

But, it may be urged, if it was not affected by the imagination of the mother, why did the child come into the world with broken limbs? However rash it may appear to explain a matter which is extraordinary and uncertain, and of which we have no right to exact a solution, yet this question appears to me answerable in a satisfactory manner. Circumstances of the most rare and extraordinary kind happen as necessarily as those which are frequent and common. In the infinite combinations which matter can take, the most extraordinary arrangements must sometimes happen; hence we might venture to wager, that in a million, or a thousand millions of children, there will be one born with two heads, four legs, or with broken limbs; it may, therefore, naturally happen, without the concurrence of the mother's imagination, that a child should be born with broken limbs. This may have happened more than once, and the mother, while pregnant, might have been present at the breaking on the wheel, and therefore the defect of the child's formation has been attributed to what she had seen, and to her impressed imagination. But, independant of this general answer, we may give a more direct explanation. The foetus,  
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