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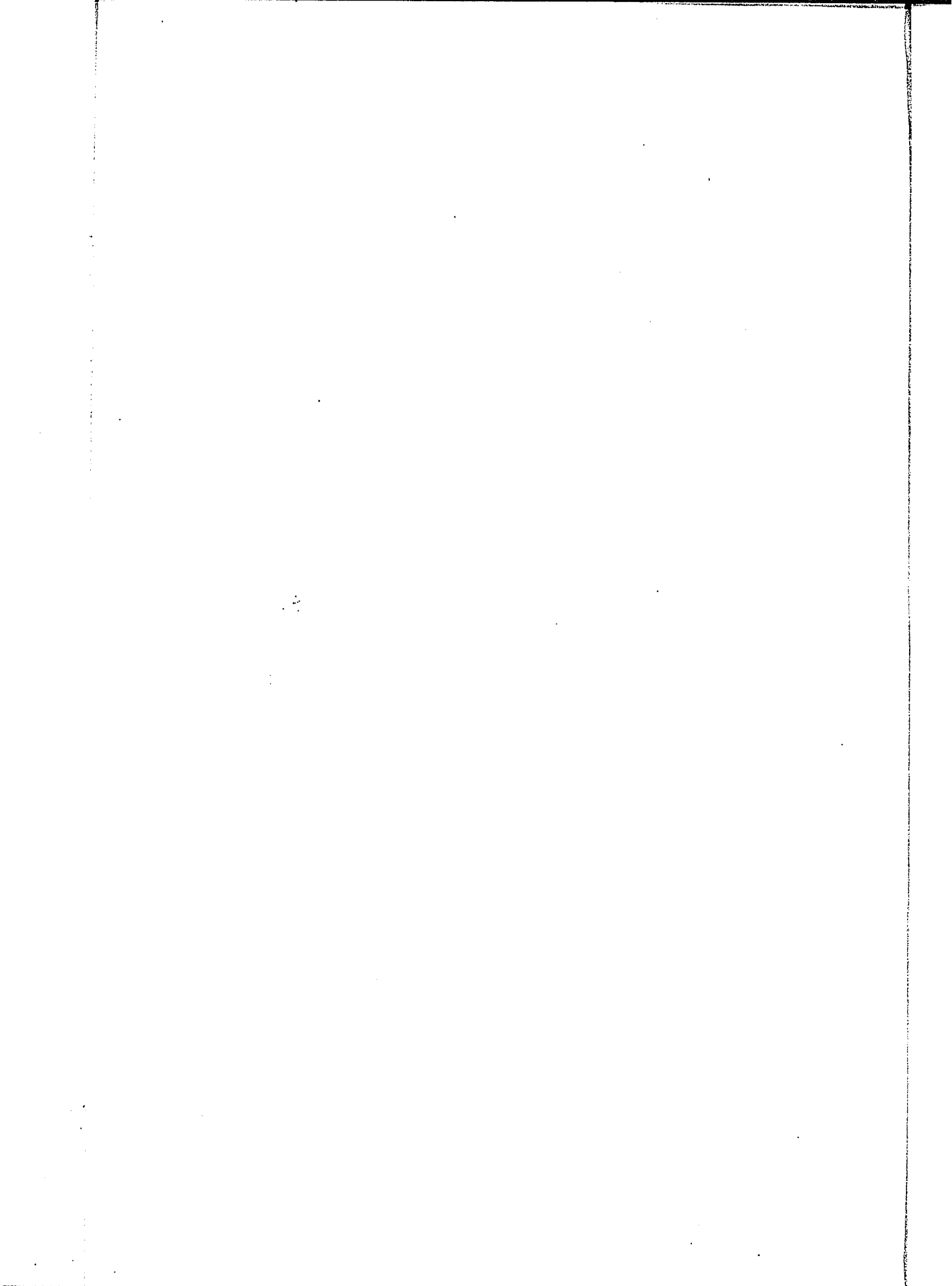
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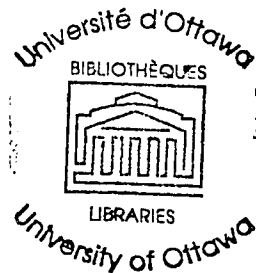
UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA -- ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

CAUSATION AND FREEDOM ACCORDING TO DAVID HUME.

by

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Thesis presented to the Faculty of  
Philosophy of the University of Ottawa  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
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## INTRODUCTION

David Hume is one of the outstanding figures among the empiricists, and as far as the modern philosophy is concerned, his doctrines are among the most influential elements on the western civilization. One of his doctrines is his identification the doctrine of freedom with the doctrine of necessity. So, in the present thesis an attempt will be made to expose his doctrine of freedom and its relation to morality and religion, and see how this doctrine is a logical outcome of his empiricism. But, in order to deal with Hume's doctrine of necessity and its relation to morality and religion, we must have a clear notion of his theory of causation, because it affects directly his views on freedom. Moreover, Causation in the Humean sense has its roots in his theory of knowledge, and his empirical outlook. Therefore, in this study I confined myself to Hume's philosophical work, because I found that his other works were not directly relevant to this research. I studied almost all the literature written about Hume concerning freedom and causality, and all the books which are available in the libraries, and which directly or indirectly touch upon this present subject.

The thesis is divided into four chapters: The first one deals with Hume's epistemological outlook and his empiricism along with his doctrine of impressions and ideas.

## INTRODUCTION

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In this chapter I tried to trace the roots of causality, and how Hume came to the idea that the relation of cause and effect is a mental or psychological relation, and it is nothing but the effect of habit or custom on the imagination. Habit produces a propensity in the mind to infer the one upon the appearance of the other due to the constant conjunction of objects, and their habitual succession. That is to say, that the mind by necessity make the inference. The second chapter deals with the doctrine of necessity which was the outcome of his causal theory, and I tried to show how such a doctrine leads to determinism. Yet, Hume tried to identify the doctrine of freedom with his doctrine of necessity. The third chapter deals with Hume's zeal to introduce his doctrine of necessity (which is at the same time the doctrine of freedom in the Humean sense) to be applied in the order of religion and morality, and I explained how Hume attacks the doctrine of freedom according to the christian notion, and destroys its foundations accusing it as inadequate to fulfil the religious and moral purpose. The fourth chapter is a kind of a general evaluation of Hume's doctrine of freedom and causality, and to a certain extent a very brief criticism of these doctrines under the light of our christian notion of man, and his purpose on earth and his final cause.

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## CHAPTER I

## HUME'S THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE--EMPIRICISM

## A. HUME'S EPISTINOLOGICAL APPROACH

One of the major problems which Hume discusses at the opening of the Enquirey is the problem of metaphysics. Because, it is an aspect of the many aspects of philosophy; but it differs from the other by being profound and deep, and, he says that not everybody is interested in an easy philosophy, there are some who want to speculate and enjoy the profound thinking. There is nothing wrong with that, but metaphysics is a very delicate matter, and it should be handled with care in order to obtain the best possible result, he says:

"Were the generality of mankind contented to prefer the easy philosophy to the abstract and profound, without throwing any blame or contempt on the latter, it might not be improper, perhaps, to comply with this general opinion, and allow every man to enjoy, without opposition, his own taste and sentiment, but as the matter is often carried farther, even to the absolute rejecting of all profound reasonings, or what is commonly called metaphysics, we shall now proceed to consider what can reasonably be pleaded in their behalf."(1)

Therefore, it can be noticed that Hume admits that metaphysics is something profound, and before it is rejected it must be studied carefully, and he tells us that

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(1) Enquiry, G. & G., Vol. IV, P. 6.

## HUME'S EPISTEMOLOGICAL APPROACH

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he is going to do that. At the first moment you think that Hume is all for metaphysics, and he does not want to see it rejected. But, unfortunately, he does not go far, before he rejects it himself. His reason was that metaphysics is not only profound, but it is too deep to the extent that it is unattainable. At this point, I think that Hume reaches the climax of his epistemological difficulty, because, he refuses to admit the full capacity of the intellect, and he does not trust it as being able to attain any metaphysical truth. And he thought that, the main problem is not only that metaphysics is something incomprehensible, but <sup>not admitting</sup> ~~our~~ incapability in comprehending what is beyond our reach. So, his purpose was, to analyze human understanding, and, show that it is not fit for metaphysical notions:

"The only method of freeing learning, at once, from these abstruse questions, is to enquire seriously into the nature of human understanding, and show from an exact analysis of its powers and capacity, that it is by no means fitted for such remote and abstruse subjects. We must submit to this fatigue, in order to live at ease ever after."(2)

Therefore, to live happily is not to carry things beyond your capacity, and metaphysics is something too heavy for us and the only solution is to get rid of it by some means, and the means is to destroy or overthrow it reasonably. According to Hume:

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(2) Enquiry, G. & G., Vol. IV, P. 9.

## HUME'S EPISTEMOLOGICAL APPROACH

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"Accurate and just reasoning is the only catholic remedy, fitted for all persons and all dispositions; and is alone able to subvert that abstruse philosophy and metaphysical jargon, which being mixed up with popular superstition, renders it in a manner impenetrable to careless reasoners, and gives it the air of science and wisdom."(3)

Hume wanted to explore the human nature by a new method of science.. So, he needed a principle to be the foundation of that science.. The principle which he thought of was experience:

"And, as the science of man is the only solid foundation for the other sciences, so, the only solid foundation we can give to this science itself must be laid on experience and observation."(4)

So, we can see that experience to Hume is something like a key to the science of man, because, he thinks that if he can have a clear insight into man, then, he will be able to solve all the questions that are of any significance:

"There is no question of importance, whose decision is not comprised in the science of man; and there is none, which can be decided with any certainty, before we become acquainted with that science."(5)

The question which comes to mind now is, why experience? And what kind of experience Hume means? The

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(3) Enquiry, G. & G., Vol. IV, P. 9..

(4) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. I, P. 307-308.

(5) Ibid.

answer is very obvious, as far as the "why" is concerned, because Hume believed that all the reasonings that we have, or we can have about the matter of fact are derived from the relation of cause and effect, and this relation is founded on experience. He says that if we were asked concerning this relation, "what is the foundation of all our reasonings and conclusions concerning that relation? it may be replied in one word, experience." (6) But, the whatness of that experience, he says, is very difficult to determine, and many philosophers attempted to explain it, and they did not succeed in their attempt. As far as his explanation of it is concerned, he says:

"For to me it seems evident, that the essence of the mind being equally unknown to us with that of external bodies, it must be equally impossible to form any notion of its powers and qualities otherwise than from careful and exact experiments, and the observation of those particular effects, which result from its different circumstances and situations." (7)

Therefore, as it appears from the quotation that the experience which he means is sense experience, based on the observation of things. And he asserts, that the actions of "infants" or "brute beasts" confirm, the idea of experience and not reasonings. Because, their actions are not based on reasoning or any intellectual operation, but

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(6) Enquiry, G. & G., Vol. IV, P. 28.

(7) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. I, P. 308

## HUME'S EPISTEMOLOGICAL APPROACH

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merely on experience:

"It is certain that the most ignorant and stupid peasants - nay infants, nay even brute beasts - improve by experience, and learn the qualities of natural objects, by observing the effects which result from them. When a child has felt the sensation of pain from touching the flame of a candle, he will be careful not to put his hand near any candle, but will expect a similar effect from a cause which is similar in its sensible qualities and appearance." (8)

But, he discovered that the lack is this: though man knows that only experience can be the true principle, yet, "we seldom regulate ourselves by it." (9) That is why Hume does not forget from time to time to remind us of that, and in a kind of advertisement to his system, he uses his didactic method by personifying nature and letting her decry abstruse thoughts and deep thinking. He imagined nature saying:

"Indulge your passion for science, says she, but let your science be human, and such as may have a direct reference to action and society. Abstruse thoughts and profound researches I prohibit, and will severely punish, by the pensive melancholy which they introduce, by the endless uncertainty in which they involve you, and by the cold reception which your pretended discoveries shall meet with, when communicated. Be a philosopher; but, amidst all your philosophy, be still a man." (10)

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(8) Enquiry, G. & G., Vol. IV, P. 34.

(9) Treatise, G. & G.; Vol. I, P. 412.

(10) Enquiry, G. & G., Vol. IV, P. 6.

The philosopher stays a man as long as he does not engage himself in deep speculations and metaphysical notions.

I am not here going to judge the truth or falsity of that assumption, and how Hume conceives the philosopher, but there is one thing which ~~show~~<sup>drew</sup> my attention, and that is that in the Treatise he considers those people who personify nature as something wrong with them, and such a personification is weak, childish, emotional, and anti-philosophical. But, that is not the main point in his epistemological approach. The main one is his strong confidence that the human mind is incapable of attaining any metaphysical truth.

#### B. PERCEPTION

A science based on experience has to start somewhere, and in order to be consistent Hume starts with perception - experience can lead that far - , and reality to him can be resolved in perceptions; beyond perceptions we cannot experience anything and consequently it is not worth talking of it. Then, he tells us what he means by perceptions, and that is the full capacity of the human mind to know the real, and sense data is the proto-type of it. At this time, he starts with the conclusion of his speculations which was a sentence to be quoted hundreds and hundreds of

## PERCEPTION

## II

times by different people and eminent scholars. "All the perceptions of the human mind resolve themselves into two distinct kinds, which I shall call impressions and ideas." (11). That much the human mind can know, and that much reality can be verified by it. Hume proceeds to explain the difference between impressions and ideas, and what he wants to show us is that the specific difference between them is vivacity and its concomitants, "The difference betwixt these consists in the degrees of force and liveness, which they strike upon the mind." (12) Resemblance plays an important role in the distinction between impressions and ideas, and Hume wanted to make a clear-cut distinction between the two, as a matter of fact his idea of resemblance was not so promising, he was not optimistic about it, and he tried to avoid the equivocation, which results from that resemblance. So, he defined the terms and confined them each to its own attire. In defining them Hume takes the mind to be the common denomination, and the difference between impressions and ideas can be specified by how hard or softly they strike upon the mind, those which strike it hard are called impressions, in his own words:

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(11) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. I, P. 311.

(12) Ibid.

"Those perceptions which enter with most force and violence, we may name impressions; and, under this name, I comprehend all our sensations, passions and emotions, as they make their first appearance in the soul." (13)

Then, he defines ideas by relating them to impressions, so that the definition would be exclusive, e.g., they exclude each other so that clarity will be attained and ambiguity will be avoided, he says, "By ideas, I mean the faint images of these in thinking and reasoning." (14) By the word these he means impressions.

This resemblance between impressions and ideas, "except their degree of force and vivacity." (15) led Hume to think that there must be a kind of connection between these two. In other words, he was seeking the origin of that. He noticed that there is a kind of constant conjunction between them, and that, "every simple impression is attended with a correspondent idea." (16) and vice versa. So, his conclusion was that there must be a kind of influence, of one upon the other, and if there is such an influence, which one is the origin of the other? Upon reflecting on the case he found out that the impressions

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(13) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. I, P. 311

(14) Ibid.

(15) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. I, P. 312

(16) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. I, P. 314

are the origin or rather the causes of the ideas - since he thinks of course in terms of the efficient causality - and his proof was the priority which the impressions have over the ideas.

Hume was not satisfied with that distinction, he wanted the distinction to be exclusive and exhaustive, and this must be established step by step. So, he further divides perceptions into simple and complex, e.g., simple and complex impressions, and simple and complex ideas, and here he wanted to show whether in both cases the impressions are the causes of the ideas. He defines them in order to show what he means. He says:

"Simple perceptions, or impressions and ideas, are such as admit of no distinction nor ~~nor~~ separation. The complex are the contrary to these, and may be distinguished into parts." (17)

Now measuring what he has at hand, he finds out that he is in a position to make a "general proposition", and that was, "all our simple ideas in their first appearance, are derived from simple impressions." (18) From this general principle he proceeds to show that the complex impressions and ideas are nothing but a composition of simple impressions and ideas consecutively, and consequently,

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(17) Treatise, G & G Vol. I, P. 312.

(18) Treatise, G. & G. Vol. I, P. 314.

his affirmation was that the impressions are the causes of the ideas in their simplicity and complexity successively.

Hume further divides perceptions into two dichotomies: First, he divides impressions into, impressions of sensations, and impressions of reflection. Second, he divides ideas into memorative ideas, and imaginative ideas.

In the first dichotomy we have:

1. Impressions which arise from senses - these are beyond our human reason, and Hume says that the cause of their first appearance in the soul is unknown, and we cannot judge with certainty what is "their ultimate cause." Because, there are three possibilities; the object, the mind, and God.

"As to those impressions which arise from senses, their ultimate cause is, in my opinion, perfectly inexplicable by human reason, and it will always be impossible to decide with certainty, whether they arise immediately from the object, or are produced by the creative power of the mind, or are derived from the Author of our being." (19)

Therefore, as far as the impressions of sensations is concerned that much we know about them, and that for the human reason can verify their truth, and beyond that we are in the domain of probability, and we do not want to involve ourselves with any speculation and "metaphysical jargon" which is contrary to this system which is supposed to be

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(19) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. I, P. 385.

built on a new, different and solid foundation of science.

2. Impressions of reflection - this second type of impressions according to Hume is to a great extent the product of ideas, he says, "the second", and he means the second kind of impressions, "is derived, in a great measure, from our ideas." (20) When Hume says, "in a great measure", he means that the ideas are not the sole source in producing the impressions of reflection, but they contribute largely to the production of them. Because the whole thing is derived from the impressions of sensations, and the narration is, as he relates it:

"This idea of pleasure or pain, when it returns upon the soul, produces the new impressions of desire and aversion, hope and fear which may properly be called impressions of reflection, because derived from it. These again are copied by the memory and imagination, and become ideas; which, perhaps, in their turn, give rise to other impressions and ideas; so that the impressions of reflection are not only antecedent to their correspondent ideas, but posterior to those of sensation, and derived from them." (21)

The second dichotomy is of ideas. He divides ideas into:

a) Memorative ideas, and by that he means those ideas which are kept by the memory, and he defines the memory as, "the faculty by which we repeat our impressions

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(20) Treatise, G. & G. Vol. I, P. 317.

(21) Ibid.

in the first manner."(22). In other words, he is here harping again on the "vivacity" of it. He wants to tell us that the ideas of the memory are vivid and forceful, and he goes on to explain the function of the memory in handling the ideas. He says that the primary function of the memory is not to keep them only, but to keep them according to their order, and their situation as they originally invade the memory.

b) Imaginative ideas - In my estimation, and that is due to my recent experience in reading Hume's philosophy, Hume always thought highly of the imagination, and he used it in many different aspects and in many different meanings. Sometimes he opposes it to reason, and then we have to take it in a very limited sense; at other times he opposes it to memory, and then it takes on another meaning; and most of the time he uses it independent and we can take it in the broad and unrestricted sense. So, here, in order to know clearly what he means by it I am going to juxtapose it to the memory and show what Hume means by the imaginative ideas.

The first difference between the memorative ideas and the imaginative ideas is that while the memory preserves its ideas according to their original order and position, the imagination operates differently with the ideas, it,

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(22) Treatise, G. & G. Vol. I, P. 317.

"transposes and changes them as it pleases."(23). But, he does not consider this as the main difference. There is more to it than that, in one place he says, "that the difference between it and the imagination lies in its superior force and vivacity."(24). In another place he says, "When I oppose the imagination to the memory, I mean the faculty by which we form our fainter ideas."(25). Therefore, the second difference lies in the liveliness on the sides of the memorative ideas, and faintness on the sides of the imaginative ideas.

### C. ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS

Examining the imaginative ideas, Hume sees how the imagination operates regarding the simple ideas and how it can separate them and then conjoin them in whatever manner it pleases. He concludes that there must be a problem there, and the problem is that (as he sees it) whether there is an associating principle which joins the simple ideas together in order to form the complex ideas? He noticed that there is such a thing as complex ideas, and it is

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(23) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. I, P. 386.

(24) Ibid.

(25) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. I, P. 416

ordinarily composed of simple ideas. But, what is it that makes the ideas come together? He did not believe that they are loose.

"Were ideas entirely loose and unconnected, chance alone would join them, and it is impossible the same **simple ideas** should fall regularly into complex ones (as they commonly do), without some bond of union among them, some associating quality, by which one idea naturally introduces another."(26).

Here then, we see Hume searching for the associating principle or principles of ideas. So, at the beginning of the Treatise, he just enumerates them, and they are three in number:

"The qualities, from which this association arises, and by which the mind is, after this manner, conveyed from one idea to another, are three, viz. resemblance, contiguity in time or place, and cause and effect."(27)

But as his doctrine developed, and his theory of knowledge grew, we find him speaking in a different vein. After detecting the weakness of these principles and amending it as much as possible by his own dexterity, he comes back to the same subject, in the same book but much later, to prove that he is certain of them, and he is positively sure that the associative principles are three, and the only three which must be taken into consideration:

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(26) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. I, P. 319.

(27) Ibid.

"But though I allow this weakness in these three relations, and this irregularity in the imagination, yet, I assert, that the only general principles which associate ideas, are resemblance, contiguity, and causation."(28)

If we look for the same thing in the Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, we find him repeating the same principles, but this time they are coming from the mouth of different man. Here, he does not limit himself to show that these are principles of association, but rather he wants to show his originality in that field. Moreover, he speaks with such a tune as if he is an authority in philosophy, and as a philosopher whose reputation has been already established:

"Though it be too obvious to escape observation, that different ideas are connected together; I do not find that any philosopher has attempted to enumerate or class all the principles of association; a subject, however, that seems worthy of curiosity. To me, there appear to be only three principles of connection among ideas, namely, resemblance, contiguity in time or place, and cause or effect."(29).

There are two points in this section to be taken into consideration. First, he mentions that no philosopher up till then had discussed such a thing, consequently, he is the philosopher who is going to do it. Second, he says, as far as he is concerned, here it is the <sup>doctrine</sup> ~~objective~~. And as a philosopher here, he does not forget the scientific approach

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(28) Treatise, G. & G. Vol. I, P. 393.

(29) Enquiry, G. & G. Vol. IV, P. 18.

or method, and that is to give concrete proofs to what he says in order to solidify his statement. He gives three proofs each one represents one of the three principles; The first proof for resemblance, the second for contiguity, and the third for causation, and they are enumerated respectively in this statement:

"That these principles serve to connect ideas will not, I believe, be much doubted. A picture naturally leads our thoughts to the original: the mention of one apartment in a building naturally introduces an inquiry or discourse concerning the others: and if we think of a wound, we can scarcely forbear reflecting on the pain which follows it."(30).

Hume insists that among these three relations, the relation of cause and effect is the most extensive one, "contiguity and resemblance have an effect much inferior to causation."(31)

Because he believed that the idea of matter of fact, and our knowledge of it is derived solely from the cause-effect relation:

"When it is asked, what is the nature of all our reasonings concerning matter of fact? the proper answer seems to be, that they are founded on the relation of cause and effect."(32)

And he goes further to say that he is going to

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(30) Enquiry, G. & G.. Vol. IV, P. 18.

(31) Treatise, G. & G. Vol. I, P. 410.

(32) Enquiry, G. & G. Vol. IV, P. 28

concentrate on examining causation to the bottom, and that is due to its importance in affecting the imagination, because to him there is no stronger relation that can produce a very strong connection in the fancy than the relation which is existed between the cause and the effect. Contiguity and resemblance keep us in contact with our senses. Whereas, causation to him is:

"of those three relations, which depend not upon the mere ideas, the only one that can be traced beyond our sources, and informs us of existences and objects, which we do not see or feel, is causation."(33)

In addition to that Hume suggests or rather asserts that everything which exists either "internally" or "externally" can be considered either a cause or an effect. In other words, beings can be ranked, classified, or divided into causes and effects. But, **causes** and effects in the empirical sense.

#### 1- THE ORIGIN OF THE IDEA OF CAUSATION

One of the main problems in the whole system of the Humean philosophy was the origin of the idea of causation. Hume wanted to know what was the source of that idea? First of all he questioned the qualities, and he found out that he had no hope in that, because every quality he did

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(33) Treatise, G. & G. Vol. I, P. 377.

search, according to him, was not satisfactory, for there always were certain objects which did not have that quality, yet, they ~~fall~~ <sup>fell</sup> under the notion of causation. From this he concluded that the origin of the idea of causation must be found among the relations, because to him, as he thought, cause and effect is a kind of relation between objects. He noticed that every cause and effect is contiguous, therefore, contiguity is a very essential quality of causation. Also he noticed that the cause is always prior to the effect, and as a result succession must be essential too. But, after turning the problem on all sides, he discovered that an object can be prior and contiguous to a certain object, yet not be considered as its cause. Then the previous two were not enough, though they were essential, so he started to look again for another one, and his conclusion was that "there is a necessary connection" to be taken into consideration, and this relation is of much greater importance than any of the other two above mentioned"(34). Here again he found himself in the same trouble, he wanted to know what the source of this idea of "necessary connection" is? And from what impressions is derived? He was disappointed, because, he could not verify that, and so his procedure to verify it was :

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(34) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. I, P. 379.

"We must therefore proceed like those who, being of search of anything that lies concealed from them, and not finding it in the place they expected, beat about all the neighbouring fields, without any certain view or design, in hopes their good fortune will at least guide them to what they search for." (35)

There were three neighbouring fields to beat about in order to reach the source of such notion as "necessary connection."

1. He wanted to know whether can such an idea be attained by intuitive knowledge? So, he discusses the question of knowledge and how we know things, and the certainty which we get about them, and from what sources this certainty arises. According to him:

"All certainty arises from the comparison of ideas, and from the discovery of such relations as are unalterable, so long as the ideas continue the same. These relations are resemblances, proportions in quantity and number, degrees of any quality, and contrariety; none of which are implied in this proposition, whatever has a beginning has also a cause of distance. That proposition therefore is not intuitively certain." (36)

Moreover, he says that some philosophers will say that the removal of a "cause" is something absurd, because, the word "effect" is a kind of a relative term which implies a "cause". Whereas, to Hume, as far as the intuitive knowledge is concerned it is as easy to have the same intuition from the removal of "cause" as retaining it:

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(35) Treatise, G & G, Vol. I, P. 379.

(36) Treatise, G & G, Vol. I, P. 380-381.

"If the removal of a cause be intuitively absurd in the one case, it must be so in the other; and if that absurdity be not clear without a proof in the one case, it will equally require one in the other. The absurdity then of the one supposition can never be a proof of that of the other; since they are both upon the same footing, and must stand or fall by the same reasoning." (37)

2. If the idea of "necessary connection" is not an intuitive one, then he tries to see whether it can be reached through reasoning. But, he says that reasoning has nothing to do with it. Because to him, "all our reasonings concerning causes and effects are derived from nothing but custom."

(38). Moreover, reason concerns itself with the relation between ideas, but it cannot be the originator of ideas. And because he was searching for the origin of "necessary connection" and not the relation of it, he concludes that reason cannot be the source of the idea of necessary connection:

"First, that reason alone can never give rise to any original idea; and, secondly, that reason, as distinguished from experience, can never make us conclude that a cause or productive quality is absolutely requisite to every beginning of existence." (39)

Therefore, Hume believed that the necessity of a cause cannot be the function of our cognitive power, and that we cannot attain it through our reasoning, and the only source which we can rely on in clarifying the problem

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(37) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. I, P. 382.

(38) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. I, P. 475.

(39) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. I, P. 452.

is our "observation and experience," since:

"all our reasonings concerning existence are derived from causation, and as all our reasonings concerning causation are derived from the experienced conjunction of objects, not from any reasoning or reflection, the same experience must give us a notion of these objects, and must remove all mystery from our conclusions." (40)

And this leads us directly to the third point which is experience.

3. Experience - And by that Hume means empirical experience; the "cause" was defined by him as, "an object followed by another, and where all the objects similar to the first are followed by objects similar to the second."

(41). So, in order to explain what he means by that I am going to show what he means by experience, and here I will divide experience into two parts, objective experience, and subjective experience:

a. Objective experience - when Hume says in his definition of cause, "an object followed by another" he is in fact denying the objectivity of cause and effect. He uses the word "follow" instead of produce or influence, and this indicates explicitly that there is no real connection among objects, but the connection is made among the ideas in the mind:

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(40) Treatise, G & G., Vol. I, P. 466.

(41) Enquiry, G. & G., Vol. IV, P. 63.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE IDEA OF CAUSATION

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"When we look about us towards external objects, and consider the operation of causes, we are never able, in a single instance, to discover any power or necessary connection; any quality, which binds the effect to the cause, and renders the one an infallible consequence of the other. We only find, that the one does actually, in fact, follow the other. The impulse of one billiard ball is attended with motion in the second. This is the whole that appears to the outward senses. The mind feels no sentiment or inward impression from this succession of objects." (42)

b. Subjective experience - That is what Hume means by experience when he says that the necessity of a cause and its relation can be detected by experience. As a matter of fact, in this experience he found what he has been looking for. He found out that the idea of "necessary connection" is something subjective and in the mind, and he denies the existence of real connection among objects as cause and effect:

"Our judgment concerning causes and effects are derived from habit and experience; and when we have been accustomed to see one object united to another, our imagination passes from the first to the second by a natural transition, which precedes reflection, and which cannot be prevented by it." (43)

That's all we know about Causes and effects, we always saw objects conjoined in the past, and their constant appearance produced such a habit in our mind to infer the second every time we see the first, and so, when we consider

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(42) Enquiry, G. & G., Vol. IV, P. 52.

(43) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. I, P. 443.

## VALUE OF CAUSAL INFERENCE

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any connection among objects, we just transfer our own state of mind through resemblance to the outside things, and we apply the same internal habituation to them. Consequently, only through this experience and observation we can infer any cause or effect, and the existence of the one from the appearance of the other. Basing his views on the above mentioned arguments, Hume informs us that the understanding is impossible to perceive any real connection among objects, and that, "the union of cause and effect, when strictly examined, resolves itself into a customary association of ideas."(44)

## ii- VALUE OF CAUSAL INFERENCE

I have just finished discussing experience and the role it plays regarding the relation between cause and effect. If we recall the argument we will notice that it is impossible to infer any cause or effect without "observation and experience"; and by experience only such inference occurs, e.g., from the "flame" we infer "heat", we recall in our mind their previous "constant conjunction", and so, we call the first cause and the second effect. The whole argument comes to this, "the inference is nothing but the effects

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(44) Treatise, G. & G., VOL.I, P. 540.

of custom on the imagination."(45). Such reasonings bring the Humean causal theory into the domain of probability:

"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 or intricacy of the question."(46)

In other words, Hume wants to tell us that all our knowledge comes from experience; experience cannot make us aware of the functions of objects. All experience can do is to determine the mind the way that we regard objects. But, as far as the objects are concerned, we cannot have any real knowledge about their operations, all we know about them is probable and consequently, we believe that they behave this way or that way. This belief is not in any way a kind of knowledge according to Hume, but it is rather the effect of our vivid perceptions on the mind, they constitute in the mind such a thing as belief. I think N.K. Smith depicts Hume's views on this very accurately, he says according to Hume:

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(45) Treatise, G. & G., VOL. II, P. 186-187.

(46) Treatise, G. & G., VOL. I, P. 472.

"Belief takes charge at the point where knowledge ceases; it is not in any degree an extension of knowledge; it is a substitute for it, with virtues and limitations appropriate to the functions which, in the economy of our human nature, it is required to fulfil."(47)

### iii- CONSEQUENCES

As we have seen above that the "causal inference has its objective reality in the mind only; but regarding objects we do not know. Probably it has, and that is why we believe that the "causal inference" exists among objects. But, from the point of view of knowledge we can admit its existence only in the mind, and we cannot move from the mind to the object without leaving the domain of knowledge and migrating to the realm of probability and belief.

According to this theory, then, the necessary connection between cause and effect is a kind of mental or psychological relation;

"upon the whole, necessity is something that exists in the mind, not in objects; nor is it possible for us ever to form the most distant idea of it, considered as a quality in bodies. Either we have no idea of necessity, or necessity is nothing but that determination of the thought to pass from causes to effects, and from effects to causes, according to their experienced union."(48)

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(47) N.K. SMITH, THE PHILOSOPHY OF DAVID HUME, Reprinted 1949, London, MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1949, P.400

(48) Treatise, G. & G., VOL. I, P. 460.

Therefore, causality is no more that double-entry -system, e.g., (it exists in the mind as well as in the real order); and so, we have at hand one type of causation.

So, if we analyze causality according to Hume, the logical conclusion is that, the relation of cause and effect is nothing but the effect of the "custom" or "habit" on the mind. The "constant conjunction" of objects produces a habit in the mind to infer the second on the appearance of the first; it produces a "propensity" in the mind to infer, and it necessitates the mind to do that, because, it cannot do otherwise. So, the mind by necessity infers the cause or the effect, because it has no~~x~~ alternative. Consequently, causation degenerates itself into one particular type of necessity, eg., mental necessity.

## CHAPTER II

## FREEDOM EXPLAINED AS ONE PARTICULAR TYPE OF NECESSITY

## A. NECESSITY IS THE OUTCOME OF HUME'S THEORY OF CAUSATION.

It seems that Hume's treatment of causation and then trying to discuss the doctrine of human freedom in the light of that causation, can be expressed in the words of Mortimer Taube. He says, "Hume's discussion of human freedom is merely an unfortunate appendage to his more serious concern with the question of causation."<sup>(1)</sup> This is a valid statement. Because, Hume's treatment of freedom is a kind of a screen reflecting Hume's projection of causation on it. The screen - which is freedom here - shows clearly all the defects which Hume has in his causal doctrine.

In dealing with causality, Hume shows that the relation of cause and effect is a kind of subjective causal inference, which is due to a habit, produced in the mind a propensity to infer. In other words, the "necessary connection" of cause and effect is in the mind, which was determined to make the inference, because of the habitual succession of objects. And consequently, the traditional view of causes is not valid, and there is only one kind of

(1) Mortimer TAUBE, Causation, Freedom and Determinism, London, G. Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1936, P.137.

causes, the efficient causes, he says:

"First, we may learn, from the foregoing doctrine, that all causes are of the same kind, and that, in particular, there is no foundation for that distinction which we sometimes make betwixt efficient causes, and causes sine qua non; or betwixt efficient causes, and formal, and material, and exemplary, and final causes. For as our idea of officency is derived from the constant conjunction of two objects, wherever this is observed, the cause is efficient; and where it is not, there can never be a cause of any kind. (...): If constant conjunction be implied in what we call occasion, it is a real cause; if not, it is no relation at all, and cannot give rise to any argument or reasoning."(2)

Applying the same method to freedom, Hume came out with the "necessity" again; and freedom turned out to be one particular type of that necessity. Because, according to him necessity is the same thing as causality, is of one kind only:

"Secondly, the same course of reasoning will make us conclude, that there is but one kind of necessity, as there is but one kind of cause, and that the common distinction betwixt moral and physical necessity is without any foundation in nature."(3)

In the previous chapter I discussed Hume's attitude towards the "necessary connections" and tried to show that in searching for the origin of the idea of it, and from what impression of sensation it was derived, Hume ended his search by saying that such a notion is not in the domain of

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(2) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. I, P. 464-465.

(3) Treatise, G. & G. Vol. I, P. 465.

of knowledge, but, it is rather the property of probability and belief. So, we see that belief plays an important role in Hume's doctrine of necessity. And in order to clarify that, I am going to discuss the notion of belief in the Humean sense, and how he arrived at the doctrine of necessity through it.

I think that by juxtaposing knowledge to belief and showing what Hume means by knowledge, then the idea of belief becomes clear and obvious. In defining knowledge, Hume says, "By knowledge, I mean the assurance arising from the comparison of ideas."<sup>(4)</sup> Therefore, knowledge does not consist of the assurance arising from the comparisons of impressions, but from the comparison of their copies. Whereas, belief as opposed to knowledge, in Hume's words:

"I say, then, that belief is nothing but a more vivid, lively, forcible, firm, steady conception of an object, than what the imagination alone is ever able to attain."<sup>(5)</sup>

These are the qualities of belief. But Hume further tells us what is the function of it, and the effect it produces; and the influence it exerts on other faculties. He says that the function of belief, "is to raise up a simple idea to an equality with our impressions, and bestow on it a

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(4) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. I, P. 423.

(5) Enquiry, G. & G., Vol. IV, P. 42.

like influence on the passions."(6). So, we can see that belief does not confine itself merely to the comparison of ideas, it rather elevates the position of the idea into the position of an impression. And consequently this elevated idea puts on a new attire and characteristics the same as the impression, and starts to operate on the passion in the same manner that an impression does. Because, the specific difference between impression and idea is "vivacity", and once the idea gets that "vivacity" through belief, it effects us as if we are confronted with an impression. Consequently, by influencing the passions, belief also influences our judgment on things, and so, our activities are influenced by our judgment. Because, our attitude is determined according to how we judge reality, and we behave in a manner suitable to our perception of it. So, concerning belief he says:

"In philosophy, we can go no further than assert, that is something felt by the mind, which distinguishes the ideas of the judgment from the fictions of the imagination. It gives them more force and influence; makes them appear of greater importance; infixes them in the mind; and renders them the governing principles of all our actions."(7)

From the above quoted words, it can be concluded that there are two intentions in Hume's mind:

1. Concerning impressions and ideas, he wants, "to bring

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(6) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. I, P. 417.

(7) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. I, P. 398.

the whole argument in line with his doctrine of impressions and ideas."(8). In the quotation, he stresses the word "felt", and he intends to prove that what we call belief and inference are nothing but aspects of feeling, and the idea which we have from the inference of the effect from the cause is the idea of "necessary connection", which was derived from that feeling; which in turn was raised to the rank of the impressions by the influence of repetition or custom. That is to say, that belief raises the causal inference into the rank of an impression, which is the origin of the idea of "necessary connection."

At this level Hume finds himself that he is able to discuss the question of morality, because, to him morality has something to do with the relation of the actions of man to their motives and situation:

"Now moral evidence is nothing but a conclusion concerning the actions of men, derived from the consideration of their motives, temper, and situation."(9)

And he derives the relation of actions to passions from the relation of objects. So, if we can attribute necessity to the natural operations, why cannot we attribute it to the relation of actions & passions? Because, to him there is no difference between the two operations they both affect the mind and determine it to make the inference.

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(8) MACNABB, D. David Hume, His Theory of Knowledge and Morality, London, Hutchinson's University Library, 1951,

(9) Treatise, G & G., Vol. II, P.186 P.66-67

In his own words:

"We must now show, that, as the union betwixt motives and actions has the same constancy as that in any natural operations, so its influence on the understanding is also the same in determining us to infer the existence of one from that of another. If this shall appear, there is no known circumstance that enters into the connection and production of the actions of matter that is not to be found in all the operations of the mind; and consequently we cannot, without a manifest absurdity, attribute necessity to the one, and refuse it to the other." (10)

Therefore, we can see the similarity between the necessity which is due to the causal inference, and the necessity which exists in the relation between passions or emotions and actions. And Hume tried to identify the doctrine of liberty with that of necessity between passions and actions. But that is not to say that we have two kinds of necessity, it is rather one type of necessity with two derivative aspects.

2. Regarding matter of fact and existence. If the inference is something felt in the mind by necessity, due to "constant conjunction" of objects, then, the inference concerning matter of facts, and concerning existence are not the objects of knowledge, but they are rather the objects of belief only; e.g., they are not evident more than causally considered, and according to the Humean notion of

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(10) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, P. 185-186.

causation. The consequence is that we do not know that the objects exist, we believe so. But, the certitude which Hume can get from belief, cannot go beyond the mind, and his conclusion is:

"Upon the whole, necessity is something that exists in the mind, not in objects; nor is it possible for us ever to form the most distant idea of it, considered as a quality in bodies. Either we have no idea of necessity, or necessity is nothing but that determination of the thought to pass from causes to effects, and from effects to causes, according to their experienced union."(11)

Let us reflect for a while on what Hume's conclusion would be logically to us. He denies causality as well as necessity if these two notions were not ~~occupied~~<sup>confined</sup> to a mere mental sphere. And here, I cannot be but in a perfect agreement with professor J. Laird in commenting on Hume's views regarding causation. He says according to Hume:

"The repetition could not effect things. What it ~~did~~ effect was our own minds. It produced in us a new feeling of determination or of necessitation, and this mental effect (or novel impression of reflection) was the only difference that the multiplicity made. (The reader will perceive Hume contradicted himself when he said that the impression of necessity was itself caused; but he did say so)."(12)

Laird made his point clear concerning the impression of necessity, and I think that he is right in his con-

(11) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. I, P. 460.

(12) John LAIRD, Hume's Philosophy of Human Nature, London, Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1932, P. 94.

clusion, because, the feeling that we have of necessity was produced by something, and that "something" can be considered as a cause.

No matter how much we try to avoid the conclusion that causation is nothing but one particular type of necessity, we find ourselves compelled by Hume's assertion that it is discovered this way by experience. And if we look at his definition of necessity in the second book of the Treatise, as well as in the Enquiry, we find him define it using the same terminology, basing it on his two essential definitions of "cause", he says:

"I define necessity **two** ways, conformable to the two definitions of cause, of which it makes an essential part. I place it either in the constant union and conjunction of like objects, or in the inference of the mind from the one to the other."(13).

And all our doubts cease when we read, "Necessity makes an essential part of causation, and consequently liberty, by removing necessity, removes all causes."(14) Here, Hume's affirmation is depicted explicitly, and we have no business to deny that, because we should admit that when Hume says something, he means it.

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(13) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, P. 190.

(14) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, P. 188.

## B. NECESSITY LEADS TO DETERMINISM

If we examine Hume's treatment of necessity very closely we find him leading us to determinism. Because, according to him our mental activities in their operations are passive and have to be determined according to the influence of habit. That is to say, that our mind is shaped after the manner of custom, and custom is something imposed on the mind from outside, so that our understanding cannot avoid <sup>its</sup> force. Hume is not satisfied by pointing at determination for us, he goes further than that. From repetitive and critical reading in the Enquiry, one comes to the notion that Hume is trying to establish new pillars in supporting the edifice of determinism, as a matter of fact such a notion was pointed at by Mortimer TAUBE, (and I think that he is right in judging Hume this way):

"By the time Hume wrote his Treatise the concept of universal determinism had become an integral part of scientific thought. Hume perceived that most men accepted this concept without inquiring into its origin and validity. Thus, his self imposed task was the discovery of the source of this belief in universal determinism and the defence of the belief against those who supposed it false."(15)

The most important arguments in the Enquiry regarding the doctrine of necessity are those which contribute to

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(15) Mortimer TAUBE, Causation, Freedom And Determinism, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1936, P. 130.

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the refutation of the opposition. As it appears there, Hume, after establishing the doctrine of necessity, tried to raise some objections against his system and tried to refute those objections. He states, that he does not forget that some people will derive something different from what he intends it to be in his system. One of the objections he raises is:

"It may be said, for instance, that, if voluntary actions be subjected to the same laws of necessity with the operations of matter, there is a continued chain of necessary causes, pre-ordained and predetermined, reaching from the original cause of all to every single volition of every human creature. No contingency anywhere in the universe; no indifference; no liberty. While we act, we are at the same time, acted upon. The ultimate Author of all our volitions is the Creator of the world, who first bestowed motion on this immense machine, and placed all beings in that particular position, whence every subsequent event, by an inevitable necessity, must result." (16)

Hume's support to the deterministic views appears very clearly in his refutation to the above quoted objection. The proofs which he offers to defend his doctrine of necessity are nothing but shining lamps in the twinkling sign of determinism. He states the objection and he points at it. He pretends that he is going to destroy that objection, and then he finds out that he does not possess the instruments

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(16) Enquiry, G. & G., Vol. IV, P. 81.

in order to destroy it. He proceeds by dividing the objection into two possibilities: The first one is that either our human actions are traced by necessary causes to God - the infinite goodness and perfection - and by this chain all the human actions are good and never **evil**, because they are the outcome of something perfect, and this implies the impossibility of attaining any evil actions from perfect agents. The second possibility is that the human beings are not responsible for their actions whether they are good or evil actions. Because, if God is the cause of all human beings, then, God is responsible for their evil actions, on the assumption that He could have created them perfect beings instead of creating them wrongdoers.

After exposing the problem as what I have just explained, Hume found himself secured in his defence, as a matter of fact he does not have to employ too many words in doing so (as he did). Because, as it seems, in both cases the problem has something to do with God. In other words, the problem is a kind of metaphysical one. And, he had already shown us that our intellect is not fit for such an ontological problem. And because in philosophy we do not go beyond our own intellect. Therefore, when we ask philosophy to solve for us problems like this, we are seeking the impossible. As a consequence, his conclusion was:

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"To reconcile the indifference and contingency of human actions with prescience; or to defend absolute decrees, and yet free the Deity from being the author of sin, has been found hitherto to exceed all the power of philosophy. Happy, if she be thence sensible of her temerity, when she pries into these sublime mysteries; and leaving a scene so full of obscurities and perplexities, return, with suitable modesty, to her true and proper province, the examination of common life; where she will find difficulties enough to employ her enquiries, without launching into so boundless an ocean of doubt, uncertainty, and contradiction." (17)

Basing his determinism on the doctrine of necessity and trying to identify necessity with freedom, Hume offers us a certain and particular type of determinism. It is a very dangerous type of determinism, because it employs freedom to a certain extent in its operation, some philosophers refers to it as "soft determinism", and in order to understand what is meant by that term, I think Paul Edwards summarizes that very beautifully, in his own words he points out the most notorious characteristic of that theory, he says:

"According to this theory there is in the first place no contradiction whatsoever between determinism and the proposition that human beings are sometimes free agents. When we call an action "free" we never in any ordinary situation mean that it was uncaused; and this emphatically includes the kind of action about which we pass moral judgements. By calling an action 'free' we mean that the agent was not compelled or

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(17) Enquiry, G. & G., Vol. IV, P. 84.

constrained to perform it."(18)

Hume tries to strengthen the roots of determinism by employing few notions of the doctrine of freedom to support his views, and he attributes to liberty the desire for determinism:

"The necessity of any action, whether of matter or of mind, is not properly a quality in the agent, but in any thinking or intelligent being who may consider the action, and consists in the determination of his thought to infer its existence from some preceding objects: as liberty or chance, on the other hand, is nothing but the want of that determination, and a certain looseness, which we feel in passing or not passing from the idea of one to that of the other."(19)

This is the danger of Hume's soft determinism, because the word soft does ~~not mean~~ that it's less forceful, but it is rather more acceptable and more appealing to mankind. Hume does not deny that human beings are free agents sometimes, because to him, there is nothing wrong with being determinist, and feeling free at the same time. And this terminology depicts Hume's attitude towards determinism. Because, Hume himself, in one sentence negates and affirms this feeling free:

"Now, we may observe, that though in reflecting on human actions, we seldom feel such a looseness or indifference, yet it very commonly happens, that in performing the actions them-

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(18) Paul EDWARDS, "Hard & Soft Determinism", an essay in Determinism & Freedom, edited by, Sidney HOOK, New York, New York University Press, 1958, P. 106.

(19) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, P. 188-189.

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selves, we are sensible of something like it."(20)

The question here arises, what explanations Hume gives to this equivocation, and to this contradictory attitude in our feeling? He says that we attribute our feeling to the will, and we think that the will is free in whatever actions it does. Because, if the will is not free we can prove it. Every time we have a doubt in the freedom of the will, we subject it to the test, and through the test we find out that it can easily choose this thing instead of that thing without any restriction whatsoever from outside, and this convinces us that our will is free. But, to Hume such a test is not a very satisfactory one, choosing the good instead of the evil and vice versa does not prove the freedom of the will:

"These efforts are all in vain; and whatever capricious and irregular actions we may perform, as the desire of showing our liberty is the sole motive of our actions, we can never free ourselves from the bonds of necessity".(21)

To Hume then, choosing between good and evil does not function because we are endowed with free choice, it is rather something imposed upon us by necessity whatever we choose, and this feeling of freedom within ourselves is a chimerical one. That is to say that, we imagine ourselves

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(20) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, P. 189.

(21) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, P. 189.

to be free, but in fact we cannot judge that ourselves, because we are not worthy of that judgment:

"We may imagine we feel a liberty within ourselves, but a spectator can commonly infer our actions from our motives and character; and even where he cannot, he concludes in general that he might, were he perfectly acquainted with every circumstance of our situation and temper, and the most secret springs of our complexion and disposition. Now, this is the very essence of necessity according to the foregoing doctrine."(22)

Therefore, determinism is not something to be ashamed of. Hume sees it as the manifestation of reality, that is to say, it is not the fabrication of our own mind, it is reality revealing itself to us in a deterministic way; we perceive it otherwise, it is not the fault of necessity or determinism; it is the fault of our perceptions, and how differently we perceive reality. Moreover, everybody knows that there are certain things which should act necessarily. But necessity, intrinsically speaking, implies determinism. A proof to this is the action of the external objects:

"It is universally acknowledged that the operations of external bodies are necessary; and that, in the communication of their motion, in their attraction, and mutual cohesion, there are not the least traces of indifference or liberty. Every object is determined by an absolute fate to a certain degree and direction of its motion, and can no more depart from that precise line in which it moves, than it can convert itself into an angel, or spirit, or any superior substance."(23)

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(22) Treatise, G. & G. , Vol. II, P. 189.

(23) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, P. 181.

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If everybody agrees that the actions of matter are necessary ones, then, Hume does not see why we cannot apply the same method to those things which are equal to matter in this respect. In other words, he wants to apply the same principle to the actions of the mind. He does not find anything wrong with the idea of attributing necessity and consequently determinism to the activities of the understanding. Because, according to his own experience:

"There is no known circumstances that enters into the connection and production of the actions of matter that is not to be found in all the operations of the mind; and consequently we cannot, without a manifest absurdity attribute necessity to the one, and refuse it to the other." (24).

Therefore, Hume's conclusion is that the actions of the mind are subject to the deterministic theory by necessity. And the notion of freedom which we talk about is nothing but the notion of necessity. That is to say, that while we say something, we mean something else, the meaning which we have in mind, does not correspond to the words we employ, and this leads directly to the next point which I am going to discuss, where Hume identifies the doctrine of necessity with the doctrine of freedom (liberty).

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(24) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, P. 185-186.

## C. FREEDOM AS IDENTIFIED WITH NECESSITY

Hume starts considering the equivocation which the people use between liberty and necessity and he mentions the historical background of the dispute on this subject and he says that this topic was dealt with by most of the philosophers and was so scrutinized to the extent that they spoiled the topic by their "obscure sophistry". As a consequence of that philosophical controversy, the reader became tired of this, and he does not want to hear about it any more, because it's neither didactic nor amusing.

Because of this situation, Hume's intention was to draw the attention of the reader by making his doctrine more appealing so that the reader would not "turn a deaf ear" to it. So, Hume promises him that this doctrine is going to be completely different, and he is not going to involve himself with any sophistical reasoning. And in a kind of an introduction he shows the reader what it's his plan for solving the problem and what he hopes to fulfil:

"I hope, therefore, to make it appear that all men have ever agreed in the doctrine both of necessity and of liberty, according to any reasonable sense, which can be put on these terms; and that the whole controversy has hitherto turned merely upon words." (25)

So, he tells us that he is going to make a kind

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(25) Enquiry, G. & G., Vol. IV, P.67..

## FREEDOM AS IDENTIFIED WITH NECESSITY

of reconciliation between the two doctrines, and it follows then, that he should discuss each doctrine and prove how do they coincide. He starts with the doctrine of necessity and attempts to prove that all mankind acknowledge it, and in his own empirical way introduces his own notion of causation from which the idea of necessity is derived. He says that the "constant conjunction" and the "causal inference" which determine necessity are due to the resembling scenes of nature:

"It seems evident all the scenes of nature were continually shifted in such a manner that no two events bore any resemblance to each other, but every object was entirely new without any similitude to whatever had been seen before, we should never, in that case, have attained the least idea of necessity, or of a connection among these objects. We might say, upon such a supposition, that one object or event has followed another; not that one was produced by the other."(26)

Therefore, without the "Constant conjunction" of such a resembling scenes, and the "inference" from the first to the second the idea of necessity is without foundation. So, the challenge to him is this, if he can prove the reality of these two notions, in human actions then, necessity follows automatically. As far as the "inference" is concerned, he proves that through experience he says that all our inferences concerning the future depend on our past experience. All the people in their con-

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(26) Enquiry, G. & G., Vol. IV, p. 67.

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"take their measures from past experience, in the same manner as in their reasonings concerning external objects; and firmly believe that man, as well as all the elements, are to continue, in their operations, the same that they have ever found them. A manufacturer reckons upon the labor of his servants for the execution of any work as much as upon the tools which he employs, and would be equally surprised were his expectations disappointed." (27)

It can be noticed that Hume in his example concerning the inference which he bases it on experience, the experience he chooses is an everybody's one and it is admitted by the vulgar as well as by the philosopher, so that when he speaks of "all mankind" he wants his statement to be universal <sup>and not</sup> ~~or~~ restricted, e.g., not confined or limited to one group of people. The "inference" then, is experienced by "all mankind", therefore, he does not see any need for affirming it more than it is.

The second thing to prove in his challenge is the "constant conjunction". To Hume it is no problem to prove that, he says:

"It is universally acknowledged that there is a great uniformity among the actions of men, in all nations and ages, and that human nature remains still the same, in its principles and operations. The same motives always produce the same actions; the same events follow the same causes. (. . .): Would you know the sentiment, inclinations, and course of life of the Greeks and Romans? Study well the temper and actions of the French and English: You cannot be much mistaken in transferring to the former most of the observations which

(27) Enquiry, G. & G., Vol. IV, P. 73.

## FREEDOM AS IDENTIFIED WITH NECESSITY 50

you have made with regard to the latter. Mankind are so much the same, in all times and all places, that history informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular." (28)

Moreover, he looks around and sees that as far as the constant conjunction is concerned, he does not have to prove its validity in the human actions. Because up till then, nobody argues against it, and it seems that it is universally acknowledged. So, he concludes:

"Thus it appear, not only that the conjunction between motives and voluntary actions is as regular and uniform as that between the cause and effect in any part of nature, but also this regular conjunction has been universally acknowledged among mankind, and has never been the subject of dispute, either in philosophy or common life." (29)

Now, he finds himself secured in positing the doctrine of necessity, since necessity is the result of "constant conjunction" and "inference". The transition is very easy, everybody acknowledges the first two notions, so, it is impossible and contradictory to deny the doctrine of necessity. Hume's conclusion was, "It seems almost impossible, therefore, to engage either in science or action of any kind without acknowledging the doctrine of necessity." (30)

After this argument by which he tried to convince

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(28) Enquiry, G. & G., Vol. IV, P. 68.

(29) Enquiry, G. & G., Vol. IV, P. 72

(30) Enquiry, G. & G., Vol. IV, P. 73-74.

us that the doctrine of necessity is practiced by everybody and is admitted by everyone, now, he is amazed to see some difficulty in letting people grasp its notion, and he tells us his attitude towards the problem:

"I have frequently considered, what could possibly be the reason why all mankind, though they have ever, without hesitation, acknowledged the doctrine of necessity in their whole practice and reasoning, have yet discovered such a reluctance to acknowledge it in words, and have rather shown a propensity, in all ages, to profess the contrary opinion!"(31)

The solution is easy to him, he had accustomed himself to the method that every time a question is raised, and he does not find a solution to it, he attributes it to metaphysics; and consequently ~~by~~ the intellect is not fit to discuss any metaphysical problems. He says that man knows from causation, only the "constant conjunction" of objects, yet, man does not admit his inadequacy, and still maintains that he knows more than that, and the intellect is capable of penetrating farther into the verification of the truth about nature. From this belief in the aptitude of the intellect man is adding problems to himself of no avail, ~~and~~ that is why the problem of necessity and liberty cannot be settled, because the approach to the solution is erroneous:

"It would seem, indeed, that men begin at the

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(31) Enquiry, G. & G., Vol. IV, P. 75.

wrong end of this question concerning liberty and necessity, when they enter upon it by examining the faculties of the soul, the influence of the understanding and the operations of the will. Let them first discuss a more simple question, namely, the operations of body and of brute un-intelligent matter; and try whether they can there form any idea of causation and necessity, except that of constant conjunction of objects, and subsequent inference of the mind from one to another."(32)

Then, the only solution according to Hume is to admit that the material connection, e.g., the "constant conjunction" which we can conceive in reality, constitutes the whole of that necessity, and at the same time we should admit that, "these circumstances be also universally acknowledged to take place in the operations of the mind."(33) then and only then the problem can be solved, and it follows as a consequence that the dispute is nothing but verbal one, and he reminds us that the fight continues to exist between the followers of each doctrine:

"as long as we will rashly suppose, that we have some farther idea of necessity and causation in the operations of external objects; at the same time, that we can find nothing farther in the voluntary actions of the mind; there is no possibility of bringing the question to any determinate issue, while we proceed upon so erroneous a supposition."(34)

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(32) Enquiry, G. & G. , Vol. IV, P. 76.

(33) Ibid..

(34) Ibid.

The highlight of Hume's argument in making the reconciliation between liberty and necessity is that the question is merely linguistic one and can be solved easily, though, he admits that the question is the "most contentious" as far as metaphysics is concerned, and metaphysics is the "most contentious science", yet, he says that he does not require too many words in proving that the dispute is "merely verbal", and the solution is that, there is no such a thing as freedom if it is defined in such a way as to conflict with the doctrine of necessity. But, freedom exists if it is defined in such a way that it includes necessity. In this respect he says:

"By liberty, than, (!) we can only mean a power of acting or not acting, according to the determinations of the will; that is, if we choose to remain at rest, we may; if we choose to move, we also may. Now this hypothetical liberty is universally allowed to belong to everyone who is not a prisoner and in chains."(35)

Here, it shows that Frederick Copleston was right in saying that Hume identifies "freedom" with "spontaneity". Because, according to Hume's previous definition of liberty that is what it implies, and such a freedom does not conflict with his doctrine of necessity. And his concluding remark in this respect is a kind of a dogmatic type; he believes that his doctrine of necessity is perfect, or rather with

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(35) Enquiry, G. & G., Vol. IV, P. 78.

no defects, so that whenever it conflicts with the doctrine of freedom one of them has to disappear, because, there is no dualism in truth, and truth cannot be but one, therefore, the doctrine of freedom must not exist. Because, either its meaning is the same as what he means by necessity, but it is said in a different word, e.g., "freedom", or, it employs a different word and a different meaning, and in this second case, it is impossible, for him at least, because the only possible one is that of necessity. And the "cause", which constitutes Hume's necessity cannot be defined but in the terms which he himself used in defining it:

"thus, if a cause be defined, that which produces anything; it is easy to observe that producing is synonymous to causing. In like manner, if a cause be defined, that by which any thing exists; this is liable to the same objection. For what is meant by these words, by which? Had it been said, that a cause is that after which anything constantly exists we should have understood the terms. For this is, indeed all we know of the matter. And this constancy forms the very essence of necessity, nor have we any other idea of it."(36)

So, if there is such a thing as freedom, it can be grasped under the notion of necessity. That is to say, that the two words in this sense can be used alternatively, and that's what he means when he says that the difference between the two is "merely verbal."

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(36) Enquiry, G. & G., Vol. IV, P. 78.

D. THE LOGICAL CONCLUSION: FREEDOM IS ONE TYPE OF NECESSITY.

After the identification of freedom with necessity, and Hume's efforts to validate that, the question which naturally arises on the lips is, what happened to freedom? Whether it retained its full force or not? Whether it lost something or it gained something? In order to answer these questions, I think it is more convenient if the problem is divided into two. Because, though, Hume identifies freedom with necessity, we would like to know what kind of necessity he means. There is the subjective necessity on one hand, and the objective necessity on the other hand. So, we want to know with which one of them freedom was identified according to Hume. These are the two divisions of necessity:

I. OBJECTIVE NECESSITY —

We know that necessity in the Humean sense is the outcome of his theory concerning the relation of cause and effect. So, he does not admit the four causes of Aristotle nor the traditional division of causes according to the scholastics. According to him:

"There is but one kind of necessity, as there is but one kind of cause, and that the common distinction between ~~the~~ moral and physical necessity

~~physical necessity~~ is without any foundation in nature." (37)

Then, if the necessity is one kind as well as the cause, it is logical to ask, what kind? To avoid redundancy, this distinction was made clear in the first chapter of the present thesis, where it is shown that the idea of causation and necessity arises from the repetitive observation of objects resembling one another constantly conjoined, and in the long run we were accustomed—due to a habit which determines the mind — to infer the one from the appearance of the other:

"These two circumstances form the whole of that necessity, which we ascribe to matter. Beyond the constant conjunction of similar objects, and the consequent inference from one to the other, we have no notion of any necessity or connection." (38)

In the above quotation there is the statement, "which we ascribe to matter." From it we can conclude that Hume is talking about the objective reality of necessity. But, unfortunately we do not go far before he disappoints us, by telling explicitly that there is no such a thing as objective necessity. In order to verify what I am talking about, we just have to go back to Hume's Treatise and there he narrates the whole story concerning this necessity in a positive and direct manner:

"The several instances of resembling conjunctions

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(38) Enquiry, G. & G., Vol. IV, P. 67.

lead us into the notion of power and necessity. These instances are in themselves totally distinct from each other, and have no union but in the mind which observes them, and collects their ideas. Necessity, then, is the effect of this observation, and is nothing but an internal impression of the mind, or a determination to carry our thoughts from one object to another. Without considering it in this view, we can never arrive at the most distant notion of it, or be able to attribute it either to external or internal objects, to spirit or body, to causes or effects."(39)

So, after these words, I do not think that we are going to have any hope in investigating farther about whether the objective necessity exists in the Humean sense. Because, at least, if Hume is not negating the objective necessity, he is affirming or pointing another kind of necessity which is the second step in my present discussion.

## II. SUBJECTIVE NECESSITY --

Undoubtedly, subjective necessity is the kind which Hume means when he talks about necessity. Because, we cannot have any insight into the essence of bodies, all that we know about them is their constant union, and the determination of the mind due to habit. Therefore, the removal of this insight into the objects, does not change our feeling of necessity as long as the "inference" and the "constant union" remain. It follows from this, that the necessity which we attribute to the extra mental things is nothing but imaginative one, and is not found but in the

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(39) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. I, P. 459-460.

mental sphere. He speaks explicitly on this subject saying:

"Before we are reconciled to this doctrine, how often must we repeat to ourselves, that the simple view of any two objects or actions, however related, can never give us any idea of power, or of a connection betwixt them: that this idea arises from the repetition of their union: that the repetition neither discovers nor causes anything in the objects, but has an influence only on the mind, by that customary transition it produces: that **THIS** customary transition is therefore the same with power and necessity; which are consequently qualities of perceptions, not of objects, and are internally felt by the soul, and not perceived externally in bodies."(40)

Therefore, freedom is identified with this kind of necessity, that is, subjective necessity. Consequently, freedom is one particular type of necessity and it does not comprise the two aspects of it.

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(40) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. I, P. 460-461.

## CHAPTER III

## FREEDOM, MORALITY &amp; RELIGION.

In the previous chapter of this thesis the attempt was made to show that Hume regarded the problem of liberty and necessity and the long fight among the followers of each of them merely as a linguistic one. And he thought that what the traditional views of freedom are nothing but what he calls "spontaneity". And any notion of freedom other than that is just chimerical, and consequently is incapable of being a moral and religious notion. This notion of freedom which Hume reduces to spontaneity suffices his purpose to establish the doctrine of necessity. Because such a notion coincides perfectly with what he means by necessity. But Hume's intention to bring to existence the doctrine of necessity in this shape, e.g., the Humean one, is not merely a necessity for the necessity sake, he wants this doctrine to be used as the foundation of morality and religion:

"I shall go further, and assert, that this kind of necessity is so essential to religion and morality, that without it there must ensue an absolute subversion of both, and that every other supposition is entirely destructive to all laws, both divine and human" (I)

So, as it is clearly stated in the above quotation Hume thought that there is a need for such a doctrine, and a

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(I) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, P. 190-191.

religious need that must be struggled for, in order to develop it and make it acceptable by mankind.

Before going ahead with the discussion it is commendable to ask whether Hume in his mentioning religion, he means the Christian religion. Undoubtedly the question is in the negative. Because, once he denies the metaphysical notion, by saying that is something beyond the capability of the intellect, and consequently denying the final causality or rather the final end of man. Therefore, the religion which he is talking about is a Humean one, in the sense that the doctrine of necessity will cope with such a religion.

But in order to propagate the doctrine of necessity, there are two very essential steps that Hume must follow. 1) He sees that the people are enthusiastic about the doctrine of liberty and that they hate to see it overthrown. Moreover, they challenge whoever attempts to do that. So, Hume has to do away with this obstacle in a very delicate way, so that he would not be the target of the people's rage. 2) He wants to replace it by the doctrine of necessity. But it is not that easy to do that, no matter how much good is in it, because the people at large are very pessimistic about this doctrine, and they do not want to see it functioning in morality and religion. Then Hume's task was to attack the doctrine of freedom and to destroy its foundation in a way, so that he would not hurt

the feeling of the people. After the people loose faith in that doctrine, then, they have to accept some other more appealing doctrine. And Hume attempts very hard to praise as much as possible the doctrine of necessity in order to crown it on the throne of religious thoughts and morality. And Hume proceeds in his twofold process, in order to demonstrate the validity of his words.

I. FREEDOM, CONSIDERED AS DETRIMENTAL TO RELIGION & MORALITY.

When Hume speaks of freedom or liberty, the word which we always encounter conjoined to them is the word "chance". So, in order to have a clear idea of what Hume understands by freedom according to the christian notion, it is important to verify the word "chance".

As we know, Hume's doctrine of necessity and Hume's determinism, and all his justification concerning these two, are based on his theory of causation. So, when he speaks of "chance" he tells us in terms of causality what is meant by it, he says, "that chance is merely the negation of a cause, and produces a total indifference in the mind"(2). From this we understand that he does not approve of such a term as chance, because, it is a contra-

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XX (2) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. I, P. 425.

dictory term to necessity. Here is the trap where Hume tries to put liberty in. If he can do that, it will be a smart idea to corrupt the edifice of freedom. Then he proceeds by dividing freedom into two aspects, and he implies that only intelligent people understand that:

"Few are capable of distinguishing betwixt the liberty of spontaneity, as it is called in the schools, and the liberty of indifference; betwixt that which is opposed to violence, and that which means a negation of necessity and causes" (3)

Here, he does not only state that there are two kinds of liberty, but he goes further to judge each one of them. He judges the second as the "Negation of necessity and causes"; from this we can conclude that Hume is trying to identify the liberty of indifference with chance; they have the same implication, e.g., to negate necessity and causality. But to him that is impossible, because everything which conflicts with necessity has to go, "liberty when opposed to necessity, not to constraint, is the same thing with chance which is universally allowed to have no existence" (4). Whereas, he judges the first, which is the liberty of spontaneity as, "opposed to violence", and this is what he wants to retain, he says of it (the liberty of spontaneity):

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(3) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, P. 188.

(4) Enquiry, G. & G., Vol. IV, P. 79.

"The first is even the most common sense of the word, and as it is only that species of liberty which it concerns us to preserve, our thoughts have been principally turned towards it, and have almost universally confounded it with the other." (5)

It can be noticed that he is still harping here on the idea that the difference between liberty and necessity is a linguistic one; he admits it merely because it does not negate necessity, it rather affirms it.

Now according to Hume when people of christian faith talk of freedom, they mean liberty of indifference; and so, he proceeds to examine objectively why the doctrine of liberty in this sense is better received than the doctrine of necessity. He gives three reasons for that:

"First, after we have performed any action, though we confess we were influenced by particular views and motives, it is difficult for us to persuade ourselves we were governed by necessity, and that it was utterly impossible for us to have acted otherwise, the idea of necessity seeming to imply something of force, and violence, and constraint, of which we are not sensible." (6)

As it seems, Hume ascribes the first notion to lack of knowledge on our side, while our activities are directed by necessity due to the influence of certain motives. Yet, we judge differently, because we cannot convince ourselves of the reality of our activities, and that

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(5) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, P. 188

(6) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, P. 188

is due to the mysterious power of the doctrine of necessity which operates in a medium completely unattainable by our senses.

The second reason which supports the doctrine of liberty is the incapability of understanding what determinism means. Once the deterministic doctrine is fully known as it is, then, no room is available to liberty or chance, he says:

"there is a false sensation or experience, even of the liberty of indifference which is regarded as an argument for its real existence. The necessity of any action, whether of matter or of mind, is not properly a quality in the agent, but in any thinking or intelligent being who may consider the action, and consists in the determination of his thought to infer its existence from some preceding objects: as liberty or chance, on the other hand, is nothing but the want of that determination." (7)

What he is aiming at is this, that he is trying to prove that the act of necessity is precedent to the act of the will. Therefore, no matter on which side we turn it, "we can never free ourselves from the bonds of necessity." (8).

The third example is the highlight of Hume's argument, and he speaks in a victorious vein. Because, as he considers it the most absurd argument which is used to defend the doctrine of liberty. Yet, it has the greatest effect on letting people maintain that doctrine, and that is the argument that proceeds from religion:

(7) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, P. 188-189.

(8) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, P. 189.

"A third reason why the doctrine of liberty has generally been better received in the world than its antagonist, proceeds from religion, which has been very unnecessarily interested in this question. There is no method of reasoning more common, and yet none more blamable, than in philosophical debates to endeavour to refute any hypothesis by a pretext of its dangerous consequences to religion and morality."(9)

As it is clearly depicted in the quotation, there are two assumptions: first, the religion has no need for the doctrine of liberty to maintain it. Because, by keeping it, religion is not safer than by denouncing it. The second is, that when they defend the doctrine of liberty they say that without it religion and morality are in danger, due to the consequences which follows from it. He says that this is not philosophical thinking, because, to him philosophy aims at the verification of truth. But, what kind of truth we get when we say that the elimination of the notion of liberty is dangerous to morality? He says:

"When any opinion leads us into absurdities, it is certainly false; but it is not certain an opinion is false because it is of dangerous consequences. Such topics, therefore, ought entirely to be fore-born, as serving nothing to the discovery of truth."(10)

Therefore, if no truth is expected from such a process, then, to be wise is, not to talk about it, and, to forget such a topic.

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~~XX~~ (9) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, P. 189-190.

(10) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, P. 189-190.

If we reflect on Hume's arguments concerning the doctrine of liberty, and his proofs against it, we find that there are two things which validate his conclusions as far as Hume is concerned. But, on the other hand, these two things, which we as christian do not admit, are the basis for the disagreement between the christian thinkers and Hume.

FIRST, the notion of causality. Copleston depicts it well:

"It will be remembered that Hume recognized only one type of causal relation, in which constant conjunction forms the objective element and necessary connection the subjectively contributed element" (II)

Therefore, as far as the subjective aspect is concerned, causality is confined to necessity. But, we know that according to Hume the opposite of necessity is chance, and in identifying liberty of indifference with chance, he is merely saying that the free actions are uncaused actions. Then, if free actions are not caused, as a consequence, human beings are not responsible for them; and every blame or punishment inflicted upon man whether by God or by men of law is unjust one, because they are punishing people for things they are not responsible for them:

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(11) Frederick COPLESTON, A History Of Philosophy, Hobbes to Hume, Westminster, Newman Press, London, Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1959, P. 325.

"The action itself may be blamable; it may be contrary to all the rules of morality and religion: but the person is not responsible for it; and as it proceeded from nothing in him that is durable or constant, and leaves nothing of that nature behind it, it is impossible he can, upon its account, become the object of punishment or vengeance."(12)

Then, he goes on to prove that the followers of the doctrine of liberty are "absolutely inconsistent" in their procedure. While they deny the doctrine of necessity concerning the actions of man, they continue to judge according to the laws of necessity. They judge the actions of the person according to a certain regular order; and if the actions are irregular, then they punish him, they do not realize that the conformity to the regular order, is one of the bonds of necessity. He takes the madmen as an example:

"It is commonly allowed that madmen have no liberty. But were we to judge by their actions, these have less regularity and constancy than the action of wise men, and consequently are further removed from necessity. Our way of thinking in this particular is, therefore, absolutely inconsistent; but is a natural consequence of these confused ideas and undefined terms, which we so commonly make use of in our reasonings, especially on the present subject."(13)

Here, I do not think that I will be mistaken if I judge Hume as being little bit too dogmatic, and that he

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(12) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, P. 191.

(13) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, P. 185.

has a complete faith in the perfection of his causal theory and his doctrine of necessity. The following quotation shows clearly his dogmatism:

"Here then I turn to my adversary, and desire him to free his own system from these odious consequences before he charges them upon others. Or, if he rather chooses that this question should be decided by fair arguments before philosophers, than by declamations before the people, let him return to what I have advanced to prove that liberty and chance are synonymous; and concerning the nature of moral evidence and the regularity of human actions. Upon a review of these reasonings, I cannot doubt of an entire victory."(14)

It seems that his attitude here, is completely different from what he thinks on another occasion. Because, in the Treatise, he concludes the book with different attitude, he says, "Every step I take is with hesitation, and every new reflection makes me dread an error and absurdity in my reasoning."(15) Such a position does not contrast with what he is saying, it is rather a contradiction.

SECOND, Hume's identification of natural abilities with moral virtues. Because, here there is a kind of equivocation between voluntary actions and involuntary ones, and that involves the will and the freedom of choice. Hume does not agree with the moralists on the distinction they make between those two notions. He thinks that those

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(14) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, P. 192.

(15) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. I, P. 545.

moralists, when they make the distinction, do not know what they are talking about. And here, he applies the same method ~~that~~ he used in proving that the difference between liberty and necessity is merely verbal. He thinks that the dispute on this subject (natural abilities and moral virtues) is nothing but a dispute in the terminology that they use. They say something, while they mean something else, and that is the main source of the dispute, they do not understand one another when they talk about this subject. But, he is sure that the meaning is the same in the mind of the two disputants. He says:

"No distinction is more usual in all systems of ethics than that betw~~xt~~<sup>xt</sup> natural abilities and moral virtues; where the former are placed on the same footing with bodily endowments, and are supposed to have not merit or moral ~~worth~~<sup>worth</sup> annexed to them. Whoever considers the matter accurately, will find, that a dispute upon this head would be merely a dispute of words, and that, though these qualities are not altogether of the same kind, yet they agree in the most material circumstances. They are both of them equally mental qualities; and both of them equally produce pleasure; and have of course an equal tendency to procure the love and esteem of mankind."(16)

Hume thinks that those who ~~make~~<sup>make</sup> the distinction between natural abilities and moral virtues, base their arguments on two assumptions; first, they consider that the feeling which the natural abilities produce in the spectater

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(16) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, Page 361-362.

are different from the feeling which is produced by the moral virtues. That is to say, a beautiful one influences the spectator and produces in him a feeling completely different from the feeling which he has, when he is influenced by a just or magnanimous one. For instance, the beautiful usually produces love, whereas the magnanimous one produces an esteem. But concerning this Hume says that this is not enough to make the distinction, and to prohibit the natural abilities from being considered as virtues. Because, he says that the whole argument degenerates into love and esteem, or, hate. And even the moral virtues do not produce the same feeling, "Each of the virtues, even benevolence, justice, gratitude, integrity, excites a different sentiment or feeling in the spectator." (17). Moreover, the natural abilities are not unlike the moral virtues, they also produce different emotions from one another. In other words, not all of them produce the same kind of feeling, because, "Good sense and genius beget esteem; wit and humour excite love." (18). The second assumption is the consideration of the voluntary and involuntary qualities. They maintain that the natural abilities, "are entirely involuntary, and have therefore no merit attending them, as having no dependence

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(17) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, P. 362.

(18) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, P. 363.

on liberty and free will."(19). But, Hume again does not agree on such an assumption, because, he considers that a great number of the moral virtues fall under the same category, e.g., involuntary:

"That many of those qualities which all moralists, especially the ancients, comprehend under the title of moral virtues, are equally involuntary and necessary with the qualities of the judgment and imagination. Of this nature are constancy, fortitude, magnanimity; and in short, all the qualities which form the great man(20)".

So we see that the two assumptions above mentioned are no good in Hume's eyes, and he destroys them one by one through his sophistical refutations. Therefore, what's voluntary is not a good argument to say that it is free, because, free will cannot be determined by the actions of man. And he goes on to say that when we judge the free will of man basing our judgment on the voluntariness and the involuntariness of the action, we make an unjust judgment, because, there are things which prove the contrary of that supposition. And his concluding words on the free will and the voluntariness of the action are:-

"As to free will we have shown that it has no place with regard to the actions, no more than the qualities of men. It's not a just consequence, that what is voluntary is free. Our actions are more voluntary than our judgments; but we have

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(19) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, P. 363.

(20) Ibid.

not more liberty in the one than in the other(21)."

Now, we can see why Hume thought that the doctrine of liberty is inadequate. Because in both cases the doctrine is defeated. In the first place, he conceives freedom as equivalent to chance, and of chance as the negation of causes and necessity, and that makes the person not responsible for his actions, and that is against the purpose of religion. In the second place, his identification of natural abilities with moral virtues. He sees in the moral virtues involuntariness yet a necessity according to a regular order; in order to be virtuous; the same involuntariness which you find in the natural abilities. But, the doctrine of liberty denies that necessity. And consequently, Hume does not see why in any reason the doctrine of liberty should be considered as suitable to religion and morality. No wonder then if Hume concludes the argument in the following words, because it is a logical conclusion to the premises of his system:

"According to the hypothesis of liberty, therefore, a man is as pure and untainted, after having committed the most horrid crime, as at the first moment of his birth, nor is his character any way concerned in his actions, since they ~~are~~ derived from it, and the wickedness of the one can never be used as a proof of necessity, that a person acquires any merit or demerit from his actions, however, the common opinion may incline to the contrary"(22)

(21) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, P. 364.

(22) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, P. 191, 192

The above quotation serves to Hume two functions, first, it puts an end to the doctrine of liberty as it is not fit for moral and religious purposes, and in vain, we look in it for good qualities which we <sup>base</sup> ~~base~~ our moral judgments on them. Our hope is completely of no avail, so we better look for something else to serve us in order to fulfil our purposes regarding the religious matters. The second function is that it serves to mark the Transition from liberty to necessity. He proposes another principle which fits the subject of morality, and, "only upon the principle of necessity", that an individual can be evaluated or devaluated according to the actions that individual performs. And in order to know what Hume means by the principle of necessity, and how it functions as a system in the moral and religious order, we have to discuss that fully, and show the validity of it according to Hume. And that's the subject of the discussion which follows, and which constitutes the second point of this chapter.

## 2. NECESSITY, THE HUMEAN BASIS OF RELIGION AND MORALITY.

"But Hume, having whisked away necessity as it initially seemed, turned right around and re-installed necessity in all its original force in his new interpretation of the causal relation." (23).

(23) Leonard GREENBERG, "Necessity in Hume's Causal Theory". New Haven. Review of Metaphysics, June, 1955, P. 612

These are the words of Leonard Greenberg, in discussing necessity according to the causal theory of Hume's attitude. He first reduced necessity to merely psychological activities, and something purely subjective; and he tried to prove that as far as the objectivity of that mental activity is concerned, we do not know anything about it besides the constant conjunction of objects. Because, no matter how much we try to penetrate and deepen ourselves in order to understand it, we cannot have a clear insight into it. All we know, is the habitual succession of the things which determines our mind to feel the necessity; by habit we are determined to feel this subjective element of causation which we call necessity, and consequently, the necessity which exists between the actions and emotions, because, their union is as constant as any natural operation, and they influence the mind to infer the existence of the first from the appearance of the **second** in the same manner. But, Hume found himself static in his movement regarding his system, and he discovered that only through habit that he can make his system a kind of dynamic one. Because, he made out of habit an objective cause influencing him to infer the one upon the appearance of the other:

"Thus, it appears that despite the fact that the only connection Hume leaves between cause and effect is a mental habit, he gives the habit all the force and certainty of the traditional

idea of objective necessity" (24).

Now, he is in a position to move and say something about the things themselves and their relation to necessity. So, in order to make the notion of necessity clear, he juxtaposes it to chance and indifference, and shows the adequacy and objectivity of necessity. Where-as he depicts the latter to be subjective and inadequate, and the acknowledgment of it is nothing but a lack of knowledge on our side:

"We conclude, that the chance or indifference lies only in our judgment on account of our imperfect knowledge, not in the things themselves, which are in every case equally necessary, though to appearance, not equally constant or certain" (25)

According to Hume, then the judgment which proceeds ~~from~~ chance or liberty is a fantastical one. But, if we are going to proceed reasonably, and base our judgment on reasonable foundation we should take into consideration the actions, and the regularities of them with certainty, and their constant union with some particular motives. And because the "moral evidence" is concerned with the judgment which we pass on human actions in so far as persons are the cause of the actions, and are derived from a certain temper in them, therefore, only necessity which takes into consideration the two parts of the process, the speculative part and the practical part which produce the action:

(24) Leonard GREENBERG, "Necessity in Hume's Causal Theory", New Haven, Review of Metaphysics, June, 1955, P.612

(25) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. III II, P. 185.

"In short, as nothing more nearly interests us than our own actions and those of others, the greatest part of our reasonings is employed in judgments concerning them. Now I assert, that whoever reasons after this manner, does ipso facto believe the actions of the will to arise from necessity, and that he knows what he means when he denies it(26).

Hume is implying that there is a need for a doctrine by which our moral judgment must be regulated, and he affirms explicitly that the doctrine of necessity is adequate for that. But, he does <sup>not</sup> forget that it has a very bad reputation as a means to do away with religion. So, the only way for him is to advertise it, and prove to the public that the doctrine as he interprets it is completely innocent of such an accusation, and as a matter of fact is good and satisfy the purpose and the aim which religion and morality seek. He says that he does not want people to accept it on faith in what he says, but he wants them to examine his words and see whether he is right or not:

"I submit myself frankly to an examination of this kind, and dare venture to affirm, that the doctrine of necessity, according to my explication of it, is not only innocent, but even advantageous to religion and morality(27).

The question which normally arises here is, what is his explication of the doctrine of necessity which he wants it to be examined? According to Hume, there are two

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(26) Treatise, G. & G. Vol. II, Page 186.

(27) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, Page 190.

places where we should look for necessity, the first is in the constant conjunction of similar objects, which we frequently perceive them united. And second, in the mind, where upon the appearance of the one, it infers the existence of the other. So, he says, whatever sense of these two you choose everybody admits it to be the property of the will:

"Now, necessity, in both these senses, has universally though tacitly, in the schools, in the pulpit, and in common life, been allowed to belong to the will of man; and no one has ever pretended to deny, that we can draw inferences concerning human actions, and that those inferences are founded on the experienced union of like actions with like motives and circumstances (28)

Hume points out that there are two possibilities for the denial of that, first may be the person who denies that abstains from calling it necessity, he may assign some other term to it. But as far as the terminology is concerned there is no dispute about it as long as the meaning is the same to both of us. The second possibility, is that the person, "will maintain that there is something else in the operations of matter" (29). So, regarding the second, Hume says that he does not know whether the operations of matter are other than what he is asserting. But, Hume says that whoever is mistaken that does not affect the will, it only affects matter:

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(28) Treatise, G & G. Vol. II, P. 190.

(29) Ibid.

"I do not ascribe to the will that unintelligible necessity, which is supposed to be in matter. But ascribe to matter that intelligible quality call it necessity or not, which the most rigorous orthodoxy does or must allow to belong to the will. I change, therefore, nothing in the received system, with regard to the will, but only with regard to material objects".(30)

After exposing his doctrine of necessity, and submitting it to the examination, depending on its adequacy that it is going to stand the test. Then, Hume, turns around and examines what morality and religion demand from it, he finds that the doctrine fulfils all the requirements, and only its principles can serve as the foundations of the moral laws. And he asserts, that whatever principles beside the ones that he is advocating are used, the result will be not only a complete destruction to moral laws, but to civil laws as well:

"I shall go further and assert, that this kind of necessity is so essential to religion and morality, that without it there must ensue an absolute subversion of both, and that every other supposition is entirely destructive to all laws, both divine and human."(31)

It seems to me that the idea of cause in the Humean sense, serves Hume as a magic wand by which he tries to solve each problem that he encounters. When he states the problem, he describes it objectively as it should be

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(30) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, F. 190.

(31) Ibid.

described. But, when he comes to solve it, he creates another problem. He says that all kinds of laws are established on "rewards and punishment", and so men regulate their actions according to the influence of these two notions. Therefore, this influence must be considered as a cause whose effect are the actions of the human beings, And, because he considered, chance or liberty as something which negates the cause, then their doctrine is inadequate for the solution of the problem. Whereas, the cause is an instance of the doctrine of necessity, and as a consequence, Necessity is the only solution and its principles are the right ones. He says that the actions in themselves are perceived under the notion of temporality, and unless they are attributed to a certain disposition in the man who performs them they are not a part of him at all, and the person is not subject to blame or reward, whether the actions are blamable or laudable:

"For as actions are objects of our moral sentiment, so far only as they are indications of the internal character, passions, and affections; it is impossible that they can give rise either to praise or blame, where they proceed not from these principles, but are derived altogether from external violence."(32)

Hume wants to show what renders a person responsible for his action. From his analysis to the subject

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(32) Enquiry, G. & G., Vol. IV, P. 81.

he concludes that unless these actions of the individual are regulated or influenced by something internal in man, the actions are not considered as his, and man is not evaluated by them. In other words, Hume's intention is to show that unless there is something in man coming from within which necessitates his actions, man cannot be judged by them. And he goes further and gives few examples of the operation of the law in the society and he shows that in all of them no matter who is the judge (as long as the judge is a reasonable being) the person is always judged according to the principles of necessity:

"Men are not blamed for such actions as they perform ignorantly and casually, whatever may be the consequence, why? but because the principles of these actions are only momentary, and terminate in them alone. Men are less blamed for such actions as they perform hastily and unpremeditatedly than for such as proceed from deliberation. For what reason? but because a hasty temper, though a constant cause of principle in the mind, operates only by intervals, and infects not the whole character. Again, repentance wipes off every crime, if attended with a reformation of life and manners. How is this to be accounted for? but by asserting that actions render a person criminal merely as they are proofs of criminal principles in the mind; and when, by an alteration of these principles, they cease to be just proofs, they likewise cease to be just criminal." (33)

The three examples here mentioned above, are judgments made according to the principles of necessity. There is no necessary link between the ignorant man and his actions

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(33) Enquiry, G. & G., Vol. IV, p. 80 <sup>-81</sup> ~~80~~

because he does not know what he is doing. So, the mind is not necessitating the action to be performed. And the actions which proceed from a hasty temper are not well connected with the person, because the mind was not involved completely, e.g., it was not given time enough to consider the action and necessitate it, and consequently, the action does not involve the whole person in the guilt, and so, he is partially responsible for his action. Moreover, the repentance, is a kind of eradication of the criminal principles of the mind. By the uprootedness of these principles, the individual is cut off completely from the principles. And he is not bound any more by necessity to them and the judgment which follows the repentance will be a judgment on a completely different person. So, we can see that according to Hume we cannot run away from the bonds of necessity no matter what we do and how we do it:

"But so inconsistent are men with themselves, that though they often assert that necessity utterly destroys all merit and demerit either towards mankind or superior powers, they continue still to reason upon these very principles of necessity in all their judgments concerning this matter." (34)

This statement looks as if Hume is saying that the doctrine of necessity, is by necessity the principle of morality and religion.

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(34) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, P. 192.

## CHAPTER IV

## CONCLUSION.

A complete criticism of Hume's theory concerning the doctrine of freedom, is beyond the scope of this thesis. But I will try to make a few remarks in so far as Hume's consistency is concerned. His consistency lies in the outcome of his principles. For instance, causality as he perceived it is a logical conclusion to his empirical outlook; and his doctrine of freedom is also a logical conclusion to his theory of causation. So, if we trace the roots of his difficulty regarding the doctrine of freedom, we find that the essential lack in his treatment of it lies directly in his theory of causation, and indirectly in his empirical method.

1. DIRECTLY, we know that Hume in his theory concerning the relation of cause and effect he reduces causality to one type, the subjective one. That is why people refer to Hume as the philosopher who denied causality. Because, he admitted only, that the relation of cause and effect is nothing but the constant conjunction of objects and through custom determine our minds to infer the one upon the appearance of the other. That is to say that, the relation of cause and effect is a kind of mental or psychological relation; so, once he denied the objectivity of a cause, then automatically objective causality disappears.

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Moreover, even with the subjective part which he retains, Hume attributes to it one kind of cause, e.g., the efficient cause;

"For as our idea of efficiency is derived from the constant conjunction of two objects, wherever this is observed, the cause is efficient; and where it is not, there can never be a cause of any kind."(1)

From this, two things can be derived. First, he denies the final cause, and second, he reduces all types of actions to one type. And, at this point Hume finds himself fortified to attack the christian notion of freedom. Because, he identifies it with chance, and chance to him is nothing but the negation of a cause, and consequently the negation of actions. Therefore, if freedom as well as chance imply negation of actions, man is not responsible for his action according to the doctrine of freedom. But according to Hume man must be responsible for his actions, therefore the doctrine of freedom in this sense is not fit for religion, and morals.

2. INDIRECTLY, and by that I mean that it did not have an immediate effect on freedom but rather a mediate one. His empirical outlook did not effect freedom directly, but it led him to the denial of metaphysics. Metaphysics, deals with being as such, but, HUME reduced the object of the

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(1) Treatise, G. & G., Vol. I, Page 464-465.

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mind to the object of observation and experience which is the phenomenon (impressions) and by that he denied the full capacity of the mind to reach reality, and at the same time denied its proper object, which is being. Therefore, the empirical theory of Hume leads him to perceive the relation of cause and effect as he perceived it, because, if we admit with him that the mind cannot have any insight into objects, then, according to observation, cause and effect follow each ~~another~~ rather than produce each other, because that is the way they appear.

Let us proceed mathematically and collect terms and see what happened to the Humean man. If we admit that the real freedom evolves from our knowledge concerning the purpose of man on earth and his final cause, then, Hume is a failure. Because, we admit that, the purpose of man's existence is to glorify God as his Creator, and to direct himself towards his ultimate end, and this end we know it to be the final cause of man, who is the Supreme Being. But David Hume denies that. By denying causality objectively, he denies the final cause, and so, he denies that man's finality is to reach God. And he means it, because he says that when he "excludes causes" he excludes them all, and he "really excludes them." Therefore, while man to us is a self-determining being, and this implies freedom; Hume ranks man among other beings which are subject to the laws of

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determinism. And by this Hume thingify man, and this reification degrades man from being made after the image of God to being made as a thing.

So, that is what I mean when I say that Hume's empirical outlook affects freedom indirectly. Because, the value of his theory of freedom depends on the value of his causal doctrine, which in turn depends on the validity of his empirical method.

The empirical method, by limiting itself to experience based on sense impressions banished from its realm the notion of spirituality. And consequently they banished freedom and installed determinism. No freedom unless there are spiritual beings and creatures that reason:

"Freedom is rooted in the spirit. Only rational and spiritual creatures are free. Stones and sealing wax, carnations and cows are not free but determined by inherent laws and instincts. Man alone is self-determining. Because possessed of reason he can set up his own goals and purposes and choose the means to attain them. His highest freedom is achieved by acting within the law of his being and choosing between good things in order to attain the fullest enrichment and flowering of his personality in God." (2)

We see then, that freedom is confined to the rational creatures, and only because they possess reason that they are free. In other words, whoever underestimates the role which reason plays in the domain of knowledge,

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(2) F. J. SHEEN, Freedom Under God, The Bruce Publishing Company, MILWAUKEE, Third Printing, 1940. Page 37.

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undoubtedly that will lead him to the misunderstanding of human freedom. And here is one of our greatest living philosophers, Jacques Maritain commenting on our doctor, concerning <sup>the</sup> relation to reason:

"In the teaching of St. Thomas freedom of choice is not an irrational element thrust on the philosopher by the moral consciousness; it is a thing proper to a certain nature, in short, to the rational or intellectual nature. "The whole root of freedom lie in reason." To be free is of the essence of every intellectual being." ~~(3)~~ (3)

So, according to Jacques Maritain, St. Thomas placed freedom in the bosom of reason and whoever tries to do away with reason, he automatically uproots freedom. And that is what Hume did, when he assigned the function of reason, by saying that, "reason is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them." (4) Therefore, when we say that our passions and emotions should be watched, guided, and disciplined according to the dictates of reason, we just talking nonsense according to Hume. And the pessimistic views which Hume had concerning reason led him to reject reason, attributing to it the in-capability of coping with the responsibility that we Christian assign to it, he says:

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(3) Jacques MARITAIN, Freedom in The Modern World, Translated by, Richard O'SULLIVAN, Sheed & Ward, London, 1935, Page 5-6.

(4) Treatise G. & G., Vol. II, P. 195.

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"The intense view of these manifold contradictions and imperfections in human reason has so wrought upon me, and heated my brain, that I am ready to reject all belief and reasoning. (...): Where am I, or what? From what causes do I derive my existence, and to what condition shall I return? Whose favour shall I count, and whose anger must I dread? What beings surround me? And on whom have I any influence, or who have any influence on me? I am confounded with all these questions, and begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable condition imaginable, environed with the deepest darkness, and utterly deprived of the use of every member and faculty.

Most fortunately it happens, that since reason is incapable of dispelling these clouds, Nature herself suffices to that purpose, and cures<sup>5</sup> me of this philosophical melancholy and delirium." (5)

There is the clash between our idea of freedom and Hume's idea. The conflict is that we consider ourselves as possessing freedom, in so far as we are aware of our destiny. We know what is the purpose of our existence, and by this knowing we feel that we are really free. But, how can Hume reach such a notion when you hear him uttering the above quoted words, which indicate his confusion and his perplexity about his existence and the purpose of it.

Unless a person knows what he needs the freedom for, he does not know the meaning of it. Bishop Sheen is right in saying:

"no one wants to be free just to be free, but to be free in order to fulfill a purpose or a goal. We want the windshield of our auto to be free<sup>6</sup> from dust in order that we may drive safely." (10)

(5) *Treatise, G. & G., vol. I, p. 548.*

(6) F. J. SHEEN, Freedom Under God, The Bruce Publishing Company, MILWAUKEE, Third Printing, 1940. P.24-25.

(7) ~~Ibid., Page 244.~~

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Hume falls victim to this notion of freedom, just because he does not know the goal which that freedom is aiming at. So, Hume by admitting that freedom is nothing but "spontaneity", he is separating the two parts of freedom, e.g., first the free choice which is the means, and second the freedom of perfection which is the end; and by separating them he missed the essential part of freedom; "to tear them asunder" bishop Sheen says, "is to do just as much violence to man as to separate his eye from color or his ear from sound." (7).

In conclusion, it can be said that Hume by decrying reason, he contributed the highest percentage to his failure in dealing with freedom. In addition to his main efforts to belittle reason, he tried to discuss the metaphysical question in the light of that belittled reason, and he wants to free learning from all this "metaphysical jargon" as he says at the beginning of the Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding, and he concludes that metaphysics is something irrelevant, and our intellect is not fit ~~at~~ to such a study. Whereas the contrary is true, because to St. Thomas as well as to every christian philosopher (not in name only) freedom is a property of man, and it presupposes his Nature. Jacques Maritain answers this question very

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(7) Jacques MARITAIN, Freedom in The Modern World, Translated by, Richard O'SULLIVAN, London, ~~XXXXXX~~ Sheed & Ward, 1935, P. 244.

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adequately:

"But that freedom presupposes Nature, what ~~does~~ this mean for us? It means that ethics presupposes metaphysics and speculative philosophy and that the true use of our freedom presupposes the knowledge of Being and of the supreme laws of Being. Metaphysics is a necessary prerequisite of ethics."(8)

And so, free will in the real sense of the term is something given to us by God and it is the property of our nature, and it is not the product of man's labor.. And by our free will, we are beyond the necessity and determinism of Hume.. We are free because we are rational animals who speculate and know, and by exercising our free will, we experience the harmony between our reason and our will, and the union of these two which produces the free will.. From this we cannot but conclude that:

"Man is a metaphysical being, an animal that nourishes its life on transcendental things. There is no ethics among ants any more than among the stars; the road they are to follow is traced out for them in advance.. But we men, merely because we know the sense of the word Being and of the word Why."(9)

Finally, in trying to explore human nature Hume missed the best part of it, in the sense that he missed that man is a metaphysical being in his very nature, and that he cannot help it, because according to Jacques Maritain, "we are metaphysicians in spite of ourselves."(10)

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(8) J. MARITAIN, Freedom in The Modern World, translated by, R. O'SULLIVAN, London, Sheed & Ward, 1935, P. 13.

(9) Ibid. P.14-15.

(10) Ibid.

## ABBREVIATIONS

All the quotation of Hume's works will be taken from:

The Philosophical Works Of David Hume, edited by, T.H. GREEN & T.H. GROSE, in four volumes, New edition, London; Longmans, Green, And Co., 1889-1890, And New York: 15 East 16th. Street.

The footnotes are abbreviated in three ways:

First, "Treatise, G. &G., Vol.. I, P.etc." This abbreviation means: David HUME, Treatise of Human Nature, in GREEN & GROSE'S edition of The Philosophical Works of David Hume, Volume I, and page number.

Second, "Treatise, G. & G., Vol. II, P. etc." This means: David HUME, Treatise of Human Nature, Part II, in GREEN & GROSE's edition of The Philosophical Works of David Hume, Volume II, and page number.

Third, "Enquiry, G. & G., Vol.. IV, P.etc.." This means: David HUME, An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, in GREEN & GROSE's edition of The Philosophical Work of David Hume, Volume IV, and page number

The rest of the footnotes is written fully and without abbreviations..

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The contents of each volume:

VOLUME I, A Treatise of Human Nature, Part I, with an introduction by T. H. GREEN.

VOLUME II, A Treatise of Human Nature, Part II; A Treatise of Human Nature, Part III; Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, with an introduction by T. H. GREEN.

VOLUME III, Letters, and Essays, Moral, Political and Literary, Part I, and Part II.

VOLUME IV, An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding; An Enquiry Concerning The Principles of Morals; The Natural History of Religion; A Dissertation on The Passion, A Dialogue, Essays Withdrawn, Unpublished Essays, and some letters and fragments of a paper.

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