

DOWNLOAD PDF HUME AN INQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING

Chapter 1 : An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding Quotes by David Hume

From a general summary to chapter summaries to explanations of famous quotes, the SparkNotes An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding Study Guide has everything you need to ace quizzes, tests, and essays.

Copyright by Gerald J. The letter to his friend in Edinburgh will give you some idea of the religious opposition to Hume they played hardball in those days and how Hume answers it, not always ingenuously as you will soon learn. Look over the Hume bibliography to get a feel for the amount and range of his published work. Read the "Advertisement" placed opposite the first page of the Inquiry so that you can see what Hume took to be the relationship of the present Inquiry to his youthful magnum opus entitled A Treatise of Human Nature. Of the Different Species of Philosophy 1. Hume means by moral philosophy something very different from what this term means today. What does Hume mean by it? How is the term used nowadays? How do these two types of philosophy differ from one another? What are their respective advantages and disadvantages? It may help you to sort matters out if you keep in mind that Hume sees himself as practicing accurate and abstruse philosophy, i. Which three philosophers does Hume himself name as practitioners of accurate and abstruse philosophy? Which three does he name as practitioners of easy and humane philosophy? What does Hume mean in this Section by metaphysics? Hume is convinced that religion, which he calls superstition, has infiltrated hard philosophy so as to produce pseudo-metaphysical nonsense to cover up and protect its weakness. What does he think is the sole and universal remedy for debunking the pretensions of pseudo-metaphysics? What is the new method pioneered by John Locke in philosophy that Hume proposes to follow? Is it appropriate to call it the epistemic turn? Did Descartes follow it? What negative benefit does Hume hope to achieve by it? Is Hume skeptical about our ability to understand basic facts about the operations of our minds? What does Hume mean by mental geography? Why does he attach considerable importance to taxonomy of the mind when he clearly recognizes that taxonomy has very little value in the sciences that deal with physical things? Does he have any hope that moral science will advance beyond this taxonomic stage? Is it legitimate to search for a few simple laws to systematize and explain a large mass of taxonomically organized data about the mind? Does Hume despair of the advent of a Newton of the mind? What two achievements does Hume hope for from this Inquiry? Of the Origin of Ideas 1. What is a perception of the mind? What examples does Hume give? What is the basis for this division? What examples does Hume give of each class? How adequate is this division, i. What can we think of, i. Why does our thought appear to be unlimited, i. Can we conceive or think things that imply contradictions? What does Hume take the materials of thought to be? Where do they come from? What does Hume take the bounds or limits of thought to be? Is every idea either simple or complex? By what mental operations does the mind construct or fabricate complex ideas out of simple ones? What examples does Hume give of simple ideas? Where do we get the idea of God as an infinitely intelligent, wise and good Being? Hume advances two important universal theses about ideas. First, every simple idea is a copy of an impression of inner or outer sense. Second, every complex idea is a bundle or assemblage of simple ideas, i. Hume offers two arguments for these theses. The first argument turns on the observation that, whenever we try to do so, we can always reduce a complex idea to simple ideas that are copies of impressions. The second argument features people who lack one of the senses e. Set out these two arguments in detail. Which thesis does each support? How probative are they? How, according to Hume, can an opponent refute the first thesis? What is the missing-shade-of-blue thought experiment all about? Is it a counterexample to the first thesis mentioned in 4. How does Hume resolve the anomaly of the missing shade of blue? Does he qualify or restrict his general rule that all simple ideas are copies of impressions? How does Hume relate the doctrine of innate ideas to his theses that simple ideas are copies of impressions, whereas complex ideas are assemblages of simple ideas? Of the Association of Ideas 1. Why does Hume think that the flow or stream of our ideas is not random, but is governed by principles or laws of connection or association? Formulate his principles of the association or connection of ideas, namely: Resemblance, Contiguity in time or

DOWNLOAD PDF HUME AN INQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING

place, and Cause or Effect. Give illustrations of each principle. Hume thinks everyone will concede that his three principles really do connect or associate ideas one with another. What he thinks is controversial is his implicit claim that these three principles suffice, i. How does he think one might establish the completeness of his three principles of association of ideas? How does he reduce the principle of Contrast or Contrariety to his three principles? Is it mere coincidence that Newton formulated three laws of motion? Hume claims that all objects of human reason or inquiry all propositions fall into one of two classes: In what sciences or disciplines does one usually find them? Are they discovered or known a priori or a posteriori? Explain the difference between a priori and a posteriori. Where does one find or meet such propositions? Are matters of fact known a priori or a posteriori? Are their contraries possible or conceivable? Are their contradictories possible or conceivable? What, according to Hume, enables us to get beyond memory and sense perception, i. What examples does he give? What is the thought experiment about Adam supposed to show? What about cases where the causal mechanism is supposed to be highly complicated or to depend on hidden structure? What about cases where the events are familiar, simple, and without apparent hidden structure, e. What is the nature of all reasonings concerning matters of fact? What is the foundation of all our reasonings and conclusions concerning cause-and-effect? How do these two questions differ from the new one which Hume now raises, namely, what is the foundation of all conclusions from experience? What is the utmost that past experience can tell us about which objects follow upon which other objects? What accounts for our extrapolation to the future and to unobserved objects? What logical connection or logical relation holds between the following two propositions? I have found that such an object has always been attended with such an effect. I foresee that other objects similar in appearance will be attended with similar effects. Is this connection or relation intuitive analytic? Is it demonstrative, i. According to Hume, all experimental conclusions conclusions based on experience are based on or presuppose the principle that the future will be like the past the so-called Principle of the Uniformity of Nature. What leads us to expect similar effects from similar causes? Does a single instance of cause and effect suffice to mold our expectation? What does this fact show? If the inference in 9. What is the relevance to this of his observation that stupid people and even infants acquire considerable knowledge of cause-and-effect? Sceptical Solution of these Doubts Part I 1. Hume thinks that, like religion, many species of philosophy can corrupt morals, reduce enjoyment of life, and make us lazy and presumptuous.

DOWNLOAD PDF HUME AN INQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING

Chapter 2 : An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding (Audiobook) by David Hume | www.nxgvision.com

First Enquiry David Hume 1: Different kinds of philosophy Most of the principles and reasonings contained in this volume were published in a work in three volumes called A Treatise of Human Nature“a work which the author had planned before he left college, and which he wrote and published not long after.

But not finding it successful, he was sensible of his error in going to the press too early. Yet several writers, have taken care to direct all their batteries against that juvenile work, a practice very contrary to all rules of candour and fair-dealing. Henceforth, the Author desires, that the following Pieces may alone be regarded as containing his philosophical sentiments and principles. The one considers man chiefly as born for action, influenced by taste and sentiment. This species of philosophers select the most striking observations from common life, they make us feel the difference between vice and virtue. This easy philosophy enters more into common life, moulds the heart and affections and will always be preferred by the generality of mankind. The other species of philosophers are more abstruse - they consider man as a reasoning rather than an active being and regard human nature as a subject of speculation. They think it a reproach that philosophy should talk of truth and falsehood, vice and virtue, beauty and deformity without being able to determine the source of these distinctions, but such abstract reasoners seem to have enjoyed only a momentary reputation for it is easy for such profound thinkers to commit a mistake in their subtle reasonings, and one mistake is the necessary parent of another. To plead on their behalf we can say that just as the anatomist presents the most hideous and disagreeable objects; yet his science is useful to the painter in delineating even a Venus or an Helen. So it is a worthy philosopher who succeeds in delineating the parts of the mind, in which we are all so intimately concerned. Though a philosopher may live remote from business, the genius of philosophy, if carefully cultivated, must gradually diffuse throughout society and bestow correctness on every art and calling. The politician will acquire greater foresight, the lawyer finer principles and the soldier more caution. The most perfect character is supposed to lie between those extremes. Man is a sociable no less than a reasonable being. Be a philosopher; but amidst all your philosophy; be still a man. If you tell me that any person is in love, I easily understand your meaning, but can never mistake that conception for the real passion, for even the colours of poetry can never paint natural objects. Therefore, we may divide perceptions into two classes. The less forcible and lively are commonly called Thoughts or Ideas. The other species I call Impressions, employing the word in a sense somewhat different from usual to mean the more lively perceptions as when we hear, or see, or feel, or love, or hate. When we think of a golden mountain, we only join two consistent ideas gold and mountain, with which we are already acquainted. We can conceive of a virtuous horse because we can conceive of virtue and unite it with the shape of a horse. Even the idea of God arises from our reflecting on the operation of our own minds and augmenting its qualities without limit. To express myself in philosophical language, all our ideas are copies of impressions. We always find that every idea is copied from a similar impression. Those who would disagree have only one, easy, method of refuting this: There is, however, just one phenomenon which may prove that it is not absolutely impossible for ideas to arise independent of impressions. Suppose a person, enjoying good sight, be presented with all the shades of blue from the deepest to the lightest, except a single one. Even if he has never had fortune to meet with the missing shade I believe it will be possible for him to imagine it. However, this instance is so singular that it does not merit that we alter our general maxim. Here, therefore, is a proposition which may banish jargon and make every dispute equally intelligible: When we entertain any suspicion that a philosophical term is employed without meaning or idea as is too frequent, we need but enquire, from what impression is that supposed idea derived? To me, there appear to be only three principles of connexion among ideas, namely, Resemblance, Contiguity in time or place, and Cause and Effect. A painting naturally leads our thoughts to the original Resemblance: Relations of Ideas, and Matters of Fact. Of the first kind are the sciences of Geometry, Algebra and Arithmetic - for propositions like to three times five equals half of thirty express a relation between

DOWNLOAD PDF HUME AN INQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING

numbers discoverable by mere thought alone. The second kind, Matters of Fact, are not ascertained in the same manner nor is our evidence for their truth, however great, of a like nature. The proposition the sun will not rise tomorrow is still an intelligible proposition. Therefore, let us enquire what is the evidence which assures us of any real existence or of matters of fact. This part of philosophy has been little cultivated, so our doubts and errors may perhaps be excused. I shall venture to affirm, as a general proposition which admits of no exception, that knowledge of matters of fact seem to be founded on the relation of Cause and Effect, that the knowledge arises entirely from experience when we find that particular objects are constantly conjoined with each other. Let an object be presented to a man of ever so strong natural reason; if that object be entirely new to him, he will not be able, by the most accurate examination of its sensible qualities to discover any of its causes or effects. Adam could not have inferred from the fluidity of water that it would suffocate him, nor from the warmth of fire that it would consume him. We fancy that from our first appearance in the world we could have inferred, without experience, that one billiard ball would communicate motion to another or that a stone raised in the air without support would fall. If we could pronounce concerning such effects, without consulting past observation, after what manner, I beseech you, must the mind carry out this operation? Is there anything a priori which might prevent the stone from moving upwards or the or the billiard ball from remaining at rest? In all our reasonings the mind can never find the effect in the supposed cause. The utmost effort of human reason is to reduce the many effects of natural phenomena to a few general causes. Thus, the law of motion, assisted by geometry, allows us to devise the parts of a machine. We have deduced laws of motion, gravity and elasticity. Yet the law that governs these, established by nature, remains totally shut up from human curiosity. The observation of human blindness and weakness is thus the result of all philosophy, and meets us at every turn. Part II What is the nature of our reasoning concerning matter of fact? When we ask What is the foundation of our understanding of cause and effect? But if we sift further and ask What is the foundation of experience this implies a new question which may be of more difficult solution. Nature has kept us at a great distance from all her secrets, and has afforded us only the knowledge of a few superficial qualities of objects. Our senses inform us of the colour, weight and consistence of bread, but neither sense nor reason can ever inform us of those qualities which fit it for the nourishment of humans. Sight or feeling conveys an idea of the motion of bodies, but as to the wonderful force which carries a moving body forever in a continued change of place and which bodies never loose but by communicating it to others, we cannot form even the most distant conception. The bread which I eat nourishes me, but does it follow that other bread must also nourish me at another time? The consequence seems nowise necessary. It is a consequence drawn by the mind, a process of thought, which wants to be explained. When I have found that such an object has always been attended with such an effect then I foresee that similar objects will be attended with similar effect. What may be the medium which enables the mind to draw such an inference I confess passes my comprehension. In reality, all arguments from experience are founded on the similarity we discover among natural objects. Though none but a fool or a madman will ever pretend to dispute the authority of experience, it is surely for the philosopher to examine the principles which give this mighty authority to experience. You must confess that the inference is not intuitive; neither is it demonstrative: While it is certain that the most ignorant peasants - nay infants, even brute beasts learn the qualities of natural objects by observing the effects which result from them, yet no reading or enquiry has yet been able to give me satisfaction in a matter of such importance. There is, however, one species of philosophy little troubled by this inconvenience, namely the Academic or Sceptical philosophy. Every passion as of arrogance, pretension or credulity is mortified by it, save for the love of truth. By flattering none, it gains few partisans; by opposing so many follies it raises to itself an abundance of enemies. We need not fear that this philosophy should ever undermine our reasonings of common life, for, whatever we may conclude, nature will always maintain her rights and prevail in the end over any abstract reasoning. Suppose a person endowed of the strongest faculties of reason be brought on a sudden into the world; he would observe a continual succession of objects and events following each other; but he would never be able to discover anything farther. He would not be able to reach the idea of cause and effect. Suppose

DOWNLOAD PDF HUME AN INQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING

again, that he acquired more experience and saw objects and events to be constantly conjoined together; what is the consequence? He infers from the existence of one object from the appearance of the other, but never acquires any knowledge of the secret power by which one object produces the other. This inference from experience is Custom or Habit, the great guide of human life. But, though our conclusions from experience carry us beyond our memory and senses and assure us of matters of fact, yet some fact must always be present to the memory of senses from which we may proceed in drawing these conclusions. But you cannot proceed after this manner in infinitum, you must at last terminate in some fact present to your memory or senses; or else allow that your belief is without foundation. These operations are a species of natural instincts, which no reasoning or process of thought is able either to produce or prevent. At this point it would be very allowable for us to stop our philosophical researches. In most questions we can never make a single step farther; and in all questions we must terminate here at last. As to readers of a different taste, the following enquiries may be of interest. Part II Nothing is more free than the imagination of man; though it can never exceed the original stock of ideas furnished to it by the internal and external senses. It can feign a train of events, with all the appearance of reality, conceive them as existent, and paint them out with every circumstance that belongs to historical fact. Wherein consists the difference between a fiction and a belief? The difference between fiction and belief lies in some sentiment or feeling which is annexed to the latter, not to the former, and which depends not on the will, nor can it be commanded at pleasure. It must be excited by nature from the particular situations in which the mind is placed. Were we to attempt a definition of this sentiment, we should, perhaps, find it very difficult, if not an impossible, task; just as endeavouring to define the feeling of cold or the passion of anger to a creature who never had any experience of these sentiments. The proper name of this feeling is Belief. Belief is nothing but a more vivid, lively, forcible, firm, steady conception of an object, than the imagination alone is ever able to obtain. These terms may seem un-philosophical, but, provided we agree about the thing, it is needless to dispute the terms. Let us allow that the sentiment of belief is nothing but a conception more intense than what attends mere fictions and arises from customary conjunction of objects. If I hear the voice of a person with whom I am acquainted coming from the next room I immediately paint out to myself the person together with all the surrounding objects. The ceremonies of the Roman Catholic religion may be considered as instances of the same nature. The devotees of that superstition plead in excuse for their mummeries that they enliven their devotion and quicken their fervour by shadowing out the objects of faith. I shall only infer from these practices that the effect of resemblance in enlivening ideas is very common. We may add force to these experiments by considering the effects of contiguity as well as resemblance. The thinking on any object readily transports the mind to what is contiguous; but only the actual presence of an object transports it with superior vivacity. For this reason superstitious people are fond of the reliques of saints and holy men. Suppose that a friend, who had been long absent, were presented to us; this object would instantly revive its correlative idea and recall to our thoughts all past intimacies.

DOWNLOAD PDF HUME AN INQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING

Chapter 3 : German addresses are blocked - www.nxgvision.com

An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding is a book by the Scottish empiricist philosopher David Hume, published in English in It was a revision of an earlier effort, Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature*, published anonymously in London in

Table of Contents Summary Hume begins by distinguishing between impressions and ideas. Impressions are sensory impressions, emotions, and other vivid mental phenomena, while ideas are thoughts or beliefs or memories related to these impressions. We build up all our ideas from simple impressions by means of three laws of association: Next, Hume distinguishes between relations of ideas and matters of fact. Relations of ideas are, for the most part, mathematical truths, so denial of them would result in a contradiction. Matters of fact are the more common truths that we learn from experience. Denying a matter of fact is not contradictory. For the most part, we understand matters of fact according to cause and effect, where a direct impression will lead us to infer some unobserved cause. For instance, I know the sun will rise tomorrow based on past observations and my understanding of cosmology, even though I have yet to observe this fact directly. Hume suggests that we cannot justify these causal inferences. There is no contradiction in denying a causal connection, so we cannot do so through relations of ideas. Also, we cannot justify future predictions from past experience without some principle that dictates that the future will always resemble the past. This principle can also be denied without contradiction, and there is no way it can be justified in experience. Therefore, we have no rational justification for believing in cause and effect. Hume suggests habit, and not reason, enforces a perception of necessary connection between events. When we see two events constantly conjoined, our imagination infers a necessary connection between them even if it has no rational grounds for doing so. Our inferences regarding matters of fact are ultimately based in probability. If experience teaches us that two events are conjoined quite frequently, the mind will infer a strong causal link between them. All meaningful terms, Hume asserts, must be reducible to the simple impressions from which they are built up. Since there is no simple impression of cause and effect or of necessary connection, these terms might appear meaningless. Rather than condemn them entirely, Hume simply reduces their scope, suggesting that there is nothing in them that goes beyond an observation of constant conjunction between two events. Hume turns these conclusions toward a compatibilist view of free will and determinism. Near the end of the Enquiry, Hume follows a number of tangential discussions, arguing that human and animal reason are analogous, that there is no rational justification for a belief in miracles nor for the more speculative forms of religious and metaphysical philosophy. While a skepticism regarding necessary connection and the existence of an external world is justified, it destroys our ability to act or judge. The instinctual beliefs formed by custom help us get by in the world and think prudently. As long as we restrict our thinking to relations of ideas and matters of fact, we should be fine, but we should abandon all metaphysical speculations as superfluous and nonsensical.

DOWNLOAD PDF HUME AN INQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING

Chapter 4 : An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding - David Hume - Oxford University Press

Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding/9 which most concern life or action, that a spirit of accuracy, however acquired, carries all of them nearer their perfection, and renders them.

An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding Cause and Effect Part I All the objects of human reason or enquiry may naturally be divided into two kinds, to wit, relations of ideas, and matters of fact. Of the first kind are the sciences of geometry, algebra, and arithmetic, and in short, every affirmation which is either intuitively or demonstratively certain. That the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the square of the two sides, is a proposition which expresses a relation between these figures. That three times five is equal to the half of thirty, expresses a relation between these numbers. Propositions of this kind are discoverable by the mere operation of thought, without dependence on what is anywhere existent in the universe. Though there never were a circle or triangle in nature, the truths demonstrated by Euclid would for ever retain their certainty and evidence. Matters of fact, which are the second objects of human reason, are not ascertained in the same manner; nor is our evidence of their truth, however great, of a like nature with the foregoing. The contrary of every matter of fact is still possible, because it can never imply a contradiction, and is conceived by the mind with the same facility and distinctness, as if ever so conformable to reality. That the sun will not rise tomorrow is no less intelligible a proposition, and implies no more contradiction, than the affirmation, that it will rise. We should in vain, therefore, attempt to demonstrate its falsehood. Were it demonstratively false, it would imply a contradiction, and could never be distinctly conceived by the mind. It may, therefore, be a subject worthy of curiosity, to enquire what is the nature of that evidence which assures us of any real existence and matter of fact, beyond the present testimony of our senses, or the records of our memory. This part of philosophy, it is observable, has been little cultivated, either by the ancients or moderns, and therefore our doubts and errors, in the prosecution of so important an enquiry, may be the more excusable, while we march through such difficult paths without any guide or direction. They may even prove useful, by exciting curiosity, and destroying that implicit faith and security, which is the bane of all reasoning and free enquiry. The discovery of defects in the common philosophy, if any such there be, will not, I presume, be a discouragement, but rather an incitement, as is usual, to attempt something more full and satisfactory than has yet been proposed to the public. All reasonings concerning matter of fact seem to be founded on the relation of cause and effect. By means of that relation alone we can go beyond the evidence of our memory and senses. If you were to ask a man, why he believes any matter of fact, which is absent, for instance, that his friend is in the country, or in France he would give you a reason, and this reason would be some other fact, as a letter received from him, or the knowledge of his former resolutions and promises. A man finding a watch or any other machine in a desert island, would conclude that there had once been men on that island. All our reasonings concerning fact are of the same nature. And here it is constantly supposed that there is a connection between the present fact and that which is inferred from it. Were there nothing to bind them together, the inference would be entirely precarious. The hearing of an articulate voice and rational discourse in the dark assures us of the presence of some person. Because these are the effects of the human make and fabric, and closely connected with it. If we anatomise all the other reasonings of this nature, we shall find that they are founded on the relation of cause and effect, and that this relation is either near or remote, direct or collateral. Heat and light are collateral effects of fire, and the one effect may justly be inferred from the other. If we would satisfy ourselves, therefore, concerning the nature of that evidence, which assures us of matters of fact, we must enquire how we arrive at the knowledge of cause and effect. I shall venture to affirm, as a general proposition, which admits of no exception, that the knowledge of this relation is not, in any instance, attained by reasonings a priori, but arises entirely from experience, when we find that any particular objects are constantly conjoined with each other. Let an object be presented to a man of ever so strong natural reason and abilities; if that object be entirely new to him, he will not be able, by the most accurate examination of its

DOWNLOAD PDF HUME AN INQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING

sensible qualities, to discover any of its causes or effects. Adam, though his rational faculties be supposed, at the very first, entirely perfect, could not have inferred from the fluidity and transparency of water that it would suffocate him, or from the light and warmth of fire that it would consume him. No object ever discovers, by the qualities which appear to the senses, either from the causes which produced it, or the effects which will arise from it; nor can our reason, unassisted by experience, ever draw any inference concerning real existence and matter of fact. This proposition, that causes and effects are discoverable, not by reason but by experience, will readily be admitted with regard to such objects, as we remember to have once been altogether unknown to us, since we must be conscious of the utter inability, which we then lay under, of foretelling what would arise from them. Present two smooth pieces of marble to a man who has no tincture of natural philosophy: Such events, as bear little analogy to the common course of nature, are also readily confessed to be known only by experience, nor does any man imagine that the explosion of gunpowder, or the attraction of a lodestone, could ever be discovered by arguments a priori. In like manner, when an effect is supposed to depend upon an intricate machinery or secret structure of parts, we make no difficulty in attributing all our knowledge of it to experience. Who will assert that he can give the ultimate reason, why milk or bread is proper nourishment for a man, not for a lion or a tiger? But the same truth may not appear, at first sight, to have the same evidence with regard to events, which have become familiar to us from our first appearance in the world, which bear a close analogy to the whole course of nature, and which are supposed to depend on the simple qualities of objects, without any secret structure of parts. We are apt to imagine that we could discover these effects by the mere operation of our reason, without experience. We fancy, that were we brought on a sudden into this world, we could at first have inferred that one billiard ball would communicate motion to another upon impulse, and that we needed not to have waited for the event, in order to pronounce with certainty concerning it. Such is the influence of custom, that, where it is strongest, it not only covers our natural ignorance but even conceals itself, and seems not to take place, merely because it is found in the highest degree. But to convince us that all the laws of nature, and all the operations of bodies without exception, are known only by experience, the following reflections may, perhaps, suffice. Were any object presented to us, and were we required to pronounce concerning the effect, which will result from it, without consulting past observation, after what manner, I beseech you, must the mind proceed in this operation? It must invent or imagine some event, which it ascribes to the object as its effect, and it is plain that this invention must be entirely arbitrary. The mind can never possibly find the effect in the supposed cause, by the most accurate scrutiny and examination. For the effect is totally different from the cause, and consequently can never be discovered in it. Motion in the second billiard ball is a quite distinct event from the motion in the first. A stone or piece of metal raised into the air, and left without any support. And as the first imagination or invention of a particular effect, in all natural operations, is arbitrary, where we consult not experience, so must we also esteem the supposed tie or connection between the cause and effect, which binds them together, and renders it impossible that any other effect could result from the operation of that cause. When I see, for instance, a billiard ball moving in a straight line towards another; even suppose motion in the second ball should by accident be suggested to me, as the result of their contact or impulse, may I not conceive, that a hundred different events might as well follow from the cause? May not both these balls remain at absolute rest? May not the first ball return in a straight line, or leap off from the second in any line or direction? All these suppositions are consistent and conceivable. Why then should we give the preference to one, which is no more consistent or conceivable than the rest? All our reasonings a priori will never be able to show us any foundation for this preference. In a word, then, every effect is a distinct event from its cause. It could not, therefore, be discovered in the cause, and the first invention or conception of it, a priori, must be entirely arbitrary. And even after it is suggested, the conjunction of it with the cause must appear equally arbitrary, since there are always many other effects, which, to reason, must seem fully as consistent and natural. In vain, therefore, should we pretend to determine any single event, or infer any cause or effect, without the assistance of observation and experience. Hence we may discover the reason why no philosopher, who is rational and modest, has ever pretended to assign the

DOWNLOAD PDF HUME AN INQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING

ultimate cause of any natural operation, or to show distinctly the action of that power, which produces any single effect in the universe. It is confessed, that the utmost effort of human reason is to reduce the principles, productive of natural phenomena, to a greater simplicity, and to resolve the many particular effects into a few general causes, by means of reasonings from analogy, experience, and observation. But as to the causes of these general causes, we should in vain attempt their discovery, nor shall we ever be able to satisfy ourselves, by any particular explication of them. These ultimate springs and principles are totally shut up from human curiosity and enquiry. Elasticity, gravity, cohesion of parts, communication of motion by impulse: These are probably the ultimate causes and principles which we shall ever discover in nature, and we may esteem ourselves sufficiently happy, if, by accurate enquiry and reasoning, we can trace up the particular phenomena to, or near to, these general principles. The most perfect philosophy of the natural kind only staves off our ignorance a little longer, as perhaps the most perfect philosophy of the moral or metaphysical kind serves only to discover larger portions of it. Thus the observation of human blindness and weakness is the result of all philosophy, and meets us at every turn, in spite of our endeavours to elude or avoid it. Nor is geometry, when taken into the assistance of natural philosophy, ever able to remedy this defect, or lead us into the knowledge of ultimate causes, by all that accuracy of reasoning for which it is so justly celebrated. Every part of mixed mathematics proceeds upon the supposition that certain laws are established by nature in her operations, and abstract reasonings are employed, either to assist experience in the discovery of these laws, or to determine their influence in particular instances, where it depends upon any precise degree of distance and quantity. Thus, it is a law of motion, discovered by experience, that the moment of force of any body in motion is in the compound ratio or proportion of its solid contents and its velocity, and consequently, that a small force may remove the greatest obstacle or raise the greatest weight, if, by any contrivance or machinery, we can increase the velocity of that force, so as to make it an overmatch for its antagonist. Geometry assists us in the application of this law, by giving us the just dimensions of all the parts and figures which can enter into any species of machine; but still the discovery of the law itself is owing merely to experience, and all the abstract reasonings in the world could never lead us one step towards the knowledge of it. When we reason a priori, and consider merely any object or cause, as it appears to the mind, independent of all observation, it never could suggest to us the notion of any distinct object, such as its effect, much less show us the inseparable and inviolable connection between them. A man must be very sagacious who could discover by reasoning that crystal is the effect of heat, and ice of cold, without being previously acquainted with the operation of these qualities. Part II But we have not yet attained any tolerable satisfaction with regard to the question first proposed. Each solution still gives rise to a new foundation. It is allowed on all hands that there is no known connection between the sensible qualities and the secret powers; and consequently, that the mind is not led to form such a conclusion concerning their constant and regular conjunction, by anything which it knows of their nature. As to past experience, it can be allowed to give direct and certain information of those precise objects only, and that precise period of time, which fell under its cognisance; but why this experience should be extended to future times, and to other objects, which for aught we know, may be only in appearance similar-this is the main question on which I would insist. The bread, which I formerly ate, nourished me: The consequence seems nowise necessary. At least, it must be acknowledged that there is here a consequence drawn by the mind, that there is a certain step taken-a process of thought, and an inference, which wants to be explained. These two propositions are far from being the same: I have found that such an object has always been attended with such an effect, and I foresee, that other objects, which are, in appearance, similar, will be attended with similar effects. I shall allow, if you please, that the one proposition may justly be inferred from the other; I know, in fact, that it always is inferred. But if you insist that the inference is made by a chain of reasoning, I desire you to produce that reasoning. The connection between these propositions is not intuitive. There is required a medium, which may enable the mind to draw such an inference, if indeed it be drawn by reasoning and argument. What that medium is, I must confess, passes my comprehension, and it is incumbent on those to produce it, who assert that it really exists, and is the origin of all our conclusions concerning matter

DOWNLOAD PDF HUME AN INQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING

of fact. This negative argument must certainly, in process of time, become altogether convincing. But as the question is yet new, every reader may not trust so far to his own penetration, as to conclude, because an argument escapes his enquiry, that therefore it does not really exist. For this reason it may be requisite to venture upon a more difficult task, and enumerating all the branches of human knowledge, endeavour to show that none of them can afford such an argument. All reasonings may be divided into two kinds, namely, demonstrative reasoning or that concerning relations of ideas, and moral reasoning, or that concerning matter of fact and existence. That there are no demonstrative arguments in the case seems evident; since it implies no contradiction that the course of nature may change, and that an object, seemingly like those which we have experienced, may be attended with different or contrary effects. May I not clearly and distinctly conceive that a body, falling from the clouds, and which, in all other respects, resembles snow, has yet the taste of salt or feeling of fire? Is there any more intelligible proposition than to affirm, that all the trees will flourish in December and January, and decay in May and June? Now whatever is intelligible, and can be distinctly conceived, implies no contradiction, and can never be proved false by any demonstrative argument or abstract reasoning a priori. If we be, therefore, engaged by arguments to put trust in past experience, and make it the standard of our future judgement, these arguments must be probable only, or such as regard matter of fact and real existence, according to the division above mentioned. But that there is no argument of this kind, must appear, if our explication of that species of reasoning be admitted as solid and satisfactory. We have said that all arguments concerning existence are founded on the relation of cause and effect, that our knowledge of that relation is derived entirely from experience, and that all our experimental conclusions proceed upon the supposition that the future will be conformable to the past. To endeavour, therefore, the proof of this last supposition by probable arguments, or arguments regarding existence, must be evidently going in a circle, and taking that for granted, which is the very point in question.

DOWNLOAD PDF HUME AN INQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING

Chapter 5 : An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding Summary - www.nxgvision.com

Hume's Enquiry is, one might quip, not an easy work for our "human understanding" to grasp. This is especially true of his erudite, but daunting, explications of cause and effect. Another challenging chapter deals with the ages-old dispute between determinism and free will.

Summary[edit] The argument of the Enquiry proceeds by a series of incremental steps, separated into chapters which logically succeed one another. After expounding his epistemology , Hume explains how to apply his principles to specific topics. Empirical epistemology[edit] 1. Of the different species of philosophy[edit] In the first section of the Enquiry, Hume provides a rough introduction to philosophy as a whole. For Hume, philosophy can be split into two general parts: The latter investigates both actions and thoughts. He emphasizes in this section, by way of warning, that philosophers with nuanced thoughts will likely be cast aside in favor of those whose conclusions more intuitively match popular opinion. However, he insists, precision helps art and craft of all kinds, including the craft of philosophy. Of the origin of ideas[edit] Next, Hume discusses the distinction between impressions and ideas. By "impressions", he means sensations, while by "ideas", he means memories and imaginings. According to Hume, the difference between the two is that ideas are less vivacious than impressions. For example, the idea of the taste of an orange is far inferior to the impression or sensation of actually eating one. Writing within the tradition of empiricism , he argues that impressions are the source of all ideas. Hume accepts that ideas may be either the product of mere sensation, or of the imagination working in conjunction with sensation. These operations are compounding or the addition of one idea onto another, such as a horn on a horse to create a unicorn ; transposing or the substitution of one part of a thing with the part from another, such as with the body of a man upon a horse to make a centaur ; augmenting as with the case of a giant , whose size has been augmented ; and diminishing as with Lilliputians , whose size has been diminished. In this thought-experiment, he asks us to imagine a man who has experienced every shade of blue except for one see Fig. He predicts that this man will be able to divine the color of this particular shade of blue, despite the fact that he has never experienced it. This seems to pose a serious problem for the empirical account, though Hume brushes it aside as an exceptional case by stating that one may experience a novel idea that itself is derived from combinations of previous impressions. Of the association of ideas[edit] In this chapter, Hume discusses how thoughts tend to come in sequences, as in trains of thought. He explains that there are at least three kinds of associations between ideas: He argues that there must be some universal principle that must account for the various sorts of connections that exist between ideas. However, he does not immediately show what this principle might be. Sceptical doubts concerning the operations of the understanding in two parts [edit] In the first part, Hume discusses how the objects of inquiry are either "relations of ideas" or "matters of fact", which is roughly the distinction between analytic and synthetic propositions. The former, he tells the reader, are proved by demonstration, while the latter are given through experience. For Hume, every effect only follows its cause arbitrarilyâ€”they are entirely distinct from one another. When again it is asked, What is the foundation of all our reasonings and conclusions concerning that relation? But if we still carry on our sifting humor, and ask, What is the foundation of all conclusions from experience? Sceptical solution of these doubts in two parts [edit] For Hume, we assume that experience tells us something about the world because of habit or custom, which human nature forces us to take seriously. This is also, presumably, the "principle" that organizes the connections between ideas. Indeed, one of the many famous passages of the Enquiry is on the topic of the incorrigibility of human custom. In Section XII, Of the academical or sceptical philosophy, Hume will argue, "The great subverter of Pyrrhonism or the excessive principles of skepticism is action, and employment, and the occupations of common life. These principles may flourish and triumph in the schools; where it is, indeed, difficult, if not impossible, to refute them. But as soon as they leave the shade, and by the presence of the real objects, which actuate our passions and sentiments, are put in opposition to the more powerful principles of

DOWNLOAD PDF HUME AN INQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING

our nature, they vanish like smoke, and leave the most determined skeptic in the same condition as other mortals. Of probability[edit] This short chapter begins with the notions of probability and chance. For him, "probability" means a higher chance of occurring, and brings about a higher degree of subjective expectation in the viewer. By "chance", he means all those particular comprehensible events which the viewer considers possible in accord with their experience. However, further experience takes these equal chances, and forces the imagination to observe that certain chances arise more frequently than others. These gentle forces upon the imagination cause the viewer to have strong beliefs in outcomes. This effect may be understood as another case of custom or habit taking past experience and using it to predict the future. He rejects the notion that any sensible qualities are necessarily conjoined, since that would mean we could know something prior to experience. Unlike his predecessors, Berkeley and Locke, Hume rejects the idea that volitions or impulses of the will may be inferred to necessarily connect to the actions they produce by way of some sense of the power of the will. He reasons that, 1. In this way, people know of necessity through rigorous custom or habit, and not from any immediate knowledge of the powers of the will. Of liberty and necessity in two parts [edit] Here Hume tackles the problem of how liberty may be reconciled with metaphysical necessity otherwise known as a compatibilist formulation of free will. Hume believes that all disputes on the subject have been merely verbal argumentsâ€”that is to say, arguments which are based on a lack of prior agreement on definitions. He first shows that it is clear that most events are deterministic, but human actions are more controversial. However, he thinks that these too occur out of necessity since an outside observer can see the same regularity that he would in a purely physical system. He then shows quite briefly how determinism and free will are compatible notions, and have no bad consequences on ethics or moral life. Of the reason of animals comparable to man [edit] Hume insists that the conclusions of the Enquiry will be very powerful if they can be shown to apply to animals and not just humans. He believed that animals were able to infer the relation between cause and effect in the same way that humans do: Hume concludes that there is an innate faculty of instincts which both beasts and humans share, namely, the ability to reason experimentally through custom. Nevertheless, he admits, humans and animals differ in mental faculties in a number of ways, including: Of miracles in two parts [edit] Main article: Of Miracles The next topic which Hume strives to give treatment is that of the reliability of human testimony, and of the role that testimony plays a part in epistemology. This was not an idle concern for Hume. Depending on its outcome, the entire treatment would give the epistemologist a degree of certitude in the treatment of miracles. True to his empirical thesis, Hume tells the reader that, though testimony does have some force, it is never quite as powerful as the direct evidence of the senses. That said, he provides some reasons why we may have a basis for trust in the testimony of persons: Needless to say, these reasons are only to be trusted to the extent that they conform to experience. Hume understands a miracle to be any event which contradicts the laws of nature. First, he explains that in all of history there has never been a miracle which was attested to by a wide body of disinterested experts. Second, he notes that human beings delight in a sense of wonder, and this provides a villain with an opportunity to manipulate others. Third, he thinks that those who hold onto the miraculous have tended towards barbarism. However, he seems to suggest that historians are as fallible at interpreting the facts as the rest of humanity. Of a particular providence and of a future state[edit] Hume continues his application of epistemology to theology by an extended discussion on heaven and hell. His friend argues that, though it is possible to trace a cause from an effect , it is not possible to infer unseen effects from a cause thus traced. Of the academical or skeptical philosophy in three parts [edit] The first section of the last chapter is well organized as an outline of various skeptical arguments. The treatment includes the arguments of atheism, Cartesian skepticism, "light" skepticism, and rationalist critiques of empiricism. Hume shows that even light skepticism leads to crushing doubts about the world which - while they ultimately are philosophically justifiable - may only be combated through the non-philosophical adherence to custom or habit. He ends the section with his own reservations towards Cartesian and Lockean epistemologies. In the second section he returns to the topic of hard skepticism by sharply denouncing it. We need only ask such a skeptic, What his meaning is? And what he proposes by all these curious researches? He

DOWNLOAD PDF HUME AN INQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING

is immediately at a loss, and knows not what to answer On the contrary, he must acknowledge, if he will acknowledge anything, that all human life must perish, were his principles universally and steadily to prevail. If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? Commit it then to the flames: The "custom" view of learning can in many ways be likened to associationist psychology. This point of view has been subject to severe criticism in the research of the 20th century. Still, testing on the subject has been somewhat divided. Testing on certain animals like cats have concluded that they do not possess any faculty which allow their minds to grasp an insight into cause and effect. However, it has been shown that some animals, like chimpanzees, were able to generate creative plans of action to achieve their goals, and thus would seem to have a causal insight which transcends mere custom. Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding 1 ed. Retrieved 28 June The mentality of apes. Passer, Michael et al. Wikiquote has quotations related to:

DOWNLOAD PDF HUME AN INQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING

Chapter 6 : Squashed Philosophers - Hume - Human Understanding

Hume begins by distinguishing between impressions and ideas. Impressions are sensory impressions, emotions, and other vivid mental phenomena, while ideas are thoughts or beliefs or memories related to these impressions. We build up all our ideas from simple impressions by means of three laws of.

Nov 14, Manny rated it it was amazing Recommends it for: I was not surprised by his relentless scepticism, or by his insistence on basing all reasoning on empirical evidence. These qualities, after all, have become proverbial. In case you are as poorly informed as I was, let me summarise it here. He asks what grounds we have for supposing that multiple repetitions of an experiment justify us in inferring a necessary law. If we note, on many occasions, that hot objects burn our hands when we touch them, what logical reason do we have for assuming that we should not touch the next candle flame we happen to see? The answer is that we have no logical grounds at all for making such an inference. Of course, as a matter of observed fact, we do assume, after a small number of trials, that touching hot objects will hurt us. Hume says this is nothing to do with logic; we are simply designed in such a way that we cannot help being influenced by our experience to adopt such rules. As he points out, many other living creatures do the same. It is impossible to believe that a dog or a horse is performing any kind of logical deduction when they learn to avoid touching naked flames. They simply acquire the habit of behaving in this way. The most economical explanation of what we see is that human beings are doing the same thing. A mountain of discussion has accumulated since Hume published his book, and it would be presumptuous of me to give my opinions when so many extremely clever people have already done so. I am, however, struck by something I have noticed in the course of my professional career. I have worked in Artificial Intelligence and related subjects since the early 80s, and during that period the field has suffered a profound change. In , most AI research was related to logic. People assumed that the notion of intelligence was in some essential way based on the notion of deduction. Making machines intelligent was a question of making them capable of performing the right kinds of logical inferences. This tempting approach was, unfortunately, a resounding failure. Somewhere towards the end of the last century, a different way of looking at things started to become fashionable, and quickly gained ground. Instead of thinking about logic, people began more and more to think about probability. They collected data and extracted various kinds of statistical regularities. The new AI systems made no attempt to think logically; their decisions were based on associations acquired from their experience. At first, the AI community was scornful, but it was soon found that "data-driven" systems worked quite well. They made stupid mistakes sometimes; but so did the logic-based systems, and the mechanical logicians tended to make more stupid mistakes. They could reason, but they had no common sense. Today, data-driven systems have taken over the field, and the approach has been shown to work well for many problems which had once been considered impossible challenges. Particularly striking successes have been notched up in machine translation, speech recognition, computer vision, and allied fields.

Chapter 7 : SparkNotes: An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding

Philosopher David Hume was considered to one of the most important figures in the age of Scottish enlightenment. In "An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding" Hume discusses the weakness that humans have in their abilities to comprehend the world around them, what is referred to in the title as human understanding.

Chapter 8 : HUME STUDY GUIDE

An Enquiry Concerning the Human Understanding. comprehended, and send back the student among mankind full of noble sentiments and wise precepts, applicable to every exigence of human.

DOWNLOAD PDF HUME AN INQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING

Chapter 9 : SparkNotes: An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding: Summary

All the objects of human reason or enquiry may naturally be divided into two kinds, to wit, relations of ideas, and matters of fact. Of the first kind are the sciences of geometry, algebra, and arithmetic, and in short, every affirmation which is either intuitively or demonstratively certain. That.