

QNo: 2 Explain David Hume's Theory of Epistemology in detail. How did he carry his Empiricism / skepticism to its logical limits?

Answer:

① Introduction:

David Hume was a Scottish philosopher who

was a radical empiricist. He introduced his

epistemology (theory of knowledge) asserting

that all knowledge comes from experience.

However, he showed the limits of experience

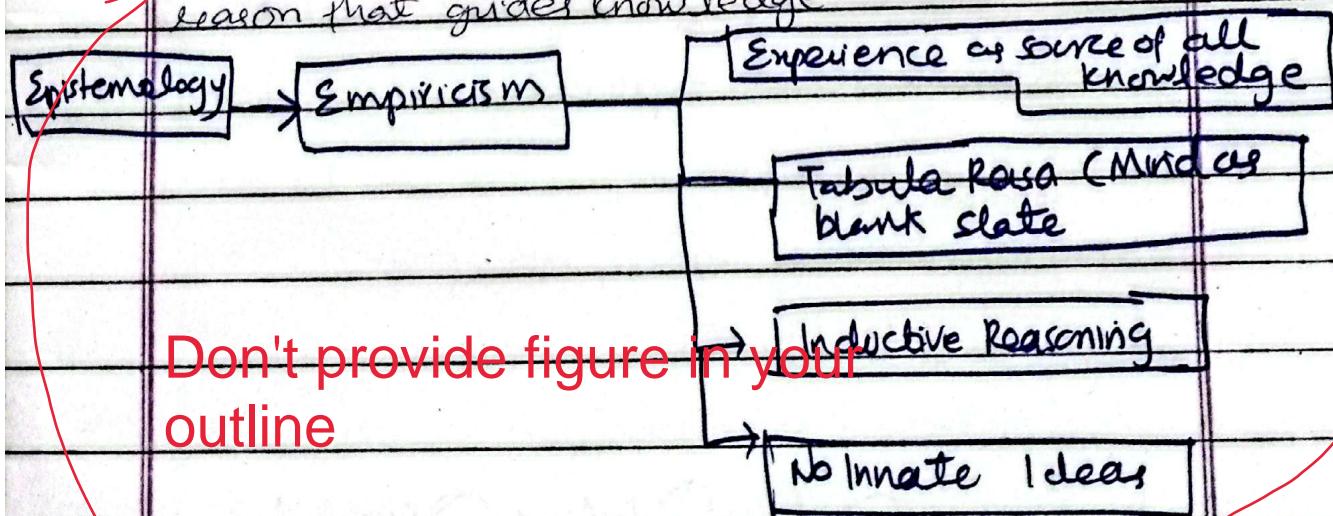
and by extension, knowledge and science.

He avoided nihilism and dogmatism in the

process and remained a moderate skeptic

He rejected the existence of innate ideas or

reason that guides knowledge.



② David Hume's Theory of Knowledge

David Hume introduced his own theory of epistemic knowledge in order to reject the abstract first principles of rationalists. Rather, he wanted to build a "science of man".

"The science of man is the only solid foundation for the other sciences" —Treatise. He outrightly rejected metaphysical theory as 'Sophistry and illusion'. Even Bertrand Russell commented that Hume "swept away the debris of dogmatism from philosophy".

(a) Impressions Precede Ideas

Knowledge is constructed from the loose mental events which are impressions and ideas. Humans do not directly sense experiences in the outside world. Rather, they form impression which later make ideas as faint copies of those very immediate and vivid experiences.

* Impressions \rightsquigarrow Ideas \rightsquigarrow beliefs \rightsquigarrow Knowledge
(source of knowledge (episteme))

(b) Hume's Copy Principle

According to David Hume, experience from

sensory organs precedes everything else.

We cannot experience what we cannot

think of before. He put impression at the centre.

(c) Hume's Fork

According to David Hume, there are only two
legitimate kinds of true statements.

Exaggerate it

(i) Relations of Ideas

They are analytical and mathematical

statements that are true and infallible.

According to Hume, it has metaphysical

reasons because of which relations of

ideas are necessarily true. But they do

not reveal any new fact about the world.

(ii) Matters of Fact

They are synthetic and empirical claims

about the world. They are probabilistic

and cannot be absolute truths. They

are dependent on human experiences.

So, he termed them as a posteriori truths.

(D) Circular Reasoning of Inductive

According to Hume, inductive reasoning is not a philosophical truth but a psychological habit. Humans are prone to build science on habit, not reason. The foundation of empirical sciences is probabilistic, not certain. Inductive reasoning relies on the very principles it seeks to justify.

(E) Bundle Theory of Self

Humans are not a holistic self, but a fragmented bundle of perceptions. This

'self' is a psychological construct of

individual feelings, thoughts, and sensations.

However, our mind out of habitual reasons

see us as coherent beings.

(E) Causation as Habit

According to David Hume, there are no natural bonds between cause and events.

Human do it out of their habit.

There are no as such causal links

between our experiences in the outside world.

(E) Limits of Hume's Empiricism

(a) Subjective and Fallible Impressions

Hume pointed out the limitations of his own theory of knowledge in his copy principle. He asserted that impressions can deceive due to illusions, dreams, or even hallucinations.

Since sense organs are our source of knowledge, these impressions become uncertain and fallible.

(b) Classic Begging the Question

Hume's copy principle is itself an idea that has not any prior impression. This makes it meaningless and presupposes its own

conclusions. This is a clear case of Cartesian reasoning which shows the limits of experience as the source of all human knowledge.

(E) Limitations

He regarded construct. Dr of epistemology as coherent flaws in science comes in the

(C) Flaws of Inductive Reasoning in science

David Hume also exposed the flaws of logical reasoning in science. Since scientific method was trusted blindly at his time, Hume exposed the problems of inductive.

Just because future experiences minor part ones does not mean that it will lead to a logical conclusion.

(F) Is-

According epistemology states one's only

(I) illogical causal interconnection

He also exposed the limits of natural laws.

He saw no natural bonds that connect causes and effects. He saw it as an illogical and flawed interconnection that people do out of their habit.

(E) Limitations of 'self'

He regarded 'self' as a psychological construct. David Hume exposed the flaws of epistemology that studies 'self' as a coherent being. Thus, he revealed the flaws in science and the limitation it comes inherently.

(F) Is-Ought Debate

According to Hume's skeptical approach to epistemology, no amount of descriptive statements (is) can lead to prescriptive ones (ought). Morality thus, do not rely on facts but passion.

Criticism

David Hume was not a radical skeptic, but a moderate one. He called for a mitigated skepticism that does not delegitimize the positive aspects of science, logic, and reason. He exposed the limitations of knowledge and its sources.

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equally. According to him, some beliefs are beyond human experiences. Also, he encouraged his readers to pragmatically accept these limits in everyday lives.

Conclusion

Thus, David Hume pushed empiricism to its logical limits by showing that knowledge derived out of sense experiences is probable and not certain. He did not doubt everything but initiated a modern skeptical debate in epistemological branch of philosophy. His works like *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* inspired Kant to assert that he was awoken from his dogmatic slumber. Popper too, founded a whole new falsificationism theory from Hume's works.

Question is attempted fairly.
Work on your headings
Don't provide figure in your introduction.