

ought to be considered as a cause; and to which all particular causes should be referred, nay even that of impulsion, since it is less general and less constant; and the principal difficulty is to perceive how impulsion can be an effect of attraction; for if we rest on the communication of motion by impulse, we are then persuaded that it can only be transmitted from one body to another by elasticity, and that all the hypotheses, which suppose a communication of motion in hard bodies, are mere ideal fancies, which do not exist in Nature. A perfectly hard or a perfectly elastic body is entirely imaginary, as neither of them really exist; for it is certain that nothing exists absolutely or in extreme; and the idea of perfection must suppose one or the other.

It is certain that if there were no elasticity in matter there would be no impulsive force; for instance, if we throw a stone, the motion it acquires is communicated by the elasticity of the arm. When motion is communicated by one body in action encountering another at rest, how can we possibly suppose it to be done otherwise than by compressing the spring of the elastic particles it contains, which recovering itself almost immediately after, gives to the whole mass a force equal to that which it received?