explanation' bringing forward the direct perceiving of objects at face value. Opponents of direct experience assert that „The perceptual identification of an object is inexplicable if the perceiver does not possess a descriptive belief that mediates the perception of this object. *Therefore*, for every perception, there is a descriptive belief that mediates the perception" (Hudson, op. cit., p. 365).

Hudson considers the logical structure of this argument and reconstructs it as follows: „Given hypothesis h (e.g. I directly perceive this table), one cannot explain the phenomenon p (my ability to successfully identify this table), *therefore*, hypothesis h is false." Now, he proposes an experiment with a man, Bob, who perceives two identical lamps A and B having only one feature that allows him to distinguish between the two lamps (being to the left of a lamp). If an opponent of direct perception is right (because a descriptive belief is necessary), it means that explanation for seeing lamp A is recognizing it as possessing the aforementioned property (being to the left of a lamp). The question is what happens when we shuffle the lamps without the perceiver knowing it. According to Hudson his opponents should say: the perceiver sees nothing, for it is clear that the perceiver does not see a proper lamp. However, Hudson concludes that „either Bob perceives lamp A or he perceives lamp B; and he does not perceive lamp B (the lamps were changed places each other), thus Bob sees lamp A." In a result Hudson rejects the opponent's argument using their own weapon: „Given hypothesis h (that, for every perception, there is a descriptive belief which grounds the identification of the perceived object), one cannot explain phenomenon p (Bob's ability to perceive lamp A in the post-shuffling situation), *therefore*, h is false" (ibid., p. 366).

(3) The third argument is put forward by different kinds of adversaries of direct perception. They say „Without descriptive beliefs, perceptions do not possess the content with which to bear confirmationally or disconfirmationally on others belief. *Therefore*, for every (epistemically valuably) perception, there is a descriptive belief that mediates the perception" (ibid., p. 367).

Hudson agrees that in general they are right and he calls the distinction between conceptually shaped experience on the one hand and conceptually shapeable experience on the other. This should help to understand his next experiment with a lamp. We have the sentence 'That is a green lamp'; the followers of indirect perceiving have to admit that their seeing of the lamp is determined by a descriptive belief 'green lamp' but how about the situation in which that lamp appears as such but it is in fact blue. Hudson rhetorically asks „what do they perceive, a green or a blue lamp or maybe nothing?" If we agree that

perceivers see a green lamp and their experience was shaped by some concepts it will entail that the sentence „That is a green lamp” is true. This implies that perceivers are always right, which seems to be a strange idea after all. Concluding, Hudson adds „Now, I am going to take it for granted here that theory-laden, empirical claims are epistemically valuable only if their truth or falsity depends on the way the world is [...]” (ibid., p. 368).

This is not the end of the story. Hudson focuses on the concepts or beliefs which may determine our perception, stressing their content. In fact that what does determine perception or experience in general is a content. I would agree that this determination is really very unpleasant and gives rise to many troubles with solipsism and scepticism in the forefront. But he does not exclude that there is a kind of determination that I call here ‘pre-conceptual and pre-propositional determination’ and which plays a fundamental role in the process of experiencing the world.

All three arguments mentioned above for direct perception have the same flaw. In order to refer to and identify objects we must at least subconsciously to have some sort of tools which enable us to see the world divided into different objects and facts which we may know and talk about (see J. McDowell [1994]). Fodor [1984], for instance, admits that there are so-called core concepts which are located in perceptual modules. Although I am far away from thinking that what Fodor is talking about are really concepts, it seems to be very good opportunity to formulate hypothesis I will call further the basic furniture hypothesis – BFH:

(BFH) In order to explain how it is possible to refer to and identify reality in its objective and plural dimensions, there has to exist a basic furniture of our cognitive faculties which pre-conceptually and pre-propositionally determines all experience.

Now that is a good time to shift to the theory of transcendentals that offers us support to the basic furniture hypothesis and helps us to understand why pre-conceptual and pre-propositional determination is something more than only a fairy tale.

## **Theory of Transcendentals**

Although the theory of transcendentals was developed by medieval theologians mostly interested in talking about the nature of God and relationships between God and human beings, they were not able to set aside the philosophical background of this theory. Before speaking in detail about this mysterious construction, it is necessary to go back for a moment to Plato and Aristotle.

Plato in the *Sophist* considers a few concepts which are very different from all concepts discussed by him in other dialogues. He mentions five such concepts: *being*, *motion*, *rest*, *identity*, and *difference*. It is not clear whether the full list includes non-being or not but it is entirely reasonable to say that these concepts play a significant role in Plato's new metaphysical project. This project tries to explain how it is possible to produce true sentences about different kinds of reality without falling into contradiction. I have no time to penetrate Plato's conception but it should be underlined that the distinctive feature of the new theory (this is called the theory of the highest genera – gr. *megista gene*) is the possibility of predicating being of all sorts of things regardless of its membership to the class of material things or the class of ideas.

Aristotle develops and qualifies the idea of the most common concepts. In *Metaphysics* IV he brings into philosophical circulation the concept of being *qua* being, the most abstract notion that sparkles many meanings and different usages. Although he focuses mainly on one of the meanings, that is the meaning of substance (to be a particular), the full list includes truth as well.

It is necessary to call your attention to Aristotle's view on the relationship between being (he adds also unity – gr. *hen*) and particular. This view might be interpreted in contemporary philosophical language as a deflationist or rather minimalist view. He points out that when it is said 'man is' nothing more than 'man' is said (analogously 'the one man' means the same as 'man'). To say of particulars something that does not belong to the nine categories adds nothing new. Being a being is included in being a particular; when we perceive this table we understand that this is a being.

Moreover, according to Aristotle, a sentence is a combination of a subject and a predicate. 'Be' cannot be a predicate because its function among other things is to link subject and predicate. In this situation the sentence 'man is' looks like an incomplete sentence and from the logical standpoint it means nothing more than the word 'man' that a logical and semantical feature is to refer to something.

It has been told about the redundancy of the basic terms of the Aristotelian metaphysics in order to introduce the characteristic of the aforementioned concepts. First of all, there is more than one metaphysically important notion (Plato speaks about five, Aristotle lists at least three). Secondly, their logical features totally differ from the features of particular or universal concepts. Thirdly, they play a different role in human cognitive activity. Fourthly, they have more than one meaning; they are equivocal. This gives us an opportunity to present the theory of the transcendentals that appears in the *Questiones disputatae de veritate* of St. Thomas Aquinas (English translation [1952–1954]).

St Thomas Aquinas introduces the theory of the transcendentals while discussing the problem of truth. It is worth noting that he does not do it in the context of goodness that is an object of interest of his predecessors, Philip the Chancellor, Alexander of Hales, and his teacher Albert the Great. This is remarkable because truth is strictly connected with knowledge and it means that the theory of transcendentals was improved in order to explain some aspects of our knowledge.

I propose to divide St Thomas' text into three parts: (1) methodological assumptions; (2) the concept of being, and (3) the procedure for deriving the rest of the transcendentals.

(1) Thomas, in establishing the most fundamental concepts of our conceptual schemata, uses the methodology that derives from ancient philosophical considerations. In the literature this is called 'resolutio' and relies on the analysis leading to first concepts or propositions. Thomas accepts the procedure of reduction and he mentions two main arguments for it.

He says (*De veritate*, 1.1 respondeo): „*When investigating the nature of anything, one should make the same kind of analysis as he makes when he reduces a proposition to certain self-evident principles (reductionem in aliqua principia per se intellectui nota). Otherwise, both types of knowledge will become involved in an infinite regress, and science and our knowledge of things will perish.*”

When investigating the nature of a thing we have to be able to deliver analysis that shows that there is (or are) self-evident principles which are the basic 'description' of the thing. Let us consider this table. We may produce many different descriptions and in accordance with the procedure of reduction there is a kind of basic description of this table. Thomas gives us the subjective, epistemological criterion for it that is self-evidence. We easily notice that any descriptive sentences we produce might be not recognized as a basic description because none of them is self-evident for us. It seems to be evident that this kind of description will not use any of the concepts by which we usually characterize things. It is hard to believe that such a description according to Thomas Aquinas could be delivered, for instance, by physicists or chemists, not to mention biologists. Their descriptions are really not very easy to be grasped by people and what is perhaps more important, they do not fulfill the second criterion, that is, to be evident *per se* to the intellect. (The English translation I am using misses the word 'intellect'.)

The second argument concerns the methodological aspect of achieving knowledge. Thomas suggests that if there were not first self-evident principles (concepts or propositions), there would not be knowledge any more. What is very interesting is that he separates

science (lat. *scientia*) from the knowledge of things (*cognitio rerum*). This division uncovers some beliefs that Thomas is familiar with. The first self-evident principles have to be identified by people both in scientific research and in the natural process of cognition. This means that he establishes his theory as applied to all the fields of human cognitive activity. We might ask 'is it really necessary to have such the principles in order to obtain knowledge?' He would answer this question by saying that although such the principles seem to be useless at the level of descriptive knowledge that focuses on features and characteristic of things expressed in universal concepts, the principles are necessary when we want to evaluate sentences about things which are regarded as not having the recognized status. At any rate the first principles (concepts or propositions) are roughly speaking outside of the whole scientific procedure unless there arise problems with some ontological classification of objects of science. We do not demand first principles when we are speaking about tables or chairs, but when we start talking about unicorns and gods the ontological problem arises and we have to go back to the first principles.

There is another interesting methodological view that appears in *The Disputed Questions on Truth*. Thomas in q. 11 formulates a mysterious doctrine that is hardly understandable to many scholars and specialists of his thought. Every student of philosophy knows that Thomas does not belong to the nativists, that is, he does not agree with the theory that there is something innate that determines human knowledge about the world. In the aforementioned question he says that 'preexistent in nobis 'rationes seminales'."

He mentions two types of 'rationes seminales', simple and complex. The set of simple *rationes* includes such concepts as being, unity, truth and so forth. These concepts are known directly, without any mediation. Members of the second set are principles. They are complex and what we may say in all probability they are reducible to the first simple concepts.

Anyway, we have quite clear methodological assumptions which can be connected with BFH. Now, we have the content of BFH: the mind is equipped with some sort of pre-propositions and pre-concepts which determine our knowing reality.

(2) There is no more basic and more simple concept than the concept of being. Thomas argues for this point in the four ways. We read in the *Disputed Questions* (q. 1, respondeo): „Now, as Avicenna says, that which the intellect first conceives as, in a way, the most evident, and to which it reduces all its concepts, is being. Consequently, all the other conceptions of the intellect are had by additions to being. But nothing can be added to being as though it were something not included in being

[...]. The Philosopher has shown this by proving that being cannot be a genus. Yet, in this sense, some predicates may be said to add to being inasmuch as they express a mode of being not expressed by the term 'being'. It happens in two ways."

The four ways of argumentation are as follows:

a. a being is conceived as the first by the intellect. We have to be sure Thomas says the intellect directly grasps being, simply an existent. Sometimes Thomas tends to say that the intellect grasps being *in actu confuse* which means that there is no conceptual clarity in what the intellect actually conceives.

b. Being is most evident for the intellect. It is easy to understand why it is. Before we start distinguishing things and predicating full-blooded concepts of them, it must be evident that we conceive an existent. When I look through the window and see the sky over my head, it is not the most evident thing to me that there are birds, clouds, aircrafts, and so forth, but it is evident to me that there are existents which I will recognize in the next steps of cognitive procedure.

c. Until now Thomas has been speaking of being, now he is beginning to talk about the concept of being. He does it because the concept of being is given immediately when a being is given to our cognitive power. As we can remember from the previous section, the *rationes seminales* are discovered by the agent intellect through the abstracted data given in experience. But Thomas adds that all concepts are reducible to being. For them to be reducible means to be for their referents recognized by the intellect as beings.

d. In the last argument Thomas turns over the procedure of reduction we have been talking about. He says that all concepts of the intellect are in some sort of combination with being. They supervene upon being. The addition is not an operation on real things. I am not able to add something to being. I may for instance add some ingredients to boiling water and then make soup but this does not mean that the ingredients which are combined and become a mixed substance called 'tomato soup' were not beings before. This means that the only addition is the addition in thought (*secundum rationem*). This addition in fact is the expression of modes of being, which are the ways things are.

We have to be clear about the concept of being. Thomas takes evasive action here. Although he indicates that both being and the concept of being are first in order of cognition, being is primary in this process. Being is recognized by the intellect immediately and at the same moment the concept of being is given as well.

(3) Speaking in the most general terms, there are two modes of being. Thomas names them 'a special manner of being' and 'a mode [...] that is common and consequent upon every being.' The differentia-



tion into ten categories belongs to the expression of a special manner of being, whereas the transcendentals are expressions of that which is common and consequent upon every being. We can observe the latter in detail by dividing it into two parts.

Thomas writes (De veritate, q. 1, respondeo): „*This mode can be taken in two ways: first, in so far as it follows upon every being considered absolutely; second, in so far as it follows upon every being consideration in relation to another. In the first, the term is used in two ways, because it expresses something in the being either affirmatively or negatively. [...] To express this, the term 'thing' is used; for, according to Avicenna, thing differs from being because being gets its name from to-be (esse), but thing expresses the quiddity or essence of the thing. There is, however, a negation consequent upon every being considered absolutely: its undividedness, and this is expressed by one. For the one is simply undivided being.*”

The situation we have is following: we experience being, it is given to us immediately as what is absolutely first in the process of cognition. But we refer to being in several ways. Thomas tells us about two different considerations. The first of them is an absolute consideration. It may be done in two ways: affirmatively and negatively.

The first two transcendentals are established upon reference to being in two manners. If you look at the table now, and imagine that you do not have any knowledge about it, in the absolute and affirmative reference to being (it exists or better it has *esse* – existent) you are able to grasp its *thisness*. We express this primarily by using our index finger, and secondarily through the demonstrative pronoun. Thomas calls this aspect of our basic experience the absolute and affirmative consideration of being and this is the meaning of the first transcendental *thing* (lat. *res*). The second consideration relies on an absolute but negative reference to a being. The word 'one' or 'unity' (lat. *unum*) means reference to a being in such a way that the mind grasps that *this* and *being* are not divided. Coming back to the table; in the very first experience we conceive *this* as *existing*.

But the mode of being that is common and consequent upon every being may be taken in the second way – according to the relation of one being to another. Thomas adds that this is done in a twofold manner. „*The first is based on the distinction of one being from another, and this distinctiveness is expressed by the word 'something' (lat. aliquid), which implies, as it were, some other things. For, just as a being is said to be one in so far as it is without division in itself, so it is said to be something in so far as it is divided from others. The second division is based on the correspondence of one being to another. This is possible only if there is something which is such that it agrees with every thing. Such*

*a being is soul, which, as is said in The Soul, „in some way is all things”. The soul, however, has both knowing and appetitive powers. ‘Good’ expresses the correspondence of being to the appetitive power [...]. ‘True’ expresses the correspondence of being to the knowing power [...]*

The meanings of the three additional transcendentals have been specified. The first of them, that is named ‘something’ refers to the plurality of things (a division between things). It is done in a relative and negative consideration. When we look at this we immediately realize that this is something different from that. Thomas wants to say that being which is given directly is given in its distinctiveness from other beings; things are given in the richness of plurality and our minds have to be equipped with some tools in order to experience this richness.

The last two transcendentals are controversial. They are based on relative and affirmative considerations. Truth and goodness are recognized as the result of a basic and fundamental relation that occurs in reality. This situation is grasped immediately when a being is given. We are speaking about the mind and its two faculties which relate to being in the correspondence relation. Thomas evidently indicates that when we, for example, experience this table the possibility of any future knowledge we will be able to achieve relies upon the relation between this table on the one hand and the human mind (soul) on the other. This relation is called ‘correspondence’ and means simply that ‘things and souls fit each other’. What is even more interesting, this fitness of our minds is confirmed in the very first moment of experience when they grasp the plurality of things and so the relation between them and itself.

I would like to bring the problem of some kind of duality to your attention. Thomas seems to speak simultaneously about the order of reality and the order of the human minds’ activity. That is why some Thomists tend to create the theory of the most common properties which are the transcendentals. It would be very reasonable to underline that Thomas tells us about the modes of being. This expression means ‘the ways things are’. He does not enumerate the several properties which are common to all things and have the transcendentals refer to them. Instead, he recognizes how things are. These modes of being are strictly connected with the fundamental and the most basic activity of the human mind. The meanings of the transcendentals are derived from the cooperation and interaction between minds and beings.

Now we may pass on to the last section where I try to make use of the relationship between the theory of the transcendentals and the problem mentioned in the first section.

## **Hypothesis of the Basic Furniture of Mind**

Let us consider the problem of pure experience again. If the theory of direct empirical experience were true, there would be a moment in perceiving the world when we would not have any intellectual involvement in it, which would mean that it is nothing but chaos. The examples with lamps show that we need a basic attitude toward the world. We expect objects and some sort of order between them on the one hand, and between them and ourselves on the other. The basic furniture hypothesis goes well here. Almost all of us have had an experience that is very common to people who walk around the forest in the evening when sun is setting and it is getting dark. There is a moment when we cannot see anything but suddenly sounds reach our ears. Although we do not know what it is, we are able to say that it is a being, that it is different from other things, that it is what is given to our faculty of knowing and our faculty of desiring. We know all these things but we are still not able to answer to the essential question 'what is it?'. Only a few seconds later we are ready to say: it is a bear or we must have imagined it; there is nothing.

Theory of transcendentals would be treated as a good support for the BFH. It offers an understanding of the very fundamental necessary conditions for experiencing and being experienced. The transcendentals seem to be the predeterminations of every particular act of knowing and desiring. Before we formulate the thesis about direct perceiving of objects we have to have a little bit of knowledge about what we actually perceive. What is perceived is being that is recognized by our mind as an existent.

The theory of transcendentals fulfilling the BFH sheds light on both ontological and epistemological dimensions of experience. We may say nothing about the objects we are perceiving with one exception; we are always able to say that they are, they are these or those, they are something, they are objects of our cognitive and voluntary faculties. This pre-conceptual and pre-propositional determination does not mean that we achieve substantial knowledge about these objects. It seems rather that we are equipped with tools which give us immediate and ordered access to reality. When we want to relate what these tools are, we have to do a piece of reflection upon the ways of working and interacting with reality.

At the semantical level all the transcendentals are hidden behind a sentence but it is relatively easy to show they really are. Let us consider the sentence 'This table is wooden.' It refers to a being (at least a creation of our minds), it refers to a thing, it combines (unifies) an object and its property, it separates one thing from another, it may

be evaluated as true, and it refers to something that may be an object of desire. To be very precise we could propose semantical operators that represent the deeper structure. Quine and Woleński showed it for being; I am sure we are able to do the same for the rest of the transcendentals. At the ordinary level of language it is not necessary yet.

In the second section it was said that Aristotle's view on the transcendentals is quite similar to the present philosophers' opinion about the redundancy of truth. This is not surprising for being, thing, something, truth or goodness, as the pre-conceptual and pre-propositional basic furniture of our minds, are absolutely transparent. If we put them in the place of the predicate in a subject-predicate sentence we do not obtain any substantial information. If someone asks us what is it and pointing at this table he is not expecting an answer 'it is a being' or 'it is a thing' or 'it is something'. His respond will probably be like this: 'I know this thing, please tell me what it is'.

This view leads to some consequences. One of them is the special status of concepts which are derived from the transcendentals. They are not first-order concepts. They really have very little content (as concepts), because they do not represent any feature of things. They are valuable in the very strange cases when for instance we have to find a solution to the problem of whether the things we are talking about are beings. In such the situations concepts of the very basic furniture of mind are introduced to first-order sentences and have very strong informative power. To say of unicorns that they are beings means much more for many people than to meet David Beckham in the nearby restaurant. About the latter we know that he is, regarding the former we wish they were.

## **Concluding Remarks**

I have been trying to show that theory of transcendentals may be treated as the content of the Basic Furniture Hypothesis that seems to be necessary to explain the process of knowing and desiring. Above all it helps to understand why we are immediately familiar with reality and have no problems with investigating a nature of things in their plurality and mutual relationships. The theory of the transcendentals stresses the fundamental co-relation between being and the mind, recognizing the richness of being in the forms of considerations which are made by the mind. These considerations are the meanings of the transcendental terms, which are *being*, *thing*, *unity*, *something*, *truth*, and *goodness*. Without them no knowledge or effective desiring cannot be achieved at all.

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**TEORIA TRANSCENDENTALIÓW A HIPOTEZA  
O PODSTAWOWYM WYPOSAŻENIU UMYŚŁU (HPWU)**

## Streszczenie

W artykule poruszam kwestię zastosowania wysuniętej w średniowieczu teorii transcendentaliów, w celu wyjaśnienia relacji między światem a Bogiem, dla naświetlenia problemu bezpośredniego postrzegania. Artykuł składa się z trzech części. W pierwszej, zatytułowanej: „Trudności związane z zagadnieniem doświadczenia bezpośredniego”, rozważam argumenty Roberta Hudsona ([2000]) na rzecz tezy o istnieniu postrzegania bezpośredniego. W części drugiej („Teoria transcendentaliów”) dokonuję rekonstrukcji i wstępnego zastosowania klasycznej, średniowiecznej teorii transcendentaliów autorstwa św. Tomasza z Akwinu. Wreszcie, w części trzeciej („Hipoteza o podstawowym wyposażeniu umysłu”) wysuwam hipotezę głoszącą, iż istnieje coś, co można nazwać „podstawowym wyposażeniem umysłu”, a co w sposób beztreściowy determinuje doświadczenie rzeczywistości przez ludzki umysł; transcen-

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**TEORIA TRANSCENDENTALIÓW A HIPOTEZA  
O PODSTAWOWYM WYPOSAŻENIU UMYŚŁU (HPWU)**

Streszczenie

W artykule poruszam kwestię zastosowania wysuniętej w średniowieczu teorii transcendentaliów, w celu wyjaśnienia relacji między światem a Bogiem, dla naświetlenia problemu bezpośredniego postrzegania. Artykuł składa się z trzech części. W pierwszej, zatytułowanej: „Trudności związane z zagadnieniem doświadczenia bezpośredniego”, rozważam argumenty Roberta Hudsona ([2000]) na rzecz tezy o istnieniu postrzegania bezpośredniego. W części drugiej („Teoria transcendentaliów”) dokonuję rekonstrukcji i wstępnego zastosowania klasycznej, średniowiecznej teorii transcendentaliów autorstwa św. Tomasza z Akwinu. Wreszcie, w części trzeciej („Hipoteza o podstawowym wyposażeniu umysłu”) wysuwam hipotezę głoszącą, iż istnieje coś, co można nazwać „podstawowym wyposażeniem umysłu”, a co w sposób beztreściowy determinuje doświadczenie rzeczywistości przez ludzki umysł; transcen-

dentalia traktowane są przy tym jako możliwa propozycja interpretacji owego wyposażenia. W niniejszym streszczeniu pokrótce omówię zasadnicze argumenty zawarte w tekście angielskim.

(I) Donald Davidson w artykule „O schemacie pojęciowym” wysunął sugestię, iż prócz dwóch zdiagnozowanych przez Quine'a dogmatów empiryzmu jest i trzeci: dogmat o niezinterpretowanych danych. Problem ten występuje pod kilkoma nazwami, wśród których prym wiedzie określenie 'mit danych'. W tradycji analitycznej jest on nie tylko często dyskutowany, ale w pewnym sensie odgrywa kluczową rolę. Trzeba bowiem pamiętać, że znakomita część filozofii analitycznej ma zdecydowanie empirystyczną afiliację, a występująca tu i ówdzie opcja przeciwna, reprezentowana np. przez L. BonJoura tudzież J. McDowell'a jest w trudnej sytuacji ze względu na nałożony na nich ciężar dostarczenia argumentów pozytywnych na rzecz własnej tezy.

Argumenty Roberta Hudsona są jedynie ilustracją problemu bezpośredniego doświadczenia. On sam przyjmuje, że z czymś takim mamy do czynienia w postaci bezpośredniej percepcji (ang. *direct perception*), definiując (Hudson [2000], s. 357) ją jako proces postrzegania przedmiotu bez zapośredniczenia (udziału) pojęć. W tego rodzaju doświadczeniu przedmiot dany jest jako pozbawiony uwikłania w teorię lub schemat pojęciowy, a zatem fakt dania przedmiotu nie jest zdeterminowany żadnymi czynnikami niedoświadczeniowymi.

Hudson wysuwa trzy argumenty, spośród których dwa mają charakter negatywny. Na tych dwóch chciałbym się skupić. Pierwszym punktem wyjścia jest następująca sytuacja: „Rozpatrzmy hipotezę *h* (np. „Postrzegam bezpośrednio ten stół.”); prosimy o to, by wyjaśnić fenomen *f* (moją zdolność do zakończonej sukcesem identyfikacji tego stołu); ponieważ takiego wyjaśnienia dana osoba nie jest w stanie dostarczyć, wnioskujemy, że *h* jest fałszywe.” Hudson ([2000], s. 365-366) obala to wnioskowanie za pomocą następującego eksperymentu: powiedzmy, że Jan postrzega dwie identyczne lampy A i B; dostępna jest mu jedynie jedna cecha różniąca, mianowicie 'bycie na lewo od'. Zgodnie z propozycją zwolenników doświadczenia pośredniego, Jan powinien posługiwać się komponentą teoretyczną w każdej sytuacji, także tej, w której, przy niewiedzy Jana, doszło do zamiany lamp A i B. Zdaniem Hudsona zwolennik postrzegania pośredniego powinien przyznać, że Jan nic nie widzi, bo przecież lampa, która jest 'na lewo od' nie jest już lampą, którą postrzegał Jan przed zamianą; w związku z tym nie dokonał poprawnej identyfikacji. Koncepcja przeciwników postrzegania bezpośredniego jest zatem nie do utrzymania.

Podobna sytuacja jest w kolejnym argumentcie. Tutaj punktem wyjścia jest stwierdzenie, że bez zapośredniczenia w komponencie teoretycznej (Hudson mówi o 'descriptive beliefs'), postrzeżenia nie

posiadają treści, do której mogłyby odnosić się pozostałe przekonania, co powoduje, że postrzeżenie bezpośrednie nie ma racji bytu. Mimo że Hudson w ogólności zgadza się z taką wizją, twierdzi jednocześnie, że należy dokonać rozróżnienia na 'doświadczenie uformowane za pomocą pojęć' oraz 'doświadczenie formowalne za pomocą pojęć'. Ta dystynkcja pozwala przejść do drugiego eksperymentu z lampą: Zaczynamy od zdania 'To jest zielona lampa'; zdanie to jest prawdziwe wtedy i tylko wtedy, gdy lampa jest zielona. 'Bycie zieloną lampą' jest pewną daną teoretyczną, która determinuje doświadczenie (postrzeżenie). Hudson pyta ([2000], s. 368): jeśli jest tak istotnie, jeśli 'bycie zieloną lampą' determinuje nasze postrzeżenie (formuje je), co się stanie, gdy okaże się, że lampa jest niebieska; czy ten, kto postrzega daną lampę, cokolwiek postrzega? Jest to, oczywiście, pytanie retoryczne. Hudson konkluduje, że lampę postrzegamy bezpośrednio, co nie oznacza, że nie jest to doświadczenie formowalne za pomocą pojęć.

W tym momencie warto wprowadzić hipotezę o istnieniu podstawowego wyposażenia umysłu (HPWU). Odpowiada ona na zarysowany powyżej problem w następujący sposób: postrzeżenie dowolnego przedmiotu ma charakter bezpośredni, tzn. zawsze coś postrzegamy, bez względu na to, jaki aparat konceptualny jest zaangażowany, przy czym nie oznacza to, że nie istnieje rodzaj determinacji, który formuje nasze doświadczenie (postrzeżenie) przedmiotu. Nie jest to bynajmniej determinacja treściowa, tak jak ją charakteryzował R. Hudson, lecz raczej determinacja formalna, umożliwiająca doświadczenie przedmiotów jako przedmiotów, a także otwierająca możliwość identyfikacji poprzez 'przekonania opisowe'. Wydaje się, że tego rodzaju funkcje spełniać mogą transcendentalia, których status rozpoznali i opisali średniowieczni teologowie i filozofowie, ze św. Tomaszem z Akwinu na czele (wspomnieć się godzi jeszcze o Filipie Kanclerzu, Aleksandrze z Hales, Albercie Wielkim czy, już po Tomaszu, Janie Dunsie Szkocie). W artykule rekonstruuje teorię Tomasza z Akwinu.

Tomasz dokonuje pełnego wykładu teorii transcendentaliów w dziele *Kwestie dyskutowane o prawdzie* (*Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*), w pierwszej Kwestii. Jest to informacja istotna; wcześniej problem transcendentaliów rozpatrywany był na gruncie pytania o dobro, w kontekście rozważań wokół zagadnienia relacji między Bogiem a stworzeniem i argumentacji na rzecz tezy, iż zło nie jest czymś realnym. Tomasz dokonał w tym względzie ogromnej zmiany. Umieścił problem na nowym tle, w odniesieniu do zagadnienia prawdziwości, a więc rozpatrując warunki powodzenia procesu poznawczego.

(II) Teorię transcendentaliów Tomasza analizuję w trzech paragrafach: w (1) omawiam założenia metodologiczne; w (2) pojęcie bytu; w (3) natomiast procedury derywacji (konstytucji) pozostałych, prócz bytu, transcendentaliów.



(1) Kluczem do zrozumienia wywodu transcendentaliów jest poznanie metodologii, jaką przyjmuje Tomasz z Akwinu. W Odpowiedziach na zarzuty wysunięte w Kwestii 1.1. *De Veritate* twierdzi on, że wiedza jest możliwa, o ile istnieje granica redukcji (łac. *resolutio*) do zasad, które są samooczywiste i uchwytywane przez intelekt sam przez się. Zasady (w formie pojęć lub sądów) mają charakter fundamentalny, są nieredukowalne i nie podlegają już dalej rozkładowi, tak jak dzieje się to w przypadku innych pojęć i sądów. Granica redukcji, owe zasady, są ostateczną instancją epistemiczną, determinującą doświadczenie rzeczywistości. W 11 Kwestii *De Veritate* pisze, że istnieją w nas jakby nasiona wiedzy (łac. *rationes seminales*), które są albo proste, jak pojęcia bytu, jedności, dobra, prawdy, albo złożone, jak zasady. Te niby racje zarodkowe wiedzy przynależą do wyposażenia umysłu i są ostateczną racją i determinacją wiedzy przedmiotowej. Stefan Swieżawski sugeruje, że Tomasz ma w tym przypadku na myśli swoiste struktury przedkonceptualne, które nie są nośnikami treści, lecz jedynie są formą dla wszelkich pojęć i sądów. Transcendentalia spełniają kryteria metodologiczne Tomasza, nade wszystko zaś pierwsze transcendentalne – *byt*.

(2) Pierwszeństwo transcendentalne byt jest szczególnego rodzaju. Tomasz powołuje się na Awicennę i jego słynne stwierdzenie z *Metafizyki*: „Tym, co intelekt pojmuje jako pierwsze i do czego redukuje inne pojęcia, jest byt”. Zwraca uwagę swoista dualność: (I) intelekt pojmuje jako pierwszy byt, ale też (II) do bytu redukowane są wszystkie pojęcia. Tomasz zatem postrzega transcendentalne byt zarówno w aspekcie referencjalnym, jako to, do czego termin 'byt' się odnosi, jak i znaczeniowym jako to, co jest treścią pojęcia znaczonego przez to wyrażenie. To ma kolosalne znaczenie dla wywodu transcendentaliów, gdyż są one, zdaniem Tomasza i jego poprzedników, tym, co w jakiś sposób dodane do bytu. Jako że nie może być do bytu dodane nic realnie, co by sprawiło, że byt byłby jeszcze bardziej bytem, pozostaje jedynie dodanie na poziomie znaczeniowym (łac. *secundum rationem*). Tak właśnie ma się rzecz z transcendentaliami innymi niż byt.

Tomasz dokonuje wstępnej charakterystyki transcendentalne byt, która ze względu na wysuniętą HPWU jest szczególnie interesująca. Píše on mianowicie, że byt jest tym, co pojmowane jako pierwsze, co jest jednocześnie najbardziej dla intelektu oczywiste (narzucające się), co uruchamia całą skomplikowaną strukturę konceptualną, i co, wreszcie, stanowi podstawę dla pozostałych pojęć. W tym kontekście pozostałe transcendentalia stanowią wyraz refleksji nad pierwszym transcendentalne, w którym ma miejsce jedność przedmiotu oraz myśli o tym przedmiocie.

(3) Konstytucja pozostałych transcendentaliów jest pochodną refleksji immanentnej nad sposobem odnoszenia się do przedmiotów, a także

analizy sposobu dania przedmiotów. Tomasz wyróżnia dwa zasadnicze sposoby bytowania (istnienia): (a) szczególny (konkretny) oraz (b) ogólny. Konkretny sposób istnienia charakteryzowany jest za pomocą kategorii (pojęć ogólnych), podczas gdy ogólny (przez co należy rozumieć taki sposób istnienia, który przysługuje każdemu przedmiotowi bez względu na zaszeregowanie gatunkowo-rodzajowe) wyrażają transcendentalia. Tomasz wymienia, poza bytem, jeszcze pięć transcendentaliów: rzecz (*res*), które wyraża fakt, iż przedmiot posiada jakąś treść (istotną), jedność (*unum*), która wyraża fakt, iż w przedmiocie istnieje związek między jego komponentami (np. istotą i istnieniem), którego negacja oznaczałaby zniweczenie całego przedmiotu, wielość (*aliquid*), która wyraża fakt oddzielenia jednego przedmiotu od drugiego (zróznicowania przedmiotów), wreszcie dobro (*bonum*) oraz prawda (*verum*), które wyrażają relację między dwiema władzami duszy a dowolnym przedmiotem: dobro od strony woli, prawda – intelektu.

Wspomniałem o tym, że transcendentalia wyrażają zarówno sposoby istnienia, jak i sposoby pojmowania, w dodatku są to ogólne sposoby istnienia i pojmowania. Jest to fakt nie bez znaczenia dla rozumienia HPWU. Uniwersalia w konfrontacji z transcendentaliami wyrażają jedynie partykularne sposoby istnienia, co oznacza, że schemat pojęć ogólnych, gdyby uznać go za determinujący doświadczenie, dokonywałby zawężenia pola doświadczenia. Zaproponowany przez Hudsona eksperyment z lampami w pełni potwierdza intuicje wyrażone przez Tomasza w teorii transcendentaliów.

(III) Przetestowanie HPWU występującej w powiązaniu z teorią transcendentaliów rozpocznijmy od przypomnienia, iż argumenty Hudsona dotyczą dwóch ściśle ze sobą sprzężonych kwestii. Po pierwsze, braku zaangażowania aparatu konceptualnego w doświadczenie (identyfikację) przedmiotu. Po drugie, możliwości tzw. doświadczenia (postrzeżenia) bezpośredniego. Celowo wymieniam obie kwestie w odwrotnym porządku. Możliwość postrzeżenia bezpośredniego nie musi być negowana przez przeciwnika tezy Hudsona, o czym zresztą wymieniony autor lojalnie informuje. Podobnie jest w drugą stronę; Hudson nie neguje konceptualnej komponenty w doświadczeniu. W istocie rzeczy postrzeżenie bezpośrednie, jeśli brać je na poważnie, jako całkowicie pozbawione związków z wyposażeniem pojęciowym, jest jedynie czystą odbiorczością, którą można zredukować do receptora bodźców. Funkcją takiego receptora, i tutaj Hudson nie jest wystarczająco ścisły, nie jest jednak pouczanie nas o tym, jaki jest świat, ale przyjmowanie, przekształcanie i transmitowanie danych do ośrodka przetwarzania informacji, czyli, na poziomie fizjologicznym, mózgu, a na poziomie ontologicznym – umysłu.

HPWU nie działa w omówionym powyżej obszarze. Ma natomiast zastosowanie do kwestii zaangażowania aparatu pojęciowego do identyfikacji przedmiotu. Moment identyfikacji nosi już znamiona zaangażowania pojęciowego. Identyfikujemy coś za pomocą czegoś, a więc przedmiot za pomocą jakichś kryteriów. HPWU wyjaśnia zjawisko identyfikacji (a także determinacji postrzeżenia bezpośredniego) w ten sposób, iż określa warunki identyfikacji: (a) identyfikujemy zawsze jakiś przedmiot; (b) identyfikujemy odnosząc się do jakiejś treści (bierzemy pod uwagę jakąś treść); (c) identyfikacja może zaistnieć tylko pod warunkiem, że istnieje więcej przedmiotów niż jeden; (d) identyfikacja jest jakąś formą stwierdzenia, że jest tak-a-tak (zdaniem prawdziwym). Transcendentalia określając warunki identyfikacji dla przedmiotu nie przesądzają przy tym, za pomocą jakich pojęć ogólnych (przekonań deskryptywnych) proces ten się dokonuje. Ma to kolosalne znaczenie z uwagi na argumenty Hudsona. Identyfikacja lamp po ich zamianie może się nie udać w tym sensie, że Jan nie wie, że lampa A zmieniła pozycję w stosunku do lampy B. Wszelako obie lampy zostały zidentyfikowane jako coś, przedmioty, które pozostają w stosunku do siebie i w stosunku do intelektu w jakichś rodzajach relacji. Stawiając dramatyczną hipotezę, iż Jan po zamianie lamp nic nie postrzega, Hudson nie bierze pod uwagę momentu determinacji formalnej, która nie przesądza o tym, co widzi Jan, ale że w ogóle coś widzi. Jan nie widzi lamp, widzi natomiast coś. To natomiast jest warunkiem możliwości dalszych procedur wiedzy twórczych.

W podsumowaniu stwierdzam, że HPWU i teoria transcendentaliów znakomicie współgrają ze sobą przede wszystkim dzięki temu, że teoria transcendentaliów odnosi się zarówno do poziomu ontycznego, jak i conceptualnego. Tym samym staje się poręcznym narzędziem do zrozumienia skomplikowanego życia umysłu. Taki też cel, jak miemam, miał Tomasz z Akwinu, gdy pisał *De Veritate*. W ostateczności można bowiem interpretować to dzieło jako wykład z zakresu domniemanego życia umysłowego Boga. Przy mniejszych aspiracjach chodzi po prostu o życie ludzkiego umysłu.