DEMONSTRATION AND BELIEF:
THE INVESTIGATION OF A DIFFERENCE IN CLASSICAL THOUGHT

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
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December 1978
CHAPTER THREE

SECTION ONE

DESCRIBING AND PRESCRIBING
When Descartes states 'that our method rightly explains how our mental vision should be used', he is exemplifying one of the defining characteristics of the paradigm of demonstrable knowledge. The method which determines how the 'vision' of the thinking subject could be used is a method which, as method, transcends the thinking subject. The thinking subject's involvement only occurs in the application of the method. With Hume it is no longer the case that a method is prescribed; rather, what is found is a description of the mental processes which accompany the thinking subject's claims to certainty. In Hume, therefore, there exists a descriptive rather than a prescriptive approach to the knowing process.

The distinction between prescriptive and descriptive philosophical discourse is a distinction which holds between different paradigms of the knowing process. Consequently the move from the prescriptive to the descriptive indicates a profound re-structuring of that process. This discourse generated by the paradigm of demonstrable knowledge is, as has been mentioned previously, marked by its being prescriptive. What is intended by this particular characterisation is that the philosophical texts belonging to the paradigm were concerned with carefully detailing the correct method of knowing and with defining those things which could not be known. The actual demonstrations were not demonstrations or examples of how the knowing process takes place; rather, they were instances of the thinking subject's application of the
prescribed method. Expressed epistemically, they indicate the nature of representation, and furthermore they indicate the type of relationship which existed between signs and things. The prescriptive nature of this paradigm entailed the existence of an arbitrary relationship between the signifier and the signified, since the intent of demonstration is to secure the thing with its one true sign. Quite clearly this relationship between the signifier and the signified is also evidenced in what has been called 'first order knowledge', that is, where reason perceives the connection clearly and distinctly without the need of demonstration.

The prescriptive nature of the paradigm of demonstrable knowledge is further evidenced in the role that the problem of error plays within it. What is of interest in regard to error is its relationship to certainty. Error was something that, although it existed, could be avoided by 'observing' the rules. The existence of human fallibility and the related existence of error did not impinge upon certainty. The reason why this is the case is due to the nature of, and the ways in which, certainty can be established. It is because certainty can be established by means of demonstration or probabilistic reasoning or by means of clear and distinct perception (understood in this instance as 'first order knowledge'). This entails that certainty does not refer to, nor is it contingent upon, the actions of the thinking subject. These methods are transindividual as they all refer to a prescribed method which both postdates and predates the thinking subject's use
of them. The importance of this particular point is that with Hume, the fact that individuals err does cast doubt upon the possibility of attaining certainty. In the case of the paradigm of demonstrable knowledge, in contrast, the fact that method is badly applied such that error results does not cast doubt on the method itself. This is why it is important to recognise that the method's efficacy is not tied to its successful use in any particular instance. Consequently, while it is the case that the subjectivity of 'willing', 'desiring', 'judging' can in any instance dash the claims of certainty, this does not call the method itself into question. The separation of the subjective and the objective such that the subjective dimension does not call into question the objective nature of the objective dimension is possible only if the approach to the knowing process is a prescriptive approach. If there is a prescribed method or way of proceeding, then the fact that certain individuals err is only of consequence to those individuals who err. Error does not relate to the prescribed method, and, more importantly, can be explained in terms of it, so that the explanation of error locates it in the relationship between the subjective domain and the objective domain (the pre-existing method).

The explanation of error and its relationship to certainty is premised on an assumed relationship between the knowing subject and the object of knowledge. What was assumed in this relationship was that knowledge itself is not problematic.
The only way in which knowledge was a problem was that the
most efficacious method for knowing needed to be established.
There was no problem of knowledge expressed in terms of the
possibility of knowledge and certainty. Rather, knowledge
was inevitable. In fact it could be argued that, due to the
power of reason and the related existence of first order
knowledge, it was inevitable. Consequently, the challenge
of the sceptic, the possibility of being deceived by a
deceitful demon, etc., were all heuristic devices. The
questions that emerged with Hume were questions that could
not be posed within the preceding paradigm. Consequently,
Hume's questioning of the nature of the knowing subject, of
why things are believed, was an activity which marked the
difference between the two paradigms.

A further example of the prescriptive nature of the
paradigm of demonstrable knowledge can be seen in the dis-
ussion of miracles in the Port Royal Logic. What is of
interest in this regard is the fact that within the Logic
miracles are assumed to exist. The consequence of this
assumed status is that the philosophical problems generated
are concerned with determining whether or not a purported
miracle is in fact a miracle. It is the assumption that
miracles exist, and the related questions generated by such
an assumption, that indicate and are symptomatic of a
prescriptive rather than a descriptive approach to the knowing
process. If the question was as to why it is that miracles
are believed, then it would refer to a psychology of belief,
and as such would necessitate a description of the process of believing in general and a description of the particular belief, namely, the belief in miracles. As the questions posed by the Logic assume the existence of miracles, it follows that the questions generated by such an assumption concern only the prescribed method for determining in any particular instance whether or not a reported miracle is in fact a miracle. The assumption that miracles exist highlights the primacy of reason within this paradigm, as the assumption that miracles exist is not an assumption that can be argued for; rather, the existence of miracles is taken to be evident to reason. Without intending to preempt what will be discussed in greater detail in the next section, it is at this stage possible to state that Hume's questioning of the nature of belief, his approach to the question of causality, and the way in which in his writings he posits and structures the distinctions between knowledge and probability, indicate that he is not writing from within the paradigm of demonstrable knowledge.

This aspect of Hume's discourse is of great importance, as an understanding of Hume must be premised on the recognition that his enterprise was not simply a critique of demonstrable knowledge and an attack upon the primacy and scope of reason; rather, his enterprise marks a shift in the gaze of philosophical discourse away from questions concerning how things can be known with certainty to a questioning of the possibility of knowledge itself. This shift had the
consequence that his arguments attempted to establish that certainty was in fact an unobtainable state of affairs and that all that could be known was why in a particular instance certainty is claimed. This does not entail that this was the only way in which the question could be resolved, since it was still possible for Hume's contemporaries to come down on the side of truth and certainty (e.g. Reid and Beattie) and to assert the methodological guarantee of clear and distinct perception (e.g. Bentham). The point is, however, that with Hume there is a difference constructed between the paradigm within which his discourse is located and the paradigm containing the Cartesian discourse. Consequently, in constructing the Humean discourse what will be constructed is the difference between it and the paradigm of demonstrable knowledge.

I have already argued in the first chapter that the relationship between the paradigms is a relation of difference rather than a discontinuous relationship. The reason why this is the case is that in regard to the paradigms, the difference exists because both have the same epistemic conditions of existence - a conception of order based on representation. It is for this reason that the discussion of Hume will take place in relation to this prevailing identity.

Before moving to a discussion of Hume, the possibility and nature of the difference needs to be established. As prescriptivism has been dealt with in considerable detail,
I will commence with a discussion of the descriptive nature of the Humean discourse. However, before undertaking this task it is vital that the nature of difference be reiterated. The contrast between difference and discontinuity was that the concept of difference depended on there being a prevailing identity. I have already argued that if there is a relationship of difference between a given A and a given B, there has to be prevailing identity to generate and provide the possibility of difference. The differences do not exist in themselves, i.e., they do not exist in terms of the essential characteristics of A and B; rather, the difference is established because of the difference found in their relationship to the identity. And it is this conception of difference which will be established in this chapter by focusing on the relationship between the Humean paradigm and the prevailing identity.

The difference between description and prescription as two approaches to the knowing process is intimately connected to the distinction between internal and external evidence. (In saying this I am not precluding its being connected to other components of the paradigm of demonstrable knowledge or, for that matter, components of the Humean paradigm. I am merely using this connection as a starting point for my discussion.)

In the Logic, the distinction takes the following form: 'internal circumstances (are) those which belong to the event
itself; external circumstances, those which pertain to the persons by whose testimony we are led to believe in the events' occurrence' (Arnauld, p.342). It should be remembered that this particular conception of evidence does not pertain to what has been described as first or second order knowledge, as the truth or the certainty which is established by evidence is qualitatively different from the conception of certainty that pertains to the domain of ideas. This conception of evidence relates to the existence and likelihood of past, present and future events. These two conceptions of evidence are therefore only concerned with establishing the moral certainty of the event. (The distinction between moral and metaphysical certainty has been discussed in Chapter 2, Section 3.) It will be seen, as Hacking has indicated, that the distinction between external and internal evidence provides the basis for Hume to write his essay 'On Miracles'.

In terms of their appearance in the Logic, the distinction between external and internal evidence is that the former is concerned with those aspects of the event which are extrinsic to the event itself, while the latter is concerned with those aspects of the event which are intrinsic to the event itself.

These two conceptions of evidence for an event were, in terms of their appearance in the Logic, intended to be combined. Internal evidence would account for the possibility of the event considered in itself. To use the example men-

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1. See Hacking, The Emergence of Probability, Chapters 4 and 5.
tioned in the previous chapter, internal evidence would be concerned with the possibility of crossing the Rubicon, while external evidence referred to the confirmation by others of the likelihood of the event. In our previous discussion of miracles, one of the aspects of the miracles was the fact that they were reported by St. Augustine. As St. Augustine was not the type of man who would intentionally deceive others, it was thought that his testimony provided sufficient external evidence to justify the judgement that the miracles he reported were in fact miracles. However, as the testimony of others was not as unchallengeable as the evidence presented by St. Augustine, then it followed that the evidence of others was not accorded the same degree of certainty, and as such was less probable. The consequence of this is that external evidence established degrees of certainty depending on the reliability of the testimony.

The same situation also occurs with internal evidence. However, internal evidence is slightly more complex than mere testimony, as internal evidence was concerned with the possibility of the event itself. The evidence for the possibility of an event was not the evidence derived from the authority of testimony; rather, it was the event functioning as evidence. This conception of the sign was not established on the basis of verisimilitude, as it does not refer to the event under consideration appearing as anything; rather, the sign pointed beyond itself. The sign as evidence was not therefore the conventional sign, nor the nominal
definition; rather, it was the natural sign and the real definition. It was this particular conception of signification which, because it was ambiguous, could not function as the basis of demonstration. Yet the chance of its significations resulting in a degree of certainty opened up its use in the domain of probabilistic reasoning.

The distinction between internal and external evidence is combined in the idea of calculation. As Hacking describes the goal of the section on probability in the Port Royal Logic, 'the goal is a calculus for combining evidence to discover which proposition has an acceptable level of probability' (Hacking, 1975b, p.79). (This theme of a calculus of combination has already been mentioned in our discussion of the Classical Episteme, where it was identified as one of the consequences of the binary structure of the sign found in the Classical Episteme.)

It can be seen therefore that the distinction between nominal definitions and real definitions, conventional signs and natural signs, accounts for the emergence of probabilistic reasoning. In many ways there does not exist a point of comparison between the Port Royal Logic and Hume in their respective treatments of the relationship between knowledge and probability. This aspect of their respective writings is illustrated in Reid's comment:

But it may be understood that Hume ... uses the word probability in a sense for which I know no authority
but his own. Philosophers understood probability as opposed to demonstration; the vulgar as opposed to certainty; but this author understands it as opposed to infallibility which no man does. (Reid, Of Reasoning, Ch.IV)

Now, it is clear from Reid's comments that there is something quite remarkable in Hume's opposition between infallibility and probability. The opposition between demonstration and probability is an opposition which was evident in the Logic. It was an opposition which generated two incommensurate views of certainty; and furthermore, it was an opposition that accepted as an essential premise the primacy of method and the transindividual nature of the method. Error, as has been mentioned before, belonged to a completely different domain - a domain which did not refer to certainty. In this lengthy quote from Hume it can be seen that for him this separation was not strict and that demonstration was not transindividual:

In all demonstrative sciences the rules are certain and infallible; but when we apply them, our fallible and uncertain faculties are very apt to depart from them, and fall into error. We must, therefore, in every reasoning form a new judgement, as a check or control on our first judgement or belief; and must enlarge our view to comprehend a kind of history of all the instances where'in our understanding has deceived us, compar'd with those, where'in its testimony was just and true. Our reason must be considered as a kind of cause, of which truth is the natural effect; but such-a-one as by the irruption of other causes, and by the inconstancy of our mental powers may frequently be prevented. By this means all knowledge degenerates into probability; and this probability is greater or less, according to our experience of the veracity or deceitfulness of our understanding, and according to the simplicity and intricacy of the question. (HT, p.180)

In many respects, Hume's philosophical corpus (even his theory of the passions) can be extrapolated from this particular
passage. However, while this is the case, my concern is far narrower than this, as all I am concerned with is the relationships between: certainty and error, reason and judgement, and finally, knowledge and probability.

Hume's first move is to describe demonstration as certain and infallible. With this point the Port Royal logicians would not quibble. Once again, his next move, which is to state that in the application of method we sometimes err, would not cause too much consternation. After all, the Logic was written to instruct others in how to reason so they did not fall into error. However, even in this move there are glimmerings of the horrors to come. Hume has excluded clear and distinct perception (first order knowledge) and spontaneous acts of reason. Hume's next move is to advocate a system whereby judgements can be checked by forming new judgements. It is at this point that there is a complete break with the procedure of the Logic, as the system of clear and distinct perception circumvents the need for undertaking this activity. The establishing of a procedure for checking judgements has the consequence, as Hume indicates, that all 'knowledge degenerates into probability'.

Clearly these are many points at which it is possible to establish the incommensurate nature of the relationship between the two paradigms. One of the most important is the relationship between knowledge and the thinking subject. In
stating the relationship in this way, I am not referring to Hume's conception of the self *per se*, but rather to the way in which Hume envisages the role of the thinking subject in the knowing process. What is intended by this can be made clear by briefly recapitulating my discussion of the role of the thinking subject in the paradigm of demonstrable knowledge.

In this paradigm, as has already been mentioned, there existed a primacy of method. This primacy of method entailed that knowledge was not dependent on the thinking subject, in that the means for determining certainty pre-existed the individual. The question as to how representations which have their origin in the mind can give us knowledge of independently existing substances was simply answered in what I have called the primacy of method. In every instance there was the real possibility of a methodological guarantee of certainty. However, once the distinction between method and the thinking subject is destroyed; once the question is posed in terms of the fact that error destroys the credibility usually granted to the thinking subject, all that can be left is the thinking subject's claims concerning knowledge about the world. It is as though with Hume, instead of the primacy of method, there is the primacy of the thinking subject. The reason why this is the case is that it is a direct consequence of denial of a transindividual method. This denial can be seen in Hume's claim that error on behalf of the thinking subject calls the possibility of certainty
into question. This 'calling into question' could only be operational if there was a denial of what I have called a distinction between the subjective and the objective domains.

The primacy of the thinking subject entails that there can only be probability rather than certainty given that there is not an outside domain in which the guarantee of certainty can be located; and the thinking subject is no guarantee in itself.

It is now possible to see in what way the move from prescriptive to descriptive philosophical discourse has taken place. In order to develop this theme, and consequently the difference between the paradigms, I now move to a discussion of the Humean paradigm.
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SECTION TWO

MIRACLES AND NATURE
In this section it is intended that the Humean paradigm be established. The way in which this task will be undertaken is by commencing with a discussion of Hume's critique of miracles. The reason for taking this approach is based, in part, on the revealing nature of the treatment of miracles in the Port Royal Logic. The discussion of miracles in the Logic both highlighted and exemplified the concerns of the Logic. In orientating my discussion around the question of miracles I am not, as has already been mentioned, intending to over-emphasise their importance in Classical thought. Rather, what is of interest is that their presentation in the Logic marks the emergence of difference, since with Hume what was unproblematic becomes problematic. As my concern lies with the nature of the difference rather than merely the history of miracles, my use of Hume's critique of miracles is as a marker in terms of which the nature of the difference can be both explained and developed.

In Section X of the Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding, Hume advances what is usually described as a rigorous and successful critique of the demonstrable existence of miracles, which has the implication of being a critique of the belief in religion in general; a critique of the concept of revealed truths on which so much religious thought and dogma were based. What is of interest in this regard is not the critique qua critique; rather, it is the possibility of
the critique. Hume's discussion of miracles encapsulates and is premised upon the tenets of the paradigm which mark the limit and establish the difference between it and the paradigm of demonstrable knowledge.

In the opening paragraphs of Section X, Hume quotes with approval Dr Tillitson's argument against the Catholic doctrine of 'real presence'. Tillitson's argument as presented by Hume begins with the claim that the evidence for the truth of the Christian religion is premised on the testimony of the apostles and therefore on their sense perceptions. It follows therefore that the evidence presented by the apostles is not as strong as our evidence for believing things. Now, as the reports of the apostles were transcribed over time, then it must be the case that their veracity (as evidence) must decrease over time. Therefore, we must have less faith in the works of the apostles than we have in our own senses. Now, as 'weaker evidence can never destroy strong evidence', we have no justified reason for believing this instance of weaker evidence. Consequently, as the justification for 'real presence' resides in the scriptures and not as an object of our senses, it can be concluded that the evidence against believing it is greater than the evidence for believing it. After presenting this argument, Hume concludes by stating that 'I flatter myself that I have discovered an argument of a like nature' (HE, p.110). Before moving to a discussion of Hume's argument, it is important
to note that the conception of evidence presented by Tillitson differs quite markedly from the conception of evidence introduced in the Logic. It was certainly the case that in the Logic there was a conception of evidence which allowed for greater and lesser degrees of certainty. However, in the Logic, degrees of certainty were not calculated in terms of a temporal schema. The testimony of St Augustine derives its reliability from the character of Augustine. The fact that he lived in the fifth century A.D. is irrelevant. Tillitson points out that evidence decreases in its power as evidence over time, which is a conception of evidence that is in marked contrast to the atemporal conception of evidence in the Logic. Consequently, it is possible even at this stage to glimpse the difference that emerges in the treatment of evidence in Hume.

In discussing Hume's arguments concerning miracles, instead of discussing them in relation to his overall philosophical position I will proceed by discussing them in terms of their presentation in the text. The section on miracles consists of two parts. The first part is concerned with showing that the existence of miracles could be accounted for on the basis of testimony, such that the testimony comprised 'an entire proof' (HP, p.116). The second part is an undermining of this position such that Hume can conclude that the testimony which accompanies miracles provides neither a proof nor a probability.
Hume begins by claiming that the only guide which exists for the reasoning that is concerned with matters of fact is experience, and that such reasoning is not infallible. Hume in this instance is clearly dealing with matters of fact rather than the relationship that exists between ideas, and as such is operating within the domain which in the Logic was characterised by moral rather than metaphysical certainty. However, Hume is in fact doing more than this. As will be indicated later, he is undermining the distinction between a domain of pure ideas and a domain based on experience. The point of saying that he is operating in the domain of moral certainty is that within the Logic the concept of evidence was only pertinent to this domain. Consequently, in his critique of the power of evidence, Hume is in fact collapsing the opposition between a domain of understanding and a domain of the will.

After discussing the fallibility of reason, Hume indicates that instead of using experience to corroborate such reasonings, evidence fulfils the role of experience. Hume's next move is to claim that while reasoning on the basis of human experience is extremely common, this aspect should not be accepted as an essential characteristic of reasoning, but rather its commonality should be understood in relation to its origin. Its origin is that because human testimony is usually true, and because the 'facts' usually conform to testimony, our experience of these connections establishes their necessity, rather than being either something inherent
in the experience, or objects themselves, or the fact that they are commonly conjoined. This being the case, the origin or proof of probability in regard to matters of fact is subject to Hume’s general maxim concerning the connection between objects:

that no objects have any discoverable connexion together and that all inferences, which we can draw from one to another, are founded merely on our experience of their constant and regular conjunction. (HE, p.111)

Consequently, while this is the case with human testimony, it is still the case that we discover by experience that men seldom lie, that the memory is for the most part reliable, that falsehood is discoverable; and as such we do grant a certain authority to human testimony. Since we do grant this authority, we do deem some testimony as providing proof and other testimonies as providing a probability, if the relationship between the report and the object under consideration has also been found to be either 'constant or variable' (HE, p.112).

It seems that for Hume matters of fact always lend themselves to a 'contrariety of evidence', and it is for this reason that we always have to balance the evidence, assessing the positive against the negative. It is at this stage that Hume introduces a reference to the nature of the object under consideration being either ordinary or 'extraordinary'. He states that the reason why we tend to believe historians or witnesses is not because we have an a priori understanding of
the relationship between testimony and reality, but rather because 'we are accustomed to find a conformity between them' (HE, p.113). However, it is a slightly different case if the reality of the object under consideration is less. Hume describes this phenomenon in terms of the object having 'seldom fallen under observation' (HE, p.113). When this is the case, the evidence for the object having existence is assessed against the contrary evidence, and the conclusion should always be in terms of the stronger evidence.

Now, in order to extend his discussion, Hume states that instead of looking at ordinary, or for that matter marvellous or extraordinary facts, 'let us suppose, that the fact, ... is really miraculous' (HE, p.114). If this is the case, and if there is testimony functioning as proof affirming the miracle, then this results, as Hume indicates, in a 'proof against proof'.

Hume has two definitions of miracle. The first is that a miracle is

a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of them, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined. (HE, p.114)

The second definition of miracles is:

a transgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity, or by the interposition of some invisible agent. (HE, p.115)
There is no real difference between the two definitions, except that with the second, instead of tying miracles solely to nature, he is tying them to the action of the Deity in regard to nature. Consequently, his second definition will allow for the polemical conclusion of Section X.

After defining miracles in this way, Hume then moves to a discussion of the implications of such a definition. His basic point is that in taking nature as constant and as the basis of experience, it must follow that miracles are not found in nature, and as such not the objects of experience. Furthermore, if a miracle is a violation of nature, then the natural occurrence which is violated must function as the object of experience. If, for example, the miraculous event is that a man rises from the dead, then this is miraculous because our experience is that men do not rise from the dead. Hume expresses this as follows:

There must (therefore) be a uniform experience against every miraculous event, otherwise the event would not merit the appellation. *(HE, p. 115)*

The consequence of their existing such a 'uniform experience' is that the evidence for a miracle existing must be greater than the evidence that would indicate the contrary. In regard to the above example, a report that a man rose from the dead would establish itself as a belief in the minds of others if, and only if, the statement's being false would be a more miraculous state of affairs than the statement's being true. In posing the point in this way, Hume is allowing for the
possibility of miracles, though restricting the possibility to a seemingly improbable, though not impossible, state of affairs. In fact this in the conclusion of the first part of Section X. While I wish to wait until the whole of Section X has been discussed before commenting on the nature of Hume's activity, it is clear that even at this stage the treatment of miracles indicates a profound re-working (by Hume) of the concepts of evidence and probability.

The second part of Section X begins with the admission that the conclusion of the first part is a 'great deal too liberal' (HE, p.116) in its concession in allowing for the possibility that there might be a proof for the existence of miracles. Consequently, Hume uses four arguments to undermine the conclusions of Part 1.

The first takes as a premise a fact that Hume deems indisputable, namely, that through the course of history the testimony which accompanies miracles has not been derived from a sufficient number of reliable witnesses. For example, it is not the case that any reports of miracles have had as their source a witness whose reputation would suffer if the miracles were in fact shown to be fraudulent. Hume lists other such 'circumstances' which would be necessary if we were to trust the testimony of others. He concludes that it is for this reason that testimony cannot be fully trusted.

The second argument which Hume advances concerns the role of resemblance in the activity of reasoning. He claims
that the maxim by which we commonly reason is

that the objects, of which we have no experience, resemble those of which we have; that what we have found to be most usual is always most probable; and that where there is an opposition of arguments, we ought to give the preference to such as are founded on the greatest number of past observations. (HE, p.117)

However, though the thinking subject does tend to reason according to this maxim in matters of fact, 'the mind observes not always the same rule' when it is dealing with events that are marvellous or events that are miraculous. In fact such occurrences are granted credibility and consequent reality on the basis of that which, if examined, would destroy their credibility or authority. That is, such events are granted existence because of the passions which accompany consideration of them. In the case of miracles, the passions which accompany them are 'surprise' and 'wonder'. (Hume's 'theory of the passions' assumes that the qualities that engender the passion do not inhere in the object itself; rather, as in this case, the 'surprise is nothing but a pleasure arising from novelty' (HT, p.301), and as such, it is the pleasure, or it is on the basis of the pleasure, that the existence of the miraculous is affirmed.) The consequence of this is that because the passion does not affirm the nature of the occurrence, the fact that a purported occurrence can generate a certain passion is not in itself sufficient reason for affirming the existence of the actual occurrence. In other words, the fact that people enjoy hearing stories concerning fabulous events does not of itself provide sufficient
evidence to claim that the events actually occurred. The further consequence of this is that the belief in miracles can be explained by the theory of the passions, such that all authority that was thought to reside in the testimony of others which would confirm the existence of miracles is actually stripped of all authority.

The third argument concerning the existence of miracles is advanced in terms of the nature of the peoples who originally reported miracles and the fact that miracles no longer occur. Hume begins by stating that

It forms a strong presumption against all supernatural and miraculous relation, that they are observed to abound among ignorant and barbarous nations; (HE, p.119)

Hume also states that if civilised peoples claim the existence of miracles, they usually do so on the basis that such occurrences occur among 'ignorant and barbarous' peoples. For Hume, the origin or initial histories of all nations are obscured and mystified by the fact that the 'whole frame of nature is disjointed' (HE, p.119), and consequently things appear differently. For example, reports of marvellous or miraculous occurrences during war are in fact to be understood as being no more, or reflecting no more, than man's 'propensity' towards the marvellous. Hume's point is that it seems to be part of human nature to describe certain events in terms of their being miraculous occurrences. However, though this may be the case, this does not entail that the events are miraculous. In fact, to use Hume's word, the fact that
human nature has such tendencies should make us 'suspicious' of all reports of miraculous events. Hume's point concerning the non-occurrence of miracles in the present day is couched in antagonistic polemic: 'It is strange, ... that such prodigious events never happen in our day. But it is nothing strange, I hope, that men should lie in all ages' (HE, pp. 119-120). Though this statement of Hume's is polemical, the point it is making is not new; in fact St Augustine answered such objections in The City of God as follows:

> Cur, inquiunt, nunc illa miracula quae praedicatis facta esse non flunt? Fossem quidem dicere necessaria prius fuisse quam credit mundus, ad hoc ut credet mundus.

(Why, they inquire, are the miracles that used to be done, as you boast, not done now? I could reply that they were necessary before the world believed, in order that the world should believe.)

Hume's point is not simply pedantic; rather, it reflects a broader epistemological point concerning the nature of evidence, and the relationship between evidence and authority. He is claiming that the testimony of others, even if the testimony derives from a source that should be reliable and in which it should be possible to grant authority, this need not be the case. We should be 'suspicious', as reliable witnesses have misled in the past, and because of this there is not a sufficient reason to suggest that this will not occur in the present or in the future.

The fourth reason which 'diminishes the authority of prodigies' (HE, p. 121) once again concerns testimony. Only in this case, the argument is far more subtle. Here Hume
argues the following: that for every prodigy, even though it be accompanied by testimony in its favour, it is always opposed by an 'infinite number of witnesses'. This being the case, it follows that the existence of miracles must destroy the authority of testimony, and furthermore the testimony qua evidence is self-defeating. In other words, the fact that a number of people affirm the miracle's existence must be weighed against the number who deny it; therefore, for Hume, as the number of negative instances is greater (as a matter of course) than the number of positive instances, then it is the case that, firstly, the miracle destroys the evidence for its own existence, and, secondly, the greater number of negative instances destroys the smaller number of positive, and consequently, 'the testimony destroys itself' (HE, p.121).

This brings Hume to the most important point he makes against the belief in miracles. Throughout the four arguments, Hume has slowly undermined the possibility of there being evidence to substantiate the existence of miracles. He starts by attacking the authority of human testimony by claiming that the testimony which accompanies miracles is not always reliable and as such should not necessarily be trusted. He then takes a new tack on the undermining of testimony by showing that in the case of the miraculous, such testimony can be explained in terms of his theory of the passions. This move has the consequence that the miraculous quality is to be explained with reference to the thinking subject, rather than being located in the event itself.
His next move is to undermine the credibility and authority of those who report the occurrence of miracles. And finally, in his most subtle argument, he undermines the idea of testimony altogether. These moves, if taken together, comprise a systematic attack not on miracles per se, but on the testimony which would establish the veracity of miracles. From this point, Hume is able to make two separate, though related, conclusions. In fact his first conclusion refers to the first definition of miracles, and his second conclusion to the second definition. To begin with, he concludes:

Upon the whole, then, it appears, that no testimony for any kind of miracle has ever amounted to a probability much less to a proof; and that even supposing that it amounted to a proof; it would be opposed by another proof; derived from the very nature of the fact, which it would endeavour to establish. (HE, p.127)

This conclusion refers to the first definition of miracles, as it was this particular definition which described miracles as a simple violation of the laws of nature. Such a description necessitated as a proof an argument from experience that would prove the existence of the miracle as miracle; and it is this being a possibility which is denied in the conclusion.

The second conclusion is concerned with the function of miracles:

that no human testimony can have such a force as to prove a miracle, and to make it a just foundation for any system of religion. (HE, p.127).
It is clear that this distinction refers to the second definition, as it describes miracles as not simply being a divergence from the laws of nature, but rather a divergence undertaken by a Deity. The consequence of this is that, if miracles depend upon the existence of a Deity, and if it can be shown that it is impossible to provide sufficient testimony to establish either the proof or probability of miracles, then it must also follow that it is impossible to substantiate, either on the level of proof or probability, the existence of the actions of a Deity. Now, the second conclusion states that if a religious system is founded on the existence of miracles, and if their existence cannot be affirmed, then it must be the case that the religious system is without a base. Consequently, the second conclusion is both an implicit attack on religion in that it reaffirms the impossibility of establishing the veracity of miracles, and an explicit attack as it leaves the way open to argue that, as religious systems are based on miracles, and as miracles cannot be affirmed, then there is no reason to believe in the dogmas of any particular religious system. In fact, this is Hume's conclusion:

we may conclude, that the Christian religion not only was at first attended with miracles, but even at this day cannot be believed by any reasonable person without one. Mere reason is insufficient to convince us of its veracity: And whoever is moved by faith to assent to it, is conscious of a continued miracle in his own person, which subverts all the principles of his understanding, and gives him a determination to believe what is most contrary to custom and experience. (E, p.131).

In his conclusion, Hume reaffirms certain themes which played a central role in his attack on the veracity of miracles.
He argues that the belief in miracles is an impossible state of affairs unless one's entire being is accompanied by a miracle such that the basis of knowing, experience, is constantly being denied. The reason why this is the case is that things are known due to the operations of custom and experience. Furthermore, what is known in this way is 'nature'. Consequently, since the definition of miracles is a 'transgression of the laws of nature', this necessitates a particular conception of nature. Prior to my discussion of Hume's theory of belief, this conception of nature will be examined. This comes through, of course, throughout much of the Treatise. I will try to bring it to light by focusing on his discussion of love and hate.

Hume in his discussion of the passions of love and hate argues that while it should be the case that these passions are of necessity related to 'desire' and 'aversion', this may not in fact be the case at all. As it is, it is assumed that a relationship exists between on the one hand, love and desire and on the other, hatred and aversion, because the relationship can be explained in terms of the fact that the passions of love and hatred are thought to have a cause, an object and an end. In the case of love, the cause would be pleasure; the object a person; and the end, the happiness for the person. If this were the case, the distinction between love and desire would collapse, as implicit in the necessity of the connection between cause, object and end is the equality between love and desire; i.e., love and the
desire for another's happiness amount to the same thing. The same state of affairs can be shown to exist in the relationship between hatred and aversion.

Hume quickly points out that this scenario is 'contrary to experience' (HT, p.137). The reason why it is contrary is that happiness and misery are not essential characteristics of love and hatred; rather, they are presented by the imagination as such. While this finding has important consequences for Hume's theory of the passions, it has, as well as this, important consequences for his theory of nature.

The fact that love and hatred are joined to desire and aversion by the imagination indicates that the actual joining and the actual configuration are arbitrary. The consequence of this is similar to the consequence inherent in the distinction between the natural and the conventional sign. The conventional sign consisted of the application of the sign to the thing, which entailed that signs were not inherent in nature, but were applied by means of conventional though arbitrary rules. Both the arbitrary relationship between sign and thing and the arbitrary connection between various passions indicate that order is not inherent in the nature of things; rather, things are ordered. To express this in terms of necessity, the argument follows the same lines. In the same way as the relationship between sign and thing is not a necessary connection, the nature of the sign is that it is conventional, the necessity of the relationship between
passions is not due to the nature of the passion; rather, it is also established by convention. The consequence of this is that necessity is not inherent in the nature of things; rather, necessity comes from outside of the domain of things and nature. In fact, order arises due to the operation of the imagination, given that one of the functions of the imagination is the separating and ordering of ideas. Consequently, if the idea of necessity does not reside in nature, then this leaves open the question of the origin of necessity and its relation to nature. Hume in his previous discussion of the idea of necessity argues the following:

The idea of necessity arises, from some impression. There is no impression conveyed by our senses, which can give rise to that idea. It must, therefore, be deriv'd from some internal impression, or impression of reflexion. There is no internal impression, which has any relation to the present business, but that propensity, which custom produces to pass from an object to the idea of its usual attendant. This therefore is the essence of necessity. (HT, p.165).

Implicit in this discussion is the dominance of resemblance. When Hume states that the idea of necessity is to be explained in terms of a propensity which allows for the passing from an object to its usual attendant, he is in fact highlighting the role of resemblance, since if it were not for the fact that there was a resemblance, this 'passing' would not be possible. Though there are other philosophical relations, it is the concept of resemblance which underpins them all.

In his discussion of resemblance in Book I, Section VI, Hume states that the concept of memory is inextricably related
to resemblance, since for memory to function, the images that it recalls must resemble the objects under consideration. Consequently, though memory is in some sense a secondary occurrence in comparison to the account of the origin of the idea of necessity, in both instances it can be seen that what is at work is a type of process, a process which in the case of necessity moves from the unordered Sameness via resemblance to the establishing of order and necessity. In the case of memory, as its 'chief exercise is not to preserve the simple ideas, but their order and position' (HT, p.9), it can be seen that the same type of process is at work: from the random impressions that enter the mind, order is constructed. Once again the movement is similar; from unordered Sameness to a conception of order as a differentiated order which is dependent for its workings on resemblance.

It is clear then that in the case of the idea of necessity and in the Humean conception of memory there is always the movement from an unordered, undifferentiated and random domain to a domain of order and necessity. It is in the first domain that nature can be located. It is now possible to relate the existence of these two domains, and the location of nature in the first - and therefore outside the domain of order and necessity - to our discussion of the 'analytic of the imagination' and the 'analysis of nature' which formed an integral part of the discussion of the role of the imagination in the 'Classical episteme'.
It has already been mentioned that the 'analytic of imagination' was concerned with the disorder in nature and, related to this, the disorder of the impressions of the thinking subject. The 'analysis of nature' was concerned with the resemblances between things prior to their reduction to order. In other words, the concern exhibited by the 'analysis of nature' was with both the possibility and basis of order. That is why in the interplay between the 'analysis of nature' and the 'analytic of imagination' we find Hume's concern with establishing the relationship between the imagination and resemblance. However, before discussing this relationship, it is vital that the conception of nature in the Classical episteme be mentioned, since what will be shown later is that Hume's definition of miracles as a transgression of the laws of nature depends not only on a certain conception of nature but also on a distinction between nature and the laws of nature.

In the section of The Order of Things which is devoted to establishing the internal specificity of the Classical episteme, Foucault describes the concept of nature inherent in the episteme as follows:

nature is nothing but the impalpable confusion within representation which makes the resemblance there before the order of identities is yet visible. (OT, p.71)

It is this conception of nature that enables the linkage between impressions and nature, and furthermore, this description necessitates a further linkage (in the case of Hume)
between memory and the imagination. It can be seen that on
the one hand there are brute impressions, those things which,
due to a certain degree of passivity on behalf of the thinking
subject, enter the mind in a random and disparate manner—
the entry of the unordered and undifferentiated Same. And
yet on the other hand, if there is to be both a connection
between impressions and the consequent comparison of ideas in
order that custom and experience can play a decisive episte­
mological role, it is essential that these impressions can be
represented. Furthermore, it is also essential that they can
be represented again and again; and it is at this point that
it is possible to see the emergence of memory playing the
dual role of ordering impressions and, due to the power of
resemblance, enabling their imaginative recall. It is also
at this stage that it is possible to see the operation of
the imagination in joining together different ideas such that
from the disorder of nature a conception of natural order can
emerge. In the example of the relationship between love,
happiness and desire, a relationship which for all intents
and purposes looked 'natural', we found that though it appears
as such, it is only a certain conformity of experience, aided
by the role of resemblance, which establishes any order of
the relationship such that it can appear natural. Consequently,
it can be seen that the Humean relationship between imagination
and resemblance is a relationship where the dominance of
disordered Sameness is being constantly traversed by resem­
blance such that from its undifferentiated domain emerges a
conception of linear order.
The problem posed by Hume's description of the miracle as being a transgression of the laws of nature was that it necessitated a certain conception, yet a difference, between nature and the laws of nature. Now, nature, as has already been indicated, is the domain of Sameness; of undifferentiated impressions. Given that this is the case, it opens up the question of the laws of nature. The difference between the laws of nature and nature lies not in the term 'law' being located before the term 'nature'; but rather because it stands in marked contrast to the conception of nature in the Classical episteme. Nature is disorder, while the term 'law' can only refer to order; and as the order invoked in such a term cannot be found in the disorder itself, the origin of the law provides a way into Hume's theory of belief, since the origin of the belief is the same as that of the law.

It has already been suggested that it is resemblance which, in providing the means for the operation of the imagination, establishes order from the disorder of random impressions. Consequently, it is within the terms of this distinction that the distinction between nature and the laws of nature can be located. If law is to be located in the domain of order, then it must be the case that the conception of necessity which is pertinent to the Humean conception of necessary connection is also evident in the concept of law. There are two characteristics of necessity which seem to validate the relationship between law and necessity. The first of these is the fact that necessity does not inhere in
the object itself, or in the relationship between objects. The same is true of the laws of nature, as it has already been shown that nature itself does not contain any law-like qualities. The second characteristic is that necessity cannot be explained in terms of necessary relations between ideas or impressions; but rather, can only be explained in terms of the propensity produced by custom to pass from ideas to impressions. The fact that they are usually joined entails that via resemblance and custom, any future occurrence will join those ideas. Once again, it is possible to see a structurally similar position in regard to the laws of nature. If, for example, it can be assumed that 'men once dead do not rise from the grave' is a law of nature, then the reason it exists as such is not that there is a particular essence, 'deadness', that precludes their rising from the grave, but rather than men rising from the grave is contrary to experience. In other words, death and the idea of rising from the grave are not joined by resemblance.

It is now possible to grasp what is at stake in the description of the belief in miracles being a belief which, if held 'by a reasonable man', must necessitate a constant miraculous state in the believer, given that the belief is a belief in the transgression of the laws of nature. It is not because the belief in miracles is contrary to the nature of things, as for Hume things do not have a nature or essence; rather, it is because the belief is contrary to the necessity established by custom and resemblance. This, of course, must
be understood in relation to the fact that for Hume the only way things can be known is on the basis of the orderings and arrangement of ideas and impressions.

Throughout this section I have been concerned with Hume's undermining of the concept of evidence which is at play in the Logic. However, the way in which Hume undertakes this activity is not merely by attacking evidence per se; rather, it is by attacking the conditions of this particular concept of evidence. The way this is achieved is by attacking the distinction between a domain of reason and a domain of judgement. The consequence of this attack is that, among other possibilities, it allows for an explanation of the belief in miracles to be advanced in relation to the passion 'novelty'. To show that there can never be sufficient evidence to substantiate the existence of miracles necessitates, given that miracles are believed, an explanation of this particular belief. Furthermore, throughout this section I have attempted to give greater content to the difference between a prescriptive and a descriptive approach to the knowing process. In Hume, the fact that miracles come to be treated in terms of an explanation of the belief in miracles indicates that there is no transindividual method for determining the relationship between subject and object. Rather, what is of interest for Hume is the subject's claims or beliefs concerning the object. In the paradigm of demonstrable knowledge, the subject knowing the object with certainty was established by means of this transindividual method. This distinction has important impli-
cations for the differing conceptions of the knowing subject in the two paradigms. In the case of the paradigm of demonstrable knowledge, there is a tangible cogito, and hence it is possible to determine the nature of the thinking subject. This activity is clearly at work in Descartes' Meditations. However, in the Humean paradigm it is clear that the shift from prescribing to describing has different implications for the conception of the knowing subject. If I am right in asserting that what is important for Hume is the thinking subject's claims or beliefs, and that the origin of this is the epistemological primacy of custom and resemblance, then it is not the case that Hume could state, 'I believe therefore I exist'. The consequence of the Cartesian 'cogito ergo sum', namely that the existence of the 'I' of the 'cogito' is established by an act of the thinking subject, is absent from Hume. There are two reasons why this is the case. The first relates to the impossibility of there being a separate idea of existence which could be annexed to the idea of 'I' and the related impossibility of there being an impression which corresponds to the idea of an 'I'. This reason itself undermines the possibility of the statement's being a proof of the identity of the cogito. However, there is a more significant reason, namely, that the statement runs contrary to Hume's theory of belief. Belief for Hume is not an act of the thinking subject; rather, belief is a passive process that occurs within the thinking subject. In order to indicate why this is the case and to further develop the descriptive nature
of the Humean paradigm, I now turn to a discussion of Hume's general theory of belief.
CHAPTER THREE

SECTION THREE

BELIEF
Throughout the Treatise, Hume discusses belief in terms of its origin and hence can account for why the thinking subject believes matters of fact, namely, where the cause and effect are presented to the subject. However, in the Appendix Hume returns to what he sees as the problematic nature of the theory of belief. This aspect of the theory is the nature of belief itself. It is in the Appendix that he realises that while he has dealt with the question 'why is a belief a belief?', he has not as yet dealt satisfactorily with the related question, 'what is it about a belief which makes it a belief?'. My concern in this section is with the later question, since it is this question and the answer to this question which will allow greater amplification of the descriptive nature of this paradigm. It is for this reason that this section will centre around Hume's discussion of belief in the Appendix.

Having posed the question 'what makes a belief a belief?', Hume suggests that there are two possible answers. The first is that a belief is an idea which is joined to the simple conception of an object. The consequence of this is that belief assumes the status of a Berkeleyan abstract general idea; the particular structure of belief that it engenders is a ternary structure comprising the idea 'belief', the thinking subject, and the object of belief. The second answer to the question is that belief is a 'feeling or sentiment' which arises when the cause and effect which give rise to the belief occur in the thinking subject. The consequences of this particular
answer are that belief is no longer an idea which entails that it does not exist in itself, and that the structure of belief engendered, instead of being a ternary structure, is a binary structure. In this instance, while there is a distinction between the believer and the object of belief, there is a coalescence between the belief and the object of belief. Furthermore, the binary structure indicates a degree of passivity on behalf of the thinking subject, while the ternary structure indicates a degree of activity in that the idea 'belief' is joined to the object of belief by an act of the thinking subject, namely, the act of believing. In the ternary structure, because the belief and the object of belief are inseparable, the thinking subject's believing is a passive act, which has the broader implication that it is an act which cannot be regimented (that is, the thinking subject can believe anything presented to it by custom) but can only be described. In other words, the process of belief is a passive process in the thinking subject and, as such, a theory of belief must be a description of the operation of this passivity.

As is well known, for Hume belief is the latter of these two alternatives. However, what is of interest here is the argument presented to establish the binary structure of belief and the arguments used against the ternary structure.

Hume advances two arguments which are intended to show that belief 'is not a new idea annexed to a simple conception'
The first of his arguments concerns the possibility of there being ideas like existence and reality. The reason for taking this approach is that if there is an idea of belief, then it would have a status similar to that of the ideas of existence or reality, in that they exist independently of the objects to which they are annexed. In the Appendix, Hume takes as his premise that there are no ideas of existence which are independent of the existence of objects.

In the first argument, Hume takes as his premise the non-existence of abstract general ideas. The argument runs as follows:

We have no abstract idea of existence distinguishable and separable from the idea of particular objects. 'Tis impossible therefore, that this idea of existence can be annex'd to the idea of any object, or form the difference between a simple conception and belief. (HT, p.623)

What is being said here is that, given the initial premise that there can be no abstract idea of existence, then this idea cannot be annexed to objects in order to give them existence. Furthermore, if this is the case, then the idea of existence cannot be used to establish the difference between ideas and beliefs. The consequence of this is that ideas and beliefs are reduced to the same level, which has the broader implication that all knowledge slides into belief. Consequently, the conclusion of the argument is that on the one hand, there is no abstract idea such as existence or belief separable from objects; and on the other hand, the difference between ideas and beliefs does not lie in the 'existence' of
the former. However, while this argument establishes the fact that existence cannot be used to explain the difference, it opens up the question of what will explain the difference. Hume turns to this question in his second argument.

Hume's second argument against a belief's being a new idea is as follows: firstly, as the mind has control over all its ideas, it can do with them as it pleases. Secondly, it follows from this that if a belief is a new idea, then the thinking subject could believe anything it wanted to believe, as all that would be involved would be the annexing of the idea of belief to the object under consideration. Consequently, as there is the regulatory power of custom, it can be shown that this is not the case, and that the thinking subject only believes certain things, that is, those things which are presented by cause and effect. Relating this back to what I have called the ternary structure of belief, it is possible to get a better idea of what Hume is actually doing.

Quite clearly, one of the things which is being done is denoting the possibility of a separation between the belief and the object of belief. If belief consists merely in a new idea, then this allows for the possibility of the knowing process being the annexing of the idea to objects or the ideas of objects. And if this were the case, the result would be (as Hume indicates) that the knowing subject could believe whatsoever it pleased.
In many ways, the denial of the ternary structure complicates Hume's theory of belief, as it introduces a further coalescence to the one already mentioned. There is the primary coalescence between the belief and the object of belief such that it becomes difficult to grant each component a separate status; furthermore, there is a secondary coalescence between the believer and the primary coalescence. The consequence is that it is difficult to extract the believer without dragging out with him the belief and the object of belief. That this is the case is amply demonstrated by Hume's conclusion to this particular argument:

We may, therefore, conclude, that belief consists merely in a certain feeling or sentiment; in something that depends not on the will, but must arise from certain determinant causes and principles of which we are not master. (HT, p. 624)

Having arrived at the conclusion that belief differs from a simple conception in that a belief is a particular feeling or sentiment that occurs in the thinking subject when it believes, his next concern is with the nature of the sentiment or feeling, and whether it is analogous to other sentiments which occur in the human mind.

Once again, Hume offers two alternative answers to this question. If the feeling is not analogous, the implication is that the sentiment has no cause; that it is therefore one of the 'original principles' of the mind. On the other hand, if there is an analogy between this feeling and other feelings, it then becomes possible to explain 'its causes from analogy,
and trace it up to more general principles' (HT, p.624).

Hume begins the discussion by claiming that those things which are believed (the objects of conviction and assurance) strike the mind with great force, and thus are similar to impressions, as they share with impressions the immediacy of their presentation to the thinking subject. This being the case, it is but a short step to conclude that the sentiment or feeling which is the belief is to all intents and purposes analogous to impressions. After showing in what way the feeling or sentiment is analogous to impressions, Hume states that there does not exist an argument against this conclusion except the statement that:

There is not, in my opinion, any possibility of evading this conclusion except by asserting, that belief, beside the simple conception, consists in some impression or feeling, distinguishable from the conception. It does not modify the conception, and render it more present and intense; it is only annexed to it ... (HT, p.625)

After stating the above, he then advances four arguments to show that such an hypothesis can be 'removed', and therefore it can be concluded that belief does in fact modify the conception and 'render it different to the feeling, without producing a distinct impression' (HT, p.627)

The first argument begins with the claim that belief, being analogous to other states of mind, is in fact contrary to experience. What is meant by this is stated further on, when it is claimed that 'no distinct impression attends every distinct idea or conception of matters of fact' (HT, p.625). It
is the nature of the relationship between ideas and impressions which is known by experience. The following example is used to indicate how belief can modify a conception. Suppose that I see the legs and thighs of a particular individual, but the rest of him is obscured from my vision. Then if this is the case, the imagination 'supplies' the rest of the body. The implication of this is that the customary connection between parts of a body and the whole body leads the imagination to spontaneously supply the present impression with those parts that are absent. Consequently it can be seen that the conception is in fact modified; but due to the spontaneity of the modification, there is no act of mind which occurs apart from the modification. This relates back to our description of the distinction between an active theory of belief and a passive theory of belief. It is clear from this example that the Humean conception is characterised by a degree of passivity on the part of the thinking subject.

The second argument is a re-statement of a theme that appears throughout the Treatise: that the mind has greater control over matters of fact than it does over those objects of mind which are fictitious. The implication of this is that belief, because it is regulated by custom, is primarily concerned with matters of fact, i.e. those things which are the objects of experience. This being the case, it is evident that in regard to matters of fact, modifications occurring due to the origin and nature of the impression make it both unnecessary and in the end misleading to advance explanations
for the operation of the imagination where such suppositions are located beyond the parameters of the thinking subject's experience.

In the third argument, Hume states that the cause of a firm conception can readily be identified, but what cannot be identified or explained are the causes of separate impressions. However, the point that is being made is stronger even than this, since the reason it is possible to explain the causes of a firm conception is that it can be done because of, in relation to, and in terms of, impressions. Consequently, the explanatory movement is an oscillation between impression and idea. This does not preclude the conceptions of causality or custom being at play in the explanation. All it does do is to locate their explanatory power in no domain existing outside of the oscillation between impression and idea. As Hume puts it, 'This is the whole of it' (HT, p.626). There is nothing within this domain that can produce a new impression. In other words, the functioning of the imagination or memory can be used to explain the relationship between ideas and impressions; however, the relationship between the impression and the object which causes the impression cannot be given a causal explanation. All that can be said is that the impressions are due to the experiences of the thinking subject.

The fourth argument concerns the effects of belief in their influencing the passions and the imagination. Hume's point is that the influence can be explained in terms of a
firm conception. The implication of this is that if this were not the case, then this absence would logically necessitate the existence of a separate impression which would influence the passions. The fact that the influence can be attributed to a firm conception means that there is no separate impression.

These four arguments lead Hume to conclude that belief only modifies the idea or conception, and renders it different to the feeling without producing any distinct impression. (HT, p.627)

In this dense conclusion it should be remembered that Hume is answering the following questions: firstly, what is the nature of belief? and secondly, is the nature of pure belief analogous to other mental events? Now, Hume's answer to these questions is that the belief modifies the object of belief, rendering it different without producing a different impression. What Hume is doing here is conflating believing X with the belief about X, though the results of this conflation are separate from what has been called 'pure belief', which is the sentiment or feeling. This could be called the mental registration of the belief.

The distinctions at play in Hume's conception of belief can be explained by using an example. In regard to the often-used example of the billiard ball metaphor: believing that a billiard ball will move if hit by another billiard ball
signifies a process of belief, as the process incorporates the belief that the billiard ball will move and believing that the billiard ball will move. The conflation of these two aspects of belief amounts to the process of belief. Now the process of belief differs from what I have called the pure belief, which is the registration of the process, which in this instance refers to the belief that if a billiard ball is hit by another billiard ball, then the stationary billiard ball will move.

Consequently, the final structure of belief is as follows: the registration of the belief (the belief qua feeling) differs from the process of belief (the conflation between the belief and believing). The relationship between the believer and the object of belief is the same as the relationship between the simple concept and the belief about the simple conception, i.e., it is possible to account for the relationship in terms of habit and custom, given the fundamental pre-requisite that the operation is immediate, and as such requires not an act of the thinking subject but rather the passivity of the thinking subject. This structure of belief precludes a distinction between justified and unjustified beliefs. All that is at play in Hume's theory of belief is a description of the process and nature of belief.

After having sketched the structure of the Humean conception of belief, it is possible both to relate it back to the previous discussion of miracles, and to utilise it in
further establishing the difference that exists between the Humean paradigm and the paradigm of demonstrable knowledge. The reason why it is possible to do the latter of these is that it is via the structure of belief that the Humean conception of the knowing subject is established; and, related to this (as has already been seen), it is possible to see in what way the knowing process is structured such that knowledge is always reduced to belief. Consequently, this section and this chapter will conclude with a discussion of the above.

One of the interesting conclusions to emerge from the discussion of miracles was the description of the belief in miracles as being itself miraculous. While this point has already been discussed, it is worth briefly mentioning again, as the miraculous nature of such a belief should be even more apparent now that Hume's theory of belief has been discussed. What is of interest at this stage is the question of how it is that the thinking subject could believe in miracles.

The process of belief is, as I have already mentioned, a passive process, the only regulatory powers being custom and experience. If this is the case, what sort of custom or experience would be necessary for the thinking subject to believe in miracles? It is certainly the case that the thinking subject's attraction to the novel plays a decisive role in the belief in miracles. Yet there is more to Hume's attack on miracles than merely pointing out some of the
foibles of human nature. I have already suggested that the miraculous nature of this particular belief resides in the fact that the belief is contrary to the necessity established by resemblance and custom. If this is the case, why is it that there exist such beliefs? There are two answers to this particular question, one of which indicates how thorough-going Hume's critique of religion actually was. The second refers to the role of reason in general and the conception of reason that Hume was attempting to undermine.

The first answer concerns those experiences which would give rise to the belief in miracles. Clearly such experiences are not, as far as Hume is concerned, the experience of miracles themselves; rather, they would be the experience of, for example, going to church and hearing reports of miracles, or reading particular holy works and reading the discussion of miracles. Consequently, the belief itself can be accounted for on the basis of the fact that those in authority are trusted, or that the printed word does not deceive. It is a simple matter to develop this point to indicate that resemblance plays a powerful role in explaining the belief in miracles, given the above characterisation of the origin of such a belief. This point also clarifies our conception of Hume's theory of belief as not admitting the distinction between a justified and an unjustified belief. The distinction between 'justified' and 'unjustified' entails that there is a procedure in terms of which the justification for holding a particular belief can be assessed. If this is the case, it
would seem that holding a belief in miracles is unjustified because it can be demonstrated that such a belief is contrary to experience. However, the point is that the above would be true if belief were a separate idea which was annexed to other ideas or conceptions, since what would be unjustified would be the act of annexing the idea of belief to the idea of miracles. Hume has already demonstrated that such a configuration of belief is not at play. Now, given that this is the case, it immediately poses the question of what it is that Hume in his critique of the belief in miracles is actually criticising. On the one hand, there is no denial that people hold such beliefs; yet on the other, there is a description of the belief as being as miraculous as the object of belief. To express Hume's point simply, it is impossible for there to be sufficient evidence to support a belief in the existence of miracles. While this clearly relates to a critique of the role of reason, this point must wait, as there is implicit in Hume's critique a critique of authority and a critique of the particular manifestations of authority. In other words, the critique is on one level aimed at those who propagate beliefs for which there is insufficient evidence. Consequently, while Hume does not allow for a distinction between unjustified and justified beliefs, as belief is a spontaneous act of mind, there is implicit in his writings a critique of those who play upon the 'weakness' of human nature and the fallibility of reason in order to inculcate into others beliefs that are unsubstantiated.
This aspect of Hume's critique is related to the other answer to the question of why it is that miracles are believed to exist. This particular answer refers to Hume's conception of the power of reason. It should be remembered that the treatment of belief in miracles is just one instance of the overall critique of the primacy and scope of reason.

In the Port Royal Logic it is stated that the existence of miracles is evident to reason. There is no argument for their existence beyond the fact that their existence is assumed due to its being evident to reason. This being the case, it is clear that reason plays a powerful role in the Logic, and for that matter throughout the paradigm of demonstrable knowledge. In the Enquiries, Hume states the following about reason:

... reason, which is slow in its operations, appears not, in any degree, during the first years of infancy; and at best is, in every age and period of human life, extremely liable to error and mistake. (HE, p.55)

In the Treatise, Hume argues against reason, as it is this faculty which attempts to convince the thinking subject that there is a connection between cause and effect, which is inherent in the cause and given effect. The difference between the Humean conception of reason and the conception in the Logic is simply that reason in the latter is the guarantee of truth, i.e., something's being evident to reason is enough to establish its veracity, while in the latter case, Hume's conception of reason provides no such guarantee. It is clear
therefore that Hume's attack on the belief in miracles is part of his general attack on the efficacy of reason.

Prior to explaining the possibility of this difference, it is essential that the Humean conception of the thinking subject be related to the conception of the thinking subject which is found in the paradigm of demonstrable knowledge. I have specifically used the term 'thinking subject', rather than 'self', because the Humean 'self' is a problematic concept in that within the Humean discourse there is no impression which corresponds with an idea of self. The consequence of this is that Hume is forced to conclude that there is no conception of self per se; rather, all that there is is a bundle of sense impressions. However, the absence of a conception of self does not entail that there is no implicit conception of the thinking subject in the Humean discourse; nor does it entail that the role of the thinking subject in the knowing process cannot be examined.

I have already alluded to the role of the thinking subject in the Humean paradigm in stating that with Hume, because there exists a descriptive approach to the knowing process, and the absence of a transindividual method, the knowing process becomes the thinking subject's claim to knowledge. Everything is reduced to the thinking subject. Consequently, the absence of method, coupled with the existence of 'human fallibility', entails that the knowing process in the Humean paradigm becomes an investigation of the process
qua process. It is for this reason that Hume's text is a 'Treatise on Human Nature' and not a 'Rules for the Direction of the Mind'. The fact that the relationship between ideas is not based on the idea qua idea, but rather on custom and habit, facilitates the work of the imagination via resemblance, entailing that there are no rules to direct the operation of the mind and hence there is no act of mind to be regulated. Belief is a passive process that occurs and can be accounted for on the basis of the thinking subject's experience of the world.

The two contrasting titles embody the difference between the two paradigms. For Descartes, the separation between the subject and the object of knowledge is filled by rules, by the transindividual method, while for Hume, the separation between the subject and the object of knowledge is absolute. The entry of random and disparate impressions is a process that cannot be regulated, and the separation and ordering of impressions and ideas is a spontaneous mental act which also cannot be regulated. At this stage, having established certain aspects of the difference between paradigms, it is vital that these differences be examined in relation to the prevailing identity.

What I intend to show is that even though representation plays a structurally similar role in both the texts of the paradigm of demonstrable knowledge and in the Humean paradigm, it is possible that this identity can account for the differ-
rences that mark the existence of the two distinct paradigms. This relationship between the identity and the differences can be seen in the following two quotations, the first from Descartes, and the second from Hume:

Our ideas do depend upon things, in so far as they represent them. (DCB, p.25)

Our ideas are copy'd from our impressions and represent them in all their parts. (HT, p.96)

The quotation from Descartes comes from his conversation with Burman, where he is explaining the following passage from the Second Replies:

For all contradictions and impossibility reside simply in our thought, when we make the mistake of joining together mutually inconsistent ideas; it cannot occur in anything which is outside the mind. (HR, II, p.46; my emphasis)

Descartes is arguing against Burman's claim that if there is a contradiction among ideas, there must be a contradiction in things themselves. The important aspect of both the reply to Burman and the passage from the Second Replies is that they both refer to an active state of mind. In the latter, the joining of the two ideas is an activity undertaken by the thinking subject, i.e., it is an occurrence that we generate. This is why, as was mentioned previously, the division between error and certainty is not merely the opposition of two concepts, but rather a division which involves two distinct domains: the domain of judgement and the domain of the
understanding. Therefore, even though ideas represent things, the joining of ideas can be an active act of the thinking subject.

In Hume, however, there exists the same conception of representation; but because of the collapsing of the Cartesian distinction between the domain of judgement and the domain of the understanding, the same consequences do not follow. In other words, the structure and function of representation is similar to the conception found in Descartes (the opposition between ideas and things) and in Hobbes (the opposition between Markes and Signes), namely, it is representation existing as 'duplicated representation'; but this does not in Hume give rise to the same consequences as in Descartes. In Descartes, the conception of the sign, and hence the distinction between ideas and things, are regulated by a pre-existing method. It is the methodological guarantee provided by clear and distinct perception that regulates the relationship between sign and thing. In Hume this is not the case. Even though resemblance produces order from the random and unordered domain of impressions, the relationship between sign and thing and the relationship between ideas are both established by custom. Consequently, while custom in the case of Hume and method in the case of Descartes play structurally similar roles, they also give rise to, and mark the difference between, the two paradigms. It is at this stage that the relationship between identity and difference can be re-introduced. The differences have been established not
only in terms of textual presentation but also in terms of what I have previously terms an 'organic' approach to the text. The organic approach to the text was described as existing at the interface between the text and the possibility of the text. In constructing the paradigms, then, I have tried to follow this organic approach. Thus, throughout Chapters 2 and 3 I have attempted to ground certain textual utterances in terms of their possibility by references to the Classical episteme. For example, in the case of probabilistic reasoning I attempted to show that the possibility of this type of reasoning is to be found in the fact that in the Classical age the sign was defined in terms of knowledge; and as knowledge admitted of degrees, as it oscillated between the certain and the probable, then the sign also admitted of such degrees.

Attempting to establish the paradigms in terms of this interface refers to the statement in the Introduction to the thesis which described it as 'existing on two levels'. It is both an examination of certain topics in seventeenth and eighteenth century philosophy and an attempted examination of what is at play in writing the history of philosophy. The examination was the establishing of the paradigms while concentrating on certain topics: the thinking subject, certainty, knowledge, and error. The possibility was the relationship between the paradigms and the prevailing identity, the Classical episteme.
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