Chapter III

Problems of Pluralism, Scepticism and Causation in David Hume's Epistemology and Ontology

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Chapter III

Problems of Pluralism, Scepticism and Causation in David Hume’s Epistemology and Ontology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter we will analyse and critically examine the epistemology and ontology of David Hume with special emphasis to his views on pluralism, scepticism and causation. Since our methodology aims at studying any philosopher in the historical context, we in this chapter will see how Hume’s views on pluralism, scepticism and causation is a logical outcome of the epistemology and ontological assumptions of Locke and Berkeley. Hume like Locke and Berkeley does not challenge the Cartesian dualism, upon which British empiricism is founded. Locke, as it is mentioned earlier, combining his empiricism with Cartesian dualism arrived at the conclusion that though material object exist and is the cause of our ideas, yet mind perceives only it’s own ideas. But Locke like Descartes accepts the existence of material substance, mind and God. Berkeley on the basis of Locke’s assumptions observed that if what mind perceives are only the ideas then matter cannot exist, what exists only minds and its ideas. Hume extents the same argument which was raised by Berkeley against Locke’s notion of matter to the existence of mind. We will
find, for Hume, what exists are only discrete unconnected impressions and their corresponding ideas. Hume observes, the existence of external world and enduring substance (or substratum view of substance) is a matter of belief which has been accepted equally both by the philosopher and the common man without application of slightest of reason.

First of all in this chapter we will analyse the ontological status of Humean fundamentals like ‘Impressions’ and ‘Ideas’. Then we will proceed to examine the outcomes of Hume’s radical empiricism. We will also devout considerable space for the discussion of Hume’s scepticism concerning causality and the problem of knowledge and probability. We will finally conclude this chapter by summing up our findings.

It may be mentioned here that our intention behind examining the problems like pluralism, scepticism, causality, probability and knowledge with special emphasis because these are the points of Hume which we will be comparing with Derrida’s deconstruction in our fifth chapter.

3.2 Examination of Humean Fundamentals

Locke uses the term ‘idea’ to stand for “whatever is the object of the understanding when a man thinks.”¹ And here thinking includes perceiving,

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imagining and willing. Hence having thought and having ideas are same for Locke. Locke conceives of ideas as the materials of thinking. But Locke at the same time says that simple ideas are caused by external objects through sensation. Hume agrees with Locke that mind is originally ‘white paper’, in the sense that it contains no ideas, and that all its ‘materials’ comes from experience. But when Locke states that mind perceives only its own ideas, Hume observes that every perception is either an ‘impression’ or an ‘Ideas’. In the words of Hume:

“All the perceptions of the human mind resolve themselves into two distinct kinds, which I shall call Impression and Ideas”

Hence, for Hume it is not the case that what we apprehend through perception are impressions (and ideas rather the perception itself is either) an impressions or an idea. What Locke calls idea Hume calls perception and in a similar fashion of what Locke says about idea Hume argues about perception that “the mind have never anything present to it but the perceptions...” But whereas Locke’s position is that the ideas are caused by the external objects, Hume point is that .”. (Mind) cannot possibly reach any experience of their connexion with objects. The supposition of such a

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connexion is, therefore, without any foundation in reasoning."

Hume treats perceptions as fundamental entities. He divides the class of perceptions into impressions and ideas on the basis of the great 'force and liveliness' of the former in relative to the latter. Hume states:

"The difference betwixt these (impressions and ideas) consists in the degrees of force and liveliness with which they strike upon the mind, and make their way into our thought and consciousness. Those perceptions, with enter with most force and violence, we may call Impressions, and under this name I comprehend all our sensations, passions and emotions, as they make their first appearance in the soul. By ideas I mean the faint images of these in thinking and reasoning; such as, for instance, are all the perceptions excited by the present discourse..."

In the above passage Hume introduces the fundamental entities of his theory, namely, perceptions. But Hume does not provide any positive characterization of the nature of perceptions as such.

It may be mentioned here that Hume's distinction between Impressions and Idea is within a particular philosophical tradition and that the kind of distinction Hume is making can be found in Berkeley also. We

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are not intended to say that Hume borrowed his distinction from that of Berkeley but a similar distinction is found in George Berkeley’s *Principles of Human Knowledge*. In distinguishing between ideas of the sense and ideas of the imagination, Berkeley claims that “the ideas of sense are more strong, lively, and distinct than those of the imagination.”

Regarding Berkeley’s distinction between ‘ideas of sense’ and ‘ideas of imagination’ and its similarity with David Hume’s distinction between ‘Impressions’ and ‘Ideas’ Daniel F. Flage writes:

“Since Hume himself was later to distinguish between ideas of the memory and ideas of the imagination in terms of their differing degrees of force and vivacity (T9, 85), it is not *Prima facie* unreasonable to suggest that he was attempting to build upon something like Berkeley’s phenomenal criterion”

Hume thinks the distinction between ‘Impressions’ and ‘Ideas’ does not need much explanation, since, as he says, “everyone of himself will readily perceive the difference betwixt feeling and thinking.” Hence, Hume’s position is that the difference between ‘Impressions’ and ‘Ideas’ is a difference between feeling and thinking. That means impressions are directly felt, strong and vivid perceptions, whereas ‘ideas’ are

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comparatively feeble perception. But at the same time Hume maintains that “...all the perceptions of mind are double, and appear both as impressions and ideas.”⁹ He further observes that there is a great resemblance between our impressions and ideas in every other particulars, except their degree of force and vivacity. His hypothesis is that there is a one-one correlation between ideas and impressions. Like Locke, Hume also asserts that there are simple ideas. But when Locke’s position is that the simple ideas are caused by the ‘original properties’ of the external objects through sensation Hume’s argues that our simple ideas are derived from simple impressions. Though Hume actually asserts a one-one correlation between simple ideas and simple impressions, subsequently he argues that the origin of simple ideas is the presence of an impression for each ideas. If the correlation is hold in other direction it would follow that every simple impression is followed by a simple idea. The first general principle he takes is “that our simple ideas in their first appearances are derived from simple impressions, which are correspondent to them and which they exactly represent.”¹⁰ That means everyone who has a given simple idea also has one or more impressions which are correspondent to it. Hume states that this type of correlation between simple ideas and simple impressions cannot be coincidence:

⁹ Ibid., p.50.
¹⁰ Ibid., p.52.
"Such a constant conjunction, in such an infinite number of instances, can never arise from chance; but clearly proves a dependence of the impressions on the ideas, or of the ideas on the impressions."  

But Hume acknowledges that the impressions must cause the ideas and not vice versa, since ideas never come first.

We find, there is a striking similarity between Locke, Berkeley and Hume as all of them assert that mind can never go beyond the sphere of ideas (in case of Hume it is impressions and their corresponding ideas). All of them have taken it for granted the Cartesian proposition that mind knows only its own ideas. We have already discussed how Locke holds that what is immediately given to the mind in perception are nothing but its own ideas. And Berkeley logically concludes on the basis of Locke's argument that:

"... the senses perceive nothing which they do not perceive immediately; for they make no inferences." And since nothing is given but the ideas to the mind hence Berkeley "contends that nothing can be perceived except ideas."

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11 Ibid., p. 52.  
14 Bennett, Jonathan., Locke, Berkeley, Hume, op. cit., p. 139.
Hume states that we can only compound or separate the ideas but we can never go beyond the sphere of ideas. As Hume puts it in his words:

"Nothing is more free than the imagination of man; and though it cannot exceed the original stock of ideas furnished by the internal and external senses, it has unlimited power of mixing, compounding, separating, and dividing these ideas, in all the varieties of fiction and vision."\(^{15}\)

Hume refuses to accept anything beyond the impressions and ideas and argues nothing can be conceived beyond them. In the words of Hume:

"Now since nothing is ever present to the mind but perceptions, it follows that it is impossible for us to so much as conceive or form an idea of anything specifically different from ideas and impressions".\(^{16}\)

To conclude this section on Hume's notion of 'impressions' and 'ideas', we would like to point it out that when Hume employs the term 'impressions', he strips this word of the physiological connotations by identifying an impression as an *Perception*. In a footnote in the *Treatise*

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\(^{15}\) Hume, David, *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, op.cit., p.47.
Hume states:

"By the term of impression I would not be understood to express the manner, in which our lively perceptions are produced in the soul, but merely the perceptions themselves; for which there is no particular name either in English or any other language, that I know of."17

As we have already discussed, Hume observes that every perception is either an impression or an idea. This shows neither the ‘impressions’ nor its corresponding ‘ideas’ have any physical connotations and used to refer only to our awareness of them, because we can never go beyond ourselves, to conceive any kind of existence. "Let us fix our attention out of ourselves as much as possible: Let us chase our imagination to the heavens, or to the utmost limits of the universe; we never really advance a step beyond ourselves, nor can conceive any kind of existence, but those perceptions, which have appear’d in that narrow compass."18

Commenting upon Hume’s use of the term ‘Impressions’, A.J. Ayer states that, Hume unlike Locke has no objection to say impressions are innate; Ayer also finds Hume’s use of innateness of impressions is chiefly concerned with passions.19 Ayers study suggests, Hume’s notion of

17 Ibid., p.50.
18 Ibid., p.116.
impressions are mental in nature. As Ayer puts it: "A more crucial element in Hume's account of impressions is his taking them all to be 'internal and perishing existences' (T 194)." ²⁰

3.3 Empiricism Stretched Farthest: Logical Considerations Regarding the Possibility of Existence and Knowledge

After a brief examination of the fundamental entities of Hume, we are now in a position to analyse his philosophical position as a whole. David Hume truly represents the movement which started in 1690, with Locke, with the publication of 'An Essay concerning Human Understanding' and continued by George Berkeley. Though this movement as we have already seen owes its origin to the basic assumptions of Cartesian dualism. The main theme of the movement is that men can have no knowledge of the world but what they derive from experience. The lines of this development are that experience consists as Locke puts it, of 'Sensation' and 'Reflection. Through reflection we become aware of the operations of our own mind and through sensation we get the ideas like colours, sound, smells etc. etc. caused by their corresponding 'real qualities' which exist in the objects. Berkeley develops his philosophy by demolishing this 'Causal theory of perception' of Locke. Hume, we will find, undermined Berkeley in much the same way Berkeley had

²⁰ Ibid., p.27.
undennined Locke. In Hume, we find Empiricism found itself in it's extreme form when Hume refuses to accept anything beyond the perceptions. To quote him, “The mind has never anything present to it but the perceptions, and cannot possibly reach any experience of their connection with objects.”

Berkeley, being an empiricist argues that, as we have discussed, Lockean conception of matter is a contradiction, hence it cannot exist. The nature of scepticism which we find in Berkeley serves as is the basis of his argument to the elimination of matter. Hume being true to the spirit of empiricism argues that we cannot go beyond the perceptions. Hence he extends the nature of scepticism which was raised by Berkeley against matter to the existence of mind. That means Hume carried Berkeley’s scepticism further with regard to the existence of mind.

Both Locke and Berkeley accepts the concepts of causality though they have some mutual difference on this concept. They differ only in that when the former allows relations of force to hold between physical particles, the latter give mind’s monopoly of causal activity. But Hume finds by analysing the relation of cause and effect, that the idea of the necessary relation between cause and effect is a myth. He holds, there

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could be no necessary connection between distinct events. All that remains, then, is a series of fleeting 'perceptions', with no enduring substance to which they could belong. Thomas Reid, who is regarded as the founder of the Scottish School of Common-Sense Philosophers, in his book *Enquiry into the Human mind on the Principles of common Sense*, gives Hume the credit for taking Locke's premises to their logical conclusion. Reid argues that the absurd conclusion at which Hume arrives at is because of something had gone wrong from Locke. The principal error, as Reid saw it in the words of A.J. Ayer, "was the adoption by Locke and his followers of the theory of ideas: the assumption that what is immediately perceived, whether it be called an idea, as by Locke, or a sensible quality, or, as Hume preferred, an impression, is something that has no existence apart from perceptual situation in which it figure."22

### 3.3.1 Hume Criticism Abstract Ideas Substrate Theory, P/S Quality Distinction and Causal Theory of Perception

Hume like Berkeley argues against the possibility of ‘abstract general ideas’. Hume is also at one with Berkeley in rejecting Locke’s notion of substrate theory of substance and his distinction between ideas of primary and secondary qualities. It may be noted here that Hume acknowledges his debt to Berkeley for his sceptic argument particularly with regard to P/S quality distinction. As we have already discussed that

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the notion of scepticism in British Empiricism did not start with Hume, rather it was originated with Berkeley’s arguments against the Lockean notion of assertion of something beyond the ‘ideas’ which can never be experienced. Berkeley’s scepticism can be found with regard to Locke’s assertion of material objects, and primary qualities which are said to be the cause of our secondary qualities. Hume admits his scepticism with regard to P/S quality distinction, causal theory of perception owes to Berkeley. Though he says that he was to some extent influenced by Bayle for his scepticism. In the words of Hume:

“...This argument (argument against P/S quality distinction) is drawn from Dr. Berkeley, and indeed most of the writings of that very ingenious author form the best lessons of scepticism, which are to be found either among the ancient or modern philosophers, Bayle not excepted... But that all his arguments, though otherwise indeed, are, in reality, merely sceptical, appears from this, that they admit of no answer and produce no conviction. Their only effect is to cause that momentary amazement and irresolution and confusion, which is the result of scepticism.”

Now we will examine Hume’s scepticism with regard to ‘Abstract Ideas’, ‘Substrate Theory’ ‘P/S quality distinction’ and ‘Causal Theory of Perception’ one by one.

To begin with abstract ideas, we find that Hume’s causal use of the expression ‘abstract idea’ and ‘general idea’ obscures the presentation of his views. Hume says that “in forming most of our general ideas, if not all of them we abstract from every particular degree of quantity and quality.”

Hume at the beginning of the Book I, Section VII of the Treatise speaks of Berkeley as ‘A great Philosopher’ and gives him the credit for his (Berkeley’s) account of General ideas, according to which, “..... all general ideas are nothing but particular ones, annexed to a certain term, which gives them a more extensive signification, and makes them recall upon occasion other individuals, which are similar to them.”

Hume appraising Berkeley account of general ideas further writes “.... I look upon this to be one of the greatest and most valuable discoveries that has been made of late years in the republic of letters....” and fully agrees with Berkeley’s account and attempts to substantiate it, which is clear when he states “... I shall, have endeavour to confirm it (Berkeley’s account of General Ideas) by some arguments, which I hope will put it beyond all doubts and

25 Ibid., p.64.
26 Ibid., p.64.
controversy."^{27}

Hume's discussion of abstract ideas, like that of Berkeley's, is a critical discussion of the Lockean account of abstraction and linguistic meaning. According to Lockean account, Hume observes, "our abstract ideas have been suppos'd to represent no particular degree either of quantity or quality."^{28} Hume provides three arguments to show "That the mind cannot form any notion of quality or quantity without forming a precise notion of the degrees of each."^{29} What Hume wants to point out here is that any idea that is the object of thought is determinate in quantity and quality. Hume's first argument reads as follows:

"First, we have observed, that whatever objects are different are distinguishable, and whatever objects are distinguishable are separable by the thought and imagination. And we may here add, that these propositions are equally true in the inverse, .... For how is it possible we can separate what is not distinguishable, or distinguish what is not different?... But tis evident at first sight, that the precise length of a line is not different nor distinguishable from the line itself, nor the precise degree of any quality from the quality. These ideas, therefore, admit no more of separation than they do of distinction and

\[^{27}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p.65.}\]
\[^{28}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p.65.}\]
\[^{29}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p.65.}\]
difference. They are consequently conjoined with each other in the conception."

Locke as an abstractionist claims that it is possible to form an ideas of a quality which is indeterminate in degree. But Hume's point, which is clear from the above passage, that the degree of a quality is neither distinguishable nor separable from the quality of which it is a degree. Hence Hume concludes that the degree of a quality is inseparable from the quality itself, and it is impossible to form an abstract idea of an indeterminate quality. The same argument applies with respect to the determinateness of one's conception of quantity also. Thus, any possibility of the formation of any abstract ideas, presupposes it must be determinate in quality and quantity.

Hume in his second argument observes that all the impressions are determinate in degree of quantity and quality. And since ideas are copies of impressions, they must be determinate in degrees of quantity and quality. Hume states that:

"...no impression can become present to the mind, without being determin'd in its degree of both quantity and quality. .... Now since all ideas are deriv'd from impressions,... Whatever is true of the one must be acknowledg'd concerning the other".31

30 Ibid., pp.65-6.
31 Ibid., p.66.
The third argument basically emphasizes the point that whatever is impossible is inconceivable. As Hume observes: "That whatever the mind clearly conceives includes the idea of possible existence or in other words, that nothing we imagine is absolutely impossible." From this it follows that it is impossible to conceive an objects with indeterminate properties. So from the above analysis it becomes clear that any possibility of an abstract idea must be determinate in quality and quantity and particular. In his words:

"Abstract ideas are therefore in themselves individual, however they may become general in their representation. The image in the mind is only of a particular object, tho the application of it in our reason be the same, as if it were universal".

Now we will analyse Hume’s position regarding representative theory of perception and Locke’s primary/secondary quality distinction. As we have seen, Hume holds that every things we perceive are perceptions, in the sense perceptions mental items, and not physical objects. Hume writes: "Since all our impressions are internal and Perishing existence, and appear as such, the notion of their distinct and continu’d existence must arise from a concurrence of some of their qualities with the qualities of imagination; and since this notion does not extend to all of them, it must arise from

32 Ibid., p.81.  
33 Ibid., p.67.
certain qualities peculiar to some impressions."\textsuperscript{34} As we have discussed, according to the representative theory of perception everything one perceives are perceptions, never physical objects, but some of one’s perceptions are caused by physical objects. Hume outrightly denies such causal perception as it is contrary to reason and without any rational evidence. Hume writes:

"Thus the first Philosophical objection to the evidence of sense or to the opinion of external existence consists in this, that such an opinion, if rested on natural instinct, contrary to reason, ..., carries no rational evidence with it, to convince on impartial enquirer".\textsuperscript{35}

It may be pointed out here that, Hume not only rejects ‘representative theory of perception’, he also criticizes the ‘naive realism’. ‘Naive realism’ is a theory which advocates that some of the things we perceive are physical objects, having independent and continued existence. Hume in the section ‘of Scepticism with regard to senses’ of the Treatise comes upon to attack on the naive realism as he argues that “...a very little reflection and philosophy is sufficient to make us perceive the fallacy of that opinion.. (that is, the opinion that ascribes).... a continued existence to

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., p.244.
\textsuperscript{35} Hume, David., Enquiries Concerning Human Nature and Concerning the Principles of Morals, op.cit., p.155.
those sensible objects or perceptions.” 36 Now coming back to the issue of Hume’s treatment of ‘representative theory of perception’, we find, Hume seems to argue that we cannot justifiably assert the existence of the physical objects from the perceived qualities. In this context Hume observes: ‘Tis impossible .... that from existence of any of the qualities of the former (that is, perceptions), we can ever form any conclusion concerning the existence of latter (Physical objects), or over testify our reason in this particular.” 37 Here Hume’s argument reflect basically two assumptions. Firstly, it rests on the examination of primary and secondary quality distinction and secondly on the cause/effect necessary relationship. Hume like Berkeley denies Locke’s account of primary and secondary quality distinction on the ground that our sensible perceptions are not caused by any independent existent object. Hume cites the example of double image of objects to substantiate his claim in the following words:

“It will first be proper to observe a few of those experiments, which convince us, that our perceptions are not possest of any independent existence. When we press one eye with a finger, we immediately perceive all objects to become double,... But as we do not attribute a continu’d existence to both these perceptions are dependent on our organs,... This opinion is confirm’d by the seeming increase and diminution of objects, according to

37 Ibid., p.262.
their distance; by the apparent alteration in their figures; ... from all which we learn, that our sensible perceptions are not possest of any distinct or independent existence”.

Hence Hume suggests that perceptions are everything we perceive and are themselves mental images. Hume writes: “that everything, which appear to the mind, is nothing but a perceptions, and is interrupted and dependent on the mind.”

Finally, Hume concludes that the primary qualities like extensions are dependent on secondary qualities in a similar fashion of Berkeley. “It is universally allowed by modern enquirers, that all the sensible qualities of objects, such as hard, soft, hot. etc. are merely secondary, and exist not in the objects themselves, but are perceptions of the mind,... If this be allowed, with regard to secondary qualities, if must also follow with regard to the supposed primary qualities of extension and solidity... The idea of extension is entirely acquired from the senses of sight and feeling, and if all the qualities, perceived by the senses, be in the mind, not in the object, the same conclusion must reach the idea of extension, which is wholly dependent on the sensible ideas or the ideas of secondary qualities”.

38 Ibid., pp.260-1.
39 Ibid., pp.243-4.
Locke's account of substance as a substratum of 'real qualities' is repudiated by Hume on the basis that we cannot have any impression or corresponding idea of such substance. Here Hume's criticism of the substrate theory of substance is an outcome of the refusal of accepting anything beyond experience and a question of scepticism is also involved with it. However we will deal in detail on Hume's scepticism with regard to substance in a separate section, here we will examine, how Hume argues that the acceptance of a substrata theory of substance (as we find incase of Locke) is quite inconsistent with true form the following Hume's passage when he argues:

"I wou'd fain ask those philosophers (Locke and others), who found so much of their reasonings on the distinction of substance and accident, and imagine we have clear ideas of each, whether the ideas of Substance be deriv'd from the impressions of sensation or reflection? If it be convey'd to us by our senses, I ask, which of them; and after what manner? If it be perceiv'd by the eyes, it must be a colour; if by the ears, a sound; if by the palate, a taste; and of the other senses. But I believe non will assert, that substance is either a colour, or sound, or a taste. The idea of substance must therefore be deriv'd from an impression or reflection, if it really exist. But the impressions of reflexions resolve themselves into our
passions and emotions; none of which can possibly represent a substance. We have therefore no idea of substance, distinct from that of a collection of particular qualities, nor have we any other meaning when we either talk or reason concerning it".41

In the above passage, Hume makes a contrast between impressions of sensation and impressions of reflection. And further observes that by sense perception we encounter only such qualities like colour, sound and taste. By introspection we are acquainted only with experiences such as emotions, passions and the like. Hence he concludes that we can have no idea of substance, besides the collection of these particular qualities. It follows that, for Hume, we can have no idea of physical or of mental substrates. Given Hume's strict empiricist principle it follows that one cannot have the idea of such a substrate.

3.3.2 Belief in Enduring Substance and External World

In the history of philosophy we find substance is regarded as something which can exist in and through itself and a substratum of qualities. In the early modern period. Particularly with Descartes and Locke substance is regarded as substratum of qualities. Descartes' conception of substance as a substratum of qualities is clear when he defines substance as

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“the thing in which properties inhere.”\textsuperscript{42} Similarly Locke defines substance, already discussed that the thing that supports qualities.\textsuperscript{43} Hume raised a throughgoing critique of this doctrine of substance and he extended Berkeley’s criticism of the doctrine of material substance to the doctrine of immaterial substance. Hume held that there are certain beliefs which are accepted university like the beliefs in necessary connection, material and immaterial substance, external existence and personal identity. The universality of these beliefs does not show that they are true. Hume writes:

“It seems evident, that men and carried, by a natural instinct or prepossession, to repose faith in their senses; and that, without any reasoning or even almost before the use of reason we always suppose an external universe which depends not an our perception, but would exist, though we and every sensible creature were absent or annihilated”\textsuperscript{44}

In the above passage Hume wants to make it clear that most of the philosophers (particularly Locke) and common man take it for granted that the external world exist independent of our perception. What he intends to say here is that a sense of scepticism can be applied even to the basic


\textsuperscript{44} Hume, David., \textit{Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals}, op.cit., p.151.
common assumption that 'the external world is the cause of our ideas' which has been taken for granted. Hume then adds:

"It seems also evident, that, when men follows this blind and powerful instinct of nature, they always suppose the very images, presented by the senses, to be the external objects, and never entertain any suspicion,... This very table, which we see white, and which we fell hard, is believed to exist, independent of our perception, and to be something external to our mind which perceives it...."\(^{45}\)

Hume clearly points out that the assertion of substance as a permanent entity is a matter of faith and a mere philosophers' invention which is both unintelligible and unnecessary. He argues the very conception of substance as a permanent entity or as a substratum of qualities is clearly an invention, since all the objects we regard as having continuous identity are in reality nothing but a succession of parts connected together by resemblance, contiguity or causation.

Now the question arises "as no being are ever present to the mind but perceptions"\(^{46}\) and as we have already discussed that through perception we can encounter such qualities like colour, sound etc., and

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\(^{45}\) Ibid., p.151-2.

\(^{46}\) Hume, David., *A Treatise of Human Nature*, op.cit., p.262.
when "... all our perceptions are different from each other,... they are also distinct and separable, and may be consider'd as separately existent....", 47 how can we have an idea of an enduring substance? This is the main question which Hume sets out to answer in the section ‘of scepticism with regard to the senses’ of the Treatise. Hume puts this question as "why we attribute a continu'd existence to objects even when they are not present to the senses; and why we suppose them to have an existence distinct from the mind and perception(?) 48 As we have discussed that Hume's position is that we can never have any impression or idea of an enduring substance either through sense or through reason. Hume now proceeds to introduce his principles of ‘Association of Ideas’ to explain how we have the idea of enduring substance. Hume discusses about ‘of the connexion or association of idea’ and ‘of relations’ in the Book I, Part I, Section IV and V of the Treatise. After the completion of the Treatise, Hume himself admits that associations in his most notable achievement. In the An Abstract of a Treatise of Human Nature, Hume writes, "There are great pretensions to new discoveries in philosophy; but if anything can entitle the author to so glorious a name as that of an inventor, tis the use he makes of the principle of the association of ideas, which enters into most of his philosophy." 49 As

48 Ibid., p.238.
we have discussed perceptions for Hume are 'distinct and separable' and all perception is either an impression or an idea. Hence Impressions and their corresponding ideas are discrete and unconnected. It is only through the principle of 'association of idea' that the reality for us is constituted out of these discrete impression and ideas. In the words of John Passmore: "Association unities our impressions and ideas into the systematic structures which constitute 'reality' for us."\(^{50}\)

In the section 'of Relation' (I.I.V.) of the Treatise, Hume distinguishes between two senses of the term 'relation'. In one sense, a 'relation' is "that particular circumstance, in which, even upon arbitrary union of two ideas in the fancy, we may think proper to compare them."\(^{51}\) In the second sense, a relation is "that quality, by which together in the imagination, one naturally introduces the other."\(^{52}\) In the second sense of relation where the qualities relate ideas that means one idea naturally introduces the other, Hume calls them 'natural relations' as distinguished from 'Philosophical relations'. Hume recognizes three associating qualities namely 'RESEMBLANCE, CONTIGUITY in time and place and CAUSE and EFFECT. For Hume simple ideas are inherently separable from one another. And Hume recognize that through the above mentioned natural


\(^{52}\) Ibid., p.61.
relations of mind the ideas are united and this is the cause of our idea of a enduring substance. In the words of Hume:

“I believe it will be very necessary to prove, that these qualities (resemblances, contiguity in space and time and cause and effect) produce an association among ideas, and upon appearance of one idea naturally introduce another... our imagination runs easily from one idea to any other that resembles it,... Tis likewise evident, that as the senses, in changing their objects, are necessitated to change them regularly, and take them as they lie contiguous to each other...

As to the connection that is made by the relation of cause and effect, we shall have occasion afterwards to examine it to the bottom and therefore shall not at present insist upon it.”\(^{53}\)

Hence it becomes clear that the idea of enduring substance, necessary connection between cause and effect is formed out of the mental operation of ‘Association of ideas’ on the desecrate and unconnected ideas.

Before we conclude this section on Hume’s account of ‘external world’ and ‘enduring material’, we find that ‘perception’ is used as an umbrella term for ‘impressions’ and ‘idea’. Perceptions are ‘desecrate’, unconnected and so also ‘Impressions’ and ‘ideas’. Hume argues that it has

\(^{53}\) Ibid., p.58.
been taken for granted equally by the philosophers and common man that the external objects exist independent of our perceptions without application of a slightest reasoning. The belief in enduring substance is an out come of ‘association of ideas’ because we can never experience any such substance. In the Book I of the \textit{Treatise} Hume attempts to explain two of our most basic beliefs in terms of perceptions-- First, our belief that physical objects continue to exist independently of our perception of them, and second, our belief that our selves are given unity by some persisting thing. In Part II of the Book I he deals with the question ‘of the idea of the existence and of external existence’. In the Part IV he deals with the question of soul and of personal identity, which we will analyse in our next section. It may be mentioned here that, Hume’s object is to carry further the implications of some arguments initiated by Berkeley, by showing that we know is limited to a series of sensations, passions and emotions, together with mental images of them. Hume argues, “nothing is ever really present with the mind but its perceptions or impressions and ideas, and external objects became known to us only by those perceptions they occasion.”

This passage suggests, we think, a reading like this we cannot imagine objects which are radically different from our own perception. However much we try, ‘we never really advance a step beyond ourselves’. Hume’s investigation into the belief in the existence of body has, on his own

\footnote{Hume, David., \textit{A Treatise of Human Nature}, p.116.}
assumptions, to be an investigation into the mind.

It is worth mentioning here that in the Part IV of the Book I of the Treatise, we find a change in outlook of Hume between this and previous parts of the Book which shows that the Treatise contains two distinct ontologies. For example in the above quotation (p.116). Hume does not say that only perceptions exist: it says that only perceptions are present to the mind. But consider this passage of the Part-IV, where Hume States:

“For as to the notion of external existence, when taken for something specifically different from our perceptions, we have already shewn its absurdity.” A careful reading of this passage suggests that the objects do not exist in addition to perceptions: it says that only perceptions are present to the mind. Hence Part IV of the Treatise sees Hume adopting a radical ontology, turning himself in the process into an even more extreme thinker than Berkeley. As we have discussed in our last Chapter, Berkeley admits the existence of mind where perceptions inhere. But Hume by the process of assimilating bodies and their properties to perceptions, dispensed with the mind too, which is the subject matter of our discussion in the next section.

55 Hume, David., A Treatise of Human Nature, op.cit, Book I, Part IV, Sec.II, p.239, (The Star Mark Seen in the quotation figures also in the original passage. The Footnote against this star reads, Part II. Sec. 6, which is of the idea of existence and of external existence.)
3.3.3 Personal Identity and Bundle Theory

Hume devotes a distinct section of the Part-IV, Book I of the *Treatise* called ‘personal identity’—a subject not just of historical context but also of current philosophical debate—to put forth his account of mind/self. But in fact Hume “. . . equates personal identity with the identity of mind, and defines this without any reference to the body.”\(^{56}\) Now question arises if Hume equates personal identity with the identity of mind; what does Hume actually mean by the term ‘Identity of mind’. Hume himself explains this point in the following words:

> “the identity, which we ascribe to the mind of man is only a fictions one, (and like our other ascriptions of identity proceeds from the) operation of the imagination”.\(^{57}\)

Explaining Hume’s’ point that the identity of mind is only ‘fictitious’ A.J. Ayer writes:

> “What I therefore take him to mean by calling the identity of our minds ‘fictitious’ is that it is not what he calls a ‘true’ identity, that is, the identity of a single unchanging object, but one that can be resolved into a relation between perceptions”\(^{58}\)

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A.J. Ayer is very much right in saying that Hume when says that identity of mind is fictions he refers not to a single unchanging object rather a relation of perceptions.

A.J. Ayer’s remarks on Hume’s account of mind/self is vindicated by the following passage where Hume observes:

“For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain of pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception”. 59

Hume observes that all there is to be observed is a sequence of perceptions. Here also we find Hume’s account of mind is based on radical empiricism when he refuses to accept anything beyond the perceptions. His point is that there is no experimental grounds for attributing identity to the self. As we have already discussed that Locke though observes that “tis plain then, that the Idea of corporeal Substance matter is a remote from our conceptions, and apprehensions, as that of spiritual substance....” 60 Still he treats mind as a substance Berkeley though denied Locke’s account of

material substance, yet he treats mind as an enduring substance. Hume declare any such account of mind is just a matter of belief, because we can never experience mind as an enduring entity beyond the perceptions of Love, hatred, pleasure or pain etc. Hence for Hume, mind is “nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeeds each other with an in inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement.”\textsuperscript{61} Hume makes no distinction between personal identity and mind and declares that mind consists of perceptions which are particulars. These perceptions exist in succession, in series. Hume explains this point through an example of theater:

“The mind is a kind of theater, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass re-pass, glid away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations..... The comparison of the theatre must not mislead us. They are the successive perceptions only, that constitute the mind;....”\textsuperscript{62}

It may be noted here that while Hume argues that mind is nothing but a series of perception, he at the same time says that there is no beneath substratum or support for them. They are individual and discrete. Hume states:

\textsuperscript{61} Hume, David., \textit{A Treatise of Human Nature}, ed. L.a. Selby-Bigge. 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition. \textit{op.cit.}, p.252.
“Since all our perceptions are different from each other, and from everything else in the universe, they are also distinct and separable, and may be considered as separate existent, and may exist separately and have no need of anything else to support their existence.” 63

He further adds “(Perceptions) may be conceived as separately existent, and may exist separately without any contradiction or absurdity.” 64 Finally Hume makes it clear, “The mind is not a substance in which the perceptions inhere.” 65 Hence for Hume mind is nothing over and above perceptions because we have no experimental grounds for attributing any other identity to the self. Emphasizing this point Daniel E. Flage writes:

“Since all perceptions are individual existents and are conditions Sine qua non for the existence of the self, there is no reason to believe that the minds is composed of anything over and above perceptions”. 66

It may be remarked here this view of Hume on self is an outcome of his adherence to extreme form of empiricism. Now, let us analyse Hume’s account of scepticism.

3.3.4 Scepticism, as a Logical Outcome: Causation and the Idea of Necessity

The first book of the Treatise (Part IV) contains three famous sceptical arguments yielding: (i) a scepticism concerning induction, (ii) a scepticism with regard to reason, and (iii) a scepticism with regard to senses. Here Hume's aim is to show that how certain beliefs about the world and the human mind and generated. Hume strongly feels that, as we have already seen the ontological beliefs (existence of external world, enduring self) do not arise solely on the basis of rational or scientific considerations but that, on the contrary, they rest upon what he calls 'Human nature'.

Traditionally Hume has been considered as a septic, specially by his British interpreters who saw his work as the reaductio ad absurdum of British Empiricism. But in this century, largely through the influence of Norman Kemp Smith, a naturalistic interpretation has gained prominence with the result that Hume's scepticism is often played down or dismissed as unimportant. Robert J. Fogelin a well known commentator on Hume's

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67 Thomas Reid is one of the most important interpreters in this line who in his Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense published in 1764 gives Hume credit of retaking Locke's Premises to their logical conclusion. Reid sees Hume's scepticism, denial of enduring substance etc. is because of the adaption of Locke and his followers the Theory of ideas: The assumption that what is immediately perceived whether it be called an idea, as by Locke or a sensible quality, or, as Hume preferred, an impression, is something that has no existence apart from the perceptual situation in which it figures.

scepticism demonstrates that the Treatise contains a series of radically sceptical arguments that cannot be ignored in a balanced account of Hume’s position. In the Hume’s Skepticism in the Treatise of Human Nature, Fogelin’s main concern is to restore an appreciation of the sceptical themes of Hume’s Treatise. 69

Though most of the interpreter see Hume’s scepticism as an outcome of British Empiricism; John Passmore observes that Hume was very much influenced by French philosophers for his scepticism. Passmore writes, “Hume takes scepticism very seriously; in his respect, as in so many others, his attitude is that of a French rather than a British philosopher. In France, scepticism was a live issue...” 70 It may be noted here that when Passmore argues the Humean Scepticism is more French in nature, he certainly means the influence of Cartesian doubt on Hume. But from our methodological point of view, the debate whether Humean scepticism is an outcome of British empiricism or French in nature is irrelevant. If we attempt to understand Hume’s scepticism in it’s historical context with reference to the development of his epistemological and ontological Doctrines right from the Cartesian dualism this problem will not arise. Our

methodology, as we have already discussed aims at tracing Hume's philosophy right from Cartesianism through Locke and Berkeley.

Hume acknowledges there is a form of scepticism in Descartes in the following passage:

"There is a species of scepticism, antecedent to all study and philosophy, which is much inculcated by Descartes and others, as a sovereign preservative against error and precipitate judgment. It recommends an universal doubt, not only of our former opinions and principles, but also our very faculties; of whose veracity, say they, we must assure ourselves, by a chain of reasoning, deduced from some original principles, which cannot possibly be fallacious or deceitful".\(^7\)

As we have discussed Hume declared there are certain belief which is taken for granted equally by the philosophers as well as the common man alike without any application of reason. Hume find most common among the beliefs are believe in the existence of an external world and an enduring substance. Hume scepticism examines the validity of such beliefs. In a like manner Desecrate even accepts the existence of God which according to him is the absolute substance and he proves the existence of external world

\(^7\) Hume, David., *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning Principles of Morals*, op.cit., p.149-50.
through the clearness and distinctness of cogito and the veracity of God. In the following passage Descartes also examines the existence of God when he writes:

"I must inquiry whether there is a God, as soon as an opportunity of doing so shall present itself, and if I find that there is a God, I must examine likewise whether he can be a deceiver; for, without the knowledge of these two truths, I do not see that I can ever be certain of anything."  

A closely related idea to Hume's scepticism, and Descartes Diabolic doubt is to be found in Locke:

"I thought that the first step towards satisfying several inquiries the mind of a man was very apt to run into was to take a survey of our own understandings, examine our own powers, and see to what things they were adapted."  

We have already seen in our last chapter how there is a notion of scepticism present in Berkeley's philosophy. Berkeley himself admits his scepticism has it's roots in Locke's distinction between objects which is supposed to exist independently and ideas which are caused by it. Berkeley

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writes:

"...We have been led into very dangerous errors, by supposing a two fold existence of the objects of the sense— the one intelligible or in the mind; the other real and without the mind, whereby unthinking things are thought to have a natural subsistence of their own, distinct from being perceived by spirits. This, which, if I mistake not, have been shewn to be a most groundless and absurd notion, is the very root of scepticism; for, so long as men thought that real things subsisted without the mind, and that their knowledge was only so far forth real as it was conformable to real things, it follows they could not be certain that they had any real knowledge at all".\(^{74}\)

The above passage shows how Berkeley's scepticism is intrinsically related with the epistemological and ontological aspects. Hume's scepticism is just a logical outcome of the epistemological and ontological issues of British empiricism which has its basis in Cartesian dualism.

Coming back to Hume's nature of scepticism, now will give a very brief account of Hume's scepticism with reference to induction reason and senses.

The notion of causality, necessity, and induction are most important aspects of Humes philosophy. In both Treatise and Enquiries Hume argues

that causal connections cannot be established by any for of *apriori*
reasoning. Simplifying, it is only our experience of constant conjunction
between two sorts of events that leads us to suppose that one is the cause of
the other. We reach the problem of induction by raising the following
question: How does the experience of events being constantly conjoined in
the post license an information to the claim that they will continue to be so
conjoined in the future? Hume's words: "But if we still carry on our
shifting humour, and ask, what is the foundations of all conclusions from
experience? This implies a new question, which may be of more difficult
solution and explication."75 Hume's scepticism concerning induction
basically depends on his argument that what is 'conceivable is possible'.
since it is conceivable that the course of nature might change, and what is
possible cannot be demonstrated to be false, therefore it cannot be
demonstrated that the course of nature will not change.76

Now to analyse Hume's *Scepticism with regard to reason* we find,
by reason Hume usually means demonstrative and intuitive reasoning. For
Hume all casualties are subject to probability, restraint even including
reason- the source of demonstrative and intuitive knowledge.

75 Hume, David., *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, op.cit., p.32.
A Scepticism with Regard to Senses

Hume's examination of the senses begins with a comparison between the Sceptical problems concerning reason and the sceptical problems concerning the senses. The sceptical argument is intended to show that our perceptions are not possest of any independent existence. Here Hume argues, "when we press one eye with fingers, we immediately perceive all the objects to become double, and one half of them to be remov'd from their common and natural position. But as we do not attribute a continued existence to both these perceptions, and as they are both of the same nature, we clearly perceive, that all our perceptions are dependent on our organs, and the disposition of our nerves and animal spirits."

The second step in Hume's skeptical argument is aimed at such double existence theories and is intended to show that no argument can establish the existence of external objects resembling our perceptions. In the Treatise, Hume states that basic argument in only a few sentences:

"The only conclusion we can draw from the existence of one thing to that of another, is by means of relation of cause and effect. ...... The idea of this relation derived from past experience, by which we find, that two beings are constantly conjoined together, and are always present at once to the mind.

77 Ibid., p.210-1.
But as no beings are ever present to the mind but perceptions; it follows that we may observe a conjunction or a relation of cause and effect between different perceptions, but can never observe it between perceptions and object.78

Idea of Causality, Knowledge and Probability

Hume’s account of causation can properly be understood with reference to his ontological and epistemological position. As we have already discussed Hume’s position that what is distinguishable is separable. In this sense for Hume impressions are discrete and unconnected. Hume denies the existence of enduring material and mental substance and equates mind with a series of perceptions and observes that there is no substratum or base of these perception. Hume’s denial of necessary connection between cause and effect is a necessary corollary to his ontological position. And it is also a necessary outcome of his radical empiricism that we can never experience the necessary connection between two events apart from their spatial contiguity. How Hume’s theory of causation is related with his ontology, Suman Gupta writes:

“When there is nothing in the world except fleeting, discrete impressions, it logically follows that there cannot be a necessary causal connection between different phenomena”.79

78 Ibid., p.212
79 Gupta, Suman, Origin and Theories of Linguistic Philosophy, op. cit., p.68.
Hume in his Philosophy mostly deals with part-III of the first book of the *Treatise* to describe the question what is involved in the idea of causation. Hume here basically deals with the question: What are we believing when we believe that one event caused or will cause another? Hume writes,

“To begin regularly, we must consider the idea of *Causation*, and see from what origin it is derived. It is impossible to reason justly, without understanding perfectly the idea concerning which we reason”.

This is to say, if we want to get clear about the character of our causal inference we must first understand our notion causation.

In *Treatise* 1.iii.2. Hume discusses the elements of the idea of a causal relation. After indicating that the relations of contiguity in space and time and temporal priority of cause to effect are “essential to that of causation; or at least may suppose (them) such, according to the general opinion.” Hume notes that in addition to these “there is a *Necessary Connexion* to be take into *Consideration; and that relation is of much greater importance, than any of the other two above mentioned*.” It is clear from these quotations that for Hume the idea of ‘causation’ is a complex idea of relationships between events, and has three components;

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81 Ibid., p.123.
82 Ibid., p.125.
(i) contiguity in space and time. (ii) Priority of time in the cause before the effect and (iii) the necessary connection between cause and effect. Hume observes that the earlier two factors i.e., (i) and (ii) by themselves do not capture our idea of causation. Hume remarks, "an object may be contiguous and prior to another without being considered as it's cause."83

Hume now attempts to explain how this idea of necessary connection comes? In other words what entitles us to the idea that there is a necessary connection between a glass cup hitting concrete and the cup breaking? Is there anything in what we observe when we observe a cup hitting concrete and breaking that corresponds to the idea that there is a necessary connection here? Hume dismisses any such connection and argues:

"Here again I turn the objects on all sides, in order to discover the nature of this necessary connexion, and find the impression, or impressions, from which its idea may be deriv’d when I caste my eye on the known qualities of objects, I immediately discover that the relation of cause and effect depends not in the least on them. When I consider their relations, I can find none but those of contiguity and succession; which I have already regarded as imperfect and unsatisfactory".84

83 Ibid., p.125.
84 Ibid., p.125.
Hume denies that he finds any impression of necessary connection in what he sees when he looks at one event causing another. Hence Hume finally observes that 'necessary connection' is nothing but our inclination to think that when the first happens the second must follow is simply the result of our projecting something that is really in mind, our compulsive expectations, onto the world-necessity is something that exists in the mind not in objects. In this context Hume writes:

“When we say, therefore, that are object is connected with another, we mean only that the have acquired a connection in our thought, and give rise to this inference, by which they become proofs of each other's existence”.85

Hence to conclude this section, we find, Hume's denial of necessary relation between cause and effect is a logical corollary to his ontological position. when he argues, as we discussed, impressions are discrete, unconnected and fleeting he propagated a correspondingly causal theory to defend his ontology.

3.3.5 Propositional Truth, Knowledge and Probability

Hume in the Enquiries argues all the meaningful propositions can be divided into two broad categories, namely 'relation of ideas' and 'matters of fact'. In the words of Hume, "All the objects of human reason or enquiry

85 Hume, David., *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, op.cit., p.76.
may naturally be divided into two kinds, to wit, *Relation of Ideas and Matters of Fact.*”

The point which we want to stress here is that the above mentioned distinction made by Hume is done with reference to propositions. This is clear as Hume remarks “...(Relation of Ideas) is a *Proposition* which *propositions* of this kind are discoverable by the mere operation of thought....”

Hume’s distinction of all meaningful proposition into two categories namely ‘Relation of ideas’ and ‘matters of fact’ is an attempt to eliminate metaphysics. Besides that it is perhaps the first step in the direction to show that knowledge means knowledge of propositions.

When Hume talks that we cannot have any knowledge of the metaphysical entities he helped the modern British empiricism to enter into a new phase. As we have discussed through Descartes, Locke, Berkeley and Hume are modern thinkers yet all of them assert we can have the knowledge of God/Soul. But Hume observes, “Divinity or Theology as it proves the existence of a Deity and the immortality of soul. ... But its best and most solid foundation is faith and divine revelation.” Hence the declaration that we can have only faith not knowledge of metaphysical entities is a crucial step towards the attempt of eliminating metaphysics.

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86 Ibid., p.25.
87 Ibid., p.25, (Bracket and Bold Mine).
88 Ibid., p.165.
Secondly, Hume’s attempt to confine knowledge within the sphere of proposition marked the stage of beginning of linguistic philosophy. The following passage of Hume shows, how much importance he gives to prepositional form of meaning:

“If we take into our hand any volume of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance, let us, ask, does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No commit it then to flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion".89 We will come back to deal with Hume’s importance to ‘propositional form of knowledge, in our fifth chapter while we will be comparing this aspect of Hume’s philosophy with Derrida’s notion of ‘textuality’.

Hume finds that our knowledge about ‘matters of fact’ cannot be certain there is an element of probability involved in it. Hume writes, “The contrary of every ‘matters of fact’ is still possible; because it can never imply a contradiction,..... that sun will not rise tomorrow is no less intelligible a proposition and implies no more contradiction, than the affirmation, that it will rise.”90

Even Hume says that demonstrative sciences can also be brought

89 Ibid., p.165.
90 Ibid., pp.25-26.
into doubt “when we apply them, (because) our fallible and uncertain faculties are very apt to depart from them, and fall into error... By this means all knowledge denigrates into probability;...”91

It may be mentioned here that at this point Derrida comes very close to Hume when he argues that any search for truth is metaphysics.

3.4 Conclusion

The examination of Hume’s epistemology and ontology with reference to its historical development from the basic assumptions of Cartesian dualism through Locke and Berkeley, was our basic concern in this chapter. The conclusions which we find in Humean philosophy though seems absurd, yet it is a logical outcome of the assumptions of Locke and Berkeley.

Hume, we find says that all perceptions of human mind are either impressions or its corresponding ideas. Hume argues that perceptions are the fundamental entities and ideas are the faint copies or images of impressions. Hume as an radical empiricists went a step ahead of Locke and Berkeley, when he argues that we can never go beyond the space of impressions and their corresponding ideas even in imagination. He argues, since nothing is present to the mind but perception, it is impossible for us

to conceive or to form an ideas of anything specifically different from impressions' or 'ideas'.

Hume denies the notion of abstract ideas, primary and secondary qualities distinctions, causal theory of perceptions in almost a similar fashion as Berkeley does. But the most important factor of Hume is that when Berkeley denies Locke's conceptions of substratum theory of material substance, Hume declares the very conception of enduring substance (including mental) is a matter of faith, because we can never have an impression or corresponding ideas of such substance. Hume declares most emphatically, the believe in the existence of the external world and an enduring substance is among the most common believes taken for granted both by the philosophers and by the common man without application of slightest of reason. Hume further says, this types of believes are mere products of 'associations of ideas'.

Hume deals with the problems of personal identity in a separate section in the Treatise. But in fact he equates personal identity with the identity of the mind. As a true radical empiricist, he says that we can never experience mind as a substance, what we can experience or perceive is only love and hatred, pain and pleasure etc. Hence, he declares mind as nothing but bundle of different perceptions.

In our section on 'scepticism concerning causality and knowledge, we observed how Norman Kemp Smith plays down the notion of
scepticism as unimportant in Hume’s philosophy. Our observations were substantiated with the arguments of Foglin that scepticism does have a prominent place in Humean System. We found how Hume’s scepticism is a natural outcome of Locke’s distinction between material substance and the ideas caused by it. In fact the scepticism in Hume is not a new phenomena rather it started with Berkeley. Hume also acknowledges there is also a form of scepticism in Descartes also. Hume denies the necessary causal connections and brings the question of probability in knowledge. Hume’s distinction between two types of propositions i.e. ‘Relations of ‘Ideas’ and ‘Matters of Fact’ constitute basis of the linguistic movement of the 20th century.

This distinction has special importance from our point of view because this is the basis of Hume’s attempt to deny metaphysics. We will compare this aspect of Hume with Derrida’s denial of ‘logocentrism’ in the fifth chapter of our thesis.

Taking into considerations all those aspects of Hume’s philosophy we do not attribute any level to Hume either as a subjective idealist or as a phenomenalist or as a neutral monist, because in our opinion identifying Hume with any particular schools of thought would end in misunderstanding Hume. John Passmore puts this in his following passage:

“If we try to show that Hume is really a phenomenalist or a sceptic, or a naturalist, or that those sections of his work which
will not put into such a single philosophical systems are no more than slips of the pen, we shall have to admit that his ‘slips’ are gigantic proportions and we shall be quite baffled by the way in which he not merely falls into but goes out of his way to develop and extol, views are quite incompatible with whatever systematic doctrines we care to ascribe to him”.

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