

# Good essay about an enquiry concerning human understanding

[Literature](#), [Books](#)



David Hume was a successful philosopher who was social and pleasing to be around. His first book, *Treatise of Human Nature*, did not receive much attention from people. However, it did not deter him from coming up with his second book, *The Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. The book is a remake of his first book and focuses on building on empirical philosophy done by Locke and Berkeley. The book also attacks Descartes' metaphysical rationalism as well as others. The book has an argumentative series that has incremental steps, with each chapter containing its logistics and succeeds the previous chapter. The book shows the reader on how to implement some of the principles to impressions and ideas.

Hume starts off the book by defining the difference between impressions and ideas. He describes impressions as sensory impressions, vivid mental phenomena and emotions. Ideas are beliefs, thoughts, or memories that link with impressions. Human beings build up their ideas from simple impressions through three laws of association: contiguity, resemblance and cause and effect. The next item to distinguish is matters of facts and relations of ideas. Relations of ideas are ideas that one forms in their minds which can lead to demonstration. Matters of fact, on another view, are common truths that people learn from experience. Unlike the relation of ideas, matters of fact are contradictory. People mostly understand matters of fact by cause and effect. In it, a direct impression will make people infer unobserved cause that at first was not seen. For instance, the sun will automatically rise tomorrow because that is how people know from past observation. The understanding of cosmology also assists in making the observation correct though people will have to observe the fact directly.

According to Hume, people are not in a position to justify causal inferences. Consequently, it appears that there is no contradiction in refusing a causal connection because people cannot determine it through relation of ideas. Another view suggests that people are not in a position to justify the possibilities of future predictions with their past. The possibility of the two linking together is if there is a principle that will link the future and the past through resemblance. A good example is the change in weather. There is the season of weather, but each year is not equal to the other. Even though people may predict a particular time that the weather might, for example, rain, one is not sure it will do so on the exact day. However, the event has one principle, and that is the seasons do not fail to happen. The major difference is the previous and future seasons do not have a direct relationship in terms of its destiny.

People lack the rational justification to believe in cause and effect. In Hume's perspective, he suggests habit and not reason, makes people to connect events in their lives.. When people see two events conjoined together, the imagination creates a necessary connection among the two even though there are no rational grounds that allow one to do so. An example is the perceptions those people have when it comes to experimentation. People would fear trying out an experiment that might involve electricity because they fear the electrocution. However, it is not necessary that one will be electrocuted when dealing with electricity but the norm people have made them believe so.

Hume suggests that the inferences people have towards matter of fact come from the possibilities of the action happening. He gives a conclusion that if

experience shows people that two events seem to occur at the same time but frequently, the mind is in a position to make a strong causal link from both of them. An example would be the effects of a conflict. When two people or groups start a conflict, it is the norm for people to think of only bad things. The clash between the school and students through a strike, to most people, will result in the police intervening and damage to properties as well. Hence, people involved or are on the sidelines prepare themselves for the worse. However, it does not mean that it would happen but for purposes of protection and safety, it is good to assume it will happen.

Hume explains that all meaningful terms are reducible to mere impressions. These simple impressions build the meaningful terms. However, due to lack of no mere impression towards the cause and effect or lack of a necessary connection, people will view the terms as meaningless. Hume reduces the terms' scopes instead of condemning them entirely. He later suggests that in them, nothing goes beyond the observation of a constant conjunction that relates to the two events. He derives his suggestion from the reasoning that the events are beyond the human being's comprehension. He turns the conclusions towards a view of determinism and free will. If people perceive that there is no necessary connection between two or more events, they should not worry about all their actions being casually predetermined.

Instead of viewing it as a free will just as the freedom will show people. The freedom should be seen as an act as per the individual's determination, the fact that is true for everyone apart from prisoners.

Hume comes up with tangential discussions that discuss the human and animal way of reasoning. Hume suggests that both reason analogously and

lack of a rational justification towards a belief in miracles or more speculative ways of metaphysical philosophy and religion. The statement relates to the explanation towards the human's relation to ideas. However, there is a justified skepticism towards the necessary connection and existence of an external world, the two leads to the lack of action or judgment by human beings. People get by in the world through the instinctual beliefs that they formed by custom and leads to prudent thinking. The problem will persist as long as people will restrict their thoughts in relation to matters of fact and ideas. Hume says that everyone is fine though abandoning all metaphysical speculations should be done and should view them as nonsensical and superfluous. However, the statement remains as Hume perspective.

Hume makes a clear and distinctive description and differences on various items in his book. He establishes the different grounds that differentiate impressions from ideas. His perspectives bring about a new view towards the two terms. His explanation of matters of fact shows a deeper view of the topic. It brings about the link between matters of fact and cause and effect. From his book, the human mind seems to view everything in a particular perspective. Life has the prominent occurrences like the rising of the sun and the predictable things such as a change in weather. Hume's book is influential towards others philosophers and inspires them to come up with their philosophies or work on Hume's philosophies. Hume gives distinctive views in terms of the everyday life of a human being and the things that people assume as obvious. The relation between the thoughts of humans and animals is true. People fear judging or acting upon a rule due to the fear, they have towards it. Either it can be that or they fear the repercussion of

their judgments. In conclusion, Hume's book brings to light perspectives that people did not think deep about and opened doors to more exploitation of the stated philosophies.

## **Bibliography**

Hume, David, and Eric Steinberg. 1992. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding; [with] A Letter from a Gentleman to His Friend in Edinburgh; [and] An Abstract of a Treatise of Human Nature*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing.