

## CHAPTER ONE.

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

#### 1.1 Background of Study.

One of the never-ending processes in life is the process of knowledge acquisition which to a lay man may not constitute any puzzle, but to philosophers from time immemorial, this has constituted a serious problem. Humanity, we think is more than a series of impressions, to reduce them as bundles of impressions and these impressions coming from phenomena of the senses alone as Hume would want us to believe is myopic and amounts to philosophical negativity. This very submission terms the background of this study. It was however, the hunger for knowledge which engulfed the Greek philosophers that led them into worries about the questions of the ultimate stuff (*Urstoff*) of what there is. Dissatisfied with the inconsistent mytho-cultic answers of the cosmogonic poets- Homer and Hesoid, and they sought this in terms of the origin, being, corruption of things, and of the permanence and change in things and of how things can be one/and or many and so invariably doing philosophy. Philosophy as a discipline or as an activity does not have a definite or a universally accepted definition, this is because; philosophers down the ages had been inconsistent with their learning, interpretation and analysis of things that are. These inconsistencies were brought about by the philosophers' "way-ward neglect of the logic of the philosophical world and their failure to understand the logic of philosophical language"<sup>1</sup>. The result of this mistake amounted to the differences in their conception of truth and this, led to difficulties in arriving at a universally acceptable definition of philosophy. This is evident in Umeogu's submission that: "the result of what has been said is that it is like

having an axe to grind, getting systems, theories and propositions in philosophy that are both logically and factually consistent.”<sup>2</sup>

However, despite all odds, we shall try to throw some light on what philosophy is all about, at least to have a glimpse of what it means. Etymologically, philosophy comes from the Greek word “philosophia”, which means – “love for wisdom” (and knowledge). Wisdom here in the words of Umeogu means an active use of intelligence and not something passive.

Consequently, Philosophy is a study that seeks to understand the mysteries of existence and reality. It tries to discover the nature of truth and knowledge and to find what is of basic value and importance of life. It also examines the relationships between humanity and nature and between the individual and society. Philosophy arises out of wonder, curiosity, and the desire to know and understand. “Philosophy is thus a form of inquiry- a process of analysis, criticism, interpretation and speculation.”<sup>3</sup>

However, among different other definitions of philosophy, the definition which is close to what this dissertation tries to portray and which is more encompassing shall be taken. “Philosophy is a study that seeks to understand the mysteries of human knowledge and existence. It is a process of inquiring, analysis, interpretation and the speculation of things in our objective world.”<sup>4</sup>

In searching however, for the element that would give ultimate and consistent answers to “the question” of the ultimate stuff (*Urstoff*) of the world, the ancient Greek philosophers provided various conflicting answers to that. Thales, for instance, posited the primordial material as water, Anaximander-indeterminate boundless; Anaximenes-air, Heraclitus-fire, Democritus-atoms and all that.

However, philosophy as a discipline has many branches and has epistemology as one of its major branches.

Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that investigates knowledge. It is also a branch of metaphysics devoted to the study of knowledge and its problems. Etymologically, “epistemology comes from two Greek words, episteme’ meaning “knowledge” in the true and Cartesian sense, and ‘Logos’ meaning “theory” or “study”, hence epistemology is called the theory of knowledge. It is also referred to as “criteriology from the Greek word–“kriteriom’, meaning “a criterion”, Epistemology is also called the metaphysics of knowledge, hence, it is a branch of metaphysics that deals with human knowledge.”<sup>5</sup>

The study of knowing cannot be divorced from the study of being, and thus, epistemology, is characterized by a metaphysical grounding. Epistemology as a branch of philosophy, is not merely negative and defensive, but is “concerned with the positive investigation of knowledge and its properties as these reflect the structure of the real world”.<sup>6</sup>

It is then the special concern of epistemology to x-ray and analyze how knowledge is acquired. Its central focus is to;

“Determine the nature, the origin, the extent, validity and the limits of human knowledge. It seeks to examine the foundation, processes, modes, kinds and types of knowledge. Its main aim is to establish and evaluate the canons through which true knowledge can be differentiated from falsity. It offers a sure foundation to our knowledge claims by a critical examination, that is, it subjects our previous claims to knowledge to rational scrutiny which leads to its confirmation. Epistemology is interested in questions about what minds work on, what their material is, what its relation is to objects.”<sup>7</sup>

However, epistemology can be said to have begun with the sophists, the fifth century B.C itinerant teachers of philosophy. The philosophers before them, i.e., the pre-Socratic philosophers, are not interested in epistemology but in cosmology, as they search for the ultimate stuff (*Urstoff*) of the universe. The ancient period gave birth to the medieval period

when philosophy took a turn in natural theology. In this period, with Aquinas (1224-1274) being the most consistent philosopher, took up Aristotle's conception of substance which has the disagreeable implication that all-that-there-is about reality is substance (subject) and attribute (predicate) to a more consistent level and redefined substance.

Though, "rationalism" and "empiricism" could be seen to have run across both in the ancient and medieval period, but they evidently took a radical turn in the medieval period. Rationalism and empiricism are two opposing camps that emerged under the theory of knowledge (epistemology) which were said to have created a serious fundamental and foundational error in philosophy. These two schools of thought emerge as a result of inconsistencies among the philosophers in their systems or theories or propositions about philosophy in their investigation of "what-there-is", the (*Urstoff*) and our knowledge of it. Rationalism is a philosophical system of rationalist philosophers who thought that all our knowledge and by way of implication and extension, the existence of all that-there is are dependent on reason or mind.

According to the rationalist school of thought, which has their central views centered on the demonstration of the power of the intellect in the acquisition of knowledge, maintained that "the only way to certain, true and indubitable knowledge is 'Reason' which possesses innate ideas"<sup>8</sup>, that we cannot find any absolutely certain knowledge in sense experience but have to look for it in the realm of the mind.

This certain knowledge comes about through the unfolding of the minds innate ideas, in such a way that, from one or some 'self-evident principles', all knowledge can be derived without recourse to experience or sensory knowledge. The proponents of this school of thought claimed that any knowledge that cannot be seen in the light of reason is not

objective and certain, and as such, unreliable. They believed that human intellect, by way of reason, attains truth of reason which is both universal and necessary; this is to say, that, we know *a priori* of experience that (truth of reason) must, at any event, be true of experience. Examples of such truths are; the principles of contradiction, causality, identity and excluded middle.

The Rationalists believed that “Pure Reason (i.e. Reason independent of experience) can yield informative knowledge, knowledge of (some aspect of) the world rather than just of the relations between our concepts”<sup>9</sup>. Such rational knowledge is labeled *a priori*, to indicate that it is prior and independent of experience. The characteristic mark of *a priori* knowledge is one of universality and necessity. Mathematical knowledge provides the rationalists with their most convincing examples. It is not an accident that the rationalist philosophers, Descartes and Leibniz were also important mathematicians. Other proponents of this system include; Pythagoras, Plato, Spinoza, Wolff, Kant, Hegel, Bradley, Frege, Cook, Wilson, to mention but a few.

They had claimed that metaphysics, if properly pursued can have the same status as mathematics, i.e., that its purpose of achieving their ever necessary and lofty objective, too can provide us with *a priori* knowledge of reality. Rationalists in their method, employed “all the ways of the mind involved in inquiry, analysis, namely; deduction, speculation, dialectics, ratiocination and all”<sup>10</sup>. They also employed scientific language in order to “establish and systematize facts, principles, and methods, in regard to knowledge by deductive – mathematical- ratiocination necessary for the creation and constitution and inference of clear, distinct and true knowledge of reality”<sup>11</sup>.

Empiricism on the other hand, is from the Greek word '*empeirikos* (*'empeiris*') that is, experience in philosophy; it means sense or sense perception. Empiricism emphasized the importance of experience, and sense perception as source and basis for our knowledge. "It is the theory which holds that all knowledge is derived through experience."<sup>12</sup> "It is the philosophical system of the empiricists' philosophers who concluded that "all our knowledge and, by way of logical extension the existential significance of all-that-there is, are experience dependant".<sup>13</sup> It is the view that "all concepts are about or applicable to things that can be experienced, or that all rationally acceptable beliefs or propositions are justifiable or knowable only through experience".<sup>14</sup>

When the empiricists argue that knowledge is experiential, what they imply is that we acquire knowledge based on information we receive through the senses, whatever exists in our minds never came to exist there because of the minds' ability to produce such things but because, they came in through the senses and store in the mind as the store house of our sensation. This gave rise to the empiricist maxim 'there is nothing in the intellect that was not first in the senses'. Thus, according to empiricism, "all concepts or all rationally acceptable beliefs or propositions are *a posteriori* rather than *a priori*."<sup>15</sup>

Empiricism as a philosophical tradition is a reaction to the postulations of the rationalists that knowledge can be acquired through reason, because man possesses certain innate ideas. Instead, therefore, of seeking absolutely certain knowledge about an ideal world which rationalists or idealists pointed towards, empiricism tried however, to demonstrate how and where we really acquire our information from and to what extent this information we acquire can be reliable. Empiricists therefore demonstrated that our sense experience is the

source and basis of what we know, and have tried to construct an account of knowledge in terms of sense experience.

Consequently, the central point in empiricism is “the idea that perception is at some point or the other indubitable and that uncertainties are given in experience which is in a sense necessarily true.”<sup>16</sup> When we analyze the above, we discover that empiricism maintained that all knowledge is derived from sense experience. Empiricists held that man acquires knowledge through the observation of the nature and activities of the outside world and that the meaningfulness of any statement can be verified only by checking it against the world as perceived through the human senses. They deny the major claim of the rationalists which is that man possesses innate ideas which makes it possible for man to acquire knowledge through mere reasoning. As innatism is denied, empiricism thus in its place held that perception through the senses is the only sure guide to knowledge acquisition.

The search for knowledge that is both absolute and certain has been fervent and continuous. However, since the time of Plato, Socrates and Aristotle, there has been a strong epistemological tradition based on human existence, not directed towards the possibility of achieving absolute knowledge. Empiricism argued that “it is unreliable to set a goal of absolute and all inclusive knowledge especially when there is close at hand the power to increase practical knowledge”<sup>17</sup>. Empiricist philosophers were contented to build a system of knowledge that has a high probability of being true even though its absolute certainty cannot be guaranteed.

However, they employed all the ways the senses involve in inquiry like observation, experimentation, quantification, metricization, systematized induction and all in order to

achieve their purpose and their methods inevitably turn out to be scientific, logical and practical which according to Umeogu led them to “the antinatural reach-out of believing in only on what they can hold in their hands”<sup>18</sup>. Their language is scientific whose lexicon aimed at precision, quantitative, experiential and operational definitions and the likes. In other words, their language seeks to religiously and judiciously satisfy “verifiability criterion” of meaning by making its rules of inference immaculately and scientifically clear. The proponents of this system include the Epicureans, Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, John Stuart, Mill (Modern thinkers), John Locke, George Berkeley and David Hume (The British empiricists) etc.

When we talk of the British empiricists, we mean specifically, the British empiricists of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century in the persons of John Locke, (1632-1204), George Berkeley (1685-1753) and David Hume (1711-1776). It is in their writings that the most rigorous manifestations of the impulse to systematic philosophical construction which ordered so much to the new scientific outlook was noticed. Their philosophies influenced so much the social, political and economic norms of the modern periods and their influences are felt till today. One of the greatest empiricists who had distinguished himself as a consistent, coherent and radical empiricist was David Hume. He never deviated from the empiricist tradition unlike Locke’s “imperceptible and unknowable substance” and Berkeley’s “spiritual substance” which are metaphysical elements that were inconsistent with the empiricist principles they both enunciated. Hume was said to have brought empiricism to its logical conclusion. He attempted riding empiricism of the remaining excrescences of non-empiricist doctrines of Berkeley and carried empiricism of Locke to its logical conclusion. His philosophy is a philosophy of radical empiricism or phenomenalism, in other words, his



empiricist theory is a phenomenalist epistemology. The term phenomenalist epistemology is “the view that physical objects cannot justifiably be said to exist on their own but as perceptual phenomena of sensory stimuli (e.g. redness, hardness, softness, sweetness) situated in time and space.”<sup>19</sup> This implied that we cannot claim of any knowledge of the physical objects, man cannot attain any knowledge beyond a mere awareness of phenomena. The knowledge of these objects, Hume surprisingly argued are impressions, therefore we cannot make claims of any knowledge of the existence of any physical or external objects but only have impressions of them which form ideas of them in our minds. He therefore denied the objective knowledge of things and of the external world.

As a consistent empiricist who fought doggedly against what he called “dogmatic rationalism” maintained that “the foundation of abstruse philosophy must be undermined for it only serves as a shelter to superstition and a cover to absurdity and error”.<sup>20</sup> He therefore held that “the only method of freeing learning... is to enquire seriously into the nature of human understanding, and show from an exact of its analysis of its powers and capacity, that it is by no means fitted for remote and abstruse philosophy”<sup>21</sup>

Having used this as a launch-pad against rationalism, he went on to demonstrate the problem of reason as a sole source of knowledge; based on the problem of knowledge as he formulated it, which included that when teleguided by reason alone, it may be possible to come up with thoughts that will look plausible but which in the end will lead to irresolution and confusion. Hume demonstrated that knowledge is experiential; one must therefore come in contact with external objects which generate sensations in order to acquire knowledge.

However, the uniqueness of Hume’s empiricism lay on his division of objects of human knowledge into two; knowledge derived by the operation of the rational faculty as contained

in logic and mathematics and knowledge derived from sense perception. Hume was radical among prominent empiricists not only in advocating that metaphysics does not generate any knowledge, but also held a campaign that any book purporting to be on metaphysics has to be destroyed because, it can only give sophistry and illusion. He proclaimed;

When we run over libraries persuaded of these (empirical) principles, what havoc must we make, if we take in our hand any volume: of divinity of school metaphysics. For instance, let us ask. Does it contain any abstract reasoning containing quantity and number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matters-of fact and experience? No. Commit it to flames: for it contains nothing but sophistry and illusion.<sup>22</sup>

Hume was said to be a skeptic and does not believe in the validity of metaphysics. The Humean tradition harped on the fact of the fundamental thesis that man cannot know ultimate reality or achieve any knowledge beyond a mere awareness of phenomena, sensory images (phenomenalistic philosophy). Since Hume denied the existence of ultimate reality (substance), he was known as a metaphysical nihilist and because he asserted the existence only of phenomena of sense, he was considered a radical empiricist or phenomenalist for panphenomenalist in as much as he reduced even the self to a complex of ideas. Today, the theory that there is no genuine substance or ultimate reality beyond the phenomena of sense is a central concept of positivism; hence, Hume may also be labelled a positivist, though the term was not current in his days.

Hume's proposal of vigorous sensation as an alternative to our natural and acquired scientific, metaphysical and socio-cultural deposits and foundation of science and philosophy, have left us in the make – shift, sandy subjectivism of dry empiricism and vague associationism. Great is Hume's empiricism within the context of knowledge but consistent empiricism will end up destroying the very foundation of knowledge, the epistemological,

scientific and ontological heritage of David Hume. His reduction of human knowledge to mere flux of sensory impressions is totally wrong for this is extreme skepticism. Impressions must not have existed on their own but must have come from something and his skeptic position led to his rejection of metaphysics. There are other sources of acquiring knowledge than Hume thought, reason cannot afford to be passive in the field of knowledge acquisition otherwise knowledge of reality cannot be fully comprehended and, there are other sides to reality that cannot be grasped by mere sensory perception alone. Though Hume's empiricist theory may be fantastic and outstanding among his contemporaries, there are inconsistencies contained in Hume's empiricist theory and so his theory cannot offer us a comprehensive knowledge of reality.

## **1.2. Statement of Problems**

There are problems in Hume's empiricist theory as he determined to carry empiricism to its logical conclusion, and consequently, creating no room for metaphysics and other sources of knowledge. The major one arose in an attempt to answer the question, how reliable is our sensation? Very often, our senses deceive us; this is evident when we see a mirage, in colour blindness, in the changing size of objects according to our psychological and physiological state, in hallucination and other forms of illusions. The problem is that, there is no way of immediately differentiating the real from the unreal in such experiences. The mirage, for example, gives or is an experience of a pool of water. The size of the moon which we see from the earth is exactly what we see, though, it is not the actual size of the moon. Other problems involved are:

- To what extent does Hume's epistemology said to be pragmatic?
- How does the phenomenalist epistemology of Hume justify human rationality?
- In what aspect does Hume's philosophy promote rationalism and moral values?
- Does Hume's psychological response to ethical issues justify the concept of justice?
- To what capacity does Hume qualify as a proper functionalist (utility)
- What is the logicity in Hume's idea of causality (freedom and Determinism)?

### **1.3. Purpose of Study**

It has already been pointed out that Hume maintained a radical stand in his position of knowledge acquisition, by maintaining that knowledge comes and arises only through sense experience. This, he did by his theory of ideas where he stated that all our ideas are derived from impressions of perception through the senses and his division of the object of human knowledge into "relations of ideas" (mathematical knowledge) and "matters of fact" where he maintained that any claim of knowledge that does not find its source under these two objects should not be regarded as knowledge. In this way he relegated reason as source of knowledge and invariably rejecting the importance of metaphysics in the course of knowledge acquisition. The purpose of this study is therefore to examine Hume's position on epistemology and show that Hume's empiricist theory is a phenomenalist epistemology; that is, his theory contains some philosophical inconsistencies that are foundational and that, in as much as, we agree that human beings acquire knowledge through the senses, sense experience alone cannot constitute or guarantee a comprehensive knowledge of reality. Just as Jacques Maritain pointed out that "every philosophical system contains some truth and tells something about the real".<sup>23</sup> Hume, with the "exclusions" and "misconceptions" he was involved in the course of his theory, took his skeptical position to

an extent that he ran into problems and the consequence of this is that his empiricist theory became an error. Hume became victim of the consequence of inconsistency and error because he neglected the logical aspect of knowledge and concentrated more on the factual aspect. Thus he resultantly fell short of logical (internal) consistency that caused his empiricism philosophically inconsistent. He also neglected the “frame aspect” of knowledge and concentrated only on the “stuff aspect” and this resulted in his coming to the claim that only sense perception can afford us knowledge. The implication of this claim is the exclusion of the relevance of reason in knowledge acquisition; thus, his rejection of metaphysical realities.

In Hume’s attempt to correct the errors committed by his contemporaries, in a way to get rid of all the excrescences brought in the domain of empiricism, to bring empiricism to its logical conclusion, his theory became extremely phenomenistic unlike the philosophers before him on whose philosophies he built his own.

It however becomes the purpose of this study to point out the epistemological groundings in his empiricist theory, the problems, implications and inconsistencies inherent in his theory. Though sense experience leads to knowledge, knowledge does not stop there, after all, there are some limitations to the senses in epistemological procedure so that whatever information we receive through the senses must be subjected to judgment before it is accepted or rejected.

#### **1.4. Scope of the Study.**

It has been mentioned earlier that a phenomenanalysis of Hume’s epistemology revealed basically a phenomenistic epistemology. In mind of this, this research work covers specifically the following themes: how reliable are our senses?, the extent of pragmatism in

Hume's phenomenalistic epistemology, the extent of promotion of rationalism and moral values in Hume's philosophy, the justification of concept of justice by Hume's psychological response to ethical issues; the question as to the justification of Hume as a functionalist and, the question of logicality in Hume's idea of causality. The title makes a phenomenanalysis of Hume's epistemology in the sense that it also makes a comprehensive phenomenanalysis of his epistemology and making judgment in form of criticisms of empiricism as a theory of knowledge with Hume's empiricism providing the guide for his contemporary thought. However, the criticisms will be afterwards anchored on the problems observed; having discovered or pointed out empiricist theory of Hume. The above delineations form the scope of this research work.

### **1.5. Significance of Study.**

When this work is completed, it is hoped that it is going to be of importance in the sense that at least, it would have succeeded in pointing out some of the very important aspects of Hume's radical empiricism, and would have also succeeded in pointing out some inconsistencies and problems inherent in it. The work will equally be of help or importance to students who would want to do some work in the areas of Hume's empiricism, such as Hume's conception of politics, ethics and psychology and it will provide some aid by providing them with a kind of critical insight into the nature of Hume's contemporary or radical conception of empiricism.

This work shall also exposes or sets the tone of Hume's radical empiricism; that his theory though radical and fantastic contains some philosophical inconsistencies, his attack on metaphysics and how he finally ended up in philosophical skepticism. Above all, this work

will provide serious insights into Hume's extent of pragmatism in epistemology, justification of human rationality in Hume's phenomenalist epistemology, the extent of promotion of rationalism and moral values by Hume's philosophy, his justification of the concept of justice by his psychological response to ethical issues, etc.

## **1.6. Methodology.**

This research work shall employ the methods of phenomenology and analysis. The method of analysis is seen as a process of reasoning back to the principles. It is the step-by-step process which terminates when something unpredictable 'clicks', it is in this view that analysis is defined as "a procedure for discovering until something is reached that is known."<sup>24</sup> A problem is a complicated issue that needs 'disintegration' into simpler parts for easy solution; once we are engaged in this process, we are said to involve in analysis. This is what Descartes meant in rule 11 and 111 of 'The Discourse' when he remarked, "we shall be following this method if we first reduce complicated and observed propositions step by step to simpler ones"<sup>25</sup>. Phenomenology on the other hand "is a philosophical method of acquiring truth and in the process it rejects authority and faith together with any dependence on supernatural powers and it does not depend on the discovery connectedness between ideas"<sup>26</sup>. With these two methods, a phenomenanalysis of Hume's epistemology revealed a phenomenalist epistemology. The study will therefore analyse the basic concepts and philosophical foundation of Hume's philosophy with the aim of achieving a better meaning of these ideas from the perspective of Hume.

In chapter one, a general introduction is made which includes the background of study that entails tracing the origins, bringing out the tenets of empiricism and rationalism and then, a brief introduction of Hume's epistemology. Sub-headings are also treated and they include;

statement of the problem, purpose of study, scope and significance of the study, methodology and clarification of terms.

In chapter two, strict literature review is done on scholars who focused on Hume's epistemology. The aim of this chapter is to furnish the reader with the knowledge views on Hume's epistemology. Hume's theory of knowledge has been under support and attack by other philosophers and some of the literatures consulted are going to disclose their different opinions concerning Hume's empiricist positions.

In chapter three, Hume's epistemology shall be discussed extensively under the following sub headings; Impressions and Ideas, Association of Ideas, Modes and Substance, Memory and Imagination, Causality, Analysis of Causality; under this, Argument from Succession and Argument from Constant Conjunction shall be discussed. However, we shall try to make the discussion extensive for clearer exposure and understanding of Hume's mind.

In chapter four, this work shall be dealing on the phenomenanalysis of Hume's epistemology proper which will expose his empiricist theory as a phenomenalist epistemology; a theory derived from the word "phenomenalism" which stated that we can only have knowledge of phenomena of the senses which we perceive as impressions and these impressions form ideas in our minds. Hume's phenomenalist epistemology from the word "phenomenalism" denied the existence of the physical world and the real knowledge of anything

In chapter five, the research work shall be dealing on the phenomenanalysis of Hume's epistemology in the way of making bare the inconsistencies which are foundational in Hume's epistemology, the criticisms and the implications and limitations of Hume's philosophy; this will also disclose his contemporary thought, which as a result of his dire



desire to bring empiricism to its logical conclusion however led to his abject rejection of metaphysics. Penultimately, the implications of Hume's rejection of metaphysics, and finally, the reality, value/ importance of metaphysics in the quest for knowledge acquisition shall be discussed.

In chapter six, the work shall conclude by way of pouring out the researcher's mind on this whole work done on Hume's theory of knowledge.

### **1.7. Definition of Terms.**

**Epistemology:** This is one of the branches of philosophy that “studies the validity of truth of human knowledge. It tends to ask such questions as, what is knowledge, how is knowledge acquired, how do we know something etc.”<sup>27</sup>

**Rationalism:** Is one of the schools of thought in epistemology that claimed that ‘the only way to true, certain and indubitable knowledge is reason’.<sup>28</sup> The proponents of this school had it that reason is the primary or most superior source of knowledge about reality and so claimed that, sense experience is unreliable and inadequate route to knowledge. They believed that the fundamental truth about the world can be known *a priori*, they are either innate or self evident to human minds.

**Empiricism:** is another school of thought in epistemology that is of the claim that “sense perception is the only sure way to knowledge.”<sup>29</sup> This theory denied not only the existence of God, but of the things that are not physical, experimental and sensible. To the logic of “only empirical existence is the real or true knowledge”, they concluded the only empirical existence is real. This group jumped from epistemology to ontology and this presents the subjectivist and relativistic fact that only the things I perceived are real and those you

perceived are real. Hence, those you perceive are real only for you and those I perceive are real only for me. The proponents of this school saw reason as unreliable and inadequate route to knowledge unless it is grounded in the solid bedrock of sense experience and that there is no innate ideas within the mind that are known apart from experience.

**Impressions:** Any direct perception, including of our own feelings. Hume defined impression as “that original perception we get when we directly perceive an object, i.e. the original data from perception or thought”<sup>30</sup>. Impressions are, according to Hume, more vivid (lively) than the ideas they give rise to.

**Ideas:** They are the copies of impressions in our minds; it is “the copies of impressions, the faint images of those in thinking and reasoning.”<sup>31</sup> In effect, ideas are the products of impressions; for example, when we close our eyes to reflect on the impressions we had when we perceived a chalk. In this work however, Hume used ideas in a more strict sense than Locke.

**Induction:** Induction is generalizing on the basis of limited range of cases. It is the principle used when one predicts the future on the basis of what has happened in the past. Hume argued that it is the principle of induction that is involved when we talk of causality.<sup>32</sup>

**Phenomenalism:** the philosophy of perception that elaborates the idea that, in the word of J.S Mill ‘objects are the permanent possibilities of sensation’<sup>33</sup>

**Phenomena:** things which appear, the essences which the mind instituted; “they include all the observable entities and whatever that can occur to the mind or whatever that can be constructed mentally”<sup>34</sup>

**Factual consistency:** ‘this means consistency with facts, and by ‘facts’, I understand ‘reality’, ‘truth’, ‘state-of-affair’, actuality and this last thing, that a particular or significant thing has a particular or significant in quality and /or that certain meaningful things have certain meaningful relations’.<sup>35</sup> By factual consistency then, it means consistency with facts.

**Logical consistency:** this is according to the canons of deductive logic, conceptually compatible, internally (that is, without reference to any external or factual thing) consistent, and all other descriptions of similar nature.<sup>36</sup>

**Logical inconsistency:** this is the faithful conclusion of a logical error that is, premises not entailing the conclusion or vice versa, and not cohesively and necessarily hanging together.<sup>37</sup>

**Factual inconsistency:** this is the result of a factual error that is a system, theory etc. that may be logically consistent not approving of the facts they are meant to and should approve.<sup>38</sup>

**Philosophical consistency:** ‘This must take into consistent account, both logical and factual consistencies. A proposition, argument, system, theory is said to be philosophically inconsistent if it is not being (logically, that is, according to the principles of logic, or correct reasoning) and (factually, that is, approving of the facts or state of affairs with regard to its significant purpose) consistent. Philosophical consistency “is a theory that is both logically and factually consistent”.<sup>39</sup>

**Stuff aspect of reality:** refers to the material aspect of reality<sup>40</sup>.

**Frame aspect of reality:** ‘this is the aspect that takes care of organization of the stuff aspect of knowledge’.<sup>41</sup>

**Metaphysics:** Metaphysics apart from its traditional and etymological definitions given differently by different scholars in whatever way it is defined however; it should inculcate the necessity for a universal outlook towards reality. The word metaphysics which is said to have Greek origin is believed to have been first used in the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C by the peripatetic. It was seen as science of being qua being. Parmenides is often referred to as the real enunciator of western metaphysics before Socrates, Plato and Aristotle gave it a more detailed and rigorous treatment. Metaphysics includes both transcendental and particularism of individual existence to focus on the inter relationship of particulars within the universals Metaphysics therefore is: “A philosophical outlook which tries to reach a more comprehensive, all embracing totalistic view of reality without neglecting the unique place of individual things in the holism of reality.”<sup>42</sup>

**Skepticism:** Etymologically, the term skepticism comes from the Greek word “*Skeptesthai*” or “*Sceptomai*”, which means, “to examine” or “to consider.” The act of questioning the certainty or validity of our knowledge is what is termed skepticism and one who does it is a skeptic. Skepticism so to say is a property of all philosophical endeavors since it refers to the quest for truth or knowledge. Philosophical skepticism is defined as the expression of doubt or disbelief, which in its strict meaning is the denial of the possibility of knowledge, and in a broader meaning an attitude of suspending judgment until a critical analysis is complete or all available evidence is at hand.”<sup>43</sup> It can be adopted as a mere theoretical postulates or as a

way of life, as a theory, skepticism doubts the possibility of certain or true knowledge, but as a way of life, it refers to a practical application of the “skeptic’s” view in actual life situation by refraining from judgment as a means to attaining serenity of mind.

**Agnosticism:** this is “the philosophical theory that claimed that we cannot know any given reality, example, God whether he exists or not”.<sup>44</sup> This theory has it that no sufficient rational reason can establish the existence of a supreme being and it doubts the knowledge of God’s existence, and has no belief in God’s existence. The Agnostics do not openly deny God’s existence as the atheists would do but suspend judgment on all issues that try to provide such belief or delve into such proofs.

**Ontology:** Derived from the Greek word for being, but a 17<sup>th</sup>- century coinage for the branch of metaphysics that concerns itself with what exists 261

## End notes.

1. Bonachristus Umeogu,, *Systematic Philosophy: An Enquiry into the Roots of Philosophical Consistency of Truth and Error in Philosophy*, (Owerri: Living Flame Resources, 2012), p.1.
2. Ibid; p; 2.
3. Ibid; p.10.
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## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0. LITERATURE REVIEW

The most fascinating thing about Hume's philosophy is undoubtedly the final logical consequences which an empirical theory of knowledge entails. By implication, the result of Hume's philosophy, especially his epistemology is skepticism. Hume was acclaimed to be the only consistent empiricist among his contemporaries.

Swami Krishnananda in "The Best Philosophy is Hume's Skepticism" expressed in the following lines the summation of Hume's epistemology thus:

We have no certain say evident knowledge of anything, our knowledge is confined to impressions and ideas, and so, we are not in the position to assert the existence, either of material object or of spiritual entity. Our notion of causality, that a particular effect is necessarily produced by a particular cause, is the result of our association of ideas, a habitual or customary observation of certain ideas, phenomena which appear to have such relations. These apparent relations do not carry with them any necessity or universality. Sensations and impressions are separated from one another and so do not have in them anything universal or necessary. What is open to us is only probability and not certainty. Particular causes may not produce particular effect. Causality rests on mere instinct or belief. We do not know of any uniformity, regularity or certainty in the course of nature, everything becomes a matter of doubt.<sup>1</sup>

In the recent time, Hume's philosophy has been widely accepted but not without a lot of criticisms from his likes, who have consciously viewed his ideas in two strong divergent ways. In the first category, Hume is seen as having advanced a radical skepticism which devastated the very possibility of scientific knowledge. The second category regarded Hume as having introduced, as a matter of necessity, a healthy skepticism prompting philosophers and scientists to abandon the hasty claims of modern rationalists and to embrace humbly the fact that non-trivial knowledge is after all only probability. The initiator of the first category is Immanuel Kant and the second category prevails among some contemporary philosophers, starting from the logical positivists. Hume's philosophy especially his



understanding and analysis of induction has been remarkably resilient in the face of criticism. A very important aspect of his epistemology which has been so rejected to the point of constituting an intense degree of controversy by almost all contemporary philosophers is his theory of idea.

Krishnananda also stated that:

We are limited to perceptions and images. When the notion of causality itself, is unfounded, how can we be sure that our perceptions are caused by external objects? Though we are accustomed to observe causal relations among our ideas and perceptions, we do not see any ground for supposing their relations between perceptions and objects. What are things when they are divested of the primary and secondary qualities? They are nothing. The only objects of knowledge to us are ideas and impressions. We have no right to assume the existence of the object or sound or God or mere ideas or impressions. Where is certainty in causality, which is only a creature of custom or habit? We have to limit ourselves to the world of impressions and ideas and not go beyond this. Even of the true nature of the empirical world, we can say nothing. We know only our ideas which have neither necessity nor universality in them.<sup>2</sup>

We therefore wish to address the review of Hume's philosophy by following it according to themes. This however will enable us to have a comprehensive understanding and adequate interpretation and analysis of most of his ideas. Fundamentally, one major thing about Hume's philosophy is his absolute denial of metaphysical realities. According to Hume, no metaphysical reality is possible, we can know nothing of anything real in itself, neither world nor soul nor God. We cannot therefore have a rational cosmology of the world, of the psyche or a rational theology. We know of no such things as enduring things or substance. Hume denied the existence of a permanent soul by declaring that we know no soul as material substance. In fact, we know no substance at all either externally or internally. We know only passing ideas disconnected from one another. When we try to know an immutable soul, what we catch are mere ideas, perceptions, a bundle of thought, mere flux

and not anything simple and indivisible. We do not know whether God is, for we have no reason to believe that the universe should have a cause. We cannot infer the existence of God from our minds, for our minds are constantly changing and so, this cannot prove the existence of God who cannot change and is eternal. He therefore concluded that whatever that is metaphysics should be cast into the flames for they contain nothing but sophistry and illusion. Thus Hume wrote:

When we run over libraries, persuaded of these principles, what havoc must we make, if we take in hand any volume of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance, let us ask, does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matters of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion.<sup>3</sup>

Following his rejection of metaphysics, Hume dealt decisively with the problem of causality. The principle of causality stated that “whatever exists must have a cause”. This principle, according to Hume, cannot be demonstrated or known by intuition. That a thing has a cause is not part of its being and it can be conceived entirely on its own without the idea of its having been caused by another thing. This idea of causality derived from the frequent association of things that generally go together. When we perceive anything, we do not perceive in it the idea that it has a cause. “When one particular species of events has always in all instances been conjoined with another, we make no longer any scruple of foretelling one upon the appearance of the other and of employing that reasoning (causal inference) which can alone assure us of any matter of fact of existence. We then call the object cause, the other effect”.<sup>4</sup>

The principle of causality, Hume says, is based on the assumption that nature is uniform and does not change:

that instances of which we have had no experience must resemble those of which we have had experience. In other words, it is based on the assumption that the future will resemble the past, but this assumption that the future will resemble the past is not founded on arguments of any knowledge but is derived entirely from habit, by which we are determined to expect for the future the same train of objects to which we have been accustomed.<sup>5</sup>

Hume therefore argued that there is no observable necessary connection between things that follow each other; for the fact that they follow each other in the past; it does not follow that the same thing will be repeated in the future, no matter how often it happened in the past. He therefore concluded that no matter how frequently things happened in the past, this fact alone cannot be a valid argument for maintaining that the same things will happen in the same way in the future.

Xavier Zubiri in “Inteligencia.-Yrealidad”, (first volume of trilogy, *Inteligencia Sentiente*) strongly made the following contributions by arguing that though causes in some metaphysical sense is not given in experience, Hume’s argument is obviously erroneous. He therefore contended that:

In classical philosophy a cause is that from which something proceeds by means of a real influence upon the being of the effect. Now, causality is not something given. We never perceive the productive influence of a real thing upon another ..., our perception never perceives causality, but always does perceive the functionality; in the field of reality we sense reality in its functional moment as a field – nature moment of the impression of reality. We perceive that a thing is real as a function of others, and functionality can be and is quite varied.<sup>6</sup>

Zubiri believed that Hume’s argument failed because his analysis of intelligence is wrong on two critical points (1) our intelligence is sentient, not sensible, as a consequence, we perceive reality directly – we do not need causal inference to reach it. That is, the ‘impressions’ we have are not sensory impressions but impressions of reality, which have two aspects, ‘content’ and ‘formality’ (2) Hume’s analysis of human intelligence into

reasoning about impressions or ‘matters of fact’ based on causality, and reasoning about ‘relations of idea’ which ultimately must refer to some impressions, is radically false. The correct analysis must center on the far more complex and subtle three stages by which our knowledge unfolds: perception of reality, logos and reason, understanding of both of these points is necessary in order to unravel the problems of Hume’s analysis.

He went further to say that Hume’s acknowledgement that we have knowledge of the external world, which he thinks we base on raw sense data and causal inference, in turn identifies with constant conjunction in any conclusion (about matters of fact) beyond the impressions of our senses can be founded only on the connection of cause and effect. It has two errors. First, Hume, Zubiri contended, failed to distinguish the basic act of sentient intelligence – primordial apprehension from subsequent acts – Logos and reason-which involve the intelligence in more discursive ways. As a result, Hume had failed to recognize that the type and veracity of knowledge obtained in these acts differ sharply. Second, he has collapsed all types of discursive knowledge of the world; assuming that it all must be based on causality, identified with constant conjunction. Because there is a superficial plausibility to both of these errors, the overall argument Zubiri opined, achieved a significant degree of plausibility despite the fact that Hume himself admitted that he cannot live his life as if its conclusions were true. Zubiri stated then that, that which we base our knowledge, whether at the level of primordial apprehension or at higher levels, is not constant conjunction. It is rather, functionality considered in a very general sense. Functional relations Zubiri said may or may not involve causality in the traditional, deterministic sense, or Hume’s version of constant conjunction, functionality is a much broader concept, capable of supporting

inferences such as counterfactual conditionals which are beyond the range of constant conjunction.

Furthermore, Zubiri stated that functional relationship may be – and indeed often are – statically based, for which constant conjunction as an explanation is hopelessly inadequate. Functional relations exist for all three levels of intelligence, beginning with primordial apprehension, which leads directly to the second point (and Hume's principal error). At the level of primordial apprehension, Hume failed to distinguish between content and formality of reality in impressions. Hume assumed that content was the locus of causality – and therefore of all our knowledge of the external world (which, via functionality, it is at the higher levels). But in fact it is formality which delivers reality to us, at this most important level, that of primordial apprehension. Zubiri noted;

For Hume, causality is not given but only temporal succession. Now, I have just said myself that causality is not given. But Hume did not notice that there are two different aspects of the question. First of all, he did not see that temporal succession is just a form of functionality. In the second place, the succession is not the succession of these impressions, but the same impression of reality, one which is of successive nature – which means that what is essential about functionality, does not concern the content of the impression but their formality of reality.<sup>7</sup>

In other words, an impression of successive events gives the functionality and the reality of the succession at the same time thus through formality, functionality does give us knowledge of reality, so that Hume's skepticism is misplaced. Zubiri agreed that if we had to rely solely upon reasoning which utilizes the content of impressions as the basis for our knowledge of reality, we could not escape Hume's conclusions. We do in fact rely on such reasoning for much of our knowledge, at the level of Logos and reason; but all such

knowledge would be impossible if reality were not first delivered to us in primordial apprehension.

This, Zubiri revealed would be best understood through Hume's own example of the ringing of a bell when its cord is pulled;

In Hume's example, the ringing of the bell just follows upon the pulling of the cord. Now it is not the case that the bell's ringing is qua ringing a function of the pulling of a cord qua cord (these concepts operate at the level of Logos); rather, the fact is that it is the reality of the ringing qua real (i.e., its formality) which is the function of the reality of the pulling of the cord qua reality (i.e., its functionality). And this is something perfectly given, even supposing that the ringing were not a function of the pulling of the cord.<sup>8</sup>

Or to paraphrase Zubiri's discussion, the ringing of the bell is apprehended as real in a primordial apprehension, the same one in which the pulling of the cord is apprehended as real. This is functionality at the level of primordial apprehension, not at the level of Logos or reason, where Hume was looking. Thus the ringing of the bell is apprehended as a real function of the pulling of the cord, whether or not the pulling of the cord actually operates the bell by itself. For example, pulling the cord might just operate a switch which turns on an electric motor that in turn pivots the bell. Functionality is functionality of the real in as much as it is real. In this sense, it is a concept which encompasses many possible types. This formality, this "by" as such, is given in the impression of reality. Hume's whole critique was based upon the content of sensing, but he erred on the matter of formality.<sup>9</sup>

Understanding of the functionality of the bell ringing operation through Logos and reason, example, through the physics of motion of the bell and clapper, the nature of sound waves, their generation through vibrations of the metal bell, and so forth, is much more difficult. So it is not surprising that if one tries to base our knowledge of reality on the achievement of certainty then, skepticism would be the natural result.

Hume was right to have said that we do not know any causal link between objects and events but that does not mean that there is no connection between cause and effect. Zubiri's theory of the three processes or stages by which we acquire knowledge of causality may be right. Hume actually lost sight of the functional stage of knowledge acquisition due to his empiricist position, believing in what we can know only by the senses. The result is that he fails to recognize there are various stages of knowledge acquisition and each reveals knowledge of a particular kind.

On the issue of causality, let us see what Anthony Flew has to say.

Anthony Flew in *David Hume's Philosophy of Moral Sense*, made also a drastic reaction of Hume's view of causation, pointing out that his understanding of causation is illogical. He reasoned that in the *Enquiry of Human Understanding*, there was a very significant addition which was made without explanation or justification. "We have much as before, an object, followed by another, and where all the objects similar to the first are also followed by objects similar to the second"<sup>10</sup>. But here, a second sentence follows; or in other words, "if the first object had not been, the second never had existed"<sup>11</sup>. Flew therefore stated in contention to Hume's ideas thus:

For that second clause expresses a subjunctive, contrary-to-fact conditional: If the first object had not been, the second never had existed. But this conclusion obviously cannot be deduced from any nonnomological generalization stating only, as a matter of unexplained brute fact that all object of the first kind always have been, and will be followed by objects of the second kind. All causal and indeed, all nomological propositions, on the other hand, must sustain such inferences. If, for instance, you maintain that the cause of the trouble is a lack of fuel in the tank, this entails that ... had there been fuel in the tank, the machine would have operated. While the defining difference between a non-nomological stating a supposed law of nature is that the one cannot while the other must sustain contrary - to - fact implication.<sup>12</sup>

For this inconsistency, Flew concluded that Hume's notion of causality is illogical.

Asides the fact that Hume's theory of causation is illogical, it is also contradicting in the sense that, according to the second clause that; 'if the first object had not been, the second would never had existed' is enough to debunk Hume's position on causality. The second clause alone is enough to prove the possibility of cause and effect since one would not have existed if the other had not. That means, the occurrence of one depends on the existence of the other.

Nevertheless, in further analysis of Hume's idea of causation, Shan Gao equally strongly contended that the basis of Hume's argument is not mathematical hence, it is not logical.

Shan Gao, in the "A Quantum Physical for Panpsychism'', in his conception of Hume's metaphysics and epistemological connotations, reflected whether true or false represents the bankrupt of eighteenth century reasonableness. Hume, Gao said, started out like Locke, with the intention of being sensible and empirical, taking nothing on trust, but seeking whatever instruction to be obtained from experience and observations. But Hume, Gao further maintained, having a better intellect than Locke's, had greater acuteness in analysis, and a smaller capacity for accepting comfortable inconsistencies, arrived at the disastrous conclusion that from experience and observation, nothing is to be learnt. Gao accused Hume's conclusion of "causal reasoning as a habit is not mathematical or logical knowledge which relies upon relations of ideas, but a belief in matter of facts."<sup>13</sup> It is essentially a proposition about the operating mechanism of the mind, and then according to Hume, such a belief in matter of fact is always contingent. Thus, Hume's conclusion itself is also contingent, and cannot be justified by reason. Hume's conclusion that no belief can be justified by reason cannot be justified by reason either. Therefore, Gao accused Hume of



having actually defeated himself using his own weapons. Again, Hume's argument, Gao stressed is a combination of induction, the presupposition of his theory is basically a structure of deduction, the presuppositions of his theory are not logically self-evident, they mainly come from experience. Hume's theory, Gao said, is essentially based on cognitive science today. Many great advances Gao said have been made in this field since Hume's time. So it is not unexpected that there existed some flaws or even errors in Hume's model of mind and this Gao conclusively further said provided some reason why Hume's theory failed in some respects.

Gao's accusation of Hume being inconsistent in the way of having defeated himself with his own weapon is right, the noted inconsistencies is as a result of Hume's wayward neglect of the logic of the philosophical world and failure to understand the logic of philosophical language. This is the reason he made statements that confused with philosophy which means that his theory is in error.

In making analysis of Hume's argument as Bertrand Russell noted, Hume's theory of causality has two parts: one objective and the other subjective. The objective part said: when we judge that "A" causes "B", what has actually happened, as far as "A" and "B" are connected, is that they have been frequently observed to be conjoined, i.e., "A" has been immediately followed by "B"; we have no reason to say that "A" must be followed by "B", or will be followed by "B" in future occasions. Nor have we any ground for supporting that, however often "A" is followed by "B"; any relation beyond sequence is involved. Causality is definable in terms of sequence and is not an independent notion. The subjective part of the theory says, the frequently observed conjunction of "A" and "B", causes the impression of "A" to result in the idea of "B". But if we define causes as is suggested in the objective part

of the theory, we noticed that we must reword the above as follows. It has been frequently observed that the frequently observed conjunction of “A” and “B” has been frequently followed by occasions on which the impression of “A” was followed by the idea of “B”. This statement Gao said might be true but, claims it is hardly the scope that Hume attributed to the subjective part of his theory. Hume contended, over and over again, that the frequent conjunction of A and B gives no reason for expecting them to be conjoined in the future, but is merely a cause of this expectation.

If the objective part of Hume’s theory is right, the fact that associations have frequently formed in the past is no reason for supposing that new ones will be formed in similar circumstances in the future. This Hume actually believed of causation in the subjective part, which he tried to refute in the objective part. Following the illustration of Russell - I see an orange and expect that if I eat it, I shall experience a certain kind of taste. According to Hume, there is no reason why I should experience this kind of taste: the law of habit explains the experience of my expectation but does not justify it. But the law of habit is a causal law. Therefore if we take Hume seriously, we must still find out that, though in the past, there is no reason why it should continue to be conjoined; perhaps, the next time I see an orange, I shall expect it to taste like ice-cream.

Therefore, Hume’s theory of causality can be formulated as follows; the proposition “A” causes “B” means the impressions of “A” causes the idea of B. But if Hume’s objective theory is right, Gao said, no better reason for expectation in psychology than in the physical world. In other words, Hume held that causal law exists in the subjective world but, they do not exist in the objective world yet there is no reason for such, an asymmetry. This indicated

that Hume's theory of causality cannot explain our belief of causality in a consistent way Gao concluded.

In the presupposition of Hume in his theory of causality that perceptions are entirely loose and separate (perception atomism) Gao said has been argued that, it does not permit the existence of causal connection. So, Hume's disastrous conclusion, Gao maintained is only a consequence of his perception atomism to some extent. If perception atomism is not true in reality then Gao concluded that Hume's theory may collapse. Two experimental evidences Gao said refuted perception atomism; first experiment shows that rat finds it much easier to learn an association between eating a certain food and nausea, and flash and electric shock than the compliment Pairings (Garcid and Roelling 1966), in terms of their approximation, it can be said that natural selection has projected a regularity in the world of rats, so that any given rat contrary to Hume, did not experience some type of phenomena as "entirely loose and separate". The projected regularity here is not an invariable uniformity of sequence. Secondly the work of developmental psychologists already told us a lot about the causal in this cognitive sense of when apparently cohesive objects seem spontaneously to fragment, to pass through one another, or not to exhibit a single trajectory through space and time. (Spelke et al 1995) Other work (Baillargeon et al 1995) indicated that at the same age, infants are disposed to find apparently unsupported objects that fail to fall surprising. Some headway is being made with the difficult question of what features are, object behaviour and /or structure that led children to regard it as capable of self motion, either at all or various particular sorts. (Gelman et al- 1995). Here too, it seemed that phenomena of some sort are not experienced as entirely loose and separate.

Hume's second presupposition that "All ideas come from antecedent impressions" (the copy principle) Gao said that, in Hume's view, the way to clarify ideas, including the idea of causation, is to determine what impressions they derive from. An idea without any impression will be discussed as "without any meaning". This Gao said, is very important strategic device in Hume's theory, without which Hume cannot reach his disastrous conclusion. As some opponents argued, however, an idea without an impression is not to be dismissed as "without any meaning" but is actually counter evidence against Hume's whole empiricism. If we produce an idea like power of necessary connection, what we maintain is not derived from an antecedent impression, it is incumbent upon Hume, Gao said, to produce the impression or abandon his (Hume) empiricism, until Hume shifts the burden of proof. Gao went further to say that, his own work provided some of the best evidence against empiricism. As we think, Gao also said that ideas without impressions really exist, for example, the idea as a high-dimensional space in mathematics has no corresponding impressions, such high-dimensional spaces, Gao said, are defined by abstract algebraic relations - we simply have no impressions of them.

Another of Hume's presupposition is his theory of causality that "the conceivable must not result in logical contradictions." The presupposition alone Gao said, will result in the contingency of any belief. A belief and its contrary are both conceivable and thus are logically possible. As an example, Hume's notion of causality as constant conjunction is also contingent. Another notion of causality may also be conceivable so this presupposition, which is required for Hume's argument, may actually make his argument invalid. Besides the presupposition is evidently unreasonable Gao said, for reason is rejected simply because unreason is also conceivable.

The presupposition of Hume that causation is a constant conjunction, to this, Gao said, that though it is one of the most important notions of Hume's theory has two flaws at least, to begin with, Gao opined that our causal thinking is not recognizably Humean on any strict construal of Humean, rather a strictly Humean notion of causal thinking will require that effects follow causes infallibly and Hume did write of an "effect being" infallibly produced by cause. Hume also offered that 'similar objects are always conjoined with similar of this we have experience (E. 76). This is constant conjunction view of our cognitive processes. However, there is ample evidence said Gao, that we do not think in terms of constant conjunction at all, but in terms, of multiple chains of influence similar to directed causal graphs; or Bayes nets. Young children between the ages of (3 and 5) already show the ability, among other things, to reason to unobserved causes, to plan suitable novel inventions in response to request, to prevent a process they had only observed in operation (that is; one that they had never seen prevented), and to make inference about the directions of causal dependence in case of simultaneous change.

The second flaw is that constant conjunctions of two events do not always imply the existence of a causal relation between these events. Gao gave a widely used example of the atmospheric electrical event that causes lightning and thunder. Since we always see lightening before we hear thunder, it appears that lightening causes thunder. But in fact, lightening does not cause thunder, lastly, Gao said that we stress that Hume's argument of causation as constant conjunction does not eliminate the actual possibility that there is a necessary connection between cause and effect in reality. If Hume's conclusion is true, Gao said it only means that we cannot know the necessary connection and justify our belief in it.

In the subjective part of Hume's theory of causality, the argument of causation as constant conjunction actually relies on the uniformity principle, if the universal principle be rationally notified, then, there is no reason why present conjunctions must infallibly sustain in similar circumstance in the future. As a result of this, Hume's argument of causation of constant conjunction will collapse, Gao notified. On the other hand, if the uniformity principle can be rationally justified, then, Hume's argument of causation will be also invalid. Therefore, it seems that Hume's argument of causation may inevitably fail Gao concludes.

Gao said that Hume's theory of causation is an attempt to analyze regularity of events referred to as "regularity theories". Hume's theory is a regularity theory of causation. This regularity theory analyses causation in terms of nothing but regular sequence (together in Hume's case, with priority in time and contiguity in time and space). Regularity theory may have some plausibility Gao continued, if they are taken as just claiming that causal statements can be replaced by certain other statements in which no reference to causal connexions is made. One may hold that "A" caused "B" at least for certain purposes, can be replaced by "A" as well as "B" occurred and all events like "A" are followed by events like "B". But Gao countered that if there were no causal connexions, then probably, there would not be any of the regularities, to which the regularity theory refers. Furthermore, the theories also pose other difficulties. An obvious difficulty Gao notified is that most causes are not invariably followed by their effects. For example, it is widely accepted that smoking is a cause of lung cancer, but it is also recognized that not all smokers develop lung cancer. In addition, the asymmetry of causation may also pose a problem for regularity theories. If "A" caused "B", then typically, "B" will not also cause "A". Smoking causes lung cancer, but

lung cancer does not cause one to die. It seems very difficult for regularity theories to explain this asymmetry of causation.

Whereas, there are a number of difficulties with regularity theories, many alternatives have been proposed. On the regularity theory of causation ascribed to Hume and espoused by empiricists such as Carnap and Quine “H causes S” merely asserts the regular succession of hitting piano keys and hearing sounds. On Salmon’s and Dowe’s process theory, by contrast, “H causes S” implies the existence of particular process and interactions. Mechanical energy is transferred from fingers to hammers, then to a string, then via the surrounding air to the ear, where it is perceived as a mechanical sound”.<sup>14</sup>

Gao’s point here resulted in Hume’s failure to understand the principles of universals. It is the principle of universality that maintained permanence and regularities between objects. Hume failed to understand that regularity in things is a clear evidence of universality. Reality is really discoverable through some processes or stages of knowledge acquisition as Zubiri earlier stated. It is however the universals that gives explanation to the happenings of this world, and through it can one comes to have metaphysical knowledge, and it is in the place of the subject to perceive and analyse things and the subject cannot be divorced from the objects of reality.

Hume’s denial of the knowledge of necessary connection is as a result of his submission that we can only know particulars because we only have distinct existences. This is one of the foundational errors in Hume’s philosophy which resulted in philosophical error.

Again, Hume’s theory of idea has some foundational error that resulted in inconsistencies which affected his whole philosophy. He failed to notice that there are ideas that do come

not only from impressions but also through abstract reasoning and are part of reality and not meaningless as he took them to be because they are useful in practical life. Uniformity and regularity in life is an indication that there must be something in things that work together to bring cause and effect. Cause and effect cannot be constant conjunction as it is sometimes inconsistent with the way things work.

On 'Lewis's "Counterfactual Theory", causal claims reflect counterfactual dependencies. "H" causes "S" means there is a chain of counterfactually dependent events between "H" and "S" (if the key had not been hit or the hammer had not been set into motion etc, no sound would have resulted)"<sup>15</sup>. In the agency theory by Van Wright and Menzies and Price, H causes S' means that a free agent can bring about a music sound by hitting the piano keys. All these views reflect particular intuitions one might have with respect to causation.

There are three promising alternatives to Humeanism among the current philosophical attempts to understand causation. The first are probabilistic theories of causation which are the more sophisticated reasons of the regularity theory. The central idea behind this probabilistic theory of causation is that causes raise the probability of their effects. An effect may still occur in the absence of cause or fail to occur in its presence. That smoking is the cause of lung cancer, but because not all smokers develop lung cancer and because smokers are more likely to develop lung cancer than non-smokers. This is entirely consistent with their being some smokers who avoid lung cancer, and some non-smokers who succumb to probabilistic theories of causation in a more consistent way.

The systematic dependence approach took it that causes make a difference to their effects. This difference-making is cashed out in counterfactual terms. The relationship among some



variables (or magnitudes) “x” and “y” is a causal if, an intervention changed the value of “x” approximately, the relationship between “x” and “y” would remain invariant and the value of “Y” would change.”<sup>16</sup> According to Woodward, it is the possibility of intentions and manipulation that this essential causation and explanation. This approach maintained a variant of the traditional idea that regularity is crucial to causality, but the regularities it believes to be characteristics of causal processes differ from those of standard Humean accounts. For one thing, they are counter-factual regularities which obtain among ideal interventions on factors belonging to the system which produces the effect to be explained, and the results which would ensue if the interventions occurred.

Furthermore, because the required regularities typically held only for some interventions, the generalization which describe the need to qualify as genuine Humean laws. The mechanistic approach took it that two events are causally related if and only if there is a mechanism that connects it. Mechanism, Lewis continued, are taken to complex systems, which are composed of parts, have internal structure or organization and certain Spatio-temporal location. The mechanism has characteristic behaviour in virtue of the properties, dispositions or capacities of its parts as well as in virtue of how these parts are organized and interact with each other. What the mechanism is doing (its characteristic activity, its behaviour or its output) Lewis said is caused and explained by the details of how it is doing it. These details include the internal workings of the mechanism. Mechanism is an even more drastic departure from Humeanism that a causal explanation must describe the system which produces the effect of interest by enumerating its components and what they do is contribute to the production of the effect. Mechanisms, Lewis notified, acknowledged that some mechanisms operate with great regularity, but they do not believe that the understanding we

get from a causal explanation derived from its description of actual or counterfactual regularities.

Hume rejected the rationality of the law of causality and removed the essential necessary connection from causality. In this way, he degraded causality to mere constant conjunction of events or regularity. He characterized the 'law of causality' as a "harmful relief of a bygone age" and even urged the 'complete extrusion' of the word "cause" from the philosophical vocabulary'. Lewis contended that Hume's argument of causality is not convincing if there were no causal connection, or if one event does not logically necessitate another, then, why does regularity of events exist? Probably, there would not be any regularity. In response to this objection, Hume held that natural laws are not certain but contingent, so, there is indeed no reason why regularity exists. This is a disastrous conclusion for rationalists especially; it makes the universe unintelligible, Lewis proclaimed.

Lewis reported that Hume's notion of causality can actually help to provide promising way to unify the law of causality and indeterminism which is termed 'unified law of generalized principle of causality'. Although, it may be very tempting as Russell argued to suppose that causality is just an apparent display on natural laws and it does not exist in reality. Hume's argument that there is no necessary connection between cause and effect is similar with the argument concerning instantaneous state of objects. According to Hume, Lewis continued, causes contain nothing within themselves that could enable them to act on anything else; one event cannot logically necessitate another. In this meaning, Lewis felt that Hume's argument can lead to indeterminism. If two events are logically irrelevant, then their connection cannot be causal and regular, but must be completely random. Lewis observed that Hume did not reach this conclusion due to the limitation of his empiricism.

However, Lewis affirmed that Hume is most famous for his penetrating analysis of causality. He (Hume) noticed that cause cannot logically necessitate effect, that is, that causal necessity has no reason, and our belief in it is unjustified. However still Lewis contended, his (Hume's) scope is limited by his sheer empiricism. Hume removed necessary connexion from causality, but still keeps regularity in causality. In fact, if Hume were able to go beyond empiricism, Lewis observed, Hume could reach a more satisfying conclusion. Now that one event cannot logically necessitate another, their connection cannot be causal and regular, but must be completely random. As thus, Hume's doubt about the law of causality leads us to "indeterminism, and his analysis can also make indeterminism or the characteristic of uncaused events logically and comprehensible"<sup>17</sup> Lewis concluded.

Here Lewis is saying that the components of a thing should be studied so as to understand its operations or mechanism. Hume failed to believe in the possibility of the knowledge of causality because he failed to study the components of events and objects. There must be something responsible for the regularities among things and that underlies the reality of cause and effect.

Hume failed in his description of causality because he did not understand the laws of causality. Regularity of event is enough evidence that there is cause and effect and there is causal nexus between objects and events. His position that we have distinct existences of things that have no connection with one another is informed in his misunderstanding of the nature of universals.

Garrett Thompson in *Beckon to Kant, Introduction of Modern Philosophy*, is also a notable figure who must be mentioned that made an advanced critique on Hume's empiricism. As a matter of fact, he rejected his idea of causation. Before Kant, David Hume accepted the

general view of rationalism about *a priori* knowledge. However, on a closer examination of the subject, Hume discovered thought to be analytic, those related to cause and effect were actually synthetic, that is, (No analysis of the subject will reveal the predicate). They thus, depended exclusively on experience and are therefore *a posteriori*. Before Hume; rationalists had held that effect could be deduced from cause: Hume argued that it could not and from this, he inferred that nothing at all can be known *a priori* in relation to cause and effect. Kant, who was brought up under the auspices of rationalism was deeply disturbed by Hume's skepticism. This was what he meant when he expressed that it was the philosophical doctrine of Hume that awakened him from his dogmatic slumber. Indeed, it took Kant 12 years of intensive research and lecturing to come up with his book titled *Critique of Pure Reason* where he addressed constructively and definitively Hume's skeptical conclusion about such basic principles of cause and effect which had implications for Kant's grounding in rationalism.

In Kant's view, Hume's skepticism rested on the premise that all ideas are presentations of sensory experience. The problem that Hume identified was that basic principles such as: causality cannot be derived from sense experience only; experience shows only that one event regularly succeeds another, not that it is caused by it. In section 6, (the general problem of purism) of the introduction of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant explained that Hume stopped short of considering that a synthetic judgment can be made '*a priori*'. Kant's goal was to find some way to derive cause and effect without relying on empirical knowledge. Kant rejected analytical method, for him, analytical reasoning cannot tell us anything that is not self-evident; instead Kant argued that it will be necessary to use synthetic reasoning. However; this posed new problem. How is it possible to have a

synthetic knowledge that is not based on empirical observation-that is, how are synthetic *a priori* truths possible? Garrett Thompson therefore noted that:

Kant's notion of synthetic *a priori* truth permits him to claim that the universal causal axiom-that all events have a cause-is a necessary truth without being analytic. In other words, it is not a statement of relations between ideas but, neither-is it a matter of fact. Kant agreed with Hume that every effect has a cause' cannot, be denied without contradiction (i.e. it is analytic) and that 'every event has a cause' can be denied without contradiction (i.e. it is not analytic). Yet Kant argues that the claim; every event has a cause' is a universal and necessary truth which we can have a priori knowledge. According to Kant, the claim is a necessary truth but it is not analytic, it is synthetic *a priori*. Kant tries to explain why the thesis "every event has a cause" is a synthetic *a priori* by arguing that the concept of causation is a necessary condition for experience. In this way, he attempts to save causation from Hume's skepticism.<sup>18</sup>

Kant's proposal of synthetic *a priori* kind of knowledge is an attempt to reconcile the two opposing schools of thought, rationalism and empiricism. Our knowledge may have started with the senses but does not entirely arise from experience as Hume claimed. With the idea of Kant's theory of synthetic *a priori*, it became obvious that Hume's idea of what knowledge is all about is myopic. Although Kant's method of arriving at this submission was derived from the Euclidean geometry used earlier by mathematicians which later was overthrown by another non Euclidean geometry. What this means is that Kant's theory of synthetic *a priori* knowledge could not solve the problem of knowledge and so is in error.

John Cook in *Wittgenstein's Metaphysics* in further attempt to dispute Hume's notion of causality maintained that, had Hume noted that we regularly say such things (You can't start your car with the battery disconnected". Or "A male cat cannot breed with another male cat)", he would have found this perplexing and in need of explanation. Indeed, he would have declared that we cannot really mean what we say in such cases. Why? Part of the explanation is that he could find no impressions that would give rise to the ideas of necessity

and impossibility in nature. There is of course another option here; for it was open to him to regard such examples as showing that he was wrong about the ‘origin of ideas’. But he had another reason for ignoring examples of the sort just given. Early in the *Treatise*, long before he came to the topic of causation, Hume said as Cook reported, “Tis an established maxim in metaphysics, that whatever the mind clearly conceives includes the idea of possible existence, or in other words, that nothing we imagine is absolutely false”<sup>19</sup> Hume did not tell us, Cook noticed, how he thought this can be established, but it is clear that Cook declared that Hume took his idea for granted throughout the *Treatise*, as when we found him (Hume) saying ‘Anything may produce anything’. Cook therefore asked; how are we to take this? Does Hume mean to say that two male cats can produce off springs? Does he think that a child’s imagining two male cats producing off springs is enough to show that such a thing is not absolutely impossible?

The answer, Cook said of course, is that Hume was not talking about things like cats –not real flesh and blood cats. Rather he was talking about a world of ‘inert sensible qualities’. For it is also very early in the *Treatise* that he made clear that he followed Berkeley in dismissing Locke’s causal theory of perception by dispensing with the material, causal end and retaining the supposed effects, sensible qualities. And given this ontology, Cook reported that Hume was obliged from the outset to think that anything that occurs in the world has no discernible why or wherefore. Whatever happens just happens. And if something astonishing and inexplicable should occur, then that too just happens. There is no limit on what can happen, since sensible qualities always come into being and pass away causelessly. So it is Hume’s ontology Cook concluded, that led him to see something fishy in the idea of necessities and impossibilities in nature. Accordingly, if we do not share his

ontological views, Cook added, “we have reason to think that there is anything peculiar, anything we should want to explain away, in quite ordinary examples given above.”<sup>20</sup>

Hume’s theory of causality is purely empiricist thought. Hume in the *Treatise* attributed existence to things that are perceptible by the senses that is object of phenomena. Hume’s comment that anything may produce anything is a matter of contradiction; it contradicted his theory of causation and the statement is purely metaphysical. Hume could not have avoided metaphysics; it is at the heart of knowledge.

Having gone this far on the issue of causality and idea, let us treat the issue of the concept of miracle.

In a further discussion on Hume’s epistemology, Hume in his incisive work *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, made a case on miracle. In his view, Hume believed that by what is referred to as miracle is either impossible or is a transgression of natural law. Given that Hume argued that it is impossible to deduce the existence of the deity from the existence of the world (for he says that causes cannot be determined from effects), miracles, (including prophecy) are only possible support he would conceivably allow for theistic reasons. Hume discussed every day belief as often resulted from probability, where we believe an event that has occurred as been most likely, but that we also subtract the weighing of less common event from that of more common event. In the context of miracles, a miraculous event should be labeled a miracle only where it would be even more unbelievable (by principle of probability) for it not to be. Hume mostly discussed miracle as testimony of which he wrote that when a person reports a miraculous event-we (need to) balance their veracity against our belief that such-event did not occur. Following this rule, only where it is considered, as a result of experience less likely that the testimony is false

than that a miracle occurred should we believe in miracle. Therefore, his main argument concerning miracle is as follows:

Miracle by definition is singular events that differ from the established laws of nature and codified as a result of past experiences. Therefore a miracle is violation of all prior experience and thus incapable of this basis of reasonable belief. However the probability that something has occurred in contradiction of all past experience should always be judged to be less than probability that either my senses have deceived me or the person recounting the miraculous occurrence is lying or mistaking, all of which I have past experience of. For Hume, this refusal to grant credence does not guarantee correctness-he offers an example of an Indian prince, who having grown up in a hot country refuses to believe that the water has frozen. By Hume's light, this refusal is not wrong and the prince is thinking correctly; it is presumably only when he has had extensive experience of the freezing water that he has warrants to believe that the event could occur. So for Hume, either the miraculous event will become a recurrent event or else it would be never rational to believe that it occurred.<sup>21</sup>

Considering the magnitude of David Hume's argument on miracle as already stated, Goyette reporting John Earman in "Hume's Abject Failure: The Argument Against Miracle", made a drastic response in his contention, he therefore stated that Hume's argument on miracles starting from his definition of the concept is anachronistic, unoriginal, and a wrong judgment of the scientific intent on induction. Earman discussed Hume's claim to provide a 'proof' against miracles - an argument leaving no room for doubt or opposition based on Hume. Goyette reviewed that Earman pointed at Hume's report that the testimony in favour of a miracle can never outweigh opposing evidence since the laws of nature are derived from the constant and uniform testimony of the senses. Earman, to this, first showed that Hume's argument against miracles is unoriginal (for example, Hume owed his general formulation of the problem of miracle to Locke) and then proceeded to show the weaknesses of the argument by discussing some of Hume's contemporary critics.



Earman, Goyette reviewed, devoted the greatest attention to the criticism of Thomas Bayes and Richard Price, who argued, on the basis of the probability calculus, that Hume's arguments were flawed. They argued that law-like behavior is highly probable, but does not warrant the conclusion that miracles are altogether impossible. Price, Goyette reported, argued that the greatest uniformity and frequency of experience will not offer a proof that an event will happen in a future trial or even render it so much as probable, that it will always happen in all future trials. One of the key points stressed by Price was that Hume's account of inductive reasoning does not fit with the kind of inferences made in science and everyday life. Price, Goyette reported, pointed out that Hume's rule of induction in fact, stultified scientific inquiry since, on his account; testimonial evidence can never overcome a presumptive law of nature. He went on to illustrate this fact by the example of the Indian prince, who having never experienced a climate refused to believe that water can freeze, Goyette reported that Hume attempted to handle this difficulty by making a distinction between miracles and marvels, but Earman argued that this distinction cannot ultimately be maintained.

Goyette in reporting Earman said that Hume's putative proof against miracles of every kind is a failure. Earman, Goyette reported, however, argued that Hume was aware of the weaknesses embedded in his own argument which explained why in his book, *Of Miracles* contained a second part that treats *Of Miracles* in terms of probability. Earman, reported in part 2 of Hume's Essays, he discussed the contest between ordinary experience and testimony in favour of a miracle, especially in those cases where miracles are deemed to have religious significance. Earman noted that Hume made some valuable points regarding the possibility of deception and self deception, especially, when religious enthusiasm is

present. However, Earman reported that, the truth of these points did not justify Hume's self-contradictory remarks at the beginning of his essay. He accused these points as being unoriginal, and that many of Hume's opponents were aware of the dangers of deception and attempted to distinguish between genuine miracles and those that are fraudulent. Earman criticized Hume's fall back argument that the miracles supporting one religion undermined those in favour of another. Here again, Earman pointed out that Hume's opponents, acknowledging this difficulty, defended the New Testament miracle stories over that of the heathen.

Earman, Goyette further notified was not a Christian apologist, he shared Hume's cynicism but argued that the analysis of miracles "require not philosophical argumentation and pompous solemnities about extra-ordinary claims, requiring extra ordinary proofs, but rather difficult and delicate empirical investigations both into the general workings of collective hysteria and into the details of particular cases".<sup>22</sup> Earman, Goyette reported, pointed out some of the weaknesses in Hume's proof against miracles, but he failed to consider that Hume maybe giving a purely rhetorical argument with a political end in mind, one that employs the "language of proof" for rhetorical reasons. Judged from this perspective, Goyette concluded that *Of Miracle* is not an abject failure, but a resounding success, he advised that one should also note that Earman's own treatment on Hume was relatively brief (86 out of 219 pages) and suspected that some readers may find tedious the extensive use of symbolic logic and mathematical equations in the discussion of the probability to calculus. Goyette however, portrayed Earman's book as a vital need for the interpretation of Hume's claims and accused that most of the authors' criticisms were drawn from Hume's

contemporary critics. Earman's book, Goyette concluded, did a service, however, before introducing us to some of the contemporary responses to Hume's essay.

Earman's accusation that Hume's argument against miracle is Lockean is uncalled for; two persons can have the same idea or opinion about something, again, there is nothing wrong with one being influenced by another. Hume's position that to believe in a particular event of miracle; the miracle event should become recurrent event for one to believe that it occurred. This is contradiction for Hume defined miracle as the violation of the natural law so miracle should not be recurrent as the natural law otherwise, it cannot be a miracle judging Hume's definition of miracle otherwise a contradiction. Also Hume's usage of induction contradicts his usage of induction in the case of miracle.

Again Earman's position according to Goyette that though law-like behaviour is highly probable but does not warrant the conclusion that miracle is impossible is right because even Hume himself said that it is not right to always project the future based on past experiences because we have no rational ground to expect the future from the past experiences. This is why miracle is possible following Hume's definition of it since we sometimes witness events that are contrary to what we use to know.

Price position that Hume misconceived scientific kind of induction therefore stultified scientific, Earman's postulation that Hume's method of investigation of miracle is wrong but it requires empirical investigation both into the general collective hysteria and into particular cases since they are empirically verifiable.

Hume's theory of miracle is said to be in error because it is contradictory to the method of the empiricists' induction but has the foundational error of having not involved the other method involved in investigation of knowledge which is deductive method. Moreover, in certain cases, he uses induction which he is against in his theory of causality to define natural law and then debunk the possibility of miracle with it.

Hendrik, Vander Breggen, in "The Seeds of their Destruction: David Hume's Fatally Flawed Arguments against Miracle Reports" reported that the radically skeptical philosopher Hume argued in his two part essay *Of Miracles* that belief in reports of a miracle such as Jesus resurrection is always unreasonable. On closer examination, however, it became clear that the main arguments Hume put forth in *Of Miracle* were themselves unreasonable and ultimately, unsound. In Hume's first part of *Of Miracle* which offered a philosophical argument against miracle reported: a miracle violates the law of nature that collective human understanding and experience strongly supports, which makes the possibility of a miracle occurrence extremely improbable. This improbability weighs against any particular report of a miracle such that the report becomes unbelievable. To this, Breggen argued that the argument committed the fallacy known as question-begging. Hume assumed that God does exist, (so miracles are extremely improbable) or God does not exist, God's interventions are wholly shown to us by nature's laws (so miracles are extremely improbable).

Again, Hume's second part *Of Miracles* offered four other types of arguments: historical, psychological, sociological and religious. The first three arguments, which addressed what constitutes a poor witness to a miracle, Breggen said, are unsound, because they over generalized where case-by-case investigations were required. For example, Breggen continued, just because Hume made the claim that all people exaggerate did not make it so,

the tendency to exaggerate varies from person to person. Part – 2<sup>s</sup> final argument attempted to put miracles from competing religions against each other, thereby making reports of miracles cancel each other out. This Breggen said neglected several crucial questions, however, are the alleged miracles real? Are they really significant? Is their evidence equally strong? Breggen further said the fact that of all the miracle reports for investigation, only the biblical miracle of Jesus' resurrection involved the supernatural in a coherent and meaningful manner and boasted strong authenticating evidence.

Breggen then deduced that Hume's arguments thus did not destroy the reasonableness of belief in the occurrence *Of Miracles* especially concerning the case of the belief in Christianity's foundational event – the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Breggen went further to make clear how Hume's argument *Of Miracles* committed the fallacy of question begging, also known as circular reasoning. This fallacy Breggen said, assumed as a proof of that which is at issue, and it sneaks their assumption into the argument's premises. An example of the fallacy of question begging would be Christian statements below;

Christian: God must exist  
Skeptic: How do you know?  
Christian: Because the bible says so.  
Skeptic: Why should I believe the bible?  
Christian: Because the bible was written by God.<sup>23</sup>

The problem with the above reasoning, Breggen insinuated is that what is at issue – God's existence – is assumed as a reason for trusting the Bible, but this reason is the very thing being argued for in the first place. Breggen further made the following points that Hume took the "violation of law" aspect of miracle as sufficient grounds for rejecting miracle testimony, and thereby he (Hume) judged any miracle occurrence to be extremely improbable. To be sure, in the case of, say, Jesus' resurrection, such an event would be

extremely improbable if we granted not only the laws of nature but also Hume's assumption that there is no intervention from outside the physical system but this is exactly where the question begging occurred. Hume made the assumption that no other background knowledge is needed to make a probability judgment here. All we need is our knowledge of the relevant laws of nature. We need concern ourselves about any possible intervention from outside of nature. (and so God never intervenes via miracles) or, if God does exist, His influences on nature is shown to us wholly by the laws of nature (and so God never intervenes via miracles) if, however (as Hume explicitly assumed for the sake of argument), then, Hume's assumption about the background knowledge is at issue. In other words, any legitimate, truth-seeking investigation of an alleged miracle required that an assumption such as Hume's be put on hold Breggen opined.

Breggen argued further that Hume's argument works only if we assume that there is no God, or God-like being, who, being outside of nature (whatever we understand this to mean), can and does intervene in nature via miracles. This assumption is at issue when we are considering any alleged evidence for miracles, thus by assuming the above- described background knowledge as a hidden premise, Hume mistakenly, begged the question that only the miracle evidence, which he disallowed from the start, can answer. Hume's mind was already made up before he investigated the miracle evidence, and he (Hume) was not open to what the evidence suggested, Breggen notified.

Breggen further argued that Hume's historical, psychological, and sociological arguments in *Of Miracles* were overgeneralizations on Hume's part. Were he (Hume) to have attempted case-by-case analysis of witnesses to alleged miracles, he surely would have concluded that:

- not all people are required to be highly educated to be considered credible witnesses
- not all people are equally prone to credulity
- not all people are ignorant and barbarous (even though they might come from what Hume takes to be an ignorant and barbarous nation, and
- not all lies are more difficult to expose in these so-called ignorant and barbarous nation.<sup>24</sup>

Breggen argued that whether an education is needed to make a witness credible depends on what it is that is witnessed. In some cases, a high level of expertise is needed. In the case of a miracle in a petridish that contained cellular DNA, a DNA expert would be preferred, since only a DNA expert could attest to such a miracle. In the case of the miracle of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, however, no expertise is needed for a witness to be credible. Educated witnesses or not, Jesus resurrection was quite easy to verify. This is because over a period of several weeks, Jesus visited various people at various times, in various places. He engaged His followers in intelligent conversation, dined with them and occasionally, allowed them to examine Him, Breggen reported.

To Hume's argument on religion which Breggen called "cancelling argument" in part 2 which claimed that miracles from contrary religion cancel each other out, only works if we know the actual physical or spiritual cause of the alleged miracles. Some of the events under consideration may be due to natural causes, whereas some may not. Resurrection such as that in the case of Jesus would not be due to natural causes, because we know what relevant natural forces can and cannot do; and natural forces cannot resurrect a being from the dead. A resurrection more obviously would be due to a supernatural cause, whereas, say, a return to good health could be purely psychosomatic and wholly natural. The cancelling argument

further required Breggen observed, that the apologetic miracle testimonies of contrary religions be equally strong, but perhaps miracle evidence is strong from one religion and weak from the rest. Even if we were to grant that miracle testimonies from contrary religions are equally strong, Breggen contended that Hume's argument failed to address the significance of the qualitative differences between miracles. Not all alleged miracles are qualitatively equal: Indeed, some alleged miracles have greater existential and moral significance than others. As philosophers, Breggen quoted Francis Backwith as he astutely observed that "If the miracle of "A" and Religion "B" are evidently equal, and religion "A" claims to be ordained by the true God because its leader has the ability to instantaneously heal patterned baldness, while religion "B" has a qualitatively better miracle".<sup>25</sup>

In other words Breggen further argued that even if the apologetic miracle testimonies of contrary religious systems were equally strong, a miracle's qualitative dimension is highly significant and counts in the favour of the religious system on belief of which the miracle is alleged to have occurred. Of the major figures of the various religions of the world, for example, Confucius, Buddha, Moses, Muhammed, and Lao Tzu, only one Jesus – is reported to have resurrected from the dead Breggen concluded. Breggen opined that we reasonably can conclude, however, in view of the critique given earlier, that all of Hume's arguments in *Of Miracles* failed, mainly because, he assumed that theism is false. As William J. Wainwright astutely noted;

In short, one's assessment of the inherent probability of miracles should be guided by one's convictions about the nature of reality. If naturalism is true, the inherent probability of miracles is low. Miracle reports probably aren't credible enough to offset this low probability. If theism is true, the inherent probability of miracles is higher. In cases, testimony may be sufficiently credible to justify believing in the occurrence.<sup>26</sup>



Breggen further contended that if we do not know whether theism or naturalism is true, then we should not follow Hume in assuming that a miracle is inherently and extremely improbable, rather, we should let the merits of the miracle report be our primary guide. He reported that “Hume’s failure may seem like bad news for someone who believed his arguments, but it is actually good news. The New Testament provided historical evidence for the miracle reports concerning Jesus, evidence that is corroborated by sources outside the New Testament”.<sup>27</sup> Because the evidence is quite strong, any person who is open to the possibility of God would be well advised to check it out. Those reports, he said, provided solid ground for us to take Jesus and his teachings, seriously. Among other things, Jesus teaches us that He is God (the son) and that God loves us. This surely is good news, surely, too, no one should miss out on its benefits because of Hume’s failed arguments against miracles, Breggen advised.

It is quite evident that Hume’s method of investigating miracle is totally wrong; he might be partially right in some of his submissions about miracles but he cannot be totally right. This is because there are differences in the occurrences of miracles which require different methods of investigation. Hume was only trying to maintain with his empiricist theory but unfortunately, it led him to inconsistencies owing that his theory has some foundational errors and so cannot make a worthwhile establishment of knowledge.

Hume’s line of thought is highly influenced by his belief (atheist), his agnostic position concerning the existence of God led to his denial of miracle.

This much is enough for the philosophers’ view on Hume’s concept of miracle. Let us go over to the issue of the concept of impressions and ideas.

Thomas Reid in *An Inquiry into Human Mind*, came to the submission that Hume yielded himself a captive to the most common of all vulgar prejudices; by this Reid meant the belief in the existence of his own impressions and ideas. Reid therefore remarked:

I beg therefore, to have the honour of making an addition to the skeptical system without which I conceive it cannot hang together. I affirm that the belief of the existence of impressions and ideas is as little supported by reason, as that of the existence of minds and bodies. No man ever did or could offer any reason for this belief. Descartes took it for granted, that he thought, and had sensations and ideas; so have all his followers done. Even the hero of Skepticism hath yielded this point what is there in impressions and ideas so formidable, that this all-conquering philosophy, after triumphing over every other existence, should pay homage to them? Besides, the concession is dangerous; for belief is of such a nature, if you leave any root, it will spread; and you may easily put it up altogether, than say, Hitherto shelter thou go and no further; the existence of impressions and ideas I give up to thee; but see thou pretend to nothing more. A thorough and consistent Skeptic will never, therefore yield this point. To such a Skeptic have nothing to say; but of the semi skeptic, I should beg to know, why they believe the existence of their impressions and ideas. The true reason I take to be because they cannot help it; and the same reason will lead them to believe many other things.<sup>28</sup>

Reid however meant here that production of impressions and ideas both involve the joint work of mind and body and therefore making reason to be part of the formation of ideas. This however refuted Hume's involvement of only sense perception in the acquisition of knowledge.

Hume's eulogies about sense experience as the source and basis for all knowledge is wrong. Sense perception which results into impressions and ideas is already a mental operation. Reid is right in his position that the production of impressions and ideas both involve the joint work of mind and body therefore, this makes the reducing of the mind as being passive in this case faulty. This also refuted Hume's position that everything exists as a distinct, particular entity without any connection, whatsoever existing among them which led him deny the relation between ideas, mind/body, cause and effect and all metaphysical realities.

This is an indication that Hume's ground for rejection of metaphysical realities has foundational error.

Anthony Flew in "David Hume: Philosopher of Moral Sense", offered a 'Wittgenstenian' critique of Hume's reliance upon 'sense data' which emphasized that we need to recognize that there are both 'public' and 'private' senses of 'experience' and that Hume may not handle these senses correctly:

... In the ordinary and most useful sense, a claim to have had experience of something is a claim to have been in direct contact with mind-independent realities; whereas Hume is supposed to be committed to the contentions that he, and we never so privileged ... He, therefore, is entitled to employ the word experience, and all other terms with similar meanings, with reference only to on goings in his own mind-to his own internal world so to speak.<sup>29</sup>

To bring out the enormous and vital difference between these two senses, Flew considered the sad case of the philosophically scrupulous applicant, who responded to the advertisement of a farmer seeking to hire hands with experience of cows and abundant cowishness data – he, or she, neither is nor ever will be in a position to know that there even are such things as cows. Such an applicant would be lucky simply to be dismissed from the interview, without suffering any penalty for impertinence. Flew criticized Hume's rejection of perception and reliance on ideas as follows:

In a less artificial terminology, this amounted to saying that these arguments from illusion prove that there is in fact no such thing as perception; that we are never, that is to say, immediately aware through our senses of the existence and some of the characteristics of any mind-independent reality. By thus showing that and how we are sometimes misled into sensory error, and by inferring from this that we can never truly and correctly perceive,

Hume was presenting an argument of the same egregiously unsound form as that so memorably and so disturbingly unleashed by Descartes in the *Discourse*:

The form of these arguments is egregiously unsound in as much as the desired conclusions, not merely do not follow, but are also actually incompatible with, the proffered premises. For if in some area, we know some cases in which we have been mistaken, then we must have some knowledge, in that area, and cannot have been in every instance wrong. (One popular and parallel fallacy, in a quite different field, is that of arguing that, since everything must have a cause, and since the claim of causes allegedly cannot extend indefinitely backwards in time, therefore there must have been, in the beginning a first cause.<sup>30</sup>

Flew also noted that Hume challenged others to produce counter – examples to his ‘psychological views by applying to experience, while, at the same time, also contending that where he cannot find an impression, there is no valid ideas; but Flew found this suspicious when he said;

But this – not to put too fine a point on it – is outrageous. It is all very well to support such a psychological generalization by citing the kind of evidence which Hume does cite, and then to challenge all that comes to produce a counter-example. But it simply will not do at all to turn the generalization thus supported into the supposedly sure foundation of a method of challenge, dismissing anything which might be preferred as a counter - examples as being, on that ground alone, necessarily discredited. He is arguing that, if we can find no impression of which some putative idea is a representation, then it cannot really be legitimate.<sup>31</sup>

Flew pointed out, for example, that in his discussion of how simple impressions always take precedence over simple ideas, he discussed the impossibility of blind individuals having visual ideas:

To enforce the general point more firmly, reconsider the particular question of visual ideas enjoyed by those who never vouchsafed visual impressions. Suppose that we wish to test Hume's general hypothesis by reference to this particular case. We enlist the cooperation of a team of persons blind from birth. They come trooping into our psychological laboratory, eager to serve as respondents to our questions, or subjects in our experiments. But then what next? Suppose further – what we probably believe to be practically impossible that some or all of them have in fact enjoyed such visual imagery. Then they will still not be able to tell us anything about its purely visual characteristic.<sup>32</sup>

John Dewey in "The Quest for Certainty" maintained that whereas traditional empiricists (Hume and Mill) sought the origins of mathematical ideas in antecedent experience, 'experimental empiricism' "... recognized that experience, the actual experience of men, is one of doing acts, performing operations, cutting, marking off, dividing up, extending, piercing together, joining, assembling and mixing, hoarding and dealing out, in general selecting and adjusting things as means for reaching consequence.<sup>33</sup>

It is however true of Hume that sense experience is the basis of our experience but all our knowledge cannot be said to have arisen from sense experience. Like Kant, this is what Flew tried to portray here that all our ideas do not derive from impressions. There are ideas one has first without having the impression of it, just like the example stated by Flew above. It is however an indication that there are various ways of acquiring knowledge other than through sense perception. The example cited by Flew about procurement of certain herbs for particular disease is typical of knowledge derived by intuition or through revelation which is divine. The idea of this kind is not derived from any impression of any kind and this therefore debunked Hume's position that all our knowledge is derived from impressions of perception.

Robert B. Westbrook in “John Dewey and American Democracy”, maintained that beginning with T.H. Green’s edition of Hume’s *Treatise*, idealists endeavor to reconcile religion and Victorian natural science, via a critique of agnostic, empiricist epistemology; empiricists and idealists agreed that science was the knowledge of relations between things, but, the idealists argued, empiricism with its theory of knowledge as the impression of discrete sensations on a passive mind was unable to explain how such relations are known. In so far as they ordered sensations, these relations could not be the product of sensations, for that view would be akin to a geologist’s teaching that ‘the first formation of rocks was the product of all layers built upon it’. Thus the empiricists had to admit that ordinary experiences as well as scientific knowledge presupposed a constructive function for consciousness which their epistemology did not allow. Far from being the ally of science, empiricism rendered science impossible, Westbrook accordingly said;

... the idealists advanced beyond Kant by means of their (controversial) theory of internal relations. This theory held that all the relations of a particular thing were “internal” to it, that is, they were all essential characteristics of that thing; knowledge of any particular thing thus rested on knowledge of a connected whole of which it was a part, and the fact that all the relations of every particular thing were essential implies “the existence of a single, permanent, and all inclusive system of relations moreover, because relations were the product of consciousness, there was further implied the existence of a permanent single consciousness which forms the bond of relations”.<sup>34</sup>

Westbrook noted that Dewey criticized the empiricists’ faculty, “psychology of sensationalism” because it gave descriptions of that which has for the most part no existence and which ... it but described and did not explain.

There are relations among things and Westbrook was right to have said that Hume is wrong to have attributed the relations as the product of sensation is totally wrong. Relations

however have to do with what is internal forming the characteristic of that thing. The knowledge of that particular thing should be the knowledge of a whole.

Just as earlier agreed with Lewis, every particular existence has internal mechanisms which should be studied in order to understand the mode of operations. This is no doubt the act of consciousness as Westbrook noted which the empiricists, Hume not excluded, relegated the role of reason by making reason passive in the act of knowing.

However, this is the exclusion Hume and other empiricists made of the rationalists' theory which resulted in philosophical error in the sense that the empiricists, Hume not excluded were interested only on what is eternally true of facts and paid less attention to what is internally true of facts.

Hilary Putnam in "After Empiricism" maintained that: according to Berkeley and Hume, I do not have such a thing as "abstract ideas" or a "general idea" of green. When a particular token – be it a green color – patch or a token of the word "green" – occurs in my mind, and is used as a symbol for the whole class of green sense-data, all that happens is that the token is associated with a certain class of other tokens to which it is similar or which are similar to one another. Putnam reported that Ayer and Russell departed from Berkeley and Hume on this point – and with good reason. For this, Putnam further said that, "if I can think of a particular relation of 'similarity', then I am able to recognize at least one universal. Thus universals cannot really be avoided in the way Berkeley and Hume wanted to do it",<sup>35</sup>.

Hume's denial of universals is as a result of his misconception that every proposition should be in subject/predicate form and this led him to view the universals that are of the nature of substantive and adjective to be the only universals that are. Also his belief that the relational proposition (if there are things like them) can always be reducible to subject-predicate form;

that proposition stating that two or more things have certain relation if at all they are possible, must have the same form with the subject- predicate, that what we refer as relations which must all the time be that of two things, must always be reduced or made reducible to the properties of the seemingly related terms and finally, the case that there are no distinction between the use of the term “ideas” as an “act of thought” and “the object of thought”, in other words, the idea of thought in Hume’s theory is ambiguously used.

Robert Paul Wolff in “Theory of Mental Activity” *The Philosophy of David Hume*’, maintained that Hume’s explanation of how the imagination, when subjected is the repeated force of association developed certain habits and customs is flawed:

This explanation, based on an analogy between gravitation and association, is not satisfactory as it stands. According to Newton, two bodies attract one another without (so far as we know) the intervention of any third thing. This is at least intelligible, for bodies can literally move about toward or away from each other. But an impression clearly is not a body which approaches or recedes from other impressions. When Hume says that the cause and effect are “associated” he means that the mind tends to think of one when presented with the other. Thus the metaphor of “gentle force” is misleading. The impressions affect the mind, not one another. The question remains, by what means does the observed contiguity and resemblance become translated into a habit of association.<sup>36</sup>

Wolf also posited that:

Customary transitions” and propensities are mental operations of powers, not contents of consciousness. If the ideas of necessary connection is a copy of the translation from an impression to its usual attendant, then it is a copy of a mental activity....in these passages, we can observe Hume shifting toward explanation in terms of mental activity, while still tied to the language of mental contents.<sup>37</sup>

Wolf also noted, in regard to Hume’s explanation of the nature of belief that “the trouble with Hume’s theory is that it failed to explain why we do not believe vivid and affecting fiction, and yet believe dull history book”<sup>38</sup>



Wolff is right to have found inconsistencies with Hume's theory. Since Hume did not believe that there are relations between ideas and if there is, it is inconsistency of him to talk about "gentle force" responsible for the association of impressions and ideas. Impressions are not expected to form ideas given Hume's theory of relations among things. Though Hume's theory of ideas seems fantastic but it unfortunately the foundation of the root of error in his theory. The process by which impressions translate into ideas is not to be derived from empirical source but it is purely a mental activity and so a metaphysical act. Hence, Hume is a metaphysician without knowing it while claiming to be a consistent empiricist.

Let us go over to the theme of induction.

Hans Reichenbach in *The Pragmatic Justification of Induction, Experience and Prediction*, maintained that:

...Hume believed that any justification application of the inductive inference presupposes a demonstration that the conclusion is true. It is this assumption on which Hume's criticism (of induction) is based. His two objections directly concern only the question of the truth of the conclusion; they prove that the truth of the conclusion cannot be demonstrated. The two objections, therefore, are valid only in so far as the Humean assumption is valid. It is this question to which we must turn: is it necessary, for the justification of inductive inference, to show that its conclusion is true.<sup>39</sup>

Hume's problem with induction is that it presupposes that the conclusion because the truth of induction cannot be demonstratively proved as this is the reason he denied the existence of cause and effect which he took as a result of constant conjunction found between objects and events. Hume here is inconsistent with his theory because despite that he questioned the truth of conclusion derived from induction, he still defined natural law using this same principle and also explained away the concept of miracle by the same principle. This is however inconsistency.

As Garrett Thomson observed, in his work *Beckon to Kant: An Introduction of Modern Philosophy*, averred that... Hume actually gave two criteria for distinguishing between relations of ideas and matters of fact: knowledge and truth. According to the first criterion statements about the relations between ideas are known by *a priori* reasoning or, in Hume's own words "by the mere operation of thought" statements of matters of fact are not knowable in this way. According to the second criterion, statements, of matters of fact are made true by what exists, and their denial can 'never imply a contradiction'. Statements involving the relations of ideas are true independently of what exists, and their denial implies a contradiction. The difference between the two criteria is important in understanding Kant, Thomson noted. According to Thomson, Kant distinguished between *a priori*/empirical, analytic /synthetic. Briefly, *a priori* truths are known independently of experience, whereas empirical or *a posteriori* truths can only be known through experience. Analytic truths cannot be denied without contradiction, whereas synthetic truth can".<sup>40</sup>

Thomson also went further to speak on Kant's mind on Hume's notion of memory and imagination. He remarked that:

At Treatise, I, I, III, Hume tries to characterize the difference between imagining and remembering. He thinks that there is an immediately perceptible difference between the ideas of memory and those of imagination; the former are more vivid and lively than the latter. Now, even if all memory ideas are more vivid than those of imagination, this fact alone does not delineate the difference between remembering and imagining. But in any case, some acts of remembering seem to involve having ideas at all. For example, I can remember that  $2+2=4$  without bringing any idea to mind. This point is important because Hume tends to explain all mental activities in terms of having perceptions, and he thinks of perceptions as impressions or the faint copies of impressions (that is ideas).<sup>41</sup>

Thompson went on to say that “a more Kantian approach to distinguish between imagination and memory would be described as what capacities involved in being able to remember something and in being able to imagine something, rather than trying to specify some perceptible difference, or some difference of feeling between memory idea and an idea of imagination”.<sup>42</sup>

According to Thompson, Kant’s submission on Hume’s distinction between memory and imagination is wrong because there are acts of remembering that do not involve ideas. This however disproves sense perception as the sole source of our knowledge disputing the postulation of Hume that all our ideas come from impressions. Hume’s perception is a mental operation but perception is not all there is to mental operations. There are evidence of knowledge that has no root from any perception of the senses as in the case of revelation and intuition.

Lastly, let us go over to the theme, Belief.

Barry Stroud “On Hume”, maintained that Hume’s treatment of belief is problematic. Stroud maintained that;

Hume’s talk of believing as a feeling must not be misunderstood. He is not saying that a belief differs from a conception of an idea solely in the addition of a certain mental item, viz a feeling, to the original idea. There would then be a difference in the items that are before the mind when someone believes something and when he merely thinks about it, and that is what Hume wants to deny. It is rather in its effects on the mind that an idea that is a belief differs from mere idea-it is said to ‘weigh more in the thought’, to have a superior influence on our passions and imagination, and to be ‘the governing principle of our actions. Hume seems never to have entertained the idea that this connection between belief and the passions and the will might constitute the very difference he seeks between beliefs and mere conception. That is not to say that he simply missed something obvious. No adequate theory

of the nature of belief has been given to this day, and that is probably because, “it has been investigated in virtually complete independence from the notions of passions, desire, will and action.”<sup>43</sup>

As Treance Penelhum in “Hume’s “Moral Psychology” noted:

The doctrine of calm passions is Hume’s main card in the game against rationalist psychology. Its main internal difficulty is the fact that it requires him to say that passions can be ‘in a manner, imperceptible’, while classing them as impressions (T2. 1.1, 276), despite the fact that he has earlier distinguished impressions from ideas on the basis of their force and vivacity and has even used the very word ‘violence’ in doing so.<sup>44</sup>

Thomas Nagel in “The Last Word”, maintained on the same issue of belief that:

Since moral reasoning is a species of practical reasoning, its conclusions are desires, intentions, and actions, or feelings and convictions that can motivate desire, intentions and actions. We cannot know how to live, and why, and we want the answer in general terms; if possible. Hume famously believed that a “passion” immune to rational assessment must underline (Sic) every motive, there can be no such thing as specifically practical reason, nor specifically moral reason either. This is false, because why ‘passions’ are the sources of some reason, other passions or desires are themselves motivated and or justified by reasons that do not depend on still more basic desires.<sup>45</sup>

Here Nagel countered Hume’s notion of belief that what underlies our motives are passions devoid of reasoning and this resulted in the impossibility of having practical reason or moral reason for our motives, Nagel rather insisted that there are passions that are being motivated by reason and yet do not depend on desires.

Our motives are controlled by reason and not passions as Hume claimed; our passions may motivate our reason but it is the reason that has the responsibility of making justification on our passion, here reason plays an active role and not passive as Hume would make us understand. Our moral judgment and actions are controlled not by our passions or any feeling, even Hume himself acclaimed that man is more of a reasonable than an active being.

Hume however is not that consistent with his empiricist theory, his focus is to bring empiricism to its logical conclusion.

Kurt Baier in “The Rational and Moral Order: The Social Roots of Reason and Morality”, wrote that: But if facts can be reasons for thinking, then one can reason across a logical gap, since then one can reason from facts to what is not entailed by them. Thus, even if there are no entailments between ‘is’ and ‘ought’, this would not show that facts cannot be reasons for ought-judgments”.<sup>46</sup>

The dominant conception construes all kinds of reasons as logical or deductive ones. But these are only a subclass of conclusive reasons which in turn is only a subclass of reasons. Another sub-class of conclusive reasons is based on conclusive evidence. Thus, the fact that Jones’s finger prints were on a certain gun is conclusive evidence that Jones actually held that gun. But not all evidence is conclusive, yet even inconclusive evidence can be the basis of a more or less weighty reason, that is, warrant of rational justification for believing that for which its evidence is. Once distinguished between reasons and their bases, “we need no longer deny the existence of the reason for actions and choices, on the grounds that facts cannot entail these things or that such reasons cannot be based on entailment. Once we accept this point, we have abandoned the dominant conception of reason”.<sup>47</sup>

It seems clear that we can take ‘is’ to refer to constative facts and ‘ought’ to cases such as those in which someone knows a fact and knows that it constitutes a conclusive or an all-things-considered reason for him to believe a certain thing example, the fact that if a lump of sugar is a cube, then it necessarily has twelve-edges, for if he knows this fact about the lump of sugar and knows that it entails that the lump has twelve edges, then he also ought to know that he ought to believe that it has twelve edges, since he ought to know that it must be true.

Thus, the fact Baier assumed for the moment was that it is a fact, that there can be no entailment between the fact that constitutes the cognitive reason and what it is a reason for, namely, to believe something, is not an obstacle to reasoning soundly from 'is' to 'ought' since cognitive reasons are designed to enable us to reason precisely this way. And they are based on the same sorts of grounds on which the standard arguments employing (constative) fact-linking reason are based.

Since facts are reasons for thinking, there is possibility for one to reason or think beyond what is given as Baier acclaimed, though Hume attribute it to imagination. If reason should be regarded as passive as Hume claimed, then our knowledge will be limited to only what we can hold in our hands.

Thus far with the contributions of various authors on Hume's philosophy. Like we have already mentioned how fascinated Hume's epistemology is, indeed his philosophy. One basic thing that is highly noticeable in all these is how scholars have consistently accused him of over generalization and misconceptions. However, having reviewed the above literatures, there is a point the authors did not touch, and that point is Hume's fundamental theoretical assumptions, misconceptions and inconsistencies embedded in his theory; this simply means that Hume was not consistent with his system, theory and propositions in his study of philosophy of the source of human knowledge and the result is philosophical inconsistency. In other words, he threw away the baby with the bath water. He fell into metaphysics which he criticized as a result of inconsistencies he involved himself as he embarked on his philosophical investigation of what there is. Finally, Hume's philosophical analysis of phenomenistic epistemology reflects the culmination of empiricism which led to logical positivism (Ayer and Carnap) and scientism (Kuhn and Popper).

In the coming chapter, we shall do exposition of Hume's philosophy.

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## **CHAPTER THREE.**

### **3.0. DAVID HUME'S LIFE AND WORK.**

David Hume was born on April 26, 1711, in Edinburgh Scotland which is very close to his family's estate in Ninewells, Berwickshire. He was born seven years after the death of Locke (1632. 1704) and when Berkeley (1685-1753) was a young man of 26. He was known to have consistently brought empiricism to its logical conclusion and was prepared to accept the consequences. According to Hume "the types of knowledge" do not lie in the comprehension of "being" but in its ability to be a guide in practical life".<sup>1</sup> Hume's mother, Katherine Falconer, a daughter of David Falconer, was a woman of a singular merit. His father, Joseph Home, was a gentleman. Hume had a successful education which he attributed to his mother whom he said undertook his care. In describing his early education he commented. "I passed through the ordinary course of education with success, and was seized very early with a passion for literature which has been the ruling passion of my life and the great source of my employment"<sup>2</sup>. In the early 1720s, Hume entered the University of Edinburgh. Hume was urged by his family to study law because, his mother, Katherine Falconer, came from a family of lawyers but he declined to it as law was not appealing to him. Instead however, he showed much keener interest in the ancient writers on history, natural science and philosophy. It was here that he acquired "grounding in the classical authors, logic and metaphysics, natural philosophy, ethics and mathematics"<sup>3</sup>. It was on record that Hume left the school years after without any degree. Though, Hume was not so wealthy, as evidenced from his family background, he had sufficient means to support himself in his study of general learning and philosophy. He later went into business at Bristol in 1734, after unsuccessfully trying to be a businessman in Bristol, he underwent an

intellectual crisis and in the moment of illumination he found his true vocation. Hume “went to France, resolved to devote himself in any life pursuits and to make a consistent frugality compensate for his lack of fortune”<sup>4</sup>. It was during his three years stay in France (1734-1737) that his major works in philosophy began.

Firstly, he wrote his famous work *A Treatise of Human Nature*, which was an attempt by him to introduce the experiential method of reasoning even in moral subjects. This book was made up of three volumes, the first two were published anonymously in London in 1739 and the third published in 1740. Though Hume later rejected the *Treatise*, which according to him ‘fell dead born from the press, “without reaching such distinction as even to excite a murmur among the zealots”<sup>5</sup>. This was because, the work did not attract public applause and so he became down spirited and he exclaimed that “never literary attempt was more unfortunate”<sup>6</sup>.

In 1745, Hume did apply for the chair of ethics and pneumatic philosophy at the University of Edinburgh but his reputation for skepticism and theism helped to make his application unsuccessful<sup>7</sup>. Despite the fact that he had served in many capacities during his life time, he was never a university professor, unlike other contemporary philosophers of his status. Although, he was two times nominated for such positions, the extreme opposition of the Scottish clergy prevented him from being accepted. This sort of opposition from religious angle was however not a surprise to Hume as he was always confronted with it because of his writings that were considered blasphemous and which at one time, nearly earned him excommunication by the general assembly of the Kirk.

In 1745 still, he served as a tutor to the mad Marquess of Annandale with whom he stayed for a year, directing and guiding him until the Marquess became hopelessly insane. Later, Hume became the secretary to lieutenant-General James St Clair, and took on the rank of judge-advocate. Then, in 1749, Hume returned to Scotland and lived in the country of Ninewells. In 1748, after rejecting the *Treatise of Human Nature*, he relished the first book of the *Treatise* under the title *Philosophical Assents Concerning Human Understanding*. The second edition of this book appeared in 1751 and Hume gave it the present title, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*. It was the content of this book that Kant commented woke him from his dogmatic slumber. That same year, Hume published *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, which was more or less a recasting of the third part of the *Treatise*.

Hume however, wrote some other books after the publication of the *Treatise*. In 1752, he published several political essays and began his celebrated history in Britain. The celebration which had eluded him in his early literary endeavours came to him as a historian. These books included *Political Discourse*, published in 1752 *History of Great Britain* (1746), *History of England under the House of Tudor* (1759), *History of England from the invasion of Julius Caesar to the Accession of Henry vii* (1761). By the time, Hume was done; he later returned to Edinburgh in 1766, became an under-secretary of state in the following year and retired two years later due to ill health. He lived in his native city for the rest of his life and died as a result of bowel cancer. With these works, he became a world famous figure.

Hume made friends with such notable personalities of his time which included Adam Smith whom shortly before his death entrusted the publication of his manuscript; *Dialogue concerning Natural Religion* which he had written before 1752, was published posthumously in 1777, and under Hume's name in 1783; and Jean Jacques Rousseau whose relationship with him ended in dispute.

The last decade of Hume's life was popularly noted because of this dispute with the Swiss-born French philosopher. There is also a pamphlet which he wrote to clarify issues about his dispute with Jean Jacques Rousseau, the title of which is *A concise and Genuine Account*, this appeared in 1766. Lastly, there is an autographical sketch of his life which was titled, *My Own Life*.

Hume's autobiography edited by his friend, Adam Smith, was also published in 1777. But of all these works, Hume preferred the *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* most, as he continually referred students or critics of his philosophy to the *Enquiry* saying that, "henceforth, the author desires that the following pieces (the *Enquiry*) may alone be regarded as containing his philosophical sentiments and principles".<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, it is notable that David Hume had made a mark in the sands of time in philosophy that getting his equal in the history of philosophy becomes difficult.

### **3.1.0. Philosophical Influences on David Hume.**

It is not contestable that Hume's works are great in contributing to the progress of philosophy (Empiricism in particular). However, the society and the environment Hume found himself contributed in a considerable extent to the line of his thought. In the day of Hume, philosophy was treating the epistemic problem of true source of human knowledge.

The rationalistic metaphysical systems of Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz and Malebranche who accorded acquisition of knowledge to reason: it is a given among this group that our senses are deceptive and so, they distrusted the senses as sources of knowledge; only reason can do just that. To them, it is only through reason that we truly understand the fundamental truth about reality. This school also believed that the fundamental truth about the world can be known *a priori*; that they are either innate or self evident to the minds. These philosophers made use of deductive reasoning to prove the truth of propositions concerning the nature of the universe; God and human soul. Hume was dissatisfied with the approaches of his predecessors on the certainty of human knowledge. Therefore, “Hume wishes to base his philosophy on the experimental method and to study human nature by applying the empirical method of the experimental sciences”.<sup>9</sup>

Secondly, it is however still common to find him and the individuality of his philosophy considered merely the third major representatives, and logical outcome of British empiricism, John Locke, and George Berkeley, being therefore, his two predecessors. Undoubtedly, Hume’s writings owed so much to the influence of Locke and Berkeley. The major principle which Hume formulated in his *Enquiry concerning Human understanding* - “all our ideas ... are copies of our impressions”<sup>10</sup> considered a re-echo of Locke’s fundamental views in his *Essays concerning Human understanding*. Most of Hume’s arguments concerning the nature of object and ideas were taken almost directly from Berkeley. This is very evident because, during Hume’s youth, when he was a student of Edinburgh, he belonged to a society of young men who were engaged in discussing Berkeley’s conception of the material world and who were also correspondents with him (Berkeley). Berkeley’s influence on Hume was even confirmed by Hume himself when he

said that the writings of that very ingenious author-referring to Berkeley-form the best of lesson of skepticism which are to be found either among the ancient or modern philosophers. He however, opined that the skepticism of Berkeley's argument stemmed from the fact that they admit of no answer and produced no convictions. This kind of skepticism that admits of no answer and produces no conviction was not therefore satisfactory to Hume as he battled to correct the short comings of skepticism in his own philosophy. However, though Hume was influenced by Locke and Berkeley, it was not to the extent of drawing the same conclusions with them as the resulting philosophy constructed with the aid of their views by Hume differed sharply from theirs. Unlike both Locke and Berkeley, Hume broke away from the orthodox philosophical assumptions then in dominance - the dogmatic rationalism of the seventeenth century most notably, its appeal to God. Hume himself recognized and confirmed this fact when he wrote to Henry in Rome in 1739 saying that, "my principles ... would produce almost a total alteration in philosophy and you know, revolutions of this kind are not easily brought about".<sup>11</sup>

From this therefore, it became clear that though Locke and Berkeley influenced Hume a lot, Hume never however allowed himself to be carried away by their philosophical views as of course, he did not agree with them in many areas. One thus discovers that Hume only used the epistemological procedures of Locke and Berkeley as ladder to aid him climb to his own epistemological procedure, and after this, he discarded the ladder. He mostly used Locke's and Berkeley's views to bring out the absurdities inherent in the epistemological traditions he was attacking – dogmatic rationalism.

Another notable influence on Hume was the skepticism of the French thinkers. It is pertinent to note Hume's contact with the works of Francis Hutcheson as related by Lavine:

Hume had discovered the works of Francis Hutcheson ... who had argued that moral principles are not based upon the bible as Christianity says nor are they based upon reason, as Plato said and Socrates had said, our moral beliefs, said Hutcheson, rests only on our feelings, or sentiment of approval or disapproval.<sup>12</sup>

This led him to assert that moral beliefs are neither divine nor rational but only express our feelings to all our beliefs. He attributed the achievements of science - physics, chemistry, astronomy and physiology to sentiments and feelings that we perceive over and over again in an orderly fashion which leads to our believing them to be true. In his *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Hume stated that his purpose is to "study the science of man and to explain the principles of human nature".<sup>13</sup>

Hume was also tremendously impressed by the achievement of Newton in the field of natural science. Newton's success which depended on his employment of experimental method was so much acknowledged by Hume. For this reason, Hume felt that the time had come to employ this same method to philosophy believing it to bring about a comparable success. Hume acknowledged that thinkers before him had attempted this method as he commented, "earlier thinkers have made a start in this direction, and he mentioned, and has obviously been influenced by the works of Locke, Shaftsbury, Mandeville, Hutcheson and Butter".<sup>14</sup> But for Hume, "none had made a systematic attempt to work out an empirical science of man, and none had found any general principles by which the subject could be unified as mechanics as had been unified by Newton's law on motion".<sup>15</sup> Hume was determined to harmonize Newton's experimental method in order to produce a true science by which the hypothesis of rationalistic metaphysics could be scrutinized.

The particular conception Hume has of philosophy as an empirical ‘science of man’ is to him the true emergence of modern philosophy. Hume’s philosophy can be said to be shaped by the following dispositions:

- a. That all our ideas are acquired from impressions of sensation,
- b. That we cannot conceive of anything different from what our experiences gives us,
- c. That a matter of fact can never be proved a priori. It must be discovered by or inferred from experience. In order to achieve this task, Hume “proposes to do this by consulting experience.”<sup>16</sup>

It is based on this frame of mind that Hume’s extreme empiricism was developed.

### **3.2. The Origin of Ideas.**

David Hume, in trying to apply experimental method, that is, method of the experimental sciences to philosophy, in tracing the origin of our ideas, in section I part 1 of Book 1 of the *Treatise* resolved that “All the perceptions of the human mind resolve themselves into two distinct kinds—impressions and ideas”<sup>17</sup>. He maintained that everything about human perception must be based on impressions and ideas. He saw this as the foundation of his theory and a test for a true knowledge. Impressions and ideas are of the same source, and have sense perception as their only source. The difference between impression and idea consists in the degree of force and vivacity with which they strike upon the mind, and make their way into our thought and consciousness. Those perceptions which enter with most force and violence, Hume named impression, and they include all our sensations, passions and emotions, as they make their first appearance to the soul. Any claim of knowledge that is not derived from impression is rationally unjustified. “Those perceptions which enter with most force and violence, we may name impressions; and under this name I comprehend all



our sensations, passions, and emotions, as they make their first appearance in the soul. By ideas, I mean the faint images of these in thinking and reasoning”.<sup>18</sup>

Perception arises through the direct contact of the senses with the object of sense perception and this is what gives us the impression of the object. As I am now with my books writing on them, I have a very strong perception of my book. This is what Hume meant by impression. However, when I leave my study room, I will have the idea of my study room, I will then have the ideas of my books furnished by the impressions of my sense experience. This is evident in Stumpf’s comment on Hume that, “the original stuff of thought is an impression”<sup>19</sup>. So the origin of ideas is nothing but the impressions we have from sense perception. Harold Noonan observed that; “Hume’s understanding of the origin of ideas “intends to serve as the foundation of his (Hume’s) philosophy”.<sup>20</sup>

By ideas, Hume meant faint images of impressions in thinking and reasoning, such, for instance, are all the perceptions excited by the present discourse, excepting only those which arise from the sight and touch, and excepting the immediate pleasure of uneasiness it may occasion. Our ideas, Hume said, may approach to our impressions like in sleep, in fever, in madness, or in any violent emotions of soul; on the other hand, it may sometimes happen, that our impressions are so faint and low that we cannot distinguish them from our ideas, but in general, “they are so different that no one can make a scruple to rank them under distinct head, and assign to each of a peculiar name to mark the difference”.<sup>21</sup>

Ideas however to Hume, have a great resemblance with our impressions except their degree of force and vivacity. The one seemed to be, in a manner, the reflection of the other, so that all the perceptions of the mind are double and appear both as impressions and ideas. “When I shut my eyes and I think of my chamber, the ideas from the exact representations of the

impressions I felt nor is there any circumstance of the one, which is not to be found in the other, in running over my other perceptions. If I find still the same resemblance and representation”.<sup>22</sup> The impression Hume was making here is that ideas and impressions appear always to correspond to each other.

Another division of our perception which extends itself both to our impressions and ideas are simple and complex. Hume distinguished between simple impressions and complex impressions. Simple impressions are the impressions made in our minds by objects when we perceive them, while complex impressions are combinations of simple impressions. He similarly distinguished between simple ideas and complex ideas. Simple ideas are faint images of simple impressions, while complex ideas are combinations of simple ideas. Simple perceptions or impressions and ideas are such as to admit of no distinction or separation. The complexes are the contrary to these and may be distinguished into parts. Though a particular colour, taste and smell, are qualities all united together in this apple, it is very easy to perceive they are not the same, but are at least distinguishable from each other. Hume later observed that many of our complex ideas never had impressions that correspond to them, and that many of our complex impressions never exactly copied ideas. Hume perceived therefore, that though there is, in general, a great resemblance between our complex impressions and ideas, yet the rule is not universally true that they are exact copies of each other. He therefore affirmed that every simple idea has a simple impression, a correspondent idea, “Hence anyone who denies this universal resemblance, Hume desires the person to show a single impression that has not a corresponding idea. If he does not answer this challenge as it is certain he cannot, as we may from his silence and our own

observation, establish our conclusion”<sup>23</sup>. Thus we find out that our simple ideas and impressions resemble each other.

Impressions and ideas as they stand with regard to their existence and which of them causes and which effects is this, Hume formed a general proposition that “all our simple idea in the first appearance, are derived from simple impressions, which are correspondent to them, and which they exactly represent”.<sup>24</sup>

By a review of what Hume earlier asserted, that every simple impression with a correspondent idea, and every simple idea with a correspondent impression form this constant conjunction of resembling perceptions. Hume concluded that there is a great connection between our correspondent impressions and ideas, and that the existence of the one has a considerable influence upon the other. (Such constant conjunction in such an infinite number of instances) Hume said, can never arise from chance, but clearly proves a dependence of the impressions on the ideas, or of the ideas on the impressions. Hume therefore placed impressions before ideas. To this Hume said “I consider the order of their first appearance, and find, by constant experience, that the simple impressions always take the precedence, of their correspondent ideas but never appear in the contrary order”.<sup>25</sup>

Hume therefore concluded that impressions are formed from objects and ideas are formed from impressions and that we cannot perceive any colour or feel any sensation merely upon thinking of them. To this Hume said; “The constant conjunction of our resembling perceptions, is convincing proof, that the one are the causes of the other, and this priority of the impressions is an equal proof, that our impressions are the cause of our ideas not our ideas of our impression”.<sup>26</sup>

Ideas Hume continued, are dependent on impressions not only for their materials but also for the legitimate combination of these materials. Hume's method was therefore to show that "Every idea, simple or complex must be tested by comparison with the impression from which it is supposed to be derived. If in this comparison, it is found there is something in the ideas that is not in the impression, such extra belief must be regarded as the result of arbitrary association".<sup>27</sup>

The scope of our ideas are unbounded, Hume claimed that "there are no substantial restraints on the range of ideas we can form. He further explained that "our mind may be able to produce ideas which may look as if they never came through impressions, but on closer examination, we discover this power of the mind to form complex ideas are nothing but the faculty of compounding, transposing, augmenting or diminishing the materials afforded us by the senses and experience".<sup>28</sup> It thus became clear here that Hume's position is that even when the mind produces complex ideas, these ideas, though complex are not beyond impressions. When we carefully examine at the scope of our ideas, we will observe that all the ideas we have are derived from the materials supplied by the senses. For instance, he held that when we think of a golden mountain, we only join two consistent ideas, that is, gold and mountain. The role the mind plays here was therefore to join these ideas which of course came through impressions or more lively ones, this boiled down to Hume's position that all our ideas are therefore copies of our impressions or more lively ones. This also is known as "copy principle". The implication of this is that it is the work of the imagination to join two ideas which we originally have through impression of mountain and a metal of gold, of a horse and wings to give us golden mountain or a flying horse. It is Hume's claims

that when this line of thought is considered, one may likely conclude that “there are no substantial restraints on the range of ideas we can form”.<sup>29</sup>

Hume went ahead to explain further; “nothing at first view, may seem unbounded than the thought of man, which not only escapes all human power and authority, but is not even restrained within the limits of nature and reality. To form monsters and join incongruous shapes and appearances costs the imagination no more trouble than to conceive the most natural and familiar objects”<sup>30</sup>

The content of the mind are therefore impressions and ideas of which he further divided impressions into ‘sensation’ and ‘reflection’, sensation he said, arises in the soul originally, from unknown causes. Reflection is derived in great measure from our ideas in the following order. An impression first strikes upon the senses and makes us perceive heat or cold, thirst or hunger, pleasure or pain, of some kind or other of this impression, there is a copy taken by the mind which remains after impression ceases; and this Hume referred to as “idea”. This idea of pleasure or pain, when it returns upon the soul, produces the new impression of desire and aversion, hope or fear, which may properly be called impression of reflection. These again are copied by the memory and imagination, and because ideas, which in their turn give rise to other impressions and ideas. This happens in such a way that impressions of reflection are not only antecedent to their correspondent ideas, but *posteriori* to those of sensation and derived from them.

In order to substantiate his claim about the origin of ideas and that there can be no idea without an impression; Hume argued, “a blind man can form no notion of color, a deaf man of sounds. Restore either of them that sense, in which he is deficient; by opening this new inlet for his sensations, and he finds no difficulty in conceiving these objects.”<sup>31</sup>

This line of thought as Hume observed is compatible with the realities of life. A person who was born blind can never have an idea of colour. A born deaf man cannot know what a sound is. Those were some of the practical examples to show that without an impression, there can be no ideas. Hume then maintained that the understanding of the origin of ideas will help us to “render every dispute equally intelligible, and banish all that jargon, which has so long taken possession of metaphysical reasoning and drawn disgrace upon them”.<sup>32</sup> Hume thus made a recommendation “when we entertain, therefore, any suspicion, that a philosophical term is employed without any meaning or idea, we need but enquire, from what impression is that supposed idea derived? And if it be impossible to assign any, this will serve to confirm our suspicion”.<sup>33</sup>

Idea must be derived from an impression for it to have meaning, Hume concluded. It is based on this understanding that Hume subjected metaphysical realities like God, substance, self-etc. to test. Observing that all our ideas are derived from impression, the question now becomes; how can we explain what we normally call thinking or how can we explain how ideas group themselves in our minds. This will lead us to Hume’s discussion on the association of ideas.

### **3.3. The Association of Ideas**

According to Hume, there is a principle that makes our ideas related to one another, and this principle is known as “principle of association”. Hume said that experience shows that impression makes its appearance in the mind as an idea into different ways – both when, in its new appearance, it retains a considerable degree of its vivacity and is somewhat intermediate between an impression and an idea, or when it entirely loses that vivacity and is

a perfect idea. In this case, it appears as mere ideas, as faint copies or images of impression. The faculty by which we repeat our impression in the first manner is called 'Memory' and the other 'Imagination'.

The ideas of memory are much more lively and strong than those of the imagination and memory paints its objects in more distinct colours than any which are employed by imagination.

According to Hume;

When we remember any past event, the ideas of it flows in upon the mind in a forcible manner, whereas in the imagination, the perception is faint and languid, and cannot, without difficulty, be perceived by the mind steady and uniform for any considerable time. There, then is a sensible difference between one species of ideas and another. But of this more fully hereafter.<sup>34</sup>

The memory preserves the original form in which its objects are presented, and that whenever we depart from it in recollecting anything it proceeds from some defects or imperfection in that faculty. He went further to make another difference, memory "preserves not only simple ideas but also their order and position ... the imagination however, is not tied down in this way. It can for instance, combine simple ideas arbitrarily or break down complex ideas into simple ideas and then rearrange them".<sup>35</sup>

Man, Hume said possesses certain associating qualities by which one idea introduces another. One of the contents of the mind according to Hume is 'ideas' which come through the mind's reflections on the impressions. The mind is able to join two simple ideas to form a complex idea.

Reflection, Hume said leads to the mind combining and compounding of the ideas it forms from impression to get complex ideas. After noticing all these, one will almost be in no

doubt that the mind plays an active role in knowledge acquisition, but Hume refuted this belief. He was bent on showing that the mind is passive in this way in which impressions are related and connected with each other. He thus presented knowledge acquisition through sensation in a way that the mind is seen not actively dealing with given materials so as to put them together, “but as finding already in the very data of sensation, certain natural relations by reason of which the one calls up or introduces the other.”<sup>36</sup> In order to demonstrate that there is an association between ideas which makes it possible for ideas to come to the mind in a successive manner, without the mind actively being involved in the process.

Hume declared that:

it is evident that there is a principle of connection between the different thoughts or ideas of the mind, and that in their appearance to the memory or imagination, they introduce each other with a certain degree of method and regularity ..., this is so observable, that any particular thought which breaks in upon the regular tract or chain of ideas, is immensely renounced and rejected.<sup>37</sup>

Even in forming complex ideas from the simple ones, Hume had through the above declared that it is through the activity of the mind that these complex ideas came about, and that the ideas themselves possess some associative quality which makes it possible for them to be combined and thus appear in compound manner. Hume, therefore, believed that it can be proved that simple ideas comprehended in the compound ones, are bound together by some universal principles and has an influence on all mankind.

What Hume implied here is that there appears to be some principles of connection among ideas and he named these principles as resemblance, contiguity in time and space and cause and effect and generally calls them natural relations. He believed that the connection of all



ideas to each other could be explained by these principles. To this Stumpf remarked “a picture naturally leads our thoughts to the original (resemblance): the mention of one apartment on the building naturally introduces an enquiry or discourse concerning the others (contiguity); and if we think of a wound, we can scarcely forbear reflecting on the pain which follows it (cause and effect)”.<sup>38</sup> Hume, therefore, demonstrated from the above that there are principles which bind the different ideas that occur in our minds to one another. The mind therefore cannot and does not invent ideas; rather the ideas in themselves have some principles that bind them to one another. These principles, Hume called ‘gentle force’.

Another effect, of this union or association of ideas, those of complex ideas are said to be more remarkable; and they are the common subjects of our thoughts and reasoning, and generally arise from some principle of union among our simple ideas. These complex ideas according to Hume may be divided into relations, modes and substances.

Relations: The word relation is commonly used in two senses different from each other – either for that identity by which two ideas are connected together in the imagination, or for that particular circumstance in which even upon the arbitrary union of two ideas in the fancy, we may think proper to compare them. The qualities that make objects admit of comparison, and by which the ideas of philosophical relation are produced are comprised of seven general heads which may be considered as the sources of all philosophical relation.

1. Resemblance: This is the kind of relation without which no philosophical relation can exist. Though resemblance is necessary to all philosophical relation, it does not follow that it always produces connection or association of idea.
2. Identity: This is applied to constant and unchangeable objects without examining the nature and foundation of personal identity, which shall find its place wards. This is the most universal being common to every being whose existence has duration.

3. Space and Time: These are the sources of an infinite number of comparisons, such as distant, contiguous, above, below, before, after etc.
4. All those objects which admit of quantity and number
5. The fifth specie of relation is the degree by which any two objects possess the same quality in common
6. The relation of contrariety
7. Cause and effect which include other objects such as fire and water, heat and cold which are found to be contrary from experience, and from the contrariety of cause and effect<sup>39</sup>

### **3.4. The Operation of the Human Understanding**

In part 1 of the *Enquiry*, Hume started with the following words; “All the objects of human reason or inquiry may naturally be divided into two kinds, to wit, Relation of ideas and matter of facts”.<sup>40</sup> Let us now analyze on how to ascertain the falsity or truth of our propositions, how the validity of human knowledge can be ascertained.

#### **3.4.0. Relations of Ideas and Matters of Fact.**

Hume demonstrated that knowledge is experiential. One must therefore come in contact with external objects which generate sensations in order to acquire knowledge. However, Hume divided the object of knowledge into knowledge derived by the operation of the rational faculty as contained in logic and mathematics and knowledge derived from sense perception. According to him, when the enquiry of human understanding is carried out seriously, it will be discovered that all the objects of human reason are rationally divided into two – “Relations of ideas” and “Matters of facts”, relations of ideas have to do with mathematical conceptions like geometry, Algebra, and Arithmetic, and every affirmation which is either intuitively or demonstratively certain, that is, by way of operations of thought, their certainty is established because of the relationship between ideas which they express. Omoregbe observed that, “the truth or falsity of the propositions which assert relations of ideas depends on the meaning of terms employed”<sup>41</sup> For Hume, the assertions made in mathematics,

Geometry and Arithmetic cannot be proved nor disproved by experience nor can they be denied without involving oneself in self-contradiction. For example, that three times five is equal to the half of thirty, expresses relation between these figures. This kind of knowledge according to Hume does not depend on what is in anywhere in the universe.

Matters of facts which as the second objects of human reason are, however, not ascertained intuitively. Empirical observation is involved in ascertaining the truth of matters of fact for instance, when we say that the sun will rise tomorrow, we will wait till tomorrow and observe whether the sun rises or not. To this Hume said that “the contrary of every matter of fact is still possible, because it can never imply contradiction, and is conceived by the mind with the same veracity and distinctness as of ever so conformable to reality.”<sup>42</sup> Omoregbe went further to explain that “the truth or falsity of propositions which asserts matters of fact depends on experience. Experience can confirm or falsify the assertions made by such propositions.”<sup>43</sup> Hume is of the view that when we are not reflecting on a relation between ideas, any proposition we can form can be paired with an equally intelligible contrary claim. Scientific assertions are also examples of matters of facts. They can be proved or disproved by experience. To deny such propositions does not involve self-contradiction.

### **3.5. Causal Reasoning**

Now, it is pertinent to inquire into the nature of evidence which makes us to be sure of any existence of matters of fact outside and beyond what is present to our senses. To this, Hume maintained that “all reasoning concerning matters of fact seem to be founded on the relation of cause and effect.”<sup>44</sup>

Hume postulated that it is by means of the relation of cause and effect, that we go beyond the evidence which assures of matters of fact, Hume believed that causal reasoning is the

only form of reasoning that is potentially capable of informing us of the existence of objects and powers that are directly revealed to us by the senses and our memory. In his view, whenever we make conclusions from what we have observed to what we have not observed, the conclusion is a causal one. As I am now sitting in my study room, I hear a sound from the neighborhood, and I concluded that it must be a car driving into my compound, I have drawn conclusion even without observing the source of the sound to determine whether it is actually a car or not. Hume explained;

The hearing of an articulate voice and natural discourse in the dark assures us of the presence of some person. Why? Because these are the effects of the human made fabric, and closely connected with it... If we anatomize all the other reasoning 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.<sup>45</sup>

From this, it is clear that causal reasoning forms most of our everyday decisions and conclusions. Hume opined that “without such reasoning, our stock of beliefs about matters of facts will be massively impoverished”.<sup>46</sup> Nonetheless, “our causal reasoning, we must note, can only be discovered with the assistance of experience”.<sup>47</sup> From this line of thought, it will be arbitrary and presumptuous to posit an effect without any reference to experience from an *a priori* point of view, Hume therefore concluded that “all our reasoning concerning matters of fact are founded on the relation of cause and effect, all our reasoning and conclusion in respect of causal relations are founded on experience”<sup>48</sup>.

### 3.5.1. The Rationality of Causal Inference.

Here Hume insisted we must engage into the process in which we arrive at the knowledge of cause to ascertain its rationality. Through enquiry, Hume said we discover that our knowledge of cause and effect is not *a priori*, but *a posteriori*, because it obtains from experience. Here, Hume made it clear that the conclusions which we normally draw from our experience of the operations of cause and effect “are not founded on reasoning, or any process of the understanding”.<sup>49</sup> Our causal inferences are based on the propositions that the future will be like the past, that an object which produced a particular effect will be true on future occasions with similar effects. This line of reasoning according to Hume “is not supported by any good argument or claim of reasoning.”<sup>50</sup> It follows that for Hume, causal reasoning cannot generate rationally justified conclusions.

However, Hume said that for us to hold our causal reasoning, we need to justify the supposition that the course of nature will remain unchanged. This is the only way of “converting deductively invalid causal argument into arguments whose premises do entail the truth of their conclusions”.<sup>51</sup> Now if we agree with Hume that all our casual inferences are founded on experiential regularities, then, we also have to accept that our causal inferences cannot be rationally justified unless we are justified rationally in believing that the course of nature will remain unchanged. For a person to be justified that his belief is rationally justified, he must be able to show that the belief is true or likely to be true. Until this is done, it is judged as epistemic irresponsibility. Although Hume had argued that causal inferences concerning matters on facts are not justified, it has been observed that “it is natural for us to base our beliefs and expectations on experience”.<sup>52</sup>

### 3.5.2. The Idea of Necessary Connection.

In sections I, II and III of Book I of the *Treatise* and in the section 1 -11 of the *Enquiry*, Hume tried to enquire about the necessary connection between a cause and its effect. It is obvious that our knowledge is basically on causal reasoning. We believe that the sun will rise tomorrow; we also entertain the belief that having observed that lemon tastes bitter, we concluded that the next lemon will also taste bitter. This kind of argument presupposes, Hume concluded a necessary connection between a cause and its effect.

There are no ideas, which occur in metaphysics, more obscure and uncertain, than those of power, force, energy, or necessary connection. We shall, therefore, endeavor, in this section, to fix, if possible, the precise meaning of these terms, and thereby, remove some part of that obscurity, which is so much complained of in this species of philosophy.<sup>53</sup>

The causal inferences we make like the beliefs we have that the right-angled triangle must be equal to the square of the hypotenuse or that bricks of certain size will break panes of glass have no other source, but derived from causal relations. We came about this conclusion by our experience or observation of past events. It must be noted that Hume denied we can have *a priori* knowledge of causation like he said that we have to “turn to empirical evidence to discover the effects of partial causes and to find the sources of the idea of necessary connection.”<sup>54</sup> Hume’s view of the necessary connection is a relation between cause and its effects in which the cause necessarily produces the effects. But since for Hume, all ideas are derived from impression, then the question arose, from what impression do we get the idea of necessary connection between cause and effect? To the question of necessary connection, Hume explained:

When we look about us toward extended objects, and consider the operation of causes, we are never able, in a single instance, to discover any power or necessary connection; and quality, which binds the effect to the cause, and renders the one an infallible consequence of the other, we only find, that the one does actually, in fact, follow the other ... there is not, in any single, particular instance of cause and effect, anything which can suggest the idea of power or necessary connection.<sup>55</sup>

The point Hume wanted to make clear here is that we have no idea of necessary connection.

Our idea of necessary connection is not derived from impression but from the repeated observation of instances of the link of cause and effect “They (cause and effect) seem conjoined, but never connected”.<sup>56</sup> Our idea of necessary connection is not that of which we can claim to know through *a priori*, it is not derived from sensory impression or from an impression gained by reflecting on the operations of the mind; Hume then attributed the source of necessary connection to the imagination. He argued that “the impression of necessary connection is produced by the imagination after we have experienced a constant conjunction between two types of events”.<sup>57</sup> When we observe fire and heat for the first time, we do not think them to be necessarily connected. But after series of observing fire and heat together, with heat preceding fire, we make conclusions that fire is the cause of heat. Hume argued that this type of conclusion cannot be justified by reason; we just find it rational to think in this way. He argued that “our idea, therefore, of necessary connection arises entirely from the uniformity, observation in the operations of nature; where similar objects are constantly conjoined together, and the mind is determined by custom to infer the one from the appearance of the other”.<sup>58</sup>

Hume pointed out that there is nothing in the cause that necessitates the effects. No matter how many times we observe oxygen, there is nothing in it to show that when mixed with hydrogen will give us water. There is no analysis of fire to tell us that when a person’s finger

comes in contact with it, it will burn. Hume, therefore, concluded that our idea of necessary connection is derived from associating two events together.

David Hume as a consistent empiricist who fought doggedly against what he called ‘dogmatic rationalism, maintained that the foundation of abstruse philosophy must be undermined for it only serves as a shelter to superstition, and a cover to absurdity and error, held thus “the only method of freeing learning ... is to engage seriously into the nature of human understanding, and show, from the exact analysis of its powers and capacity, that it is by no means fitted for remote and abstruse philosophy”.<sup>59</sup>

Having used this as launch-pad against rationality, he went therefore to demonstrate the problem of reason as a sole source of knowledge based on the problem of knowledge as he formulated it, which included that when teleguided by reason alone, it may be possible to come up with thoughts that will look plausible but which in the end will lead to irresolution and confusion. He demonstrated that knowledge is experiential. One must therefore come in contact with external objects which generate sensations in order to acquire knowledge.

However, the uniqueness of Hume’s empiricism as mentioned earlier lied on his division of the object of human knowledge into two-knowledge derived by the operation of the rational faculty as contained in logic and mathematics and knowledge derived from sense perception. Or put in another way, ‘Relations of ideas’ and ‘Matters of fact’. Relations of ideas; The category of relations of ideas, covers all true propositions that cannot be derived without self contradiction and all false propositions that do imply contradictions. For instance, the assertions made in Mathematics, Geometry and Arithmetic cannot be proved nor disproved by experience, nor can they be denied without involving one in contradiction. In matters of fact, experience can confirm or falsify the asserted proposition from matters of facts. They



can be proved or disproved by experience. To deny such propositions does not involve self-contradiction.

Now let us inquire into what nature of evidence that makes us to be sure of any existence and matter of fact outside and beyond what is present to our senses. To this enquiry, Hume maintained that “all reasoning concerning matters of fact seem to be founded on the relation of cause and effect.”<sup>60</sup> He said that by means of that relation, we go beyond the evidence which assures us of matters of fact; we must therefore enquire into the process by which we arrive at the knowledge of cause and effect. Through enquiry, Hume said we discover that our knowledge of cause and effect is not *a priori*, but *a posteriori* because, it obtains from experience.

To buttress this point here, Hume suggested that let some new object be presented to a man of strong natural reason and abilities, as this object is entirely new to him, he can never, by the most accurate examination of sensible qualities be able to discover any of its causes or effect. He held this that;

Adam though his rational faculties, be supposed, at the very first, entail 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 the causes which produces it or the effects which will arise from it, nor our reason unassisted by experience, ever draw any inference concerning real existence of matter of fact.<sup>61</sup>

Hume was prominent among empiricists not only in advocating that metaphysics does not generate any knowledge, but that any book purporting to be on metaphysics has to be destroyed because, it can only give sophistry and illusion. Hume thus, was a thorough going empiricist that made the same claim with Locke and Berkeley that human knowledge derives from sense perception but took it seriously unlike these other two empiricists

mentioned. Hume would therefore have nothing to do with metaphysics which deals with knowledge that is not derived from sense perception, thus he recommended that all metaphysical books should be burnt.

### **3.6. Causality:**

We have been presenting Hume's epistemological procedure and in the course of this, we have been able to demonstrate what he felt is the limit of human knowledge - sense experience. When we accost an object via our senses, we receive sensations and through these sensations, knowledge is written in our minds. This mind can as well reflect on these sensations or what Hume called impressions and form ideas of them. From all of these, one discovers that Hume's epistemological paradigm is that human knowledge starts from perception.

It is based on this epistemological procedure that Hume's concept of causality and the subsequent denial of this causality is obtained. But let us first of all try to have an insight into what causality entails before we go into Hume's concept of it.

#### **3.6.1. Meaning of Causality?**

Causality is simply defined as the necessary notion of connection of events in their series, when critically looked into, one discovered that what is called causality implies a relation between two things (cause and effect), when the first is necessary or sufficient or both for the occurrence of the second. Russell defined causality as “any general proposition in which it is possible to infer the existence of one thing or event from the existence of another or a number of others.”<sup>62</sup>

Principle of causality stated that every change or every event has a cause. Our 'faith' in this principle goes deep. We always assume that there is some answer to the question of what caused an event to occur, a change to take place, a thing to begin to exist, even if we do not find any necessary connection between what we know as the cause and its effect. This makes us to refer often to the notion of cause and effect in our everyday experience. We often perceive beings that are acted upon. For instance, a stone falls into the water and gives rise to a series of concentric waves; the sun warms bodies exposed to its rays. However some philosophers denied the most evident experience and claimed that "causal influence is merely a chronological succession of phenomena."<sup>63</sup>

Here are some definitions of causality by some philosophers; Aristotle said that a "cause is that which has some positive inference in the production of another."<sup>64</sup> He affirmed that any effect must, out of necessity, have a cause since something cannot come out of nothing. He went further to distinguish types of causes, namely; material cause, formal cause, efficient cause and final cause. John Locke said that it is through observation that we get the idea of cause and effect and located the idea of cause and effect within sensation and reflection. In Locke's words:

In the notice, that our senses take of constant vicissitude of things, we cannot but observe, that several particulars both qualities and substances begin to exist and that they receive this existence, from the due application and operation of some other being. From this observation, we get our ideas of cause and effect, that which produces any simple or complex ideas we denote by the general name cause and that which is produced effect.<sup>65</sup>

George Berkeley on what causality is, affirmed that there is a law of nature upon which the idea of causality and other phenomena in the world is explained. He saw God, as the Architect of causality. 'God' he said "is the infinite spirit who causes the idea of what we

ordinarily think of as our immediate perception of the external world. But subsequent reflection on what we have perceived are caused by ourselves.’’<sup>66</sup>

Noonan definition of causality is that “there are objects in the world which cause according to the first definition but not according to the second definition, and conversely.”<sup>67</sup> Causality generally is therefore, the internal connection between phenomena in which case, whenever one exists, the other must necessarily follow. For instance, the heating of water is the cause of its turning into steam. We know this because, we have observed that whenever water is heated the accompanying process is the formation of steam, in this, the heating of water is the cause, the formation of steam is the effect.

### **3.6.2. Cause as Preceding Effect.**

There is the general opinion that a cause has a temporal precedence over its effect. Put differently, a cause precedes effect and does not follow it. A cause goes before its effect and not after it, thus, the striking of the match and the match lightning, the knocking at the door and the production of the sound, etc.

Since cause precedes its effect as we have seen, can we now conclude that a cause is that which precedes the event following it? However, it would be better to say that ‘M’ precedes ‘N’ not to say that “M” causes “N.” This is because many events precede after without causing it. Russell claimed that “‘causality is any general proposition in virtue of which it is possible to infer the existence of one thing or event from the existence of another or a cause of others.’”<sup>68</sup>

Thus, a while ago, my friend visited me, but that is not the cause of my writing this dissertation. This is because I have begun it before she visited, even though it precedes my writing, but it is not the cause. To say that C causes E is not merely to say that C precedes E. Many events precede others without causing them. Similarly, if at 5 this morning, you put on your wrist watch and I put on mine at 5:16 am, your putting on your wrist watch is not the cause of my doing so. Therefore to say that (C precedes E is not enough ground for saying that C causes E. It is even questionable whether it is true; that the cause always precedes its effect as we can see. Is it always the cause and its effect that seem to occur together? Thus my sitting down on an end of a plank and the other ending flying up, it would be better to say that cause never comes after the effect than to say that cause always precedes its effect. In most cases, the cause goes before the effect but it never comes after the effect. At this point, it is necessary also to pinpoint that those who uphold the law of causality were not referring to a single event of bringing about another into occurrences, but plurality of events. Thus, it is pertinent to distinguish between two conditions very vital for the occurrence of an event; Sufficient and necessary conditions.

### **3.6.3. Necessary and Sufficient Conditions.**

There is always the tendency that things fail to happen the way they have always happened in the past and the way we expect them to happen on the basis of past experience.

By sufficient it means the aggregate conditions required for an event to occur. What this means is that each of them might be necessary for an event to occur but not sufficient to bring about the occurrences of the event. The whole conditions must be present before the event occurs. It follows therefore that a sufficient condition “X” for an occurrence of event “T” is an event the occurrence of which would justify the prediction of ‘E’. On the other

hand, a necessary condition for something is one without which the thing would not exist or occur. What this means is that an event might be necessary for the occurrence of an event but not sufficient on its own to bring about the occurrence of the event. But its absence will prevent the occurrence of the event. This a necessary condition 'N' as an event of state of affair, the absence of which would justify the prediction of the non occurrence of "E".

Thus, the main thesis of the principle of causality is that there are certain antecedents conditions which if present, the event must necessarily occur. Therefore, we can infer that a necessary condition is only a causal factor but not the cause. The necessary condition can be fulfilled without the effect being the case.

Having fully addressed what causality means in the general sense, let us now go over to David Hume's idea of causality.

### **3.7. David Hume's Idea of Causality.**

Hume gave two definitions of causality, one as a philosophical relation and the other as a natural relation. As a philosophical relation, he said, "we may define a cause to be an object precedent and contiguous to another, and where all the objects resembling the former are placed in like relations of precedence and contiguity to those objects that resemble the latter."<sup>69</sup> As a natural relation, Hume continued his explanation, of cause which could be substituted to the former if found wanting "A cause is an object precedent and contiguous to another and so united with it, that the idea of the one determines the mind to form the idea of the other, and the impression of the one to form a more lively idea of the other."<sup>70</sup> These two definitions of cause, according to Iroegbu, is an "empiricist, not a metaphysical

definition”.<sup>71</sup> In the view of Iroegbu, it is quite distinct that Hume’s definition of causation buttresses “a non essential relationship of cause to the object to which it is a cause.”<sup>72</sup>

From, Hume’s definition of causality above, we can see that Hume understood cause differently from what other philosophers held. Cause in Hume’s view, is an object precedent and contiguous to another, that is to say the object must precede the other and the idea of the former makes the mind to form the idea of other object which we normally refer to as its effect. This therefore is known by experience and not by reasoning, thus “again when I consider the influence of this, constant conjunction, I perceive, that such relation can never be an object of reasoning and can never operate on the mind”.<sup>73</sup>

According to Gadamer, nobody speaks from nowhere. In line with this, Hume could be seen as a consistent empiricist, in all his issues, discussed in his philosophy, he (Hume) tried to present them from the empirical angle. Causality is not spared of this because Hume traced the origin of associating one event as the effect of another even which it is its cause through experience. To him, the relation of cause and effect is not in any instance attained by reasoning *a priori*, but it rises entirely from experience. He maintained that if cause and effect are a matter of reason and not experience, then, we will be able to find out from its effect what the cause is. Based on his epistemological procedure which held experience as the condition *sine qua non* of limit of human knowledge and also holding impressions and ideas as the objects of this experience, it becomes clear therefore that impressions are what Hume held as the guarantor of reality, ideas must conform to impressions to be acceptable.

The issue of causality is not exempted from this process as Hume attacked it from this same point, by arguing that for causality to be real, the ideas about it must come from impression. If they do not, causality is therefore not in occurrence. He went further to argue that there is

no impression of a causal nexus, the idea of causality to him, therefore arises in our minds when we experience certain relation between objects. When for example, we see a stone striking against a glass and the glass breaks, we cannot see a causal link or relation, but we still associate the breaking to the throwing of the stone. He said that because we do not perceive or have impression of a causal relation, when we say that “A” causes “B”, we simply mean that event “A” precedes event “B”. This kind of perception furnishes us with three relations which are contiguity, succession and constant conjunction. So when we talk about causality, for Hume, we are talking about nothing else but these relations, because, when we argue to prove the reality of causality, our arguments are always hinged on these relations. To prove this point, Hume proceeded to explain our conception of these relations. A condition may be necessarily just in the sense that it is one of a set of conditions jointly sufficient for the production of the consequences. It is necessary because it is required to complete the set. “If we consider the simple case where a man’s action of throwing a lighted cigarette into a waste paper basket would be treated, it is plain that the man’s action is required to complete such a set of conditions jointly sufficient to produce the fire.”<sup>74</sup>

The concept of sufficient condition for a thing to happen is the condition that when fulfilled the effect cannot but happen. Thus, the rain falling on the street is the sufficient condition for the street to be wet. If the rainfall falls on the street, the street cannot but be wet. Therefore, when there is the sufficient condition that which it is sufficient condition must be. If “s” is the sufficient condition for “L”, it means that when there is “S” then there must be “L” and if there is not “S”, then there is no “L” It is interesting to note that, it was John Stuart Mill who defined cause as “sufficient condition.” Besides, John Stuart Mill went on to tell us that to state the cause of an event is to enumerate the whole set of conditions,



thus;“the cause, then, philosophically speaking is the sum total of the conditions positive and negative taken together, the whole of the contingencies of every description, which being realized, the consequent event invariably follows.”<sup>75</sup>

We have seen from Mill an account that to obtain a cause of our event is to state the whole set of conditions required for that an event to occur. Therefore Mill made an attempt to give the scientific account of what a cause is which requires the listing of all the conditions, upon which the event depends.

### **3.7.1. Argument from Contiguity.**

Hume argued that certain events are contiguous in nature, that is, certain events happen simultaneously in space and time. Because of this, human beings have learnt from experience of past events to associate and link certain ideas together. For example, we link lightning and thunder together and claim that they are causally related because they are contiguous “A” follows “B” therefore, “A” causes “B”, thunder follows lightning. Hume held that this contiguous relation is not a product between these events but rather, it is an off shoot of an observed experience. It follows then that we assume that since thunder follows lightning, lightening causes thunder. We cannot observe any causal relation here, but the only thing here is that since the two are contiguous we have therefore learnt from past experience to associate them. Hume then argued that “we cannot validly draw the conclusion that “A” is the cause of “B” since we can observe no intrinsic connection between them, nor can we be sure that “B” will always follow “A” in the future simply because it was so in the past.”<sup>76</sup>

### **3.7.2. Argument from Succession.**

We believe that the cause of an event comes before its effect, because of this, our concept of causality “presupposes the existence of a temporal order on succession.”<sup>77</sup> For example, the throwing of stone is succeeded by breaking of glass in future we expect every stone thrown at a glass to break it. But Hume argued that because we observe certain occurrences often in our lives, we thus become used to linking such two conjoining events, this is however simply because our mind is equipped to put in its memory the frequent successions we experience in life. From the regularities of these successions, we draw our conclusions that there are some causal relations among events. But Hume maintained that regularities of succession do not necessarily imply causality. He thus argued that “in this succession, we cannot claim to have observed any energy transfer from the event which is prior to the event that follows.”<sup>78</sup>

### **3.7.3. Argument from Constant Conjunction.**

To Hume, causality is nothing else but constant conjunction, experimentally we observe two events constantly conjoined. When we observe this in the past, we thus feel the two events are causally related, if in the future, we observe one of these events, we immediately infer that the other one must come. To know whether “C” caused “E”, all we have to do is to know whether “C” is regularly followed by “E”. Hume’s account of causality is that it is through experience we come to form our notion of causality, because, we cannot know in advance of experience which events will be regularly followed by which other events, but not the causal relation as we cannot have impression. Hume therefore denied causality.

### **3.7.4. Hume's Denial of Causality:**

We have tried showing how Hume followed the argument of causality. In the arguments from contiguity, succession and constant conjunction, Hume was bent on proving one thing which is that causality is not real. This he did by premising his argument on empirical relations, causality therefore cannot be real. Every event to Hume, no matter how constantly or regularly conjoined with another, exists separately. Hume used impressions here to consolidate his argument because based on his epistemological procedure; impressions are the guarantors of reality. Hume's denial of causality is therefore purely based on his epistemological paradigm. This is because; causality does not conform to his epistemological procedure, which laid serious emphasis on impressions and ideas, as guaranteeing reality. Unless there is an impression of a thing, that thing does not exist; causality therefore does not exist, as we do not have impressions of causal relations.

Hume went further to argue that events can only be logically necessary and not causally necessary. Statements like 'friction causes heat' can be proved logically but when taken to prove causality, it becomes impossible as we cannot observe or perceive any causal relation between heat and friction. To Hume therefore, it is thus, absurd to claim that there is a necessary connection between friction and heat because empirically, we can only observe friction separately on one hand and heat separately on the other hand but, cannot observe the causal relation between the two, Hume concluded; "there is nothing in any object, considered in itself, which can afford us a reason for drawing a conclusion beyond it and, that even after the observation of the frequent or constant conjunctions of objects, we have no reason to draw any inference concerning any object beyond those of which we have had experience."<sup>79</sup> Hume's conclusion will be something like "since our perceptions is different

from each other, they are also distinct and separately existing and may exist separately and have no need of anything else to support its existence.”<sup>80</sup>

Hume opined that the relation of cause and effect is not in any instance attained by reasoning *a priori* but arises entirely from experience. Why, it is because object exists separately in Hume’s understanding, and no one thing implies the other since our impressions are discrete and no object implies the other, the idea of power, which is said to be at the origin of events and connects one thing with the other is thrown overboard as fiction by Hume; “it is only causation, which produces such a connexion, as to give us assurance from the existence or action of one object, that was followed or precede any other existence or action; nor can the other two relations be ever made use in reasoning, except so far as they either affect or are affected by it.”<sup>81</sup> Hume implied by the above quotation that it is the idea of causation which we are used to that guides us to expect one object from the other.

Commenting further, he asserted “there is nothing in any object to persuade us that they are either always remote or always contiguous and when from experience and observation, we discover that their relation in this particular is invariable; we always conclude there is some secret cause, which separate or unites them.”<sup>82</sup> Conclusively, he wrote; “our causal procedure as a causal inference is to transfer the order of such experience in conjunction to the future and make it the standard for the future events and the appearance of objects in future.”<sup>83</sup>

### **3.8. Substance and Mode.**

The literal meaning of substance means that which stands under or that which remains under the appearance of a thing as the permanent and basic element sustaining accidents in their being. When we observe some changes in a particular being, there is something in that being that does not change and we are able to recognize it despite the observable changes. So that thing that does not change, that thing that stands beneath change, that thing that supports the accidental changes is called “Substance”. Aristotle believed that “the way we know a thing provided a major clue to what we mean by substance.”<sup>84</sup> it is the belief of Aristotle that for a thing to really exist, it must be a substance and must have quality. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, substance is seen as the essence to which per-se existence is proper. Descartes viewed substance as a “thing which so exist that it needs no other thing for its existence.”<sup>85</sup> Spinoza defined substance as “that which is in itself and conceived through itself, that is the concept of which it ought to be formed.”<sup>86</sup> Samuel Stumpf observed that Locke approached the question of substance from the common sense point of view. Locke’s own words are “the idea we have to which we give the general name substance, being nothing but the supposed but unknown, support of those qualifier we find existing, which we imagine cannot subsist.... without something to support them, we call that support ‘substantial’, which according to the true import of the word in plain English, standing under or up holding.”<sup>87</sup>

Generally, the concept of substance for Locke is something we know not what. Asserting that there are no material substances because we do not perceive them, Berkeley said that “there are spiritual substances as there are spirits and minds.”<sup>88</sup> Berkeley, we must note “retains the idea of spiritual substance.”<sup>89</sup>

Having noted the positions of his predecessors, Hume continued his enquiry by asking from what impression we get the idea of substance. Popkin and Stroll observed that Hume found the idea of substance “completely unintelligible.”<sup>90</sup> In set vi, part b book I of the *Treatise*, Hume questioned “I would fain to ask those philosophers, who found so much of their reasoning on the distinction of substance and accident, and imagine we have clear ideas of each, whether the idea of substance be derived from the impressions of sensation or reflection.”<sup>91</sup> Hume questioned the idea of substance by arguing that it cannot be derived from impressions of sensation or reflection, it cannot be said to have conveyed to us by our senses because if so, would attract questions like which of the senses and after what manner? According to Hume, “if substance is perceived by the eyes, it must be colour, if by the ears, a sound, if by the palate, a taste and so of the other senses.”<sup>92</sup>

The idea of substance must, therefore, be derived from an impression of reflection, if it really exists. But Hume opined that the impressions of reflection resolve themselves into our passions and emotions, none of which can possibly represent a substance. He therefore maintained “that the origin of the idea of substance is not derived from reflection. What we have are perceptions.”<sup>93</sup> The idea of substance does not exist, it is meaningless. Hume concluded that “there is no idea of substance, distinct from that of a collection of particular qualities, nor have we any other meaning when we either talk of reasons.”<sup>94</sup> Iroegbu pointed out that Hume’s rejection and denial of Substance “was total- with grievous consequence.”<sup>95</sup> In summary, Hume conceived substance as a bundle of perception and nothing more than that. Hume allegedly denied the idea of substance. The idea of substance as well as that of a mode “is nothing but a collection of simple ideas that are united by imagination, and have a particular, name assigned to them, by which we are able to recall,

either to ourselves or others that collection.”<sup>96</sup> The difference between substance and mode is that the particular qualities which form a substance are commonly referred to as “unknown something” which are supposed to be closely and inseparably connected by the relations of contiguity and causation. The effect of this is that, whatever new simple qualities we discover have the same connection with the rest, we discover immediately, comprehend it among them even though, it did not enter into the first conception of the substance. Thus our ideas of gold may at first be a yellow colour, weight, malleableness, fusibility, but upon the discovery of its dissolubility in *aqua-rega*, we come across other qualities, and suppose it to belong to the substance as much as if its idea had from the beginning made a part of a compound one.

Furthermore, in modes, the case is different; this cannot take place here as in the case of substance and this is evident in their nature. The simple ideas of which modes are formed, either represents qualities, which are not united by contiguity and causation, but are dispersed in different subject, or if they be all united together, the writing principle is not regarded as the foundation of the complex idea. However, this rejection of substance is a big blow to metaphysics since there cannot be any metaphysical knowledge without the concept of substance. The idea of substance is at the root of all metaphysical investigations. Hume therefore, concluded that the principle of causality has no rational foundation. He is of the view that “what guides metaphysical inferences is not reason but custom, habit and repetivity.”<sup>97</sup> Hume rather lamented “there are two principles which I cannot render consistent, nor is it in any power to renounce either of them. All our distinct perception portrays the principles that unite our successive perceptions in our thought or consciousness. I cannot discover any theory that gives me satisfaction on this head.”<sup>98</sup>

### **3.9. Mind/ Body Problem.**

When one examines the claims of the idealist who explained everything in terms of mind, Hume maintained, difficulties arise because the concept of mind is an unclear concept. This is because if we search for any impression that gave rise to the idea of mind, we cannot find because there is none. Hume seemed to claim here that since we are not aware of an entity to which all our thought belongs but rather we are only acquainted with the succession of ideas. Hence, we do not know of any mental substance, nor do we find any in which our perceptions or thoughts might belong to.

The mind/body problem is one of the metaphysical problems which had caused a lot of puzzles in metaphysical circles. To Hume, this can only constitute problems based on the way it is presented. The question of how a mental event can be related to a physical event and vice-versa can only pose a problem if we first introduce the concepts of mental and material substance and begin to enquire how there can be any necessary connection between the two concepts, the problem is solved. This is because what will be left of the question is whether it is possible for mental events such as taste, smell, etc. to be constantly conjoined with physical events as extended objects. To this, Hume insisted that the answer is yes. We experience this constant conjunction all the time, for example, between the taste of pear – mental event and the pear itself – physical event. This way, the mind/body issue is no problem at all, unless, some meaningless or unintelligible metaphysical notions are introduced.



However, just as we pointed out earlier, Hume's rejection of metaphysics stemmed from his empiricism. This is seen in his rejection of substance as meaningless because we cannot have impression of them, which makes ideas of it to be absurd because they have no base.

In solving the metaphysical puzzles also, we still discovered that Hume employed empirical observations as the only solution to metaphysical puzzles and presented it in a way that they will conform to what we experience; then we will discover that they are no puzzles, the problem therefore lies in the way they transcend the objects of our experiences. "Perceptions are distinct existences and that the mind never perceives any real connection among distinct existences, for my part, I must plead the privilege of a skeptic and confess that this difficulty is too hard for my understanding."<sup>99</sup>

Because of this, metaphysicians have no defense when attacked as regards their manner of operations. Hume held that the kind of inventive imagination the metaphysicians display is equally in children, in their beliefs and also, inherent in poets in their fictions, but children, he said, we can forgive of this imagination because of their age and poets because, they follow suggestion of their fancy. But for metaphysicians, they have no excuse and should therefore not to be forgiven because, as philosophers, they should not exhibit such weakness.

To sum up, Hume's association of ideas has been praised by later psychologists. His most important feature however is his theory of knowledge by reducing all certain knowledge to subjective and unrelated perceptions, Hume brought to completion, the destruction of traditional philosophy initiated by Descartes.

### 3.10. Personal Identity.

In section VI of part IV of Book I of the *Treatise*, Hume discussed the question of personal identity, but before going into Hume's discussion properly, it is pertinent that the reader should have a general idea of the whole talk about personal identity.

Richard Taylor correctly noted "there is one metaphysical problem that seems to have resulted almost entirely from polarization and that is the celebrated problem of personal identity."<sup>100</sup> The question of personal identity can be expressed thus; As Amaka writing with a pen on the paper, can it be said that I am the same person whom my mother gave birth to some years back and gave the name Amaka or am I a different Amaka? Most philosophers would agree that I am the same person that was born some years ago, and leaned on as an infant on the lap by my mother. But come to think of the discovery of the biologists, they told us that every seven years, a person has totally new cells. This implied that the cells one had seven years ago had been replaced with new ones and does so after every seven years and this implied that the whole cells of a person would have been totally changed. Now can we say that the person is still the same person when all the cells of his body must have been totally changed? If we answer in the affirmative, the next question is: what is it that remains after all the changes must have taken place? Taylor remarked that "metaphysicians, or at least a great many of them, have supposed it to mean that there is a strict identity in something, namely, a person, over the course of time."<sup>101</sup>

Confronted with this problem of personal identity, Aristotle said that there are elements in man, substance which does not change and accidents (which undergo changes). For him, it is the substance that constitutes the principle of continuity in a person; it is the substance of a person that is responsible for the personal identity of the individual person. Aristotle was of

the view that both the soul and the body are essential elements of the human person. For Plato, it is the soul that is the essential part of the human person and it does not change. For Descartes, man is essentially a thinking being. This implied that man is essentially of mind or soul. Descartes asserted that “as long as man thinks, he maintains his identity.”<sup>102</sup> For the materialists, “personal identity is the identity of the body, the brain or the memory”<sup>103</sup>. Omoregbe observed that both Locke and Russell maintained that personal identity is “identity of continuity of consciousness and memory.”<sup>104</sup> For them without the continuity of consciousness and memory, there can be no personal identity. Now, let us enquire on what Hume held for this concept, personal identity.

Omoregbe rightly observed that, “David Hume, the uncompromising empiricist, said there is nothing like soul or mind conceived as an unchanging entity in the mind apart from the series of observable psychological experience.”<sup>105</sup> Hume was very emphatic in stating that what we call self is nothing but psychological experiences. He maintained, in the *Treatise* thus; when he goes into himself, he discovers only series of perceptions and nothing more than that, there is nothing like soul, mind, or any unchanging entity within him. Hume stated:

For my part, when I enter most infinitely into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perceptions or another of heat or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at anytime without a perception and never can observe anything but perception. When my perceptions are removed at any time, as by sound sleep, so long I am insensible of myself and may truly be said not to exist. And were all my perceptions removed by death and could I neither think nor feel, nor see, nor love, nor hate after dissolution of my body. I should be entirely annihilated, nor do I conceive what is further required to make me a perfect non entity.<sup>106</sup>

Hume went further to argue that should anybody go into himself and carried out the same introspection as he did and comes up with something different, or even says that he discovers or perceives “something simple, continued and unchanging which he calls himself, his soul or spirit, then, he must confess that such person is different kind of being from himself, that, they are not the same kind of being, and that he can reason no longer with such a person.”<sup>107</sup> It is logical enough to say that since there is no unchanging entity and man which undergoes the series of perceptions, Hume argued that we do not have any justified reason to talk of continuity of the same person or personal identity. Copleston reported that “Hume is obviously compelled to deny that we have an idea of the self as distinct from our perceptions.”<sup>108</sup>

Having reached thus far in our discussion, we have to be fair with Hume not to conclude this section without making reference to an appendix published later in Book III of the *Treatise*, in the appendix, Hume expressed his dissatisfaction with his treatment of personal identity but confessed that “he now find the whole matter a labyrinth and that he knows neither how to correct his former opinions nor how to render them consistent.”<sup>109</sup> Noonan observed that Hume could not put right what he discovered as objectionable in his earlier discussion on personal identity. One important thing to note in the last citation above is Hume’s confession that the difficulty he got himself into is too much for his comprehension. Hume was actually handicapped to explain himself clearly on the question of personal identity. Convinced of his short-comings in the earlier work, Hume declared; “I am sensible that my account is very defective and that nothing but the seeming evidence of the precedent reasoning could have induced me to receive it. If perceptions are distinct existences, they form a whole only by

being connected together. But all my hopes vanish when I come to explain the existence of God.”<sup>110</sup>

### **3.11. Existence of God.**

Down through the ages, many philosophers have been giving series of arguments to ascertain existence and nature of God. These arguments can be summed up under five headings, namely; ontological, cosmological, teleological, moral and argument from design. It must be noted that the conception about the nature of God varies according to tribes and nationalities. This is known as anthropomorphic conception of God. The Greeks conceive God as a Greek; the Igbo people conceive God as Igbo people; an American conceives God as an American, and so on. But one basic thing is that God is conceived as one who does not change but changes things.

For Aristotle, God is a pure Act, without any potency in him, he saw God as an absolutely perfect being, immutable and eternal. Thomas Aquinas saw God as eternal, self-subsisting, self-sufficient and immutable being. For John Scotus Eriugena, God is identical with nature and with everything in the universe. Descartes is of the view that God is a being which so exists such that it needs no other being for its existence. In the view of Spinoza, God is a single substance with infinite attributes. Leibniz maintained that God is an infinitely perfect being, John Locke pointed out that the idea of substance is inferred from other simple ideas and is the product, not of immediate observation, but of demonstration.

Among the five arguments for God’s existence, Hume focused on the argument from design because “for his contemporaries, this was the chief or sole argument for a divine existence.”<sup>111</sup> It is important for the reader to note that Hume was brought up as a calumnist

but he later discarded this belief, and decided to be hostile to the revealed religion. Hume was convinced that “the influence of religion was far from beneficial.”<sup>112</sup> and so he decided to disprove the arguments for the existence of God. It is quite distinct that some philosophers tried to prove the existence of God through *a priori* method. This method is not in consonance with the empiricist view of Hume. He saw the argument from design as the one that is worthy of investigation. This kind of argument Hume would ordinarily agreed to because, it has to do with the observable. The argument from design known also as teleological argument has Thomas Aquinas as its progenitor. The argument was also popularized by William Parley, who compared the mechanism of the universe to that of a watch. Following the line of thought of Parley, assuming that a person comes to a desert and stumbles on a wrist watch, naturally the person cannot but think that it must have been kept by a rational being. This is because the watch cannot bring itself to the desert. Also when we take a closer look at the mechanism of a watch, we cannot but conclude that it must have been made by a rational being. Analogically, therefore when we look at the order and harmony in the universe, we are forced to conclude that a rational being must be responsible for such order and harmony. This being is what we know as God. This is the summary of argument from design.

Following this argument from design, Hume therefore questioned if the order we find in the world presupposes the existence of an omniscient, omnipotent and benevolent God? The answer, for him is ‘No.’ Hume argued that the traditional God of Christianity cannot be inferred from the order we find in world.”<sup>113</sup> If we infer the existence of God from the harmony and order which we observe in the world, who is responsible for the disorder in the world? This question boiled down to the age-long problem of evil in the world. Hume

contended that if actually the world was designed by God, it means then that He did not do a good job. Bailey and O'Brien related that "there are moral evils such as acts perpetrated by murderers and tyrants throughout history, and there are natural evils, disease, famine and disasters such as the Asian Tsunami and Hurricane Katrina. Millions therefore have a life that is poor, nasty brutish and short."<sup>114</sup>

Hume argued that the existence of such evils in the world is not compatible with the design plan of omnipotent, omniscient and benevolent God. He further argued that if God is all-good and all-powerful, He (God) should be able to eliminate the evils in the world.

Some thinkers argued that the world is compatible with the divine design of creation. This argument is otherwise known as theodicy. Hume vehemently argued against this position. He maintained that natural or physical evils are caused by natural laws and that God should be able to control these laws such that no evil would come out from it. Against the background of those who argued that a world containing pain and compassion is better than a world that contains neither, Hume said that such cannot be a consolation to those who are suffering. There can be a world without suffering if God is actually an all-good-God. Hume maintained that there can be virtuous men in the world without the existence of suffering and pain. As against the theodicy, that focuses on free-will, Hume, in section viii of the *Enquiry* argued, "The ultimate Author of all our volitions is the creator of the world, who first bestowed motion on this immense machine, and placed all being in that particular position whence every subsequent evil, by an inevitable necessity, must result."<sup>115</sup>

Hume stated that the world is still in progress. The implication of this argument is that the world is not yet perfect. Hume was of the view that "the evil we find in the world only

indicates that progress is still to be made, though, that is part of God's design plan."<sup>116</sup> If we see, for instance, a half-finished building surrounded with heaps of sand, bricks and stone; we cannot but infer that the building is in progress and will be finished in the future. Hume maintained that even "if it is assumed that God exists, and then we can infer that his world is unfinished and that his mature creation will come to fruition sometime in the future."<sup>117</sup> Another dimension of the argument from design in Hume's critical view is the one that has to do with constant conjunction. We have seen that our causal reasoning is based on constant conjunction of events. We associate a building with a mason because we have experienced a mason molding bricks for building a house. We also associate fire with heat because we have experienced fire constantly conjoined with heat. In this regard, Hume argued that "we have not experienced lots of world, being made."<sup>118</sup> we are only conversant with our world and no other one.

Hume's argument was succinctly related by Bailey and O'Brien; "In our experience, worlds are not constantly conjoined with any antecedent events and thus we cannot conceive of the world as an effect of anything."<sup>119</sup> For Hume, we cannot infer the existence of God from the things, we observe in the world, since there is no necessary connection between cause and effects. It is clear from our discussion so far that Hume's attempt is to dislodge any argument that would establish the idea of God's existence. It must also be observed that his argument is an attack against revealed religion, especially Christianity. This calls for the reason why some thinkers refer to him as anti-Christianity. Copleston reported that Hume "refused to recognize the validity of (all) metaphysical arguments for God's existence, that is, he refused to allow that the existence of God is demonstrable."<sup>120</sup>



### 3.12. Hume's Conception of Miracle.

In the section x of the *Enquiry*, Hume tried to establish that we should not believe in miracle and also that miracle is not a reason for us to accept God's existence. Hume defined miracle as "a violation of the law of nature."<sup>121</sup> One thing that is prominent with the laws of nature is regularities of experience. This, Hume said, is what miracle violates. For Hume, that a man suddenly dies is not a miracle that water boils at 100<sup>0</sup>c is not a miracle, that a stone thrown up comes down is never a miracle. These examples are not considered as miracles because they are in accordance with the laws of nature as we have discovered from experience.

Hume focused on testimonial evidences as a proof for the occurrence of a miracle. He questioned whether human testimony could be sufficient enough for us to establish that a miracle had occurred. Hume said that we should sometimes believe testimonial evidence because, they have experiential support. For instance, if Miriam had been truthful to me for the past 15 years, there is every probability that she will continue to remain truthful. This is not necessarily so, but it is more probably so. Also since the sun normally rises from the east, it is not out of place to expect the sun to rise tomorrow from the east. Of course, Hume had argued that there is no justification for thinking in this way but we base our conclusions on past experience "the reason, why we place any credit in witnesses and historians is not derived from any connexion, which we perceive *a priori* between testimony and reality, but because we are accustomed to find a conformity between them."<sup>122</sup>

Hume noted that there are sometimes when we do not accept testimonial evidence due to inconsistencies. So he pointed out that this is also applicable to our assessment of miracles. We should also be able to weigh the evidence in favour of a certain law of nature holding against testimonial evidence that a miracle has occurred.

So far with the exposition of Hume's epistemology that resultantly led to his abject denial of metaphysics. From the epistemological procedure of Hume's philosophy which has empirical undertone that led Hume to the rejection of all metaphysical concepts like causality, substance, God etc. His rejection of metaphysical realities stemmed from his theory of the origin of ideas and his division of object of human knowledge into "relations of ideas" "and matters of fact". For Hume all knowledge is experiential, we come in contact with what we know through the process of perception which gives rise to impressions and ideas. However for Hume, we can only have impressions of things and form ideas from impressions we get from things. Anything we cannot have impressions of is no knowledge at all. The next chapter will be pointing Hume's philosophy as a phenomenalist epistemology.

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## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4.0. A Phenomenal analysis of David Hume's Epistemology: A Phenomenalistic Epistemology.**

#### **4.1. The Concept of Phenomenalistic Epistemology**

One of the things discovered in the phenomenal analysis of Hume's epistemology is that his epistemology is a phenomenalistic epistemology/empiricism.

The concept of phenomenalistic empiricism presupposed the endless debate of the certainty of human knowledge; it is a radical form of epistemology from the Humean tradition. The concept of phenomenalistic empiricism is derived from the word "Phenomenalism." Phenomenalistic epistemology is the view that "physical objects cannot justifiably be said to exist in themselves, but only as perceptual phenomena or sensory stimuli (eg, redness, hardness, softness and sweetness etc) situated in time and space."<sup>1</sup> This is what Hume's epistemology entails; that we cannot claim to have the knowledge of the existence of any physical objects but only have impressions of them and these impressions are in perpetual flux. Phenomenalism is a radical form of empiricism. Its root as an ontological view of the nature of existence can be traced back to George Berkeley and his subjective idealism, which David Hume further elaborated.

As an epistemological theory about the possibility of knowledge of objects in the external world however, it is probable that the most easily understandable formulation of phenomenalism is to be formed in the transcendental aesthetic of Immanuel Kant. However, phenomenalism is based on mental operations. These operations themselves are not known from sense experience. It connotes the non-empirical matters of space, time and contiguity that empiricism in all its forms and despite its structure seemed to require.

Furthermore, having clarified the concept of phenomenalism and invariably, phenomenistic epistemology, it is proper to clarify the concept of “Phenomenon.” Phenomenon is the word used in description of the object of experience, phenomena are things which appear. Husserl saw them in fact as essences which the mind instituted and the task of phenomenology was to describe them. In other words, “phenomena include all observable entities and whatever can occur to the mind or whatever can be constructed mentally.”<sup>2</sup> Other concepts to be noted are “Epistemology” and “Empiricism”. “Epistemology” is “the branch of philosophy that deals with knowledge and its justification”<sup>3</sup>. Empiricism on the other hand is “the view that knowledge of the world comes from sensory input rather than being innate and discoverable by reason alone.”<sup>4</sup> Phenomenalism, then, derives from the metaphysical view that objects are logical constructions of our perceptual properties. It is not so much the actual perception that counts, however, but the conditional possibility of perceiving, so that even when there is no one in a particular room to perceive a table, it is enough to say that if there were some one in that room, then that person would perceive the table.

Phenomenalism can therefore be considered as a radical form of empiricism, the whole idea of phenomenistic epistemology originated with the empiricist, John Stuart Mill who developed the first phenomenalist theory of perception otherwise known as “classical phenomenalism” which stipulated that physical objects are described as the permanent possibility of experience.



As a robust epistemological theory however, phenomenalism can be traced to the epistemological phenomenalism or transcendental idealism of Immanuel Kant. Kant insisted that human knowledge is limited to phenomena, although, Kant never denied or excluded the existence of objects outside sense experience or objects which were not knowable by way of experience (the things in themselves or noumena)

Phenomenalistic epistemology was critically discussed by various philosophers down to the logical positivists such as Ernst Mach, Bertrand Russell, Alfred Jules Ayer, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill, George Berkeley, and Rene Descartes.

#### **4.1.0. Hume's Phenomenalistic Epistemology:**

Hume's Phenomenalistic Epistemology has to do with phenomenalism which deals with perception of the phenomena of the senses, that is, physical objects with the basic position that "physical objects do not exist as things in themselves but only as perceptual phenomenon or bundles of sense data situated in time and in space."<sup>5</sup>

Hume's concept of phenomenalistic epistemeology came up as a result of his attempt to solve the problem of knowledge created by the rationalists when they accorded reason to be the superior source of human knowledge. Also as an empiricist, in trying to eliminate the non empirical excrescences of his contemporaries, he became too skeptical in his theory of knowledge. Hume maintained that in order to arrive at the true source of human knowledge, the nature of man must be investigated.

To this Hume, in his "*Treatise of Human Nature*" argued that all the sciences have some relations with the nature of man and so he developed the science of man. In doing this, he considered the issue of method as very important; he then applied the experimental method

of the natural science in the development of science of man which he saw its method as the only credible way of arriving at a true and secure science of nature. Hume therefore maintained that “as the science of man is the only solid foundation for the other sciences, so the only solid foundation we can give to this science itself must be on experience and observation.”<sup>6</sup> Hume’s point of emphasis and background was that the experimental method which has been applied with much success in natural science should be applied to the study of man; “that is to say, we ought to start with close observation of man’s psychological process and of his moral behavior and endeavored to ascertain their principle and cause”<sup>7</sup>. But Hume found out that observation and experimentation cannot be strictly applied in regard to man’s psychological and moral process in the same way they can be applied in chemistry. He advocated that; “we have to be content with the data as they are given to us in introspection and in close observation of human life and conduct... we must start with empirical data and not with any pretended intuition of the essence of the human mind, which is something that excludes our grasp.”<sup>8</sup>

Hume chose induction for the method for the science of human nature. He expressed optimism and confidence that “where the experiment of this kind are judiciously collected and compared, we may hope to establish on them a science which will not be inferior in certainty, and will be much superior in utility to any other of human comprehension.”<sup>9</sup>

He opined that “the new science of human nature must regard human nature as a subject of speculation, and with a narrow scrutiny examine it, in order to discover those principle which regulate our understanding, excite our sentiments and approve or blame any particular object, action or behavior.”<sup>10</sup> Hume saw epistemology as the basis of both metaphysics and ethics and set the limit for both as well. It is therefore rightly commented that Hume;

“Showed indeed that he has in mind a purpose connected with morality namely, to discover the principles and forces which govern our moral judgment. But he is also concerned with discovering the principles which regulate our understanding.”<sup>11</sup>

Hume maintained that we can only have perceptions of phenomena through our senses; though he acclaimed that sense experience cannot furnish us with reliable knowledge. Actually, the basic claim of empiricism is that all human knowledge is derived from sense perception. Locke and Berkeley influenced Hume’s empirical philosophy. Hume’s particular conception of phenomenalist epistemology is an empirical science of man and his (Hume’s) empirical science of man is described as the true emergence of modern philosophy. Hume’s empiricism is centered on human science. Accordingly, Hume viewed that;

We must therefore glean up our experiments in this science (that is of human nature) from a cautious observation of human life, and takes them as they appear in common course of the world, by men’s’ behaviour in company, in affairs, and in their pleasures. Where experiment of this kind are judiciously collected and compared, we may hope to establish on them a science which will not be inferior in certainty, and will be much superior in utility to any other of human comprehension.<sup>12</sup>

The disposition that shaped the philosophy of Hume can be summarized thus:

- (a) That all our ideas are acquired from impressions of sensation.
- (b) That we cannot conceive of anything different from what our experience gives us.
- (c) That a matter of fact can never be proved *a priori*; it must be discoverable by or inferred from sensory experience.

As a thorough – going empiricist, Hume traced all knowledge back to some original basis in experience. Any knowledge outside the realm of sense experience is impossibility for Hume. According to Hume, our experience is made of perceptions, a term that connotes mental

contact. He divided perception into impressions and ideas and with his theory of impression; he denied the existence of the physical world.

So from the above clarification, this work will be dealing with the phenomenanalysis of Hume's epistemology as a phenomenaltic epistemology to buttress that his epistemology is all about the perception of the phenomena of the senses; that all our ideas are from impressions which he claimed is the limit of human knowledge. Our knowledge for Hume and other empiricists begins and ends in Sense experience. We shall start with the discussion on Hume's notion of sensism.

#### **4.2. Phenomenalistic Epistemology in Hume's Sensism.**

Hume, in trying to ascertain the true source of human knowledge, sought it by the investigation of human nature which to his own understanding, is the true source by which human knowledge may be ascertained, also to quench the dust of inconsistency raised by Berkeley's spiritual substance which Hume believed should be chased back to the mind with the same argument used by Locke in chasing material substances to chimerical fictions (as Umeogu would call it) of the mind, being pleased (Hume) with the extent Berkeley moved for consistence with regard to Locke's inconsistency but was disagreeably displeased with the inconsistency Berkeley fell into; in doing so investigated the content of the mind with the submission that the contents of the mind are impressions and ideas derived from sense perception; also he divided all ideas, truths and the likes into 'Matters of facts ones', and 'Relation of idea' ones.

Matters of fact: This division is as a result of Hume's analysis on how to ascertain the falsity or truth of our proposition. How the validity of human knowledge can be ascertained, Hume said are not ascertained intuitively, empirical observation is involved in ascertaining the true

matters of fact. Relations of ideas has to do with mathematical conceptions like geometry, algebra, arithmetic, and every affirmation which is intuitively or demonstratively certain, that is, by mere operation of thought, their certainty is established because of the relationship between ideas which they express.

Accordingly to Walsh M. J,

Knowledge of impressions is either empirical knowledge of “matters of fact” or *a priori* knowledge of “relations of ideas” (images). This distinction is also called the distinction between “probability” and “knowledge” (cf. Treatise 1, 3; Enquiry 4, 1). It is the distinction which exists between contingent truths (e.g. one town is five miles or eight and necessary truths (as in mathematics). Empirical “matters of fact” can be discovered by -observation and non-demonstrative inference based on the relation of cause and effect. These empirical “facts” or “probabilities” can always

be conceived to be false without contradiction. *A priori* knowledge or “relation of ideas”, as in Euclidean geometry, can be discovered by intuition and by demonstration. It is knowledge of the relations of “resemblance, contrariety, degrees in quality, proportions in quality and number.”<sup>13</sup>

The consequence of that which has been submitted above is that all necessary truths must be formal, this means that they should be determined by the relations of identity and exclusion between ideas and the thinking that our knowledge of things is caused by them has to be given up. In the case of matters of fact truths, there is no part of matter in reality that by its sensible qualities discovers any power or gives us the ground to imagine that it would be possible that it is capable of producing anything. Then, “When we look about us towards external objects and consider the operation of causes we are never able in a single instance

to discover any power or necessary connexion, any quality which binds the effect to the cause and renders the one an infallible consequence of the other we only find that the one does actually follow the other.’’<sup>14</sup>

From the above, it is discernible that for Hume, whatever that cannot be qualified either as an abstract reasoning or experimental reasoning must remain without meaning. Everything that qualifies in terms of abstract reasoning gives no knowledge of the world. “The only abstract objects of the abstract sciences of demonstration are quantity and number, and all attempts to extend this more perfect species of knowledge beyond these bounds are mere sophistry and illusions.”<sup>15</sup> The things qualified in terms of matters of fact gives knowledge although the problem of the justification of induction poses a challenge.

This assertion of Hume stemmed from his position that all we know are impressions of things which we derive through perception with the senses. Since knowledge constitutes the basis of the new science of man, this science is to examine the extent and powers of human understanding. Like Locke, Hume derived all the contents of knowledge from experience. Though Hume did not use the term ‘perception’ precisely the same way as Locke did, but he used it to cover the mind’s content in general, and divided perception into impressions and ideas. “All the perceptions of the human mind resolve themselves into two distinct kind- impressions and ideas.”<sup>16</sup>

He took impressions to mean the immediate data of experience such as sensation, that which takes effect at the time of direct contact with the object, and later as ideas when mind reflects on the impressions or the copies of faint images of impression in thinking and reasoning. Hume explained ideas as true representation of impressions in thought. Ideas and

impressions appear always to correspond to each other. He described the differences between impressions and ideas in terms of vividness.

The difference between these consists in the degree of force and liveliness with which they strike upon the mind and make their way into our thoughts and consciousness. Those perceptions which enter with most force and violence we may name impressions, and, under this name, I comprehend all our sensations, passions and emotions as they make their first appearance in the soul. By ideas, I mean the faint images of these in thinking and reasoning.”<sup>17</sup>

We have perceptions of which forms ideas in our minds; which may be simple or complex. What led to Hume’s radical position that sense experience is the only possible guide to the acquisition of knowledge that is certain, we however discovered that it is not unconnected to the fact that the search for knowledge that is certain, which Aristotle shifted to concrete objects through experimentation and which also cut through the time of John Locke and George Berkeley who laid emphasis on sensation and reflection respectively, influenced Hume to a great extent. So, by building on the philosophy of Locke and Berkeley, Hume came to develop his radical position about sense perception as the limit of human knowledge. For him, “the only true knowledge is experiential; any concept that is not available to sense perception is mere fanciful thinking.”<sup>18</sup>

From the fore going, it becomes obvious that Hume’s position is that our sense experiences furnish us with knowledge of the physical world external to us. Having discovered however, that Hume divided the objects of human reason into relations of ideas and matters of fact and perception into impressions and ideas which involve sense experience for the proof of its certainty, we therefore sum up Hume’s epistemological paradigm this way; statements about physical objects can be known to be true through sense experience and that by means of our senses, we perceive the physical world as it is, thus, the sense experience we have of

physical things are generated by those physical things themselves. Therefore, the sense data generated by physical objects and which we get as impressions are what guarantee the existence of these objects and through which we have knowledge of them (phenomenalism). This indicated that for Hume, impression is the guarantor of knowledge. From this, Hume maintained his radical stand that there can be no knowledge of anything beyond experience. He denied the existence of the external world or physical objects claiming we can only have impressions of them like in hardness, softness, whiteness, shape, etc. There is no idea that does not come from sense experience in the form of impression; every of our idea must correspond to an impression, even when we feel that some of our ideas do not correspond to our impressions. Hume argued that it is as a result of the ability of the mind to form complex ideas through the faculty of compounding transposing, augmenting or diminishing the materials afforded us by the senses and experience. Moreover, It was also noted that Hume's sensism led him into denying innate truth of the rationalists on the ground of his belief that the so called "truths of reason" are dependent on "truth of facts" which derives from sense experience because as he claimed, they (truths of reason) are not innate, for all men are not aware of possessing these ineffable truths and so Hume took sense experience to be superior and prior to reason. This gave rise to the popular maxim of the empiricists that "nothing can ever be in the intellect without first being in the senses". Hume argued that the so called "innate truths" cannot be innate because the ideas about which they are, can by no means be supposed to be so.

Hume's theory of perception which he divided into impressions and ideas is purely phenomenalism. His submission that we can only have perception of sensory /physical objects which make impressions to the mind and ideas formed from them; also his claim that



the impressions we have of any physical objects are derived from the physical objects themselves but the knowledge or reality of those objects are not given rather their impressions and so are not known. This invariably is the denial of the existence of the physical objects and ultimately, the external world. This is phenomenalism in Hume's theory that the physical world cannot be said to exist in themselves but as a perpetual phenomena. We can only have knowledge of impressions given to us from perceptual or sensory objects. However the understanding of Hume's theory of ideas will help to note the philosophical undertone of his metaphysical rejection.

Over now to the discussion of Hume on association of ideas.

#### **4.3. Phenomenalistic Epistemology in Hume's Association of Ideas.**

In the correspondence of impressions and ideas, Hume however insisted that ideas are derived from impressions. He divided impressions into simple and complex impressions. He described simple impression as impressions made in our minds by objects when we perceive them while complex impressions are combination of simple impressions. In the same way, he divided ideas into simple and complex ideas; with simple ideas as faint images of simple impressions and complex ideas as combination of simple ideas. Simple impressions and simple ideas are such as to admit of no distinction or separation while the complex impressions and complex ideas may be distinguished in parts. The distinction between the primary ideas of impression and the secondary ideas of reflection presuppose in Hume his theory of association of ideas. Hume later observed that many of our complex ideas never had impressions that correspond to them, and that many of our complex impressions never exactly copied ideas. He further divided impressions into sensations and reflection;

sensation arises from the soul originally from unknown cause while reflection is derived in great measure from our idea.

By association of ideas, Hume meant the principle by which our ideas are related to each other; impressions which we originally derive from sensation can be repeated as ideas in various ways; by memory and by imagination. He therefore made distinction of ideas of memory and ideas of imagination. The ideas of memory are much more lively and strong than those of the imagination; it is tied to the simple ideas. Memory paints its objects in more distinct colours than any which are employed by imagination. “When we remember any past event, the idea of it flows in upon the mind in a forcible manner. The idea of memory Hume claimed, preserves not only simple ideas but also their order and position. This means that our impressions can reappear through our memory. Ideas of Imagination: he equally claimed is different from ideas of memory; it is not tied to the simple ideas in the order and position as in memory. What this mean is that in imagination, we have ideas as faint copies or images of impressions. The difference between the two Hume gave as follows; “in memory, there is an inseparable connection between ideas but in the case of imagination, this inseparable connection is wanting, but there is nevertheless, a uniting principle among ideas, some associating quality by which one idea naturally introduces another.”<sup>19</sup>

What Hume meant by the explanation above is that the mind has unbounded freedom to roam the entire universe, that though our bodies are limited to this planet earth, the mind appears to have the ability to transcending this planet to other planets in the exercise of its freedom of movement. Though the mind has this ability to think of countless incongruous and fantastic things like a “golden mountain”, etc. Hume argued that it is nevertheless confined within the narrow limits of the mind. This position is that even when the mind produces complex ideas, though complex are not beyond impressions (phenomenalism).

Like the example of a “golden mountain” given above; when we conceive of a golden mountain, we only join two consistent ideas, that is, gold and mountain which of course come through impressions we have of gold and mountain or more lively ones. This he claimed is the work of imagination.

What according to Hume leads the mind into combining, transposing and compounding of ideas it formed from impressions to get complex ideas is reflection. Despite these, Hume refuted the fact that the mind plays an active role in knowledge acquisition. The mind to him is passive. He presented knowledge acquisition through sensation in a way that the mind is seen not actively dealing with given materials as to put them together, “but as finding already in the very data of sensation, certain natural relations by reason of which the one calls up or introduces the other.”<sup>20</sup> What Hume rather claimed is that it is the idea that possesses these associating qualities which make it possible for them to combine and thus appear in compound manner though; it is by the activity of the mind that these complex ideas come about.

Simple ideas comprehend in the compound ones are bound together by these universal principles and have influence on all mankind. What Hume meant here is that there appear to be some principles of connection among ideas and named these principles as resemblance, contiguity in time and space and cause and effect. In other to demonstrate that there is an association of principles/relations between ideas which makes possible for ideas to come to mind in a successive manner without the mind, he declared;

it is evident that there is a principle of connection between the different connections, thoughts and ideas of the mind and that in their appearance to the memory or imagination, they introduce each other with a certain degree of method or regularity- this is so observable, that any particular thought which breaks in upon the regular tract or chain of ideas is merely renounced and rejected.<sup>21</sup>

However, among the connecting principles, Hume concentrated on the principle of cause and effect as the most vital in determining the connectedness of human knowledge. Hume claimed that the entire edifice of our knowledge will crumble if we fail to prove the principle of causality to be true.

Hume's submission that the contents of the mind are impressions and ideas and his division of impressions into simple and complex ones and impression further into sensation and reflection reduce all human knowledge to mere impressions; which he said are in perpetual flux. Complex ideas Hume claimed is nevertheless beyond the narrow limits of the mind that has its content as impressions and ideas. The complex ideas formed Hume saw as arbitrary association caused by the imagination. With this position, it boiled down to that all our ideas are derived from impressions which he said is the guarantor of human knowledge. We cannot know anything beyond the impressions of the senses; the object of impression is not known but the impressions of it. This is phenomenalism in Hume's epistemology

#### **4.4. Phenomenalistic Epistemology in Hume's Causality.**

Hume was of the view that all our perceptions are distinct existences and the mind never receives any real connexion among distinct existences and in this way he came to his theory of cause and effect where he argued that nothing can be claimed to have been the cause of any effect.

According to Hume, ideas are often related to other ideas and that this constancy tends to suggest that these ideas are brought together by the activity of the mind. This was as a result that some ideas are found not to represent impressions of realities. He proposed there must be some bond of friendship, some associating qualities (which he called “gentle force”) by which one idea naturally introduces another in his account for the association of simple ideas into complex ideas.

What Hume meant here is that ideas are associated with each other depending on the qualities they possess, and he named these qualities as Resemblance, Contiguity in Space and Time and Cause and Effect, but concentrated more on cause and effect which he believed form the basis for most of our beliefs. However in his quest to investigate what constitutes our knowledge and especially our information about what events are causally related to each other, he asked, where comes the idea of causality? He claimed that the relation of cause and effect is not in any way attained by *a priori* reasoning but from experience and observation. No matter how reasonable we are, we cannot *a priori* know that water can suffocate us, also; there is nothing in this world that happens by chance. No matter how many times we observe oxygen; there is nothing in it to show that when mixed with hydrogen, it will give us water. This reflected the Humean kind of argumentation. There is no analysis, whatsoever, of fire to tell us that when a person’s finger comes in contact with it that it will burn. In this way however, Hume denied *a priori* knowledge and seemed here to have downplayed on the role of reason. Then if our ideas of causation rests on our experience or observation of relations among objects how do we come about this idea or explain it through the experience or observation? He then explained these types of relations by which we come to have the idea of causation which he made evident in this quote;

Contiguity (in space), people imagine that one thing is the cause of the other, for example, a piece of rock hits the glass window and pieces of shattered glasses fall down, people associate the idea of the fallen pieces and of throwing a rock with the thought of causality.<sup>2</sup> Priority in time (succession), because “B” comes after “A”, people associate “A” as the cause of “B”. 3. Constant Conjunction, the continuous relating of smoke to fire. According to Hume, constant conjunction happens when an objects is followed by another whose appearance always conveys the thought of the other.<sup>22</sup>

Relation of contiguity: I find in the first place that whatever objects are considered as causes or effects are contiguous. He thought in this case that causes or effects are always contiguous either immediately or mediately.

Temporal priority: Here we tend to have an idea of causal relation when a thing or event precedes the other in time. He therefore argued that cause must be temporally prior to effect. This argument according to him is confirmed by experience. It means that there will be no true instance of causation if an effect should be contemporary with its cause. If this were to be the case, Hume argued that there would be no true instance of causation if an effect should be contemporary with its cause. If this were to be the case, Hume argued that there will be no such thing as succession and all objects must be coexistent.

Constant Conjunction: In this relation, Hume argued causality as constant conjunction of events when often enough in the past experience, we observed two objects occurred together; we come to conclude them as causally related. This kind of relation Hume claimed is furnished by experience and empirical observation. When we have items in the past occurring together, we expect in the future when one of the items is experienced, we immediately infer that the other must exist.

But relations of contiguity, temporal priority and constant conjunction were not the only elements considered by Hume as sufficient to establish causal relations. There should be in addition to these, elements of necessary connection which he considered as more important to the idea of causation. According to Hume, an object may be contiguous, prior or conjoined to another without being considered as its cause. The question then arises; from what impression or impressions is the idea of necessary connection derived. According to Hume, two important questions are appropriate in considering any answer to the question above. So the answers to the question presupposes two questions;

“First for what reason do we pronounce it necessary that everything whose existence has a beginning should also have a cause? Secondly, why do we conclude that such particular causes must necessarily have such particular effect, and what is the nature of that inference we draw from the one to the other, and of the belief we repose in it.”<sup>23</sup>

With regard to the question that whatever begins to exist must have a cause of its existence, Hume maintained that the claim is neither intuitively certain nor demonstrable. That is to say that certainty of the proposition cannot be *a priori* demonstrated to be true as in a typical mathematical proposition. He claimed that we conceive an object as non-existent and at one time as existent, at the other time without having any distinct idea of a cause or productive principle. The implication then is that “actual separation of these objects is so far possible that it implies no contradiction nor absurdity and is therefore incapable of being refuted by any reasoning from mere ideas, without which it is impossible to demonstrate the necessity of a cause.”<sup>24</sup>

The element of necessity in the principle of causation cannot be formally demonstrated from the analysis of the concept itself. Therefore, if the principle of causality is neither intuitively certain nor demonstrable, our belief in it must arise from experience and observation. Causation is therefore a variable relation. With regard to the question why we

believe that this particular cause must have this particular effect, Hume explained that causal inference is not the force of intuitive knowledge of essence. Consequently Hume argued that;

There is no object which implies the existence of any other, if we consider these objects in themselves and never looked beyond the ideas which we form them. Such an inference would amount to knowledge, and would imply the absolute contradiction and impossibility of conceiving anything different. But as all distinct ideas are inseparable, it is evident that there is no possibility of that kind.<sup>25</sup>

Since the idea of necessary connection cannot be intuitively certain or demonstrable, Hume became convinced that it is only by experience or observation that we come by the notion of causation “it is therefore by experience only that we can infer the existence of one object from another.”<sup>26</sup> In considering the meaning of statement according to Hume that it is by experience and observation that we come by the notion of causation. This statement does not imply that we derive the idea from impression rather Hume meant that we frequently experience constant conjunction of two objects. For instance, that of flame or the sensation of heat, and we remember that these objects have appeared in regular recurrent order of contiguity and succession. When objects have appeared in this way, Hume said “without any further ceremony we call the one cause and the other effect and infer the existence of the one from the other.”<sup>27</sup> Suitably to this experience “... we may define a cause to be an object followed by another, and where all the objects similar to the first are followed by objects similar to the second. Or in the other words, where, if the first object had not been the second never had existed.”<sup>28</sup>



By having recourse to experience to explain our idea of causal relation, Hume simply wished to observe that we cannot prove the validity of our belief of causal inference by means of principle which cannot be proved and which is not intuitively certain. However, though this is the case, we do in fact presuppose the principle of causal relation. For Hume, this presupposition is not an act of reason but habit. He remarked, “this supposition ... is not founded on argument of any kind, but is derived entirely from habit, by which we are determined to expect for the future the same train of objects to which we have been accustomed.”<sup>29</sup>

What Hume meant us to understand in his whole theory of causality is that, we cannot by mere looking at an effect know the cause. He claimed that if cause and effect were a matter of reason and not experience, then we will be able to find from the effect what the cause is. In this way, Hume denied *a priori* knowledge. He argued also that there is no impression of a causal nexus between cause and effect. The idea merely arises from our mind when we experience certain relations of contiguity, succession and constant conjunction between objects which cannot be empirically verified.

What Hume meant here is that the idea of causality arises in our mind when we experience these relations between objects. But he argued we do not perceive or have impressions of these relations. This is because, if there is in any way the existence of necessary connections between events or objects, they are not perceived and so, they are not of the phenomena of the senses. (Phenomenalism)

He believed that when we talk about causality, we are talking about nothing else than these relations. The relations of contiguity, succession and constant conjunction when subjected to the empirical observation of Hume are found to be obtained from experience, but they cannot be perceived nor give impressions. He argued then that, there is no necessary connection between objects and events.

Hume asserted that the type of conclusion we make from these relations cannot be justified by reason; we just find it natural to think in this way. He pointed out that there is nothing in the cause that necessitates the effect. The point Hume wanted to make clear is that our idea of necessary connection is not derived from any impression but from the repeated observations of Instances of the cause – effect dichotomy.

Our idea of necessary connection is not something of which we can have *a priori* knowledge of; also it is not derived from sensory impression or from an impression gained by reflecting on the operations of the mind. He recommended that we should refrain from causal reasoning. Consequently, if Hume's analysis is studied very well, it could be detected that his denial of causality is premised on his notion of impressions and ideas, impressions; we can recollect is Hume's guarantor of reality and his notion of operation of human understanding; matters of fact and relations of ideas.. Anything that does not have impression to Hume does not exist and this is the reason he denied self, God and the physical world as mentioned earlier. His rejection of causality was purely an epistemological exercise. The skepticism that Hume was led to was as a result of the devastating role impression played in his epistemology. In his epistemology, Hume claimed we only know a sequence of impressions, unrelated to each other, and as far as we can tell, not attached to, or belonging to, either external objects or an internal object called the self or mind.

Hume's phenomenalist epistemology Bailey confirmed "is not just a radical form of empiricism but an epistemological skepticism."<sup>30</sup> Hume is often described as a radical skeptic. He relied not just on experience, but observation, usually in the form of introspection. Nigel Warburton observed that his aim is to produce a coherent scientific view of humanity. Hume's reduction of thought to be only "a species of sensation" made his own philosophical thought on metaphysics porous and without foundation and this caused it to be rejected.

Hume held that we cannot rely solely on the common sense pronouncements of popular superstition which illustrate human conduct without offering any illumination, nor can we achieve any genuine progress by means of abstract metaphysical speculations. The philosophical analysis of the conceptual explication of phenomenalist epistemology to the new Hume, Allan Bailey and O' Dan Brien argued that "everyone agrees that Hume makes at least an epistemological point; we do not have knowledge of causal powers. Reason and observation cannot provide us with insight into the metaphysical question of what lies behind the shifting patterns of our experience."<sup>31</sup>

In his phenomenalist epistemology Hume tried to prove that all we could have is knowledge of impression and he denied the notion of cause and effect. This reflected in his submission that all our perceptions are distinct existences and the mind never receives any real connection among distinct existences. This is because the connectedness is not an object of perception and so cannot be perceived. The connectedness we believe exist among objects or events is as a result of relations of contiguity, succession and constant conjunction which are not in any way derived *a priori* but from experience and observation and not in any way derived *a priori* or reason.

Hume also argued that no object implies the existence of any other and this is because there is nothing in any object that gives the impression of something that implies another. Though Hume claimed that it is by observation and experience that we come to the notion of causation but the idea does not come from impression but as a result of constant conjunction we experience among objects. The notion of necessary connection is denied by Hume because it is not an object of sensory perception and so cannot give knowledge.

However, because we cannot have the impressions of any relations or necessary connection among objects and events and can only infer causal reasoning from experience and observation and not by any *a priori means*, (this is because causal inference cannot intuitively or demonstrably be certain), it becomes clear that for Hume, anything that does not fall under the umbrella of perceptual object cannot generate impressions and so cannot be known. With Hume's theory of perception, impression, idea, he maintained the knowledge only of impressions of objects of perception, hence, a phenomenalist epistemology.

The phenomenalist epistemology is a reflection of the new Humean position and the idea of causal powers cannot be explicitly denied. However, with Hume's denial of causality, he came to the denial of substance.

#### **4.5. Phenomenalist Epistemology in Hume's Idea of substance.**

Since all our ideas are ultimately referred back to impressions, the same thing applied to the idea of substance. The idea of substance together with that of relation and identity has implications for a theory of human nature and natural law in Hume. Our ideas according to Hume are referred back to impressions and are not exception with substance. Therefore according to Hume, assuming that there is such an idea of substance and a question is brought up as, what would be the likely answer to the question; from what impression or

impressions do we derive the idea of substance? For if there is an idea of substance, it must be derived from impressions of sensation or that of reflection. Hume then argued that the idea is neither derived from impressions of sensation nor impressions of reflection and he consequently concluded that “there is no idea of substance at all.”<sup>32</sup>

What this statement implied is that from the point of view of ideas that can be derived from concrete things of sensible qualities, the idea of substance is not one of such ideas. Rather, Hume pointed out that, the idea of substance “... is nothing but a collection of simple ideas that are united by the imagination and have a particular name assigned them by which we are able to recall, either to ourselves or others to that collection.”<sup>33</sup> What Hume meant here is that substance cannot be established from the nature of things according to experience. His position therefore, bothers on the denial of the idea of substance as possible idea of reason. For Hume, the idea of substance as referring to an unknown occult material substratum in which qualities are taken to inhere is unacceptable.

With regard to knowledge of all-there-is as consisting of impressions and ideas, Hume eliminated the concept of substance. Hume accusing Locke and Berkeley of the inconsistencies in their empiricist theory of having admitted the possibility of the existence of substance, committed the idea or notion of substance to skepticism and in this way, he did away with abstract ideas for the reason that no impression or idea can at any rate correspond to them.

He denied that substance could have a consistent meaning or can exist because it is not derivable from our experience. It was however, this “mitigated consequent skepticism” as Umeogu would term it that led to Hume’s denial of the self as well as the idea of personal

identity, God, mind and body relations, and all metaphysical terms and saw them as nonsensical.

However, the views of the earlier traditional philosophers in this regard, Hume said;

I would be fair to ask those philosophers who found so much of their reasoning on the distinction of substance and accident and imagine we have clear ideas of each, whether the ideas of substance can be derived from the impressions of sensation or reflection? If it is conveyed to us by our senses, I ask, which of them; and after what manner? If received by the eyes, it must be colour, if by the ears, a sound, if by the palate, a taste, and so of the other senses. But I believe none will assent, that substance is either a colour, or sound or a taste. The idea of substance must be derived from an impression of reflection if it really exists. But the impressions of reflection resolve themselves into passions and emotions; none of which can possibly represent a substance. We have therefore no idea or notion of substance distinct from that of a collection of particular qualities, nor have we any other meaning when we talk of reason concerning it.<sup>34</sup>

According to Hume, the idea of substance comes to us when in imagination, we agglomerate simple ideas which we take to be related and in our eager for unity, group these ideas under a common name by the force of habit and custom which we then refer to as substance. Accordingly; “The idea of substance as that of mode is nothing but a collection of simple ideas that are united by the imagination, and have a particular name assigned to them by which we are able to recall, either to ourselves or to others, that collection.”<sup>35</sup>

For Hume however, all we can ever talk about are attributes of substance or predicates of subjects, and that every distinct perception that finds its way into the composition of the human mind has a distinct existence and so is unique and can be distinguished from one another, also can be separated from every other perception. These are some of the logical and epistemological consequences of Hume’s skeptical empiricism. Thus; “there is no intrinsic relatedness between our perceptions (unless that from habit or custom Hume would say) of the external world or between the occurrences of love and hate and acts of will which we are aware of within ourselves, each is distinct from every other, in itself an isolated, detached event.”<sup>36</sup>

The summary of what Hume is saying about this is that, the notion of substance does not come from impression of sensation which for the eyes will be colour, ears-sound, palate-taste; he claimed that colour-sound and taste are not substances. He further claimed that the origin of the idea of substance does not come from the impression or reflection for such impressions will yield passions and emotions which are not substances. Therefore Hume concluded “there is no idea of substances at all.”<sup>37</sup>

However, to the scholastic challenge that substance is a substratum (subject) on which inheres the impressions and experience of colour, taste and sound, Hume replied that we do not have perfect idea of anything, what we have are perceptions, the idea of substance does not exist, it is meaningless. But the objection continued that our perception must have a fundament that gives them content and explanation. To this objection, Hume in replying fell into dogmatic empiricism by his answers that we need nothing further to explain the existence of our impressions. According to him, they occur, we have them and that is all.

Here again, Hume maintained a phenomenalist epistemology by his insistence on the perception of the phenomena of the senses for knowledge acquisition. Just as he debunked knowledge of causality, the same way he denied the notion of substance. The idea of substance cannot be known by the relations of ideas because the idea cannot be known intuitively nor by demonstration, nor from matters of fact because, it cannot be proved by experience, in other words we cannot have perception of it and so we cannot have impressions of it. It is not a physical object and so, cannot generate impression which for Hume is the guarantor of human knowledge. He rather took substance as congeries of simple ideas united by the imagination.

Hume's denial of substance is total with grievous consequences. The self which explains personal identity is denied a substantial identity. God as a metaphysical reality is specifically denied. God's existence for Hume cannot be inferred because the order of the universe is totally empirical. We cannot claim any knowledge of cause that is substantial, nor can we derive any principle of moral conduct from a non-existent God. He saw God hypothesis as a useless hypothesis and ultimate cause beyond our reach. The world in fact for him is an imponderable mystery. However, we see in Hume's theory "a thorough going anti-metaphysical synthesis, consistent but fragrantly negative."<sup>38</sup> Hume's philosophy is phenomenalistic; it presupposes radical skepticism of some sort. With Hume's denial of substance, it becomes obvious he will deny all metaphysical realities.

Let us first discuss Hume on the mind /body before we go over to his notion of personal identity.

#### **4.6. Phenomenalistic Epistemology in Hume's Notion of Mind / body.**

Since for Hume, all ideas are dependent on impressions, does it imply that Hume recognized the existence of bodies independent or apart from perception, are bodies the only truly existent things so that man is conceived only as a rational body? Hume expectedly objected that there are existences of objects independent of our perception, arguing that we are confined to the world of perceptions and enjoy no access to a world of objects existing independently of these perceptions. He explained the problem of this kind as thus; Since nothing is ever present to the mind but perceptions, and since all ideas are derived from something antecedently present to the mind, it follows that it is impossible



for us to conceive or form an idea of anything specifically different from ideas and impressions.’’<sup>39</sup>phenomenalism

Thus it follows according to Hume that we are limited by our knowledge of impressions and ideas of objects presented to the mind by impressions of the senses. He claimed we cannot know the objects in itself of which impressions we receive. What this entails is that all our ideas of objects are ultimately reducible to impressions, and impressions are subjective, pertaining on the percipient subject. He affirmed that we cannot have knowledge of what objects would be like or are like, apart from what our perception gives us. Here Hume was not trying to deny the existence of body or bodies independently of our perceptions, since we cannot help asserting to the proposition that bodies exist. One can sense a contradiction in this Hume’s position. Hume noticed this and in order to fill the gap he framed the question in a different manner.... ‘‘We may well ask what causes induce us to believe in the existence of body. But it is in vain to ask whether there be body or not. That is a point which we must take for granted in all our reasoning’’<sup>40</sup>

The above statement is evidence that both the skeptics and non skeptics behave as though body really exists. Therefore, we can only require what is the cause or what are the causes which induce us to believe in the continued existence of bodies distinct from our minds and perceptions. It is important to suspect that Hume’s position on this matter may ultimately lead to skepticism.

Hume argued that we cannot arrive at the notion of continued existence of bodies independent of perception either through sensation or reasoning. He claimed that the senses do not reveal to us bodies, which are distinct from our perceptions; that is, from the sensible appearances of bodies. They do not reveal to us both a copy and original.

Thus according to Hume; “properly speaking, it is not our body we perceive when we regard our limbs and members, but certain impressions, which enter by the senses, so that the ascribing of real and corporeal existence to these impressions, or to their objects, is an act of the mind as difficult to explain at that which we examine at present.”<sup>41</sup> Again, Hume argued that;

it is not reason that induces us to believe in the continued and distinct existence of bodies. He argued; “whatever convincing arguments philosophers may fancy they can produce to establish the beliefs of objects independent of the mind, it is obvious these arguments are known but to few, and that it is not by them that the greatest part of mankind are induced to attribute objects to some impressions and deny them to others.”<sup>42</sup>

On the contrary, Hume argued that ‘they inform us that everything which appear to the mind is nothing but perception, and is interrupted and dependent on the mind’” means that we cannot infer the existence of objects from perceptions, (phenomenalism), such an inference according to him would be a causal inference. The question of whence then do we derive the notion of the continued existence of bodies independently of the mind since we cannot derive the knowledge of it neither through sensation nor reasoning. To this question, Hume argued that it is from imagination. “The imagination, when we set into any form of thinking, is apt to continue even when its objects fails it and, like a galley put in motion by the oars, carries on its course without any new impulse.”<sup>43</sup> conclusively, the high point of Hume’s examination of our belief in the continued and independent existence of bodies is that it is not rationally justifiable. These arguments boiled down to the fact that we can only know impressions of existences which are distinct and separate from one another, any relation among things which does not generate impression is not a phenomenon of the senses and so cannot form impressions because they cannot be perceived.

Impression of the mind cannot be found and so it is an unclear concept.

The connection between mind/body Hume said is like that of constant conjunction like in the case of a pear (mental act) and pear (physical event). However, because there are no impressions of any connectivity between mind and body for one to have knowledge of them, Hume doubted their existence. The connection between them cannot be empirically verified and so cannot be known, (phenomenalism).

However it is pertinent to know that Hume's radical empiricism (phenomenalistic epistemology) affected the whole of his philosophical thought.

Over now to Hume's notion of personal identity.

**4.7. Phenomenalistic Epistemology in Hume's Idea of Personal identity;** it can therefore be observed that with Hume, the distinction between the material and the spiritual disappears. Hume's denial of self is informed in his denial of the idea of substance. His denial of substance gave rise to his denial of the existence of continuous self that in some way retains its identity through time. Here one wonders if given to Hume's skeptical position regarding the independent and continued existence of the body, whether identity is ascribed exclusively to the mind. It is obvious that given what has earlier been said about Hume's notion of substance, the problem of the mind or the soul in Hume was addressed from his understanding of substance. Hume dismissed the notion of substance as non existing and so nonsensical, and the question becomes; what propensity causes us to the idea of the self and personal identity. Therefore, Hume's understanding of the problem of the mind or the self or personal identity rested on his understanding and analysis of the notion of substance. Hume denied we have any idea of substance because it could not be found in impressions. The question of where we derive the impression of substance, Hume said it is

important if we must talk about the immateriality or otherwise of the soul, for the soul is thought to be a substance.

The idea of the self or personal identity rests on the notion of the immateriality of the soul. The idea of substance comes to us because we can define it, according to Hume but the definition we have of substance as “something which may exist by itself” raises some problems. According to Hume, this definition of substance fitted everything conceivable, for whatever is clearly and distinctly conceivable can exist by itself in the order of possibility. If this is the case, the definition will not serve to distinguish substance from accident or soul from perceptions. He went further to argue that the idea of substance involved inhesion in something. And “inhesion in something is supposed to be requisite to support the existence of perception, we have therefore, no idea of inhesion”<sup>44</sup>

Hume argued that ‘we have no idea of inhesion, it logically followed we have no idea of substance. Perception cannot therefore, inhere either in the body, for that would require localization or in an immaterial substance or soul, for that would amount to meaninglessness for Hume, we are confined to the world of perception and all we know is perception – if there are things other than perceptions, we cannot know what they are. This presupposition shows that the theory of the soul as an immaterial substance is indistinguishable from perceptions. Hume therefore concluded that “the question concerning the substance of the soul is absolutely unintelligible. All our perceptions are not susceptible of a local union, either with what is extended or unextended.”<sup>45</sup> Hume’s denial of substance and immateriality of the soul consequently has implications for a theory of human nature as regards personal identity. It is obvious that Hume is compelled to deny that we have any idea of the self distinct from our perceptions. Hume therefore argued against philosophers

who were wrong to imagine that we are always conscious of the self as something which remains in a permanent state of self- identity. But if we have any clear and intelligible idea of the self, Hume argued it must be derived from an impression and this is evident in this quote thus;

Self or person is not any impression, but that to which our several impressions and ideas are supposed to have a reference. If any impression gives rise to the idea of self, that impression must continue invariably the same, through the whole cause of our lives, since self is supposed to exist after that manner. But there is no impression constant and invariable... and consequently there is no idea of substance.<sup>46</sup>

Hume finally came to the conclusion about the idea of the self and personal identity that the mind is nothing but a combination of all manner of perceptions. He therefore denied that the mind has simplicity or identity seen as the seat of personal identity. He identified mind or soul as nothing but; “A kind of theatre where several perceptions successively make their appearance, pass, reposes, glide away and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations. There is properly no simplicity in it at one time or identity in different. They are the successive perceptions only that constitute the mind.”<sup>47</sup>

In as much as the idea of the self has no rational justification, man nevertheless has the tendency to attribute identity and simplicity to the mind. This tendency in man to attribute identity and simplicity to the mind, Hume attributed to memory without which according to Hume, ‘all questions about personal identity are to be regarded rather as a grammatical as philosophical difficulties’. Once we give in to memory, our perceptions are linked by association in the imagination and we attribute identity to what in fact is an interrupted succession of perceptions.

Hume's position on the issue of personal identity obviously is a difficult one to sustain. His position can neither be said to be one of the materialist nor the idealist type. This however led him to skepticism when he said "for my part, I must plead the privilege of a skeptic and confess that thus this difficulty is too hard for my understanding."<sup>48</sup>

Since Hume denied the notion of substance, it becomes obvious that he will also deny the notion of personal identity. He saw personal identity as nothing but psychological experience and not anything physical to be perceived or observed to generate impressions. This is the reason he claimed he could not find any soul, mind, and unchanging entity within him called self, when he goes in himself. We cannot arrive at the notion of continued existence of bodies independent of perception. This stemmed from Hume's phenomenalism that we can only have impressions of objects of the senses or phenomena and the perceptions we have of them are distinct and separate from one another, the mind cannot be said to interact with the body because they are both distinct from each other and if there is any relation between them, Hume maintained it cannot be perceived because it is not an object of perception, it is only but a causal relations. Also we cannot infer the existence of anything from perception because perception can only generate impressions and in this case, impressions we have of things do not guarantee their existence. Again, there are no bodies distinct from our perceptions, if there are, our senses do not reveal them to us. Therefore, in Hume's phenomenalistic epistemology, only impressions appear to the mind, we do not perceive anything body when we regard our limbs and members but certain impressions. His theory of association of ideas led to his denial that the mind has simplicity or identity seen as the self, rather he saw it as a combination of all manner of perceptions and any relations about these distinct perceptions are as a result of combination of these ideas by the memory

which deals with simple ideas. So the idea of self is derived from experience and not anything outside experience.

However, it is pertinent to note that the whole of Hume's empiricist theory ran throughout his philosophical thought.

Now on Hume's thought on Ethics/ Morality.

#### **4.8. Hume on Ethics (morality).**

In Hume's *Treatise of Human nature*, he made clear his principle of human nature and natural law because to him morality is a subject that interests us above all others as the basis of natural law. He then tried to lay human action on a clear foundation. Hume in his science of human nature made a distinction between the 'reasonable' and the 'active' aspects of their relationship. Hume therefore, came up in the *Treatise of Human Nature* with the study of man as "a reasonable rather than an active being, and a study of man as a chiefly born of action."<sup>49</sup> This distinction made by Hume within Human nature does not imply absolute dichotomy of reason and action in morality. Man, Hume believed, does reflect on his actions. By Hume's distinction between "reasonable" and "active" in human nature, he meant that "the basic assumptions on which we act, these fundamental beliefs which are necessary for practical life are not conclusions drawn by the understanding from rational argument."<sup>50</sup> what is deduced here is that man's reflections and reasons presupposed beliefs which are not themselves fruits of reasons. For Hume, the fundamental principles which regulate or operate in man's ethical life is passion; from feelings sentiments, and reason. Morality, therefore for Hume is sentimentalism. This is evident in his statement that "reason alone is not capable of being the sole immediate cause of our actions.... reasons is and ought to be the slave to passion and can never pretend to any other than to serve and obey them."<sup>51</sup>

Moreover, Hume included emotions and affects to the word passion, in other words, emotional aspects of human nature is considered as a source of action. Hume went further to distinguish between direct and indirect passion. He took direct passion to be those which arise immediately from the experience of pleasure or pain. Instances of direct pleasure include fear, despair, hope, grief, joy and security.

Hume further claimed that there are direct passions which arise “from a natural impulse or instinct, which is perfectly unaccountable. Of this kind is the desire of punishment to our enemies and happiness to our friends, hunger, lust and a few other bodily appetites.”<sup>52</sup> They are known to produce good and evil, that is, pleasure and pain. So the basic moral categories of “good” and “evil” is associated with pain and pleasure in Humean ethics. On the other hand, indirect passions according to Hume do not arise simply from feelings of pains or pleasure, they do not proceed directly from impressions of sensation but from a double relation of impression and ideas. Instances of indirect passion include pride, humility, love and hatred. Hume further made a distinction between the object and the cause of indirect passion. He took self to be the object of pride and humility and so self can therefore be taken to be the cause of pride and humility. He made the expression of the self as “the succession of related ideas and impressions of which we have an intimate memory and consciousness.”<sup>53</sup>

In Hume’s account of human nature as constituted of the passions presents an obviously individualistic picture of personality. Hume argued that man’s moral constitution is not only composed of the passions alone, but of sympathy also. It is sympathy that links ones emotions with that of others in a psychological mechanism. But in other way, each person understands his own moral situation through his own passion, but is linked to the passions of



others through sympathy. Therefore, it can be said that “Hume’s world is not a world of mutually sundered human atoms, but the world of ordinary experience in which human beings stand in one another in varying degrees of mutual relationships. It is the psychological mechanism of sympathy which he is concerned.”<sup>54</sup> Hume believed that reason is wholly inactive and can never be the source of an active principle of conscience or sense of morals. Thus, the operations of reason involve the constitution of various relations between and among mental representations derived from objects in experience. Hume’s claims about moral sense as describing the conscious phenomena associated with moral distinctions gave us a comprehensive account or articulation of Hume’s theory of moral sentiments. His theory of moral sentiments is described as a phenomenological account of morality. His ideas concern the actualization and the representing content of human mental states.

Hume designated passions as more fundamental than reason in moral matters, describing their being as caused by objects of experience to secure logical and existential theory.

However, Hume advanced two hopeless positions – pyrrhonism and dogmatism; he made a vantage point from which he could block the metaphysicians in their efforts to reach knowledge of supra-sensible realities, particularly in the theological field, and yet still himself advance in psychology, morals, aesthetics and politics.

Hume believed that moral values are quite essential in human customs and traditions; he was of the view that reason plays a crucial role in the evaluation of moral values. What governed moral values is reasoning and human freedom for instance, is governed by this same reason. Human freewill is regulated by the crucial role of reason.

Over now to Hume’s analysis of Human nature for liberty and freedom of will.

#### **4.9. Hume on the Idea of Freedom of Will.**

Can we assert the reality of the will and freedom of the will given Hume's analysis of a mechanism of passion? Does Hume's analysis of human nature as composed of the passions recognize freedom of the will?

In his analysis, Hume explained the will as “the internal impressions we feel and conscious of when we knowingly give rise to any new motion of our body or new perception of our mind.”<sup>55</sup> The will is therefore not a faculty and it is not also a passion according to Hume but, can be described as a motion of the body, arising from pleasure or pain. If the will is understood as inseparable from the passions, it implied that it cannot be resolved and hence, freedom is denied. It means that human actions are necessarily determined by the passion.

According to Hume, the union between motive and action possesses the same constancy which we observe between cause and effect in physical operations. He then argued that just as the element of necessity follows our understanding of causality, the same necessity applies to our actions. Hume emphasized this point as follows;

According to my definitions, necessity makes an essential part of causation, and consequently liberty, by removing necessity, removes also causes, and is the very same thing with chance. As chance is commonly thought to imply contradiction and is at least contrary to experience, there is always the same argument against liberty.<sup>56</sup>

According to Hume, the problem of liberty exists as a linguistic problem. If freedom must be denied, if it is defined in such a way as to exclude necessity, it can be asserted, if it is defined in another way, as spontaneity. The idea of freedom can only be understood as identical with spontaneity. The denial of freedom gives rise to two forms of truth in accordance with Hume's philosophy. He therefore, attempted to prove the truth of two propositions, namely, that “reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will and

second that reason can never oppose passion in the direction of the will.’’<sup>57</sup> Hume’s analysis of the relation between reason and passion in human nature gives rise to irrationalism in morality. This implied the assigning of the position of autonomy of the will in the determination of human actions. It is therefore passion that directs and dominates reason in human life. So the obvious thing about human life is a combat of reason and passion but in this combat, passion is said to be of supremacy over reason. Hume therefore argued that ‘‘nothing is more usual in philosophy, and even in common life, than to talk of the combat of passion and reason, to give the preference to reason and to assent that men are only so far virtuous as they conform themselves to its dictates.’’<sup>58</sup>

For Hume, reason is only concerned with abstract understanding of relations between ideas or with matter of demonstration. Reason is never the cause of any action ‘‘since reason alone can never produce any action or give rise to motion. I infer that the same faculty is as incapable of preventing volition, or of disputing the preference with any passion or emotion.’’<sup>59</sup> This understanding led Hume to confirm his assertion that ‘reason is, and ought only be the slave to passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them.’’<sup>60</sup>

Hume claimed that our moral distinction is founded on sentiments rather than reason because, if it is rested on reason, they will be the same for all human beings. His attitude of sub-ordination of reason to passion made him to subscribe to moral theory resting on moral sense and sentiments. What about our moral judgment, does it depend also on moral sentiments? To this, Hume raised the question of ultimate end of our actions. The question is ‘‘why will any action or sentiments upon the general view or survey give a certain satisfaction or uneasiness.’’<sup>61</sup> In judging the moral worth of an actions, Hume said that ‘‘we

can only expect success by following the experimental method and deducing general maxims from a comparison of particular instances.”<sup>62</sup> According to Hume, our moral judgments are based on consideration of certain virtues or ends. And this is why for Hume, “any action or sentiments upon the general view or survey gives a certain satisfaction or uneasiness”<sup>63</sup> with this, one cannot say that Hume maintained a complete emotive and individualistic theory of ethics. Hume however, introduced the principle of benevolence and utility in considering an action in terms of its rational end. He saw the two principles as foremost virtues of morality which makes an action to be desirable on its own account. And these virtues as well defined the social context of morality. Virtues as well define the social context of morality. He found virtue to be the only end that is desirable on its own account. In explaining the important place of virtue in moral judgment he said “one thing can always be a reason why another is desired. Something must be desirable on its own account and because of its immediate accord or agreement in the human sentiments and affection.”<sup>63</sup> Because the virtue of benevolence and utility are in accord or agreement with human nature or sentiments they are desirable in themselves. So virtue is considered the end of morality. “Now as virtue is an end and is desirable on its own account merely for the immediate satisfaction which it conveys, it means that there should be some sentiments which it touches ...which distinguishes moral good and evil.”<sup>65</sup> Virtue of benevolence and utility also is the source of moral approbation and disapprobation. Hume explained with regard to the virtue of benevolence, the basis for moral approbation. Benevolence and generosity according to Hume excite the approbation and good will of mankind. “The epithets sociable, good – natured, humane merciful, grateful, friendly, generous, beneficent, or their

equivalents, are known in all languages and universally express the highest merit which humans nature is capable of attaining.’’<sup>66</sup>

For Hume, the utility and moral merit or approbation attached to the virtue of benevolence is therefore essentially a social virtue. This is what people mean when they praise a benevolent man, that is, his actions promote the happiness or welfare of society. So Hume argued that in the case of virtue of benevolence, ‘‘there is one circumstance which never fails to be amply insisting namely, the happiness and satisfaction derived to society from his intercourse and good offices.’’<sup>67</sup> The above statement of Hume suggested that the social nature of virtue forms at least a part of its merit, and is once source of that approbation and regard paid to it. Hume took benevolence as highly esteemed virtue not solely because of its social utility and at the same time, it is understood absolutely as a disguised form of self- love. Like other characters, the virtue of moral approbation which benevolence arises is caused in part by its usefulness. He therefore maintained that; ‘‘the hypothesis which allow a disinterested benevolence, distinct from self love, has really more simplicity in it, and is more conformable to the analogy of nature than that which pretends to resolve all friendship and humanity into this latter principle’’<sup>68</sup>

Hume however was not thinking of usefulness to oneself when he was thinking about utility as part of approbation which is accorded to the virtue of benevolence; our approbation extends the virtue of benevolence farther than ourselves. Its utility extends to the interest of those who are served by the character or action approved. It is on this basis that Hume saw as utility the principle of morality and sociality. ‘‘If usefulness therefore, be a source of moral sentiment, and if this usefulness be not always considered with a reference to self, it follows that everything which contributes to the happiness of society recommends itself

directly to our approbation and good will. Here is a principle which accounts, in great part, for the origin of morality.’’<sup>69</sup>

Fellow – Feeling with others is therefore, according to Hume a constitutive element of the principle of utility. And Hume argued that, it is sufficient that this is experienced to be a principle in human nature. Be that as it may, this aspect of Hume’s morality which links utility with humanity tends to contradict his earlier position. Earlier in the *Treatise*, Hume concerning this said, ‘there is no such passion in human minds as the love of oneself, merely as such independent of personal qualities, of services, or of relation to oneself’’. In furtherance of his idea of sociality of human nature, Hume argued that the virtue of benevolence and the principle of utility provide the grounds for a notion of justice in society.

#### **4.10. Hume on the Concept of Justice.**

‘Public utility is the sole origin of justice and that reflects on the beneficial consequences of this virtue are the sole foundation of its merit.’’<sup>70</sup> According to Hume, self interest drives men into society in view of the benefits derived therefore especially in regard to protection of rights and property. But self – interest is not sufficient to explain men’s propensity towards society. Social contract or convention explains the utility which describes men’s general sense of common interest, and hence society. Society for Hume therefore, implied that; ‘‘there is need of a convention entered into by all the members of society to bestow stability on the possession of those external goods, and leave everyone in the peaceable enjoyment of what he may acquire by his own fortunes and industry...it is by that means we maintain society, which is so necessary to their well being and substance, as well as to our own.’’<sup>71</sup>

The covenant or convention explains the benefits or utility which provides for a general sense of common interest, in which sense all the members of the society express to one another, and which induces them to regulate their conduct by certain rules. According to Hume, with the formation of this convent about abstaining from the external goods of other people arises the idea of justice and injustice, “A general sense of common interest expresses itself in the general principle of justice and equity, in fundamental laws of justice, and our property is nothing but those goods whose constant possession is established by the laws of justice.”<sup>72</sup> The idea of convention gave rise to society and that of justice. And the origin of justice explained that of property. Following then Hume’s analysis of the origin of society, it can be said as well that his idea of society together with that of justice is founded on enlightened self interest or on a sense of utility. Thus, “self – interest is the original motive to the establishments of justice, but sympathy with public interest is the source of moral approbations which attends to the virtue.”<sup>73</sup> But to whom is allegiance due? One foundation of legitimate authority for Hume is long possession of the sovereign power; that is to him who has the power to usurpation or rebellion. Hume believed that since government does not originate by consent, experience has proved they arise through power or usurpation. But ultimately, Hume maintained that “right to anything is nothing but constant possession of authority, maintained by the law of society and the interest of mankind”<sup>74</sup> Hume’s skepticism about human nature confers on reason the power of institutionalization of self – interest that makes power the only legitimate instrument of the political society. Jacques Maritain will find in this presupposition a deliberate design to undermine the degrading of the human person.

The concept of justice in the Humean tradition was quite implicit. But Hume tried to make the implicit explicit because, his concept of moral values and ethical issues justifies the concept of justice. Society is not a free rider-system. Hume's psychological response on ethical issues qualified him as a proper functionalist (utilitarian). His conception of society is Kantian and has a functionalist dimension. Hume believed in human freedom. He advocated for a rationalistic society and was a strong supporter of a society governed by the utilitarian principle. He believed in the happiness of all human beings in terms of their objective reality and this however qualified him as a utilitarian. The utilitarian principle beckons on public justice and good moral conduct.

So far with Hume's phenomenalistic philosophy which boiled down to the fact that the only knowledge we have is impressions which means that we do not have real knowledge of the world. This is because he believed that we can only know what our senses can provide us with and that is, impressions derived from the phenomena of the senses only. Also, it could be noted that Hume's empirical thought ran across the whole of his philosophical thought. He, to some extent, never deviated from the empirical system of the empiricists. Hume was among other empiricists, the most consistent and coherent and said to have brought empiricism to its logical conclusion, invariably, his thought became a dead end for empiricist thought.

However, though Hume was said to be the most consistent of the empiricists, his theory is not without some inconsistencies that attracted criticisms of his thought, there are also problems and implications embedded in his thought.



In the following chapter, the foundational causes of inconsistencies in Hume's phenomenalistic epistemology shall be exposed, followed by the criticisms on his epistemological thought and the implications of his theory and then the value of metaphysics.

## Endnotes.

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31. Ibid; 74.
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35. Loc.cit.
36. Garthforth, F.W., quoted in Umeogu, *Systematic Philosophy*, p.238-239.
37. P. Iroegbu, *Metaphysics*: p. 175,
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42. Loc,cit,
43. Ibid; 316.
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45. Ibid; 57.
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## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5.0. PHENOMENALYSIS OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL INCONSISTENCIES, CRITICISMS AND IMPLICATIONS OF HUME'S PHENOMENALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGY.**

Having with the method of phenomenanalysis thoroughly gone through the whole idea of Hume's understanding of human nature in order to ascertain the true sources of human of knowledge, that is, his whole epistemological theory, one cannot help but finds out there are inconsistencies embedded in his theory and these inconsistencies are foundational, which resultantly led to his misconception of reality as a whole. There are also implications in Hume's phenomenalist epistemological theory and the same method of phenomenanalysis shall be applied to discuss the foundational causes of the inconsistencies in his empiricist theory, criticisms of his empiricist theory and the implications.

However, these inconsistencies are as a result of the exclusion he made of the rationalists theory while addressing himself of 'what there is' and our knowledge of it, his misconception of the nature of universals and so the negligence of the logical and stuff aspect of reality.

Let us begin with the exclusion he made of the rationalist theory.

#### **5.1. Hume's Exclusion of the Rationalists Theory.**

The empiricists, (Hume not excluded) asides their accusation on the rationalists that error and uncertainty are the result of mind's operations instead of things given in sense perception claimed that reason can only reason on what the senses have provided but failed to act without the help of sense data provided by sense perception. This led to their claim that "without sense data reason has nothing on which to exercise its powers."<sup>1</sup>

Hume's position here that sense experience is the only source of knowledge however has some limitations; his theory of knowledge failed to give a wholistic knowledge of what there - is. This is because; his theory excluded in great extent the rationalist theory which is one of the aspects of knowledge acquisition. According to Umeogu,

For any system or theory or proposition to explain reality or give any account of knowledge, it must, to the greatest possible extent, explain it (reality) or give account of knowledge that is the case. What this means is that for a system or theory or proposition to give us any account of reality (knowledge), it must be about certain things in event of reality, organized in apt relations of congeniality, sequence, consistency, proportion and integral order and, this arrangement must not only be internal to the system or theory or proposition in occurrence of its intention to express a fact about what there is, but must also be external to the system or theory or proposition, in terms of the fact it wants to approve of or express.<sup>2</sup>

This fault of Hume marked some inconsistencies in his theory and so with other empiricists and this consequently led them to believe that all statements do come from sense-experience, though knowledge entails many laws that cannot be verified by experience. This is also the reason Hume like other empiricists contended that sense observation are conclusive, and free from theory, so that other theories may trace their foundations on them. This apparently cannot hold, as Umeogu had noted that "it is clear that all observations are affected and infected by scientific theories (theories of knowledge) and as such cannot provide a theory free basis for knowledge."<sup>3</sup> This is also the reason Hume failed to recognize the fact that what the facts of experience are, cannot be answered only from the point of view of experience. He also, for this same reason, failed to know that, not only are the so called observation claims and concepts theory laden, but they are also theory – infected and has a lot to do with background assumptions. All these led Hume and other empiricists into identifying what is real with what can be experienced through the senses. This identification disappointedly led to Hume's denial of the existence of a world outside

our perceptions, a position which Umeogu said runs counter to knowledge. Hume's theory of knowledge failed to give a wholistic knowledge of what- there -is. His theory excluded some aspect of knowledge which is reasoning. Hume's exclusion of reasoning in the terrain of knowledge acquisition however is wrong. There is the need for the use of reasoning to interpret what the senses have observed to make them meaningful as is evident in this quote; knowledge is therefore, the joint product of reason and experience; without sense data reason has nothing on which to exercise its powers; without the organizing and conceptualizing power of reason sense data would remain momentary an unrelated impressions.”<sup>4</sup>

Also according to Umeogu, Hume and other empiricist philosophers are not consistent because of their claim that “to know empiricism” is the case, is a pure revelation that in some sense, in between the lines, that primarily, they were interested in the source of those things which go on in us when we think, that is, “the source of our ideas”. “The source of our ideas” in the context of empiricism confuses genetic justification sources. This showed that their usage of the word idea is faulty for at times, they make use of the word in the same context as both “the act” and “the object” of thought. And in the words of Umeogu, this is an epistemological mortal sin in philosophy. Hume and other empiricists excluded the possibility of innate ideas of the rationalists claiming, we can only have knowledge of only what the senses can provide us.

## **5.2. Hume's Misconception of the Concept of Universals / Abstraction.**

Hume's conception of idea led Hume to the problem of universals; Hume saw ideas as the "object of thought" and used it only in the context that it should be understood as an "act of thought". This led him to the denial of abstract ideas or universals. However, this position of Hume should be rejected because universals are not simply thought. Hume's misunderstanding of the nature of universals compelled him to firmly believe that every proposition must be a vehicle for the expression of qualities. This demeanor of Hume when assessed would be found that it is coming, according to Umeogu, from belligerent, dictatorial and self – righteous refusal on his part to accept the power of reason in knowledge acquisition and his relentless effort to bring empiricism to its logical conclusion which resulted to his theory being logically inconsistent in his investigation on the question of what –there-is.

Hume argued that relations are not universals and that only particulars exist and so there is nothing like abstract ideas. He saw these particulars as something like bundles of qualities or complex of qualities instead of grasping the fact that since they can be repeated and can be known or shown to be repeatable through resemblance is enough evidence that universals (in terms, especially, of the abstract– general ideas) must be admitted.

The point stated above is responsible for the fact that empiricist philosophers (Hume not excluded) had been described as one who "... holds that it does not even make sense to suppose that one perceives qualities unless this be short for perceiving particular instances of qualities."<sup>5</sup>

The reasons that led Hume to the problem of the nature of universals included his belief that a proposition must be of subject - predicate form and this led him to the view that universals that are of the nature of substantive and adjectives to be the only universals that are, secondly, his belief that the relational prepositions (if there are things like them) can always be reducible to subject predicate forms, thirdly, that propositions stating that two or more things have certain relation, if at all they are possible, must have the same form with the subject – predicate, that what we refer to as relations which must all the time be that of two things, must always be reduced or made reducible to the properties of the seemingly related terms and finally, the case that there is no distinction between the use of the term “idea” as an act of thought and as the object of thought, in other words, the idea of thought in Hume’s theory is ambiguously used.

However, Hume fell into the camp of Nominalism whose proponents believed that “universals pertain to names and do not exist in their own right linguistically, an instance is taken to stand for others of the same kind.”<sup>6</sup> The position of the rationalist philosophers that experience of particular truths though may call us to general truths does not, cannot and must never constitute the grounds for general truths pushed Hume and other empiricists to come up with the retaliating view that our knowledge of general truths, once obtained, depends ever and again upon the particular truths observed earlier. Hume contended that the so called truths of reason must be arbitrary and grossly insecure, for he believed there is no way one can demonstrate its absolute certainty unlike the absolute testable certainty of truths of facts. This is because Hume believed that general truths being within the mind agrees with nothing outside the realm of the mind, unlike the truths of fact whose truth -value is experientially and scientifically demonstrable.



Hume is in error by his contempt on abstract ideas. He did not believe that things are white because they have the quality of whiteness but rather that the thought we have of whiteness is derived when we form an image of some particular white thing, and reason concerning this particular thing, and then we take care not to deduce anything concerning it which we cannot see to be equally true of any other white thing. This fault is as a result of Hume, just as every other empiricist to take considerations only on adjectives and substantive universals leaving out relational universals like, verbs and prepositions in their systems. In this way Hume dismissed abstract ideas and began to see things as a colony or congeries of qualities – as varieties of impressions. This however is a phenomenalistic description where one will expect an orange to be a congeries or colony of roundish lights, green colours, odours etc. that when it is cut open, contains liquid, small white things (in the sense of its seeds) and all – this view will be incomplete because, it has neglected the relational universals of verbs and prepositions. This is in error because Hume should have found out by way of relation of resemblance and the possibility for any given congeries of qualities to be repeated as a possibility of universal quality and resemblance is in no doubt a universal. This is evident in this quote;

But a difficulty emerges as soon as we ask ourselves how we know what a thing is white or a triangle. If we wish to avoid the universals whiteness and triangularity, we shall choose some particular patch of white or some particular triangle, and say that anything is white or a triangle if it has right sort of resemblance required will have to be a universal. Since there are many white things, the resemblance must hold between many pairs of particular white things; and this is the characteristic of a universal, it will be useless to say that there is a different resemblance for each pair for then we shall have to say that these resemblances resemble each other, and thus at last we shall be forced to admit resemblance as a universal.<sup>7</sup>

Again, it is this negligence of the nature of universals that are verbs and prepositions that led to Hume's rejection of abstract ideas. This is what Umeogu referred to as "inconsistency making beliefs", in the sense that every proposition is regarded as attributing to a property, to a "single" thing, rather than also referring to relations between two or more things. This led to Hume's thought that universals consist of qualities not relations and the nominalists group which Hume belonged to would reduce general terms like "yellow", or "dog" to arbitrary convention as Umeogu would say. To the empiricists, Hume not exceptional, "only particulars exists and from the fact that several particulars resemble each other, it does not follow that there exist a further entity which is somehow present in all of them"<sup>8</sup>

Universal ideas however, can be understood in relation to the particulars to form the warp and the woof of the fabric (as Umeogu would call it) of our knowledge. To misconceive the universals would mean to misconceive the judgment we give to knowledge. The result of this is that Hume fell apart in his system and made exclusion of rationalism in his quest to acquire knowledge and the consequence remained that he will not make any worthwhile establishment of knowledge.

Hume failed in his conception of universals also because he based his theory for his rejection of "abstract ideas" on the grounds that he took for granted the matter that every proposition ascribes a quality or a property to a subject. He thought significantly of qualities neglecting the reasoning also of relations as universal, he ended up believing that only particulars exist and that there is nothing like abstract ideas. For him (Hume), like every other empiricists, saw these particulars as thus become something like bundles of qualities or complex of qualities but because Hume's presupposition, could not understand the

significant fact that, these “bundles of qualities” or “complex of qualities” can be repeated and can be known or shown to be repeated through resemblance, he consequently denied the possibility of universals. However, Hume failed to believe in the reality of relations as universals, and so failed to come to the knowledge that the recognition that bundles or complex of qualities can be repeated through resemblance is an evidence that universals (in terms, especially, of the abstract ideas) must not be disputed.

Another reason that made Hume set aside the doctrine of abstraction was because of his presupposition that a proposition must be in a subject predicate form and this led the empiricists (Hume not excluded) to the mistake of not knowing what it means to say abstraction as Umeogu would say. For example, that “the light is bright” means that “the light owns (in the sense of having a quality) brightness”. The light owns “brightness” means that there exists something “the light” that has the quality “brightness”, and so, the light being bright is provided for under the form of relation and not basically under the form of quality as Hume and his group would claim. In this way, universals cannot be avoided.

From the above, in the justification and intelligibility of knowledge, Hume contended that the idea of general truth depended upon the particular truths we have examined in the past. He contended that the so called truth of reason of the rationalists must be arbitrary and grossly insecure, for there is no way one can demonstrate its so-called absolute certainty unlike the absolute testable certainty of truth of facts. He further contended that the truths of reason only corresponds with what lies in the mind and not outside of the mind, but the truth value of the truths of the fact is experimentally and scientifically demonstrable.

If we however examine thoroughly the going – on of things in this universe, we will find out that we can never run away from the idea of universals, for whichever way we view it, either from the side of taking for example the idea of “white” as a simple relation not analyzable into a community of predicated or as colour likeness to the standard case of white. The whole complicated theory of the empiricists (Hume inclusive) fell to the ground in the sense that, whether or not there are particulars, there must be relations which are universals in the sense that they are concepts, not percepts and do not exist in time, also are verbs, not substantives. This possibility and the fallibility of Hume and Berkeley’s denial of the idea of universals is made evident in the following quote;

Without trying ourselves down to their statements, let us see what can be of this theory. The general name “white” in this view is defined for a given person at a given moment by a particular patch of white he sees or imagines; another patch is called white if it has “exact likeness” in colour to the standard patch. In order to avoid making the colour a universal, we have to suppose that “exact likeness” is a simple relation of likeness that we require, but a more special relation, that of colour-likeness, since two patches might be exactly alike in shape or size but different in colour. Thus, in order to make the theory of Berkeley and Hume workable, we must assume an ultimate relation of colour likeness, which holds between two patches which is commonly be said to have the same colour. Now, *prima facie*, this relation of colour-likeness will itself be a universal or an abstract idea, and thus we shall still have failed to avoid universals. But we may apply the same analysis of colour likeness. We may take a standard particular case of colour likeness if it is exactly like our standard case, it is obvious however, that such a process leads to an endless regress: we explain the likeness of two terms as consisting in the likeness of two other terms, and such a regress is plainly vicious. Thus the whole complicated theory, which had no motive except to avoid universals, falls to the ground. Whether or not there are particulars, there must be relations which are universals in the sense that (a) they are concepts, not percepts; (b) they do not exist in time; (c) they are verb not substantives.<sup>9</sup>

The force of this submission required, according to Umeogu that an easy re-statement of the subject-predicate propositions be made: instead of saying that so-and-so has such-and-such a

predicate, (likeness), it is rather said that there are so-and-sos to which it has such-and-such specific likeness.

Hume in his empiricist theory was against the use of inductive knowledge of science to ascertain knowledge. By induction, it means the principle held when one predicts the future on the basis of what happened in the past. Hume was said to have misunderstood the nature of universals especially in the ways of science.

Enough on Hume on universals and abstraction, over now to other philosophical inconsistencies involved in Hume's theory besides the exclusions he made of rationalism and his misconception of universals.

### **5.3. Hume on the Exclusion of the Logical and Frame Aspect of Reality.**

If one critically evaluates Hume's theory of knowledge, one will not but found out that his theory is only consistent with facts that are concerned with what is externally true of facts (physical objects that can make impressions) not minding about the ones that are internally true of facts. Since Hume is only concerned with what the senses can provide for us, and neglecting the role of reason in knowledge acquisition, his theory is said to be logically inconsistent.

In the words of Umeogu;

For a theory to be confirmed to be philosophically consistent, it must be logically (that is internally) and factually (that is externally) true of facts consistent i.e., deductive and inductive method must be involved. "Logical consistency" is interested in conditions for soundness rather than the actual truth of a proposition while "Factual consistency" is interested in the truth and falsity of a proposition. Logical means "of or used in the science of logic", a science which deals with correct reasoning and, by that very fact, with the criteria, principles of laws for/of consistent, cogent or valid thought."<sup>10</sup>

It would be a contradiction to affirm the premises of logical argument while denying their conclusion i.e., once their premises are true, their conclusion must also be true. This means that a thought is logical when the conclusion must be true if the premises are true and in factual argument, the conclusion is of greater or less degree probably true given the premises. Logical argument makes use of deductive method, their premises are neither necessary nor useful to be true of the world, what is necessary is that their conclusion follows necessarily from their premises.

However in factual argument, it makes use of deductive method, the conclusion does not necessarily follow from the premises and it is also necessary and advantageous that the premises be factual, that is, true of the world. Logical consistency means an argument that is conceptually compatible and internally that is, without reference to any external or factual thing consistent. Factual consistency is taken to mean consistency with facts.

The theory of philosophical consistency however needs both deduction and induction to be reliable and this entails that in other for a system to be philosophically consistent, it must be of both logically and factually consistent. This is because, induction is needed to obtain general truth or systems which must be tested logically and deduction is also needed to deduce new particular or specific theories which must be factually tested. According to Umeogu, when we embark only on deductive method in dealing with knowledge of what there is, then, the eyes will fail to penetrate the significance of any new theory and if we make use of only induction, none of our untouchable theories could be understood or corrected or improved. Therefore, for a theory to be philosophically consistent, it must be logically (that is, according to the principles of logic, or correct reasoning) consistent and

factually (that is, approving of facts of states – of - affairs with regard to its significant purpose) consistent.

Hume's empiricist theory was found to be factually consistent but not logically consistent; factual consistence in the sense that the validity of his empiricist theory can only be tested using empirical methods of induction like verification, translation and others leaving out the logical part of knowledge which employ logical/deductive methods like identity. However an adequate knowledge must satisfy both logical and factual aspect of knowledge just as Umeogu rightly said; "The adequacy and dependability of knowledge must be the outcome of a logical and factual validation: logical validation by way of principle that makes for logical significance like identity, agreement and all; factual validation by use of such criteria that make for factual significance as verifiability, translatability, falsifiability and others."<sup>11</sup>

Hume however failed to conform to this rule of knowledge and so his empiricist theory fell into the quagmire of philosophical inconsistency. He excluded one aspect of reality, "the frame aspect" and concentrated on the "stuff aspect" of reality and so fell a victim of propounding theories making propositions that lack internal consistency that is, the logical consistency and then the result of this landed his theory into philosophical error. This exclusion of the "frame aspect" of reality made by Hume and every other empiricist which resulted in logical inconsistency and the inclusion they made only of the "stuff aspect" of reality to construct their system of knowledge led them to incomplete conception of the whole of reality as they attributed knowledge only of the senses.

Over now to the details of what is meant to say that Hume excluded the frame aspect of reality while embracing or including the stuff aspect in his investigation of what-there- is (*urstoff*) of the universe.

Accordingly, knowledge comprises of two aspects; the “Frame” and the “Stuff”, the material is the stuff aspect which must be organized in a particular frame (frame takes care of organization) in keeping with a particular purpose, the purpose for which the knowledge is meaningful and has the material and organization involved. What this entails is that there are two aspects through which knowledge that is meaningful can be obtained and that these two aspects of meaningful knowledge have their distinct responsibility/provision in knowledge acquisition. The “stuff aspect” which is the material aspect, provides the material aspect of reality while the “frame aspect” which is entrusted with the responsibility of organization, organizes the material provision made by the “stuff aspect” to give it a meaning. What this means is that for a claim of knowledge, there must be a composition of aspects, the “stuff” and the “frame” aspects.

Accordingly, in the words of Umeogu;

For any system or theory or proposition to explain reality or give any account of knowledge, it must, to the greatest possible extent, explain it (reality) or give account of knowledge that is the case. What this means is that for a system or theory or proposition to give us any account of reality (knowledge), it must be about certain things in event of reality, organized in apt relations of congeniality, sequence, consistency, proportion and integral order and; this arrangement must not only be internal to the system or theory or proposition in occurrence of its intention to express a fact about what-there-is, but, must also be external to the system or theory or proposition, in terms of the fact it wants to approve of or express.<sup>12</sup>

Hume in his empiricist theory, just as every other empiricist however lost sight of the “frame aspect” while engrossed with the “stuff aspect”, the material/physical objects that can create impressions. The empiricists, besides their accusation on the rationalists that error and uncertainty are as a result of the mind’s operations instead of things given in sense perception claimed that, reason can only reason on what the senses have provided but failed



to act without the help of sense data provided by sense perception. This led to their claim that without sense data, reason has nothing on which to exercise its power.

Following from the above details, it is evident that Hume as an empiricist in his system excluded one aspect of reality while giving knowledge about “what-there-is”. Hume as an empiricist in his absorbing concentration on and comprehension of the detailed elements of knowledge, sold himself to one aspect of knowledge, the “stuff aspect”. Hume concentrated more on the stuff aspect of knowledge and then lost sight of the frame, what Umeogu referred to as “excluding and binding propensities” and this consequently resulted in philosophical inconsistency that led him and other empiricists to come up with what Umeogu would also termed “forced” formulation: all synthetic (non analytic) knowledge is based on experience”<sup>13</sup>. This is evident in his theory that knowledge can be given us only through the senses and consequently took abstract ideas as being nonsensical. No wonder, as Umeogu would put it that, “It came to pass that abstract ideas became an entity set for nimble empiricist.”<sup>14</sup>

This doctrine of Hume as an empiricist excluded analytic while at home with knowledge that is only synthetic. However, if this doctrine is philosophically consistent, it then means that it cannot be known since it is incurably a universal proposition which experience alone cannot substantiate.

Consequently, with this skeletal position, Hume and other empiricists ruled out all universal forms and thus, all statements/sentences/propositions that try to express general laws with the reason that they cannot be verified by any finite set of observational or “sense perception data”. With his position of sense experience as the only source of knowledge acquisition, it

resulted in Hume's denial of innate ideas with the claim that the so called innate ideas are not known by all men.

Consequently, with all these loopholes found with Hume's epistemology, there must be bound to be problems. Let us now look into these problems and make criticisms of them.

### **5.2.0. Problems and Criticisms of Hume's Phenomenalistic Epistemology.**

#### **5.2.1. The Limitations of the Senses as Sources of Human knowledge.**

Thus far, based on Hume's notion of empiricism, we have assumed that our senses furnish us with knowledge of the physical world external to us and that the sense data generated by physical objects and which we get impressions from are what guarantee the existence of these objects and through which we have knowledge of them. The conclusion of Hume from this is that "we cannot have any knowledge beyond experience."<sup>15</sup> But before we take this Hume's position, hook, line and sinker let us ask ourselves, are what the senses furnish us with absolutely certain that they cannot be doubted, that is, are there no limitations in sense experiences as providing us with knowledge?.

Teleguided by this question, we begin to enquire critically to ascertain the certainty of knowledge that comes through the senses and when through with this critical enquiry, we discover that what we call perception is not only dependent on the sense data or impressions generated by an object, but is at least in part, dependent on the nature of our sensory organs, we therefore become aware that there are limitations to the senses as sources of knowledge and from this, our doubt as regards the certainty of knowledge that comes through the senses starts. Each individual is unique and because of this, has unique senses and therefore perceive uniquely. "If our eyes were different, what we see would be different, if our taste buds were different, so would be the taste we have, what right then have we to assume that

we see or taste things the way they really are? In fact, how could we possibly know how things really are? Or what they are really in themselves.”<sup>16</sup>

As different individuals have different sensory organs, no two individual can therefore perceive one thing exactly the same way and hence this is so, whose perceptions should be accepted as the real one? This implied thus that, “if two persons cannot have the very same experience, and if the world of their language is defined by reference to their experiences, then the suppositions of mutual intelligibility are distinctly shaky.”<sup>17</sup> This is because, each individual perception is relative to him and no one can impose his perception on others. Therefore, “as long as the content of our perception depends so much on the nature of the perceiving organ, and as long as we are unable to shed our perceiving organs as we do spectacle, to try out other ones, how can we be so sure that we are perceiving things as they are ... indeed, do we have any right to say what the physical world is really like at all.”<sup>18</sup>

Besides differences in perceptions in different individuals, there are still cases of wrong perceptions when it is only one individual involved. On this note, let us consider illusion or optical illumination, in which case, one does not perceive things as they are. What we are then referring here include situations such as a stick, half immersed in water, looking bent though in reality it is straight, the trees on the distant mountain side looking grayish blue, though they are dark green, what of electricity cable on poles that look as if they meet each other in the distance whereas in reality, they do not meet because they run parallel to each other? In these situations, if we should rely on what the senses give us, we will be misled; it thus becomes clear that in sense perceptions, we are sometimes misled. Therefore, “it is a common place that I cannot have everything that I hear or that I read ... none even what I apparently see, most of what I see or hear in this way are hallucinations.”<sup>19</sup>

In some cases also, our senses furnish us with appearance not reality, in this case, we perceive things that are not there. When one presses his eyeballs, he sees things double when they are of course one, a person can equally see a pool of water in the distant side of the road and yet when he gets to that point, he finds out there is no such thing in reality. These are hallucinations, the things we perceive in this case, do not exist, yet we perceive them. It is our senses that furnish us with such non-existences, which are very misleading. Therefore,

In daily life, we assume as certain many things which, on a closer scrutiny, are found to be so full of apparent contradictions that only a great amount of thought enables us to know what it is that we really may believe. In the search of certainty, it is natural to begin without present experience, and in some sense, no doubt knowledge is to be derived from them. But any statement as to what it is that our immediate experience, made us know is very likely to be wrong.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, we are now aware that our senses mislead us sometimes and having known this, one begins to wonder whether the whole physical world is not as Descartes suspected “one gigantic hallucination” in which case, we are constantly being deceived that it is there. All these errors in perception must have promoted Descartes doubts which led him to the suspicion that there may be an evil demon at work who arranges things in a way to deceive us into thinking that their physical things exist when they are not. Descartes therefore, argued that, “knowledge may be illusory because, it comes from a demon that is able to deceive men by making them think they are experiencing the real world when they are not.”<sup>21</sup>

Based on these limitations that have been pointed out, one discovers that the senses cannot be completely relied upon as furnishing us with reality. Yet in spite of all these limitations, David Hume held sacrosanct to the senses as the only means of knowing reality because, they are the only organs through which we perceive the impressions generated by external

objects. His argument seemed to have run thus; those objects that generate impressions are the only things that are real and since it is through the senses that we perceive these impressions, it is therefore through the senses that we can only acquire knowledge of reality. But based on the limitations we have pointed out, we have discovered that much as we can rely on the senses for the acquisition of knowledge, this reliance must not be in the extreme as David Hume claimed, because most times, the senses furnish us with appearance that are not reality.

We should also note that Hume's belief of existence of his own impressions and ideas is emphatically a skeptical system. Hume's belief of the existence of impressions and ideas is little supported by any reason of critical mind. Hume's phenomenalist epistemology is a traditional empiricism with a radical content.

Alluding to Hume's conceptions of impressions and ideas is dangerous. A thorough and consistent skeptic will never therefore yield to this Humean tradition of empiricism. We are sometimes misled into sensory error. Hume's treatment of impression and idea could so far be seen as problematic.

Hume had earlier distinguished impressions from ideas on the basis of their force and vivacity and had used the word violence in doing so. The Humean assumption of traditional empiricism of impressions, beliefs, passions, ideas, emotions constitute psychological generalizations.

Sensism generally cannot explain all knowledge; sense knowledge itself must have a deeper foundation than the human person himself as the substance who senses. When he rejected causality, he made no provision for certitude for any knowledge including the empirical. He based all human inquiry on the shaky foundations of brute sensibility, ephemeral empiricism

and shifting associationism when he argued only for habitual association of ideas for all beings, knowledge and relationships.

### **5.2.2. Wrong Conception of Reality.**

Having vigorously followed Hume's empiricism, we have been able to demonstrate what Hume constitute reality and this is nothing else than the objects that generate impressions, which the senses perceive. These impressions the objects generate guarantees their reality. Thus based on this, Hume rejected causality and all other metaphysical concepts and of course denied metaphysics as a whole.

But one is bound to wonder whether the question about reality can be completely exhausted by Hume's impressions and ideas. Does metaphysics and its concepts imply meaninglessness as Hume made it appear because they do not conform to his epistemological paradigm? We must concede however that though objects that generate impressions are real, they however do not exhaust reality because, based on our inadequacy, there are many things which we cannot know that they are real using observation alone as earlier mentioned. Using this paradigm therefore to deny metaphysics as being incapable of knowing reality is therefore wrong thus;

Hume's uniformities which are the products of sense data, needs to be moderated and acted upon by human reason, it is not every encounter with the world that results in knowledge. It is one thing for us to observe the events in the world. But mere observation does not tell us everything. We therefore cannot help employing some extra-empirical categories to guide us to interpret what is given to us by our senses.<sup>22</sup>

Sense experience or perception is therefore shown here not to be alpha and omega; it can only furnish us with a part of reality and not reality as a whole. Therefore, other processes are needed to account for other realities when sense experience is incapacitated, metaphysics

is therefore needed. For metaphysics to account for extra-experiential realities demonstrate therefore that experiential concept or processes cannot be used to deny metaphysical concepts, because “metaphysical concepts may not be accounted for by appeal to the reality as a whole.”<sup>23</sup>

Reality is not restricted to objects known through empirical means alone; it involves not only the sensible but also the supersensible. In experiential means, what is involved is that the process of knowing reality starts with the objects that are already known through the senses and still ends with these objects. Anything that transcends what the senses can perceive has gone out of the scope of experiential means of knowing reality, so using experiential method to reject what operates in a way that transcends that experiential method becomes wrong and Hume made this “category mistake” by rejecting metaphysics based on empirical means which only pursues part of the reality while metaphysics pursues reality in whole and therefore adopts a style different and transcendental to empiricism. Hegel argued that the metaphysician sees from one piece of reality what the whole of reality must be. He maintained that; “Every apparently separate piece of reality has, as it were, hooks which grapple it to the next piece, the next piece, in turn, has fresh looks and so on, until the whole universe is reconstructed.”<sup>24</sup>

Reality is therefore interlinked and from one piece of metaphysics etc. to the other, metaphysics does not limit its problems and as such pursued the knowledge of a higher reality as distinct from that of ever changing things that empirical procedure can only acquire. This is one of the reasons why metaphysical concepts cannot be ascertained through empirical procedures. So Hume’s denial of metaphysics and its concepts as not constituting

reality based on a procedure (empirical procedure) that cannot know metaphysical concepts becomes unsuccessful. Metaphysics is not a specialized field, but studies realities that underlie specialized fields; this is why Aristotle called it the “science of sciences”.

As metaphysics is not specialized, the methods of the specialized fields cannot form the basis of judgment for the validity of metaphysics. Metaphysics and metaphysical approach are holistic and complete while the specialized sciences and their approaches are incomplete and penultimate.... that which is in exact is a more basic truth than that which is exact, therefore is a truth of higher rank not only because its theme is broader, but even as a type of knowledge, in short, in exact philosophic truth is true truth.<sup>25</sup>

So, because metaphysics is not specialized, its ways are inexact and very broad, and it therefore embodies a higher truth than that of the specialized and exact fields.

Hume failed to understand this and hence attacked metaphysics, but, this made his view of reality lopsided as it inclined heavily on the empirical side of knowledge acquisition. After rejecting metaphysics and its concepts, Hume still failed to provide any knowledge that is certain. Thus, “by arguing only for habitual association of ideas for all beings, knowledge and relationships, he bases all human inquiry of the shaky foundations of brute sensibility, ephemeral empiricism and shifting associationism.”<sup>26</sup> Sensism cannot explain all knowledge; even sense knowledge itself must have a deeper foundation than human person himself as a substance who senses.

But Hume believed just in the opposite, to him, sensism can explain all knowledge, anything it cannot explain is therefore meaningless and non-existent, because of this, Hume held so tight on impressions as guaranteeing reality that in the end, his empirical beliefs was nothing more than mere impressions. Everything that is real is therefore reduced to impressions. What Hume searched for no doubt was certainty and because of this, he relied on sense



experience because, in its limited scope, sense experience seems to guarantee certainty as it has holds on concrete external objects. For Hume, this is where reality lies; going further will lead to absurdity.

But reality as we know does not lie only in one aspect of philosophy; if it does, the philosophy of the ancient philosophers would have explained everything so that, the philosophy of the contemporary philosophers would have been still born. Just as Jacques Maritain “.... Every philosophical system contains some truth and tells us something about the real. No philosophy is totally false without any element of truth in it. Neither idealism nor positivism is totally false; each is an exaggeration of an aspect of reality.”<sup>27</sup>

Reality therefore has many faces, no one face can therefore claim to embody the whole of reality thus rendering others as meaningless. Only impressions as Hume claimed cannot explain the whole of reality and cannot therefore be used to reject every other aspect of philosophy. As Bertrand Russell argued that in every empirical subject matter I expect, though without complete confidence that a thorough understanding will reduce the more important causal laws to those of physics, but where the matter is very complex, I doubt the practical feasibility of the reduction ... they (empiricists) tend to think that only what is experienced can be known to exist and that it is meaningless to assert that some things exist- although we do not know them to exist.

... Everybody, in fact, accepts innumerable positions about things not experienced but when people begin to philosophize; they seem to think it necessary to make themselves artificially stupid. I will admit that at once that there are difficulties in explaining how we acquire knowledge that transcends experience, but I think the view that we have no such knowledge as utterly integralness.<sup>28</sup>

So because metaphysical concepts cannot be experienced, do not make them meaningless and rejectable, and reality should not be completely reduced, as Hume did, to impression alone because,

The epistemological scientific and ontological heritage of humanity is, we think, more than a series of impressions. They have content and validity based on substantial entity and authentic causality. The numerous good beliefs and ideologies that are the backbones of human, culture, religion, morality and politics are not mere impressions. They are eternal values that make for integralness of the fully human and authentically real.<sup>29</sup>

Therefore, Hume's proposal of sensism as an alternative to our natural and acquired scientific, metaphysical and socio-cultural knowledge did not solve any problems rather it creates more problems. "His epistemological paradigm of reality lying only on impressions leaves one in the "sandy subjection of dry empiricism."<sup>30</sup>

### **5.2.3. A systematic Empiricism leads to Idealism.**

Hume in order to rescue the empiricism of Locke and Berkeley from empiricist inconsistency asserted that all there is to know consists of impressions and ideas. In doing this; he liberated himself both from empiricism and rationalism. Hume's liberation from empiricism is skeptical in outlook in the sense that his empiricism is the first consistent construction of empiricism and its break down, but his liberation from rationalism, though skeptical and significant led him to the traps of rationalism - the aim of absolutely reliable knowledge. Hume's aim to bring empiricism to its logical conclusion made him skeptical that his theory wrote off the existence of the external world, metaphysical world and even the existence of Hume himself.

Hume, for instance, as a consistent empiricist who held tight to impressions and ideas as being the only contents of the mind and that they however come through sensation. When

this position is studied critically however, what one observes is a series of ideas which represent the so-called knowledge of external objects which comes through sensation.

Hume's procedure was that, we at first have contact with external objects and any sensation we get then is impression and later when we reflect on these impressions, we get ideas which he said are the fainter copies of impressions. From the moment Hume entered into ideal, we discovered that for the knowledge of the existence of anything to be proved, it has to be based on the ideas that are thus in the mind, for there to be a complete knowledge of something, ideas about it have to be closely connected or associated to each other, thus, he held that;

Without certain association principles, even the appearance of knowledge would be impossible. Where ideas entirely loose and unconnected, chance alone would join them, and it is impossible the same simple ideas should fall regularly into complex ones without some bound of union among them, some associating quality by which one naturally introduces another.<sup>31</sup>

Without this close association of ideas, we cannot be furnished with the complete picture of an object, for instance, for us to have a complete picture of a table, the ideas of the sense data of the colour, the shape, the height etc. of the table have to come to mind in an association of each other. This therefore demonstrated that;

Hume holds that a merely sensitive consciousness is able to set the feelings before it as definite objects and to pronounce that they resemble or do not resemble each other; and he maintained that it is able to represent these feelings, not merely as events in time, but also as quantities or extended things in space. It is only on the presupposition of these natural relations, as subjective principles of association that Hume afterwards explained, or rather explained away, the objective principle of identity and causation. What then is his conception of purely sensitive consciousness? It is a bundle of perceptions that succeed each other with inconceivable rapidity, and are in perpetual flux movement.<sup>32</sup>

From this, we can now see that Hume was so sure that the ideas which appear associated with each other form the sensitive consciousness that can explain away anything. This sensitive consciousness, we must bear in mind is mental and is therefore an idealistic way of explaining reality. This is to say that Hume's systematic empiricism led him to idealism.

Even other empiricists like Berkeley conceived of reality in terms of being perceived "To be is to be perceived". Perception is a mental category and not physical. A consistent empiricist from the above analysis will end up in idealism or will succeed in destroying the foundation which he stood. Hume's theory of impressions and ideas fail to attain the aim of achieving absolute reliable knowledge.

#### **5.2.4. Critique of Hume's Denial of Innate Ideas.**

Hume as an empiricist denied all innate ideas with the argument that all our knowledge comes from sense experience claiming that at birth, man's brain is a "tabula rasa" until through sense experience in the form of sense perception, it begins to register things. His argument was that if there were something like innate ideas, all men should know and it becomes a universal knowledge. However to Hume, one cannot have knowledge of anything except through experience, there is no possibility of getting knowledge of anything unless through sense experience. He claimed that "if some new objects be presented to a man of strong natural reason and faculties, as this object is entirely new to him, he can never, by the most accurate examination of sensible examination of sensible qualities be able to discover any of its causes or effect."<sup>33</sup> Hume believed that *a priori* propositions is analytic in the sense that it does not express a synthetic connection between two distinct things or notions but only as an analysis into its components of the entity or notion expressed by its subject. Hume and other empiricist unjustified denial of innate ideas according to Umeogu should

not warrant them to claim that the principle of empiricism must govern our knowledge of reality. This position of Hume and other empiricists jeopardized the establishment of knowledge that is absolute.

The denial of innate ideas has undergraded or even annihilated in the words of Umeogu the *a priori* aspect of knowledge and this led Hume to become exclusively inductive “even to the uncomfortable context of, at times, sensualizing intellectual concepts”<sup>34</sup> Hume’s position only spelt out that there may be innate ideas and not that the principles of empiricism must govern human knowledge or reality. For Hume and other empiricists, propositions do not give us any new knowledge but merely express what we already know.

However, the *locus standi* and mode of explanation of Hume and the empiricists in general is found to be responsible for the inconsistency found in their theories; this actually led to their wrong usage of concepts/terms like, idea, substance (which some knew not what of), cause, principles, space, time, perception etc. This conclusion stemmed from the fact that Hume and other empiricists cannot by their empiricist principles be able to provide a conclusion foundation for universal or necessary idea or ideas concerning entities that are unobservable. This is evident in this quote that “...mere phenomenal similarity or the imaginative association of ideas is not profound enough to uphold any necessity or universality.”<sup>35</sup>

Further,

Knowledge concerning the future is unattainable because observation merely informs us about the past, predicative knowledge can only be constructed by inferential methods, but since the implication leading from past to future observation is synthetic, deductive inference cannot be applied to the derivation of statements about the future, and the only instrument of prediction is the inductive inferences. And since the inductive inference can neither be validated by deductive logic nor by reference to experience, we have no reason to accept it; the inductive inference (thus) appears unjustifiable. Empirical methods (accordingly) cannot establish knowledge.<sup>36</sup>

Moreover, we cannot know whether there is any conformity with our system of explanation, descriptions and all to/with reality, going by the contention of Hume and his group as there is evidently no determinate comparison given the principle of empiricism.

From all that has been said so far, one can detect that Hume's empiricist position and the position of the empiricists in general of taking sense perception (in the form of having impressions and ideas) to be the only source of knowledge cannot conclusively provide a theory-free basis for knowledge; observation claims being theory laden and theory-infected must at all events always derive their credibility, meaning and justification from non-observational theory or network of background assumptions. All of these boiled down to the justified claim that a system of theory must be logically and factually consistent and must be of composite of both frame and stuff aspect to be consistent and meaningful. Knowledge inversely comprises of both the reason and sense experience to apprehend knowledge in totality. Hume and his group failed in recognizing the frame aspect of knowledge and this is the reason Umeogu's idea of philosophical consistency held Hume's empiricism as inconsistent and so, erroneous; for according to Umeogu, "a position which is logically and/or factually inconsistent is an unfailing product of error."<sup>37</sup>

Hume's contention that the only way to certain, whole and indubitable knowledge is through sense experience is wrong in the sense that knowledge of sense experience (stuff) without reason (frame) is not enough; this is to say that "without the organizing and conceptualizing power of reason, sense data would remain momentary and unrelated impressions."<sup>38</sup>

The empiricists (Hume not excluded) clarified that the "truths of reason" are dependent on "truths of facts" because the "truths of reason" are not innate; the proof of this is that all men are not aware of possessing these infallible innate truths. However Hume and other empiricists may want to prove this, sense perception certainly and undoubtedly needs the assistance of reason to supply meaningfulness to what the sense data has supplied by the senses.

From the submissions above, one cannot but accept the fact that both experience and reason complement each other in knowledge acquisition.

#### **5.2.5. Critique of Hume's Causality and Substance.**

We should attempt to save causation from Hume's assumption and skepticism. Hume tended to explain all mental activities in terms of having perceptions and he thought of perception as impressions.

However, despite the high level of intelligence depicted by Hume, his treatise on causality has been found wanting. To begin with, the definition by Hume on causality as constant conjunction has been rejected on the ground that there are cases of constant conjunction that are not cases of causality. For instance, night and day are constantly conjoined, but one is not taken to be the cause of the other. It is obvious here that Hume's argument of causation as constant conjunction does not erase the actual possibility that there is a necessary connection between cause and effect in reality. This conclusion, if true, could only mean that

we cannot know the necessary connection and justify our belief in it. On a similar note, it is also obvious that Hume's conclusion of causal reasoning as a habit is not mathematical or logical knowledge which ties upon relations of ideas, but a belief in matters of facts. Hume had ascertained that such a belief is always contingent. It follows that his conclusion is also contingent and cannot be justified by reason. To be precise, Hume's conclusion 'No belief can be justified by reason' cannot itself be justified by reason. The problem with the logical positivists could be seen at this point. The verifiability principle of the logical positivists, that nothing is true unless it has been empirically verified, cannot be empirically verified itself. This is self-contradictory. We can easily refute the fate of the logical positivists to that of Hume as stated above.

In response to Hume's idea of causality as a constant conjunction, Thomas Reid said that "it is a principle of common sense that each of us is a genuine cause of our actions."<sup>39</sup> He maintained that as rational beings, "we are responsible for willing our actions, we have the power to originate it."<sup>40</sup> This position of Reid went to debunk Hume's conception of causality as a mere constant conjunction and Hume's contention that man is not responsible for his own actions for there is no connection between the actions of a man and the man who commits the action. In his Wittgenstein's metaphysics, John Cook argued that "had Hume noted we say such things (you can't start your car with the battery disconnected or a male cat can't start breed with another male cat", he would have found this perplexing and in need of explanation."<sup>41</sup> For Cook, Hume would have declared that we cannot mean what we say from the example cited above. This is because; he could not find any impression that would give rise to the possibility of necessity in nature and this is as a result of reducing knowledge



to impressions of sense data alone, (a phenomenalist epistemology). Following this line of thought, Cook maintained that Hume was wrong in his doctrine of the origin of ideas.

It must be noted that Hume's discussion of causality has been critically analyzed by many philosophers. However, we may not be able to do justice to their varied views. In his book, "Nature, knowledge and God", Benignus said, "Hume's original error which led to his rejection of substance and causality, as valid philosophical concepts, was sensism"<sup>42</sup>.

Benignus observed that Hume considered experience as the ultimate source of valid human knowledge, which he meant to be pure sensation and nothing more. The data of pure sensation are as he (Hume) said fragmenting and intermittent sense impressions. But the act which he is analyzing is not an act of pure sensation. "What I perceive is not this fragmentary impression, but the things of which they are accidents."<sup>43</sup>

Stating that human experience includes understanding, as against the position of Hume, Benignus said that though Hume is right in saying that we do not have a sensory impression of causality or substance, but he is wrong in saying that we do not experience causes and substance.

But he (Hume) is wrong in saying that we never experience causes or substance. Efficient causes are immediately experienced every time we observe anything physically, influencing anything else, every time, for example, that we see a hammer driving a nail out, the cause qua cause is never sensed directly, cause like substance is only sensed per accidents.<sup>44</sup>

We know that cause is a sensible object, its movements and the subsequent movements of the objects acted upon are the immediate sense data. This is quite understandable. But for Hume to limit experience to perceived sense data alone is to imply that we perceive without at the same time understanding what we perceived. When I perceive for instance, a hammer descending upon a nail and also the nail moving further into the wood, I also have the

understanding that the hammer is something and is driving the nail into the wood. On this note, Benignus asserted that “both perception and understanding are equally parts of the experience.”<sup>45</sup> Since we cannot perceive without understanding what we perceive, Benignus further argued that “we do not perceive phenomena without perceiving them as the phenomena of something, nor do we perceive one thing acting upon another without at the same time understanding the former as the cause of the effect produced in the latter.”<sup>46</sup> Another critical look on Hume’s critique of causality was advanced by Xavier Zubiri. Zubiri agreed with Hume and other British empiricists that “prior to development of epistemology, it is necessary to go one level deeper in order to fully analyze human intelligence.”<sup>47</sup> In agreement with Hume, Zubiri believed that causes in some metaphysical sense, are not given in experience. Another area of agreement Zubiri has with Hume, is that there is a problem with the notion of causality and needs total overhauling. However, Zubiri maintained that Hume’s analysis of causality is practically a failure. In Zubiri’s critique; Hume’s analysis of human intelligence is radically false which rendered his argument against causality practically a failure. In Zubiri’s critique, Hume’s analysis of human intelligence is radically false which rendered his argument against causality as constant conjunction and against metaphysics as invalid. Zubiri maintained that Hume’s analysis of causality failed for four reasons; 1. Human intelligence is sentient, not sensible. 2. Not all types of knowledge of the world can be collapsed to a single paradigm. 3. No clear distinction exists between truths of reason and truths of facts, 4. Truths are not solely or even primarily proportional. Hume upheld the idea that intelligence is sensible, because of the opposition between sensory and intelligence. It is true that our senses give information to

the mind, but the mind is not just passive as Hume would want us to believe, the mind just figure out the interpretation given to it by the senses.

It is the belief of Zubiri that our impressions are not sensory but sentient. By sentient impression, he meant the impressions of reality. The impressions of reality have two parts: 1. Content (what impression is of) and formality (its mode of being derived to us). The two parts as far as knowledge is concerned is based on the above, it is absolutely false that all our knowledge are ideas of things given through impressions, we also know something about reality. For Zubiri, reality is formality. This shows that Hume's assertion that impressions never give us the least intimation of anything beyond the senses is absolutely false. The content of impression does not give us anything beyond the formality of impression which in reality according to Zubiri gives something beyond the things we experience. It is the strong belief of Zubiri that formality does not deliver the world to us intact, but goes beyond the world as we experience it.

More still, there is no clear distinction between truths of reason and truths of facts. This analysis Hume gave on causality, as we must have observed, depends so much on this distinction. This is because he wanted to establish that there is no connection between cause and effect. If such connection was to be, it would mean the existence of some kind of metaphysical knowledge which he was seriously against. Kant was against Hume on this point. For Kant, "cause and effect, substance and accidents etc are the *a priori*, universal and necessary concepts of human understanding."<sup>48</sup> Kant asserted that without the pure concepts of understanding, there will be no experience. So substance and accidents, cause and effect are not given in experience.

Let us at this point consider Hume's proposition that "all natural laws are contingent" which is also a natural law. If the proposition is right, then all natural laws will be contingent, since the proposition is a natural law, it is also contingent and by implication not certain. This automatically leads to a contradiction. It logically follows that the proposition "all natural laws are contingent" must be wrong. Following this line of argument, some natural laws must be certain not contingent. It then means that these laws have logical necessities which explain why they occur with certain regularities.

It is quite clear from the discussion in chapter 3 that Hume did not seek to connect perception to their external world causes. We know too well that without such a connection, we are left with an epistemological lacuna; the veracity of sense perception cannot be established. Hume was contented to investigate perceptions as object of the mind without bothering himself with the larger philosophical questions of how to prove the existence of the external world. Criticizing Hume's notion of substance, Benignus argued that substance is given to the intellect directly. He contended further that;

We understand the cause as producing the effect. The hammer as driving the nails, the saw as cutting the wood... we do not think the nail will ever plunge into the wood without the hammer... if something ever seem to occur this way, we do not believe it, or we call it a miracle. In a similar manner, substance is given directly to the intellect in the very act of perception; the substance is grasped as the reason for the sensible phenomena<sup>49</sup>

Though we have mentioned Benignus's view on substance and causality, it is also good for the reader to take a look at the same argument as related by Kant:

In Kant's philosophy, substance and cause are pure conceptions of the understanding, not derived from experience but imposed by the mind in objects of experience. Consequently, these concepts and the two principles of substance and causality are universally valid for all possible objects of experience that is to say, all spatio- temporal phenomena.<sup>50</sup>

It must be understood that whatever exists, in Kant's view, must have a spatio-temporal existence, that is, it must exist in time and space. To understand a table, for instance, a philosopher should ask the following questions; what is it? What is it made of? How does it exist? When does it begin to exist? And so on. These questions boiled down to the question of substance. Kant had already said that substance is *a priori* concept for human understanding. We should also note that for us to know or talk about anything, we must take reference to the substance; colour, taste, or smell is not a substance. These are purely properties of a substance. Hume failed to understand or to distinguish between substance and accidents. Substance is that which exists on its own. So whatever exists must exist as a substance or as a property of a substance.

Granted that Hume made an impact in philosophy, one can observe in his philosophy some weak points inherent in his argument. He over generalized that: the only content of human mind are 'impression' and 'idea'. This assumption, which Hume held, is for me, an overstatement. It is so, because, it does not offer room for reason. By implication, man as a rational being who uses his intellect has been relegated to the background as a bundle of impressions and ideas by Hume. And if we should agree with Hume in this sense, I ask; where lies the rationality of man that fixes man at the top of hierarchy among other beings? Moreover, the limitation of our knowledge to sense experience has a very dangerous effect. This is because our sensory knowledge cannot offer a general acceptable solution to the most fundamental problems of philosophy that are found today in our contemporary society. For example, the meaning of life and death, the meaning of good and evil, the scandal of suffering, injustice, oppression, violence, the mystery of the transcendent, as well as, the purpose of our being in this world.

It is metaphysics/ reason that tries to answer these mind agitating problems like the purpose of our being in this world as has been mentioned above. Besides, the problem of evil in the world cannot be explained through the sensory knowledge and the reason why some people suffer gravely in the world while others do not. It is a fact, that sensory knowledge cannot explain certain phenomena in the world. Therefore, Hume would have better accepted from the onset that the idea of causality ought to be investigated both from the knowledge from reason and experience respectively. If Hume had combined reason and experience to investigate the nature of causality, it would have been clear to him to understand experience and reason as the best guide to understand causality. This is because; there is element of reasoning in understanding this concept of causality. The abstraction of anticipating the likely consequence of cause and effect uses both.

Moreover, Hume's denial of causality *a priori* has relegated the idea of God as a mental conception. In other words, by his conception of causality, God cannot have any influence on humanity. Hume posited that we could only know the ideas of things and not the objects themselves. Our senses receive impression of things and then form ideas of them from the impressions received, but we cannot have direct encounter with God because of his transcendence nature. The question now is; how do we come to the knowledge of God? This is because so many writers have attested that man as a religious being has knowledge of God throughout the world. Some anthropologists took it upon themselves to move round the world, and they came with the finding that almost every culture has the knowledge of God whom they worship as their creator. From where and how did they come to this knowledge, since Hume posited that for us to acquire knowledge, it must be through experience? If we cannot come to this knowledge of God only by experience as Hume held, then we can

comfortably say that Hume has not done justice to the idea of causality. This is because what is beyond empirical investigation should be subjected to some other forms of knowledge. Therefore, Hume's claim that, we can know only the things we experience is falsified by that of the knowledge of God as well as that of causality.

Also, Hume's account of "belief" in a bid to disprove causality *a priori*, illustrates his tendency to confuse logic and psychology. This is because he gave a psychological answer to the logical question about the ground of that assurance which he called belief. But he is perhaps bound to do this, for on his premise; there can be no logical ground for our beliefs about the future and course of events. He must therefore, contend himself with showing how we come to have these belief. According to Hume, he argued, "when I am convinced of any principle, it is only an idea which strike more strongly upon me when I give preference to one set of argument, above another, I do nothing but decide from my feelings concerning the superiority of their influence."<sup>51</sup> This showed that Hume thought that all our reasoning concerning cause and effect derive from nothing but custom and belief which is more properly an act of sensitive than of cognitive part of our nature. Therefore one can infer that Hume drifted away from philosophizing to psychologies. This action does not allow him admit the metaphysical part of reality/causality.

Furthermore, Hume went into self contradiction when he talked of experience as our guide in knowing and on the other hand, "custom". In the light of this, Copleston opined, "Hume often speaks as though custom not only does dominate, but also ought to dominate in human life. At the same time, it also speaks as our guide. Thus, he said that experienced frame of events, is the great standard by which we all regulate our conduct."<sup>52</sup> In the light of things,

one notices that Hume failed to be consistent in his opinion. He contradicted himself by saying that we come to the knowledge of causality through experience, and on the other hand, he affirmed it is through habit.

Hume's idea of causality has been criticized and rejected on account that he followed his predecessors and adopted wrongly the theory of ideas in its full extent; the end in consequence, showed that there is neither matter nor mind in the universe, nothing but impressions and ideas. In fact, Hume's system of idea and impression upon which he denied causality does not even leave him a self to claim the property of his impression and ideas. This is because ideas and impressions are introduced into philosophy before he psychologically brought it to an end in an attempt to remain an empiricist and hence denied causality.

Cause and effect should not be debated about metaphysically. This is because it is a reality; it is based on causal relation that human intellect operates its reasoning. However, if we admit that human being is a bundle of idea and impression; it reduces man only to a mere animal without reason. Man would no longer be seen as a rational being, but he could be described in Hume's view as a being without intellect as such, bundle of ideas. Therefore we strongly maintain that even though Hume tried to interpret causality from his empiricist point of view and brought it to its logical conclusion, it is not enough ground to agree with him. This is because Hume did more of psychology than philosophizing. We can now infer that as a philosophical problem, it is always difficult to agree on one point. But then we can now say that to deny causality metaphysically is to argue blindly, for it is the basis of our reasoning. Allan Bailey and Dan O' Brien posited that "it is claimed that this New Humean



position is more consistent with Hume's skeptical, anti-dogmatic stance. The old Hume forwarded metaphysical claims about the nature of reality: causal powers do not exist; causation is just constant conjunction. The New Hume, however, did not claim to know whether or not there are causal powers (although he believed that there are), and his agnostic epistemological claim should not be seen as having metaphysical ramifications. Just because we do not have knowledge of causal powers does not entail their non-existence. Hume did not deny that effects have causes but that we cannot afford for the regular successions and contiguity of certain occurrences. This is evident as John Laird quoted him "allow me to tell you I never asserted so absurd to a proposition, as that anything might arise without a cause, I only maintained that our certainty or the falsehood of the proposition proceeded neither from intuition nor demonstration, but from another source"<sup>53</sup> His denial of causality is thus an entirely epistemological laws. Our inability to give an empirical account of causal relations between cause and effect does not make it unintelligible to hold the view that there is one. It may well be due to our deficiency. His notion of impression is undoubtedly a straight jacket for one reason. Man is obviously not as helpless as Hume painted him, even if we cannot see impression of causal link between two events, we are endowed with reason with which we can give explanation about the things around us. It is scandalous to agree with Hume that we can only know impressions. If impressions are the only guarantor of reality, definitely, we will be led into skepticism because all we can know is impressions and can only compare impressions.

However, the logicity in Hume's idea of causality such as freedom and determinism presupposed the fact that Hume threw away the baby with the bath water. There is always cause and effect in our objective world. What Hume tried to do in his rejection of

metaphysics was to question the rationale or certainty of human knowledge and not actually erasing the fact that there may be principle of causality.

The ultimate springs and principles of things in the world are shut up from human curiosity and epistemological enquiry. Allan Bailey and Dan O. Brien observed that;

the New Hume is a realist about causal powers – he believed that there is something in virtue of which the world is regular but he is agnostic about their nature since that is epistemologically inaccessible to us, “Hume’s definitions of cause can therefore be seen as only making reference to the accessible empirical evidence and not to causes themselves.”<sup>54</sup>

The new Hume seemed to support the realist interpretation of secrets causal powers of things in the world. Allan Bailey and Dan O. Brien observed that “Hume’s talk of ‘secret powers’ is therefore compatible with the traditional interpretation of Hume and with the claim that causation is nothing out and above constant conjunction.”<sup>55</sup> Allan Bailey and Dan O’ Brien observed that “the debate between the traditional and the new interpretation of Hume is still very much alive.”<sup>56</sup>

However, we shall take the side of the Humean new interpretation of epistemology as Allan Bailey and Dan O’ Brien had observed that Hume is not dogmatic; it is possible that there are causal powers. This is also because however, much skepticism infused Hume’s discussion of causation he cannot help but believe that the world contains necessity.

However Hume’s denial of causation led him to deny all other metaphysical concepts as mentioned earlier.

### 5.2.6. Critique of Hume's Principle of Induction.

Induction is the generalization on the basis of limited range of cases. It is the principle used when one predicts the future on the basis of what has happened in the past. Hume denied causal relation and believed that when we talk of causality, the principle that is involved is the principle of induction where we always have the expectation that the future will resemble the past. Bertrand Russell defined the principle as stating that:

When a thing of a certain sort 'A' has been found to be associated with a thing of a certain other sort 'B', and has never been found and dissociated from a thing of the sort 'B', the greater the number of cases in which 'A' and 'B' have been associated, the greater is the probability that they will be associated in a fresh case in which one of them is known to be presented; (b) under the same circumstances, a sufficient number of cases of association will make the probability of a fresh association nearly a certainty, and will make it approach certainty with limit.<sup>57</sup>

The kernel of the principle of induction therefore is that as association of events increases, the probability approaches indefinitely near to certainty. If we thus admit the proposition to be true, then we can infer that any characteristic of the whole of the observed past is likely to apply to the future and to the unobserved past. This proposition if true will definitely warrant that the inference that causal laws probably hold at all times, future as well as past; but without the principle, Russell argued that the observed cases of the truth of causal law afford no presumption as to the unobserved cases, and therefore the existence of a thing not directly observed can never be validly inferred.

Inductive principle Russell stressed cannot be proved or disproved by experience; no doubt experience might confirm the inductive principle as regards observed instances, but as regards unobserved instances, only the inductive principle sustains it. All arguments which, on the basis of experience, point to the future or the unobserved past or present, assume the

inductive principle; hence we can never use experience to prove the inductive principle without begging the question. We thus must accept the inductive principle on the grounds of its intrinsic evidence, or forgo all justification of our expectations about the future. All our conducts is based upon associations which have worked in the past, and which we therefore regards as likely to work in the future; and this likelihood is dependent for its validity upon the inductive principle.

From the foregoing, it is clear that it is the principle of induction' rather than the law of causality that is at the bottom of all inferences as to the existence of things not immediately given. Accordingly, with the principle of induction, all that is wanted for such inferences can be proved, without it, all such inferences are invalid.

Hume in his empiricist theory made use of inductive method in his quest for knowledge of what- there-is and consequently undergraded or even annihilated the *a priori* aspect of knowledge; his usage of induction "becomes too exclusive even to the uncomfortable context of, at times, sensualizing intellectual concepts."<sup>58</sup>

Hume and his disciples were terribly mistaken by their assertion that our propensity to believe that nature operates according to certain invariables laws is nothing but a habit, is a product of repeated observation or constant conjunction. But reducing the process of induction to habit does not augur with our knowledge of about the way habits are established. The experience we have about habit formation is that things which hitherto had to be done quite consciously and deliberately are, usually after some time, done effortlessly, almost automatically. Let us at this juncture cite an example of learning to drive a car. One starts by applying certain driving rules, but when driving becomes a matter of habit, one is

scarcely aware of applying rules but does what one has learnt. But this is not the same case with induction, we do not at first induct with effort deliberately, and then perform with less and less conscious efforts as we become better at doing it. It is therefore very incorrect for the Humeans to argue that the propensity to draw induction inference is a habit established by rejection.

Another argument here is that there is no such thing as repetition simpliciter; repetition must be repetition for someone. There must be someone who interprets some event as a repetition of some events that took place in the past. What this entailed is that there must be some point of views; some system of expectations or interests that lead one to note certain similarities between what is happening now and what has happened earlier. It is one's point of view, the interests and expectations which one brings to an event that determines what is to count as a repetition of some earlier event(s). This evidently shows that these expectations come before repetition and then are not products of repetition. Hume's attempt to explain our expectation that the future will resemble the past as a product of repetition must therefore be regarded as spurious and this is a proof that his analysis of induction and his substitution of causality as constant conjunction is invalid.

Undoubtedly, Hume initially avoided this method but at a point in his theory, he fell into it, (when he defined the concept of miracle as the violation of the causal law), the consequence was that this committed him to do at the same time what the rationalists were doing therefore deviating from the empiricist tradition. This method falls short of both logical and factual consistency. The method of induction which is obtained by reasoning needs logical principles which are *a priori* and universal. Hume is however not consistent in his empiricist

theory because, he rejected induction as a method of arriving at a certain knowledge yet fell a victim of it, thereby transforming induction into a deduction; induction (then becomes) “... nothing else than a deduction which uses a certain premise, namely the principle of induction.”<sup>59</sup>

To drive home, the point we are making here, it has to be observed that it is possible in empiricism, to make assertions, not only about cases which we have been able to observe, but about all actual or possible cases. The existence of assertions of this kind and their necessity for almost all prices of knowledge which are said to be founded on experience shows that “... empiricism is in error”.<sup>60</sup> Therefore Hume’s empiricist theory is undoubtedly in error.

Further;

knowledge concerning the future is unattainable because observation merely informs us about the past, predicative knowledge can only be constructed by inferential methods; but since the implication leading from past to future observation is synthetic, deduction is synthetic, deductive, inference cannot be applied to the derivation of statements about the future, and the only instrument of prediction is the inductive inference. And since the inductive inference, can neither be validated by deductive logic nor by reference to experience, we have no reason to accept it; the inductive inference (thus) appears unjustifiable.<sup>61</sup>

This evidently indicated that Hume’s empirical method cannot establish knowledge.

Hume’s empiricist theory has also made it impossible for one to know if there is any conformity with our systems of explanations, this entails that we do not have determinate comparison given his empiricist theory.

However, in as much as Hume tried to arrive at the indubitable truth set by the rationalists, in his strive to attain this as he thought empiricism a failure just because (it crumbles) as he thought, could not reach this goal set by the rationalists. The method of induction which

Hume felt that we cannot give us an absolute and unwavering certainty because inductive inference (as the empiricists understood it), cannot be justified and so cannot establish knowledge.

Accordingly, Popper accused Hume of being guilty of misconception of the nature of scientific method of induction. Hume's position that a theory cannot be inferred from observation claims was correct but he was totally incorrect to the degree of neglecting to see and note that he was incorrect to assert that one has no right to judge as he (Hume) did that a theory cannot be confuted by observations. Popper therefore came to the conclusion that only empirical generalization is not enough for method of science but also include a rational method that operates by way and means of conjectures and refutations; what experience does is to do away with false theories.

### **5.3.0. Hume's Attack on Metaphysics.**

David Hume, as we have discovered, premised his arguments as regards what constitute reality or what exists, on impressions and ideas. For Hume, the only true knowledge is experiential; any concept that is not available to sense perception is mere fanciful thinking and campaigned for book burning of any book on metaphysics.

When we run over libraries persuaded of these (empirical) principles, what havoc must we make? If we take in our hand any volume: of divinity of school metaphysics. For instance, let us ask, does it contain any abstract reasoning containing quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter- of fact and existence? No. Commit it to the flames: for it contains nothing but sophistry and illusion.<sup>62</sup>

Based on this position, Hume asserted that anything which does not generate impression is not real and it is on this that he hinged his denial of causality. Having denied causality which is a metaphysical concept, it becomes inevitably clear that Hume must attack and reject all

metaphysical concepts because they operate through the same process as causality, that is, through mostly abstract reasoning. In this way, he rejected all metaphysical concepts like personal identity, miracle, God, etc.

Let us start with the concept of personal identity and its criticisms.

### **5.3.1. Critique of Hume's Rejection of Personal Identity.**

Hume argued that we cannot talk of personal identity because he described a human person as a bundle of impressions, distinct and disjointed perceptions. Omoregbe observed that "Hume is like a person who resolves to follow a blind alley to the end. "Empiricism led Hume to a dead end and absurd conclusion".<sup>63</sup> For Omoregbe, the absurd conclusion of Hume is that there is perception but there is no perceiver. If there is perception, logically it shows that there must be a person that perceives. For Hume, the subject of experience is not part of experience. This is quite unacceptable to any critical thinker. For there to be perception presupposes that a subject of perception exists. Hume overlooked this point because of his so-called consistent belief in empiricism. Hume maintained that he could not find the subject or the experiencer of the experience because; it is not an empirical entity. If not because of Hume's uncompromising empirical belief, he would have known that at this point that there is more to human knowledge than just empirical experience. Since there is perception, he should also know that there is a subject that does the perception if actually there is perception. Despite this conspicuous fact, Hume still insisted on his denial of the self which is the subject of perception. His denial of self is in line with his denial of substance. It is clear that Hume's denial of the existence of the soul, self, ego, mind or spirit in man on the ground that he does not perceive it empirically inside himself is absurd, and "it is the absurdity of empiricism taken to its logical conclusion."<sup>64</sup> Hume failed to realize that the



“ideas of series of perception without a subject is in itself unintelligible.”<sup>65</sup> Worried how series of perceptions can confuse itself with identity, John Passmore argued;

If all that happens is that a series of very similar (or causally linked) perception succeed one another, there is no possible way in which this series of itself could generate the fiction of personal identity. Nor fiction once generates the fiction of personal identity. Could this ever reveal its functional character? Both the original fiction are possible, only if there is something which is at first misled by and then after reconsideration and discover that it was misled by a series of similar perception...<sup>66</sup>

Now following Passmore’s line of thought, one will be forced to ask; is it possible that a series of perception can be aware of itself or can series of perception confuse itself with identity? Omoregbe believed “there must be something, call it ‘self’, ‘soul’, ‘ego’, ‘mind’, ‘spirit’ or anything, which perceives and is conscious of itself as perceiving.”<sup>67</sup> Hume did not want to accept this fact because the self cannot be perceived empirically - phenomenalist epistemology. But if it cannot be perceived empirically, it does not mean that it cannot be perceived at all. It only pointed to the reality of metaphysics/reasoning as a complement source of human knowledge. Metaphysical knowledge we must admit is a reality and also a probability.

Hume denied the idea of self or soul even though he knew it to be a clear truth, because, he knew that accepting this idea is equal to accepting reasoning as source of knowledge acquisition. But since the self exists, he cannot deny it. For Aristotle, man is a composite of body and soul. Despite the fact that Aristotle denied the immortality of the soul, he accepted the fact of the existence of the self; soul and ego. Hume cannot deny the idea of self because he too has a self. It is logical to say that Hume’s denial of self is the denial of himself. Since Hume denied the idea of self, he equally denied the idea of personal identity.

The question now is; do we remember the happenings of our childhood experience? Do we remember what happened last year or even last month? Since we can remember all these, it points the fact of personal identity as an indubitable reality. It is the belief of the researcher that Hume is wrong in saying that when he goes into himself, he stumbles at some particular perceptions. In other words, he could not catch himself. There is no way he could catch himself because self is not an empirical entity. It is a metaphysical entity that is beyond sense perception. It is pertinent to note that memory or the ability to recall the past events is not the sole characteristic of personal identity, but it suffices for now in our argument.

In his critical discussion of Hume's account of the self and personal identity, Copleston said that Hume used the word 'identity' in an ambiguous way. In the footnote of the passage in question, Copleston explained that "He (Hume) seems to imply verbally at least, that we attribute identity to our perceptions. But we obviously do not this, even if we regard them as 'acts' of a persistent subject."<sup>68</sup> Copleston maintained that Hume did not give a clear and real experience of the function of the memory. For him, it is not easy to see how memory is possible in Hume's theory.

### **5.3.2. A Critique of Hume's Refutation of Miracle.**

Hume rejected the possibility of miracle because, for him, it is contrary to the established laws of nature. Since the collective experience of mankind outweighs the experience of a particular individual, such particular experience should not be trusted. But when we juxtapose this position of Hume, with his analysis of the principles of causality and the uniformity of nature, we will observe inconsistencies. Hume had claimed that the laws of nature are well established and therefore inviolable and I ask; where comes the idea of this

law of nature if not from the use of induction and the so called Hume's 'association of ideas'. He went further to make claims that every *a priori* violation of these laws should be rejected as a product of delusion. At this point, Omoregbe questioned, "Is it possible to talk of inviolable laws of nature within the context of Hume's empiricism? Is such a concept of the laws of nature not a metaphysical concept which is outside the scope of man's empirical experience?"<sup>69</sup> It is quite clear here that Hume is not consistent. Since he claimed that we have no rational justification for stating that the future will be like the past, why then did he argue against miracle on the collective experience of mankind? Is Hume trying to tell us that he has experienced all human events, the ones that have occurred and the ones that will occur in the future, in order to draw such conclusion? As we can easily notice, Hume needed to be a god in order for him to undertake such task. This showed that he is guilty of what he is criticizing. In fact, Hume could not run away from applying reasoning in his discussion. His *a priori* conclusion presupposed the relevance of reasoning in acquisition of knowledge. Following Hume's argument on causality, the fact that we observed in the past that 'A' was followed by 'B' does not mean that whenever there is 'A', 'B' must necessarily follow. He maintained that there is no amount of repetition that would make us to conclude that whenever there is "A", "B" must follow. For Hume, "we cannot make any inference or draw any conclusion from such a repetition."<sup>70</sup> If actually we cannot make any inference or draw any inference from past repetition, then, the laws of nature, as presented by Hume in his argument against miracle, are not absolute and inviolable. The laws of nature can also be seen as statements of repeated events which have no necessary implication.

If as Hume said, we do not observe strict necessity in objects, if the idea of necessity is only in the mind and not in things and if we are not entitled to draw conclusions beyond what we observe, how can the idea of inviolable laws of nature be justified “...But a firm and unalterable experience cannot, on Hume’s terms establish that future will resemble the past, or that there is a necessary connection between the two events.”<sup>71</sup>

Now, since the laws of nature, in the light of Hume’s argument do not tell us what will happen in the future but only how things have happened in the past, Hume cannot criticize the possibility of miracles based on such laws of nature. Miracles could also be taken as part of human experience even though; it may not have pure empirical explanation. This is why metaphysics is there to complement on empirical knowledge. That a blind man later regained sight is not utterly outside human experience in the past, it has not been heard of that a blind man regained his sight, but with series of human experience, we observe that it is possible that a blind person can regain his sight. The question now is on the ‘how’. This is where the question of God comes in. Let us take a look at this argument;

**Premise 1:** God created the universe *exnihilo* (out of nothing) and governs natural laws.

**Premise 2:** If God governs natural laws, God can suspend natural laws.

**Premise 3:** Miracle is a suspension of natural law.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, if God exists, He can perform miracles.<sup>72</sup>

Following the above argumentation, miracle cannot be said to be a violation of natural laws since both miracle and natural laws emanated from God. Hume’s argument against the possibility of miracle is not sound. Omoregbe pointed that “even Hume’s definition of miracle as a violation of the laws of nature is inconsistent with his empirical principle, for his conception of laws of nature (in solving as it does, the idea of necessity) is metaphysical

rather than empirical.”<sup>73</sup> Hume’s *a priori* rejection of miracles is not consistent with his empiricism and as such, it is an impossibility.

There is another objection to Hume’s arguments that miracle abounds among ignorant, uneducated and uncivilized people, we wish to say that one does not need to be educated as to be an expert in a scientific discipline for one to know that people do not rise from the dead or that it becomes too not in the same vein it does, not require special expertise to detect a violation of the causal course of events, even, if sometimes mistakes are made by ignorant and uneducated people, it must be noted that the fact that a lot of reported miracles are false, does not entail that all reported miracles are false. Although all events that are reported to be miracles are mysterious and inexplicable, it does not mean that all inexplicable events are miraculous.

Granted that due to low level of education, the uncivilized tends to find every wonder as miraculous, it cannot negate the fact that miracle is an existential reality. There are scientists who are Christians. Some of the miracles, especially in the catholic world, are tested by acclaimed scientists before being proclaimed. For example, few years back at the grotto situated at Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe, in Anambra State, Nigeria, the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary there started dropping blood from the eyes one afternoon. A priest consulted a Laboratory Technician who confirmed the blood after he must have carried out a medical test on it, a 95.5 percent human blood of some one that feeds on balanced diet, an indication of a very healthy person. Needless to go further of how I got healed of a severe ear- ache by mere putting a life flower surrounding the statue inside the affected ear! Again if a dead person after being confirmed dead by medical experts later on comes back to life, we cannot ignore it as unintelligible testimony. Hume should be able to

know that even though miracle seems to be recorded more among the uncivilized, the civilized are not exempted in that awesome experience.

In the most civilized and most learned societies, given like that of America and Europe, there are reports of miraculous cures performed by preachers and most evangelists or proponent "... yet whether the American nations nor the European nations today can be called ignorant and barbarous.”<sup>74</sup>

Hume alleged that religious people make false allusions to miracle. While we do not disagree totally with this position of Hume, we wish also to say that all religious people cannot be said to be dishonest. Despite the level of dishonesty displayed by some religious people, regarding miraculous events, there are some miracles that are conspicuously clear. For instance, assuming that a person born crippled from birth, after twenty five years, begins to walk after a prayer session, this type of miraculous event cannot be said to be false. There are many ways to ascertain if the person was actually crippled; from the person's parents or childhood contemporaries. The inquiry should be enough to ascertain the authenticity of the miracle. We must not experience something in order to believe in it. Thomas Reid contended that "we should always accept someone's testimony unless we have good reason to suspect that particular report is false.”<sup>75</sup>

In his discussion of Hume's argument that we should have good evidence before accepting a report of miracles, Ninaan Smath remarked; "miracles do not occur in the abstract but in particular personal and historical situations.”<sup>76</sup>. The historical character of miracle should be enough to prove its existence. Both in African and Western religious thought, miracle has the characteristics of pointing to a supernatural being which is normally called God.

Miracles generally have religious significance. Since belief is more or less on individual basis, Hume is free to believe in the actual occurrence of miracle or not. But whether he accepts the reality of miracle or not, his arguments against miracle have been debunked as we could deduce from the counter arguments stated above.

However, much skepticism infuses Hume's discussion of causation he cannot help but believe that the world contains necessity.

### **5.3.3. Critique of Hume's Denial of God's Existence.**

Hume criticized the design argument for God's existence on the ground that we cannot infer a cause from its effects and also that evil in the world is a sure sign that God does not exist. Taking a critical look at this position of Hume, we will certainly observe some illogicality. It is a known fact that whatever comes into being must be brought into being by another being. When we follow this argument logically, we shall come to a particular being that is in existence on its own, this being is what we call God. Whether we call this being God or nature, the fact remains that there is a higher being responsible for the being of all contingent beings. How do we know this basic truth? We got to know that from our experience in the world.

Hume argued that we have no experience of the world and their makers as we would have experience of a building and a builder. If the world is not a hand work of God (or nature as one may call it), Hume did not tell us how the world came into being. Hume's inability to tell us about the maker of the world is a minus on his part. Arguing from experience of the mysteries of the world, it would be observed that they all insist on one thing. Despite their different religious background and nationalities, they all affirm the existence of a super

natural being that is responsible for their mystical experience. The experience of these mystics cannot just be over looked. No matter the name given, the fact remains that all accepted that there is a higher being that Christians call God. Hume himself cannot relegate the experience of the mystics to the background. This point showed that we can infer the existence of God from experience even though it may not be empirical experience. Hume's experience must not necessarily be empirical.

The argument from design is based on the fact that whatever happens must have a cause. It is from this causal reasoning that we infer the existence of God. The problem with our causal reasoning is how to move from the natural to the supernatural. But since we cannot find the answer empirically, it goes to show the limitation of our empirical knowledge; hence the significance of metaphysics/reasoning. Commenting on this line of argument, Copleston reported the view of Reid, "we can infer the existence of God, as cause of contingent and mutable things, with absolute certainty".<sup>77</sup>

William Demaski affirmed that the "design reasoning has effects to causal reasoning. It begins with effects in the physical world that exhibit clear signs of intelligence and from these signs infer to an intelligent cause."<sup>78</sup> This intelligent cause of the world is what we know as God. Reid made a critical remark on issue of design argument, in lectures on natural theology, he argued thus;

No man ever saw wisdom (read "design" or intelligence) and he does not (infer wisdom) from the marks of it, he can form no conclusions respecting anything of his fellow creature. How should I know that any of this audience (sic) understanding? It is only by effects of it on their conduct and behaviour ... But says Hume, unless you know it by experience, you know nothing of it. If this is the case, I never could know it at all. Hence it appears that whoever maintains that there is no force in the argument from final cause (design) denies the existence of any intelligent being but himself ... from effects, a wise and intelligent cause may be informed.<sup>79</sup>



According to Reid, we attribute design as an inference from signs of intelligence. We do not need to know a designer before attributing a design to him. Our experience in the material world should be enough to conclude that there is a designer responsible for the order and design in the world, even though we have not had any empirical experience with the designer, whom we call God. Whether we have had direct experience with him or not, the fact is that there is a designer, his existence is not in doubt. It would be foolhardy to see the design in this world and deny the existence of a designer, Thomas Reid submitted that; “though signs of intelligence can be learnt and confirmed by experience, our ability to recognize them cannot originate in experience. That ability is hard wired into us as part of basic rationality.”<sup>80</sup>

The investigation of the anthropologists is very relevant in our argumentation here. The anthropologists are very relevant in our argumentation here. The anthropologists have taken this time to find out the source of knowledge of God which human beings have. From the investigation; they came to conclude that almost all the cultures of the world have knowledge of God whom they worship as their creator. Since Hume said that all knowledge must come from experience, the question now is; from where do people get the knowledge of God? If we cannot come to the knowledge of God through experience (following the design argument), we then expect Hume to either disprove the findings of the anthropologists (which he may find impossible), or tell us the source of that knowledge of God in all cultures of the world. But as a diehard empiricist, Hume would not accept to make allusions to anything outside empirical experience. This is a clear sign of the limitation of Hume’s philosophy and also a pointer to the fact that metaphysics is complementary to empirical knowledge.

Hume argued also that the presence of evil in the world is highly irreconcilable with the existence of an infinitely good and omnipotent God. But one can easily argue that the world is a world of opposites. We talk of tall and short, up and down, male and female, black and white, good and evil etc. If Hume accepted the fact that there is something like goodness, he should be able also to accept the reality of evil as a compliment of goodness. We talk of evil because there is good; we also talk of good because there is evil. This line of thought showed that the presence of evil in the world cannot be used to question the existence of God, but can only be used to understand the reality of the world of opposites. For Teilhard de Chardin, “evils in the world can be explained as part of the evolutionary process in the world.”<sup>81</sup> Evil for him is essentially a disorder that is inevitable in the evolutionary system. Leibniz contended that evil is part of the structure of the world.

Another explanation for the presence of evil is the fact that God, the creator of human being gave men and women free will. Physical evil is part of the natural order in the universe. But the moral evil is as a result of bad use of human free will. It has been noted that “evils are entirely due to the bad, free, choices made by human beings ... it is as good of God to create free beings, but bad of them to misuse their freedom.”<sup>82</sup> In the light of this argument, we could see that the good God cannot be said to be responsible for the evils in the world, and we cannot use evils in the world as an objection to believe in his presence. For St Augustine, evil is not a being but simply, a negation of good. Omoregbe reported St. Augustine’s view as thus; “Evil was not created and could not be created. Nor can it exist on its own since it is not a being .... Moral evil cannot be treated to any other source beyond the misuse of man’s free will.”<sup>83</sup>

Another argument for the presence of evil in the world is that “God allows evil for a greater good. Jonathan Edwards argued that “God allows evil, for the sake of good of which it will be an occasion ... he does restrain it when the good is not in view.”<sup>84</sup> The argument showed that God’s permission is logically necessary, “that this good outweighs the evil, there are no alternative good not involving those evils that would have been better”<sup>85</sup> The kpim of our discussion in this section is that Hume cannot just deny the existence of God from the presence of the evil in the world.

However, Hume’s rejection of metaphysics did not get away like that without some implications; let us now go over to the implications which are associated with his metaphysical rejection.

#### **5.4.0. Implications of Hume’s Rejection of Metaphysics.**

It has been noted earlier that metaphysics studies being in its totality. Any aspect of study of being by any discipline presupposes metaphysics. Metaphysics has been distinctly noted to be the foundation of other fields of study. Hume’s rejection of metaphysics can be seen as a serious attack on these disciplines. Also the implication of Hume’s rejection of metaphysics can be interpreted to be a death sentence to science, the obliteration of ethics, annihilation of religion and epistemological uncertainty.

#### **5.4.1. A Death Sentence on Science.**

Scientific knowledge is said to be universal. This universality is an essential character for the general acceptance of what we know as science. In degrees of knowledge, Jacques Maritain observed that “the universality of the object of knowledge is the condition of its necessity; in itself the condition of perfect knowledge or science.”<sup>86</sup> But since universality

and necessity cannot be observed empirically, as Hume told us, it follows that scientific knowledge has no rational justification.

We know too well that empirical sciences are characterized by their use of inductive method. Inductive method entails knowledge from particular to universal. Empirical science makes use of this method in fact; induction is at the basis of empirical science. Hume had argued against causality, that we cannot conclude from the known to the unknown. He argued that for the fact that water boils at  $0^{\circ}\text{C}$  in the past, does not mean that it will boil at the same  $0^{\circ}\text{C}$  in the future. This is because for him, there is no necessary connection between cause and effect. Omoregbe contended that “By criticizing the principle of causality, Hume struck the root of modern science; His attack on principle of causality is an attack on induction and on modern science which is based on induction.”<sup>87</sup> Since Hume argued that we have no rational justification for stating that future will be like the past (which is the basis of the principle of causality), empirical science which is based on that same principle has also been destroyed. Following Hume’s argument, there is no sure foundation for empirical sciences. We can say that we can begin to erase empirical sciences from the domain of human knowledge since Hume, the ‘arbiter’ has declared a ‘death sentence on it. It is clear according to Hume, that the principle of causality or inductive method has no empirical foundation. If we are to take Hume seriously, it means that science is meaningless. But we know that, empirical science even though it is based on induction, is not meaningless. This is why Omoregbe stated that “metaphysics is the foundation of modern science.”<sup>88</sup> It is only metaphysics that can rescue science from the ‘death sentence’ adjudicated by Hume. In this way, we can say that modern science validates the reality of

metaphysics. It also pointed to the fact that human knowledge is not all about sense perception or empirical knowledge.

#### **5.4.2. Obliteration of Ethics/ Law.**

As stated earlier, being is the object of metaphysics. Ethics, as we know, is concerned with the good of the being of the human person. Both Plato and Plotinus identified being with goodness from their understanding, the foundation of goodness is being. St. Augustine identified being with goodness. Knowing too well that ethics is concerned about goodness, and metaphysics is the foundation of ethics, it logically follows that Hume's attack on metaphysics is also a serious attack on ethics.

Following Hume's discussion, on necessary connection between cause and effect, we will observe that it dealt a grievous blow on our moral judgment. People are said to be morally good or bad based on the fact, that they are taken to be responsible for their actions. But since Hume said that there is no necessary connection between cause and effect, it follows that people should not be held responsible for their action, since there is no necessary connection between throwing a stone in a glass house and breaking of the glass. This is a mockery to our moral and legal laws. Take for instance, Mr 'A' shot a gun on Mr 'B' and Mr 'B' dies immediately. Following Hume's understanding, Mr. 'A' cannot be prosecuted in law for murder because there is no rational ground to justify that the gun shot by Mr 'A' is responsible for the death of Mr. 'B'. The only thing we observe is that two events happened, the pulling of the trigger by Mr. 'A' and the falling down of Mr 'B'. It can be argued in the light of Hume's position that, there is no connection between our voluntary actions. All we could observe is the constant conjunction which has no rational justification. It follows that

nobody can be held responsible for any action. If we take Hume seriously, it means that, that will be the end of ethics but as we stated above ethics is concerned with the good of human person. Our understanding of ethics should go beyond the empirical observation of constant conjunction. This is why it is said that metaphysics is the foundation of ethics.

#### **5.4.3. Annihilation of Religion.**

God as we know is the central focus of religion. There is no way we can talk of religion of any kind without reference to the idea of God. Hume “demolishes” all arguments for God’s existence. For Hume, we do not have any impression or the idea of God. The metaphysical concept, God, has no rational justification and so Hume considered it as meaningless and nonsense.

Religion employs metaphysical concepts in their discussions. Omoregbe observed correctly that “it is because religion presupposes metaphysics and is based on metaphysical foundation that theologians generally employ metaphysical concepts and terms in their exposition of religious tenets or doctrines.”<sup>89</sup> Since religion cannot do without metaphysics, it follows that Hume’s total rejection of metaphysics can also be interpreted as the annihilation of religion. We have seen how Hume ‘demolished’ the arguments of God’s existence, for him, we have no experience of God or even his attributes as claimed by religious people. He equally rejected all attempts to prove God’s existence by the use of reason alone. Even the argument from design which he could have accepted because of its empirical ‘foundation’ was rejected by him. The attempt to ascertain God’s existence through miraculous experience has no meaning in Hume’s understanding. Looking at Hume’s critical position on religion, it logically followed that religion should be

exterminated from the face of the earth. A discussion about God or religious matters is purely a waste of time.

However, it has been observed that the idea of God is an essential part of every culture of the world. The fact that every tribe and nationality has a word for God cannot be ignored. That the human person is notoriously religious cannot be empirically investigated. This fact confirmed the statement that there is more to reality than we can perceive with the senses. That there are realities that cannot be perceived with the empirical senses is left to the realm of metaphysics/reason for a proper questioning and answers.

#### **5.4.4. Epistemological Uncertainty**

Another implication of Hume's theory of knowledge is culminated in his metaphysical nihilism which is also referred to as epistemological uncertainty. Taking Hume's argument seriously means that there is no certainty of human knowledge. Generally, for us to talk of anything we first of all ask; "what is it"? This question presupposes the knowledge of anything; we must have knowledge of the substance. But since Hume rejected the idea of substance as illusory, then human knowledge can also be termed as an illusion.

Since our knowledge is generally based on experience of past events, and Hume argued that there is no rational justification that the future will be like the past; it follows that we cannot know anything for certain. We cannot say for certain that the sun will rise tomorrow or that an object thrown up will fall down in obedience to the law of gravity (natural law). Our inferences are mostly based on induction. If Hume is actually correct, it meant that we do not have any basis for most of our judgment. It also meant that all our beliefs, all scientific knowledge, are subject to doubt. If all our knowledge is subjected to doubt, then we do not have certainty of knowledge. Hume's rejection of metaphysics is actually destructive to

everything we know about Human knowledge. In sum, it leads to total epistemological uncertainty.

Metaphysical knowledge which Hume rejected is not without reality and values; let us now look at the reality and values embedded in metaphysics in the acquisition of human knowledge.

#### **5.5.0. Reality and Value/Importance of Metaphysics.**

There are many things which we cannot prove their existence due to our inadequacies or perhaps finitude using observation, yet we hold unflinchingly that they do. The contiguities and successions observed in nature from the onset are the basis from which one can determine cause and effect. Hume's uniformities which are the products of sense data need to be moderated and acted upon by human reason. Mere observation does not tell us about anything and so it is not every encounter with the world results in knowledge. This calls for the employment of some extra empirical categories to aid in the interpretation of the sense data given. Since there is possibility of uniformities and regularities, they cannot at the same time be said to have happened by chance. This means that we accept causality implicitly otherwise we would not have put on a switch and expect light. Science has its limitations; its inability to be certain in adoption of probability does not count causality as not being true. Hume's denial of causality does not constitute an eternal truth because a thing produced without a cause would be produced by nothing. We might not see how flame causes burn but causal link is already implied. An epistemological denial of phenomenon does not tantamount to an ontological denial. Metaphysics is not restricted to factual issues or empirical means of resolving problems; it is a science of both the sensible and the supra-sensible, it deals with the knowledge of the universe. It is the basis of all the sciences



because it attempts to work on hypothesis that would account for all scientific knowledge as well as everything else that we may know or believe about the universe.

Metaphysics we must admit is at the heart of every facet of human knowledge. The fact that some human problems cannot be solved only by empirical sciences will prompt us to appreciate the value of metaphysics. Metaphysical problems as we have noted are real problems that disturb the human mind. In a bid to get answers to these problems, metaphysics takes us beyond the empirical experience.

In the world of human acquisition and understanding of what constitute knowledge, there is no gainsaying that metaphysics cannot be avoided. Man in this process cannot avoid making use of reasoning in the process of acquisition of knowledge that is meaningful. However, as man cannot avoid metaphysics in this business, even if one argues against it (metaphysics), he unavoidably is doing metaphysics. “it is impossible to become an anti-metaphysician without doing metaphysics.”<sup>90</sup> The only difference between an anti-metaphysician and a metaphysician in the words of Fadahunsi is that “while both ask metaphysical questions, the former (anti-metaphysician) proposes negative answers.”<sup>91</sup> The fact is that there is no way human beings can run away from the reality of metaphysics. The literates and illiterates, philosophers and non-philosophers, all human beings without an exception engage in metaphysical discussion. It is a known fact that the common man asks questions about the soul, the nature of things and what things are made of. These are metaphysical issues. The empirical cannot give us any satisfactory answers to such problems. They are metaphysical problems and as such only metaphysics can give considerable answers. In our everyday experience, people engage in discussions about events that are caused by some other things. We may agree with Hume that we cannot perceive any necessary connection between a

cause and effect in certain events; this is only to tell us that cause and effect are beyond the realm of the empirical. It is the function of metaphysics to investigate such issues.

For Hume, anything outside empirical experience is not an object of human knowledge. This position of Hume is a limitation of human knowledge. It is because of this that metaphysics took it upon itself to address most questions which most people take for granted. The questions about substance, change and permanence, existence of soul, unity and diversity, the concept of God and so on, are metaphysical in nature. Although, the human mind has the cognitive capacity of grasping both the empirical and meta-empirical, as a result of this meta-empirical which belongs to the realm of metaphysics, metaphysics takes upon itself to address most fundamental questions which most people take for granted. It is only metaphysics that tries to give solutions to such questions. Iroegbu reflected that “Hume’s lopsided view of knowledge and reality is a philosophical negativity.”<sup>92</sup> For there to be a unified understanding of reality, we must move from the empirical to the meta-empirical.

The fact that some human problems cannot be solved only by empirical sciences will prompt us to appreciate the value of the meta-empirical. The problems within the realm of the meta-empirical are real problems that disturb the human mind. The meta-empirical takes us beyond the realm of empirical sciences. However, we argued that there is no sure foundation from empirical sciences but empirical sciences, are not meaningless. It is also a point to note that human knowledge is not all about empirical knowledge or sense perception. There is more to reality than we perceive with the senses.

Metaphysics has an important role to play in the life of the human person and also sense experience in the quest for knowledge. Further, Hume should come to terms with

metaphysics in order to find solutions to those problems that cannot be solved within the domain of the empirical.

We have pointed in our critique that the world is a world of opposites; we have up and down, tall and short, physical and metaphysical, empirical and meta-empirical. These are compliment to each other. Metaphysics should not be seen as against the empirical, this was the exclusion Hume made, but as a compliment to the empirical. When we employ empirical and meta-empirical investigation in our question for knowledge, we cannot but get to the truth or nearer to the truth of the particular reality in question. The basic fact is their general acceptance that there is more to reality than we can perceive in our sense experience. This is the fact that eluded Hume.

We can see the relevance of metaphysics in its quest to understand reality. The object of metaphysics is being while other disciplines study various aspects of being. It is only metaphysics that studies the totality of being. Metaphysics is seen as the foundation of every discipline since its central focus is being. Being underlies the study of other disciplines, Omoregbe reminded:

While other disciplines study one aspect of being or the other, metaphysics studies being in all its ramifications. This explains why there is metaphysical element in every discipline. Philosophy of science philosophy of law, philosophy of history, philosophy of education, philosophy of language, philosophy of mathematics, philosophy of social sciences, philosophy of medicine, philosophy of religion, philosophy of politics, and so on, what philosophy studies in all the disciplines is the metaphysical elements underlying them.<sup>93</sup>

Metaphysics we must admit is at the heart of every facet of human knowledge. The fact that some human problems cannot be solved only by empirical sciences will prompt us to appreciate the value of metaphysics. Metaphysical problems as we have noted, are real

problems that disturb the human mind. In a bid to get answers to these problems, metaphysics takes us beyond the empirical experience.

Chappel made an acute observation about Hume's position on metaphysics. Hume is well known as a consistent and logical empiricist unlike Locke and Berkeley, Chappel said that Hume is not a consistent empiricist, He argued that Hume's empiricism was neither strict nor pure, nor more than Locke's was. This is so in part because many of the questions that Hume raised are logical or conceptual in nature and hence do not admit of empirical answers, and also in part because some of the questions might be appropriated. Hume in fact answers *a priori*, without realizing he was doing so.

One would agree with Chappel bearing in mind that it needs only a metaphysician to raise a metaphysical question or even to address metaphysical questions. Hume argued that all our ideas are derived from impression, one cannot but question thus has he experienced all ideas to know that they must come from impression? What rational authority has Hume to conclude from the observable to the unobservable, if he actually wanted to be consistent with the tenets of empiricism? This is one of the places that depict Hume as not being consistent with the claims of empiricism; it also shows that empiricism alone without metaphysics cannot furnish us with authentic knowledge.

According to metaphysicians, there is need for us to transcend the empirical in order to gain a unified knowledge of reality. This transcendence is possible through the help of metaphysics. That the sense perception alone cannot give us an objective knowledge of reality is a pointer to the fact that we have to go beyond the empirical in order to understand reality as it is in its totality.

Aristotle can be regarded without any bias as the ancestor of metaphysics. He actually stated categorically that metaphysics is the first philosophy. He noted that there is more to reality than empirical knowledge can give us. He believed that the senses give us knowledge but accepted also that there is more to that. It was Aristotle who systematized what we know today as metaphysics. He understood metaphysics as “the science of the supra-sensible relations, including God, the science of being and the science of the primary causes. Aristotle discussed metaphysical problems of causality, matter and form, potency and Act, substance and accidents and the ideas of the unmoved mover for God’s existence.”<sup>94</sup> St Thomas Aquinas, in his metaphysics, followed the tradition of Aristotle. His metaphysics is known as ontological Realism. He believed that metaphysical knowledge complements the empirical knowledge. He discussed his metaphysics mainly in his books, “*The Summa Theologica*” and “*The Summa Contra Gentiles*”. He is also known for his “*Quinque viae*” (five ways of demonstrating/proving God’s existence). Beginning from the modern period in the history of philosophy, metaphysics took a more rationalistic approach. The continental rationalists (Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz) believed that metaphysics is the basis for understanding reality in its totality. For Hume, anything outside empirical experience is not an object of human knowledge. This position of Hume is a limitation of the potentiality of the human mind. It is because of this that metaphysics took it upon itself to address most questions which most people take for granted. The questions about substance, change and permanence, existence of soul, unity in diversity, the concept of God and so on, are metaphysical in nature. Metaphysics has an important role to play in the life of human person and his quest for knowledge, the best way to solve a problem is not by moving away from it. Hume should come to terms with metaphysics in order to find solutions to those

problems that cannot be solved within the domain of the empirical. We have pointed out in our critique that this world is a world of opposites. We have up and down, tall and short, physical and metaphysical, empirical and meta-empirical; these are complement to each other. Metaphysics should not be seen as against the empirical, but as a compliment to the empirical. When we employ empirical and meta-empirical investigation in our quest for knowledge, we cannot but get to the truth or nearer to the truth of the particular reality in question.

Metaphysics, which Hume rejected we must admit is at the heart of every facet of human knowledge. The fact that some human problems cannot be solved only by empirical sciences will prompt us to appreciate the value of metaphysics in making contributions to solving human problems. The metaphysical problems, as we note, are real problems that disturb the human mind. In a bid to get answers to these problems, metaphysics takes us beyond the empirical experience. Therefore, Hume and other empiricists should know that for us to gain profound knowledge about the truth of reality, we have to go beyond the empirical experience since experience informs us that all that glitters is not gold.

Metaphysics prevails over observation, where the empirical stops, meta-empirical (metaphysics) takes over. In our knowledge acquisition, metaphysics should be seen as a partner in progress in human cognitive activity, metaphysics/reasoning should be involved in the business of knowledge acquisition because it goes beyond the empirical sciences in its search for knowledge and truth. There is no way in which human being can do away with metaphysics; there is no gainsaying that a denial of metaphysics is a denial of human knowledge. Man's knowledge is not complete without metaphysics. John Locke's description of substance as "something we know not what" is also a clear pointer to the

reality of metaphysics. With the submissions above, one cannot but agree that to come to the knowledge of “what there is,” there is need for both the knowledge of the empirical and that of metaphysical.

Going by all that has been said before now, it could be discerned that Hume’s empiricist theory, though unique, coherent and consistent to some extent, still has some flaws. Hume’s theory of knowledge contains some inconsistency and so cannot exhaust reality. The exclusions he made while investigating the (*urstoff*) of the universe and his misconception of the concept of universals which resulted in his reliance on one aspect of reality, (empirical reality), thereby attributing the source of human knowledge solely on sense experience. Hume’s reduction of human knowledge to impressions and ideas and his division of objects of human knowledge into relations of ideas and matters of fact led him to rejection of causality and consequently metaphysics. However his theory led him into having wrong conception of reality and being empirically systematic plunged him into idealism.

However, there are extremely deep-seated assumptions in Hume’s philosophy. Hume’s theoretical construction of philosophy has epistemological reasoning and epistemological significance. His epistemological analysis questioned the significant problems and the formulation of all subsequent knowledge, including all rational knowledge.

Hume’s corresponding theological premise was deism and atheism. His overall thesis is the theoretical orientation or logical premise that causes and effects are discoverable, not by reason, but by experience.

However though, contemporary critics of Hume have sensed the immediate weakness or genetic fallacy, but we should respect Hume’s open mind. His advance of human knowledge is anchored on skeptical conclusions. He believed that, like religion, many species of

philosophy can corrupt morals, reduce enjoyment of life, and make us lazy and presumptuous.

However, Hume acknowledged the fact that we have knowledge of the external world, which he thinks we base on sense data. His whole critique of human knowledge is based on the content of sensing and skepticism, to arrive at a skeptical conclusion. His skeptical outlook presupposes a cursory examination of human psychology. His philosophical position connotes pyrrhonian and radical skepticism.

Hume's philosophical position presupposes that we must use skeptical arguments to get to the true knowledge of things. His epistemological underpinnings make us less dogmatic and make us more willing to reason with others. Allan Bailey and Daniel O' Brien concluded that:

Hume did admittedly drive home repeatedly the message that rational justification as conceived of by philosophers and those influenced by them is generally, perhaps even always, beyond our reach. He fully accepted that the force of pyrrhonian doubt is such that no arguments can show it to be mistaken. It can be held in check only by 'the stronger power of natural instinct'<sup>167</sup> Positive degree of justification."<sup>95</sup>

Allan Bailey and Daniel O' Brien duly observed that "it emerges, then, that Hume's philosophical position appears to be far more similar to the pyrrhonian skepticism espoused by Sextus Empiricus than we might initially have suspected from Hume's attempts to dissociate himself from that stance".<sup>96</sup> Allan Bailey and Daniel O' Brien believed that "thus it is tempting to view Hume as akin to Pyrrhonist with a more cautious view about the real life-psychological possibilities for human beings".<sup>97</sup> Allan Bailey and Daniel O' Brien concluded that "... Hume's polemic against pyrrhonism is, in part, a tactical manoeuvre."<sup>98</sup> Allan Bailey and Daniel O' Brien envisaged that "Hume is making his views



about justification and belief look less challenging and radical by contrasting his supposedly more moderate position with the wild and fanciful speculations of the ancient pyrrhonists.”<sup>99</sup>

Hume’s philosophical analysis is symptomatic, radical and psychological. His philosophical analysis is attributable to pyrrhonian skepticism, philosophical vigour, profundity and completeness to literary elegance. His philosophical development undoubtedly has an illuminating account. Consequently, it is concerned with the redirection of Hume’s approach to philosophical problems. His philosophical development presupposes an avalanche of psychological theory.

For James Norton, “Hume made such a prolific display of psychological ingenuity in investigating belief that it becomes increasingly difficult to defend him against the charge of burying philosophical issues beneath an avalanche of psychological theory.”<sup>100</sup> James Norton concluded that “from a philosophical theory of belief, one expects a criterion for distinguishing between rational beliefs and irrational one, and undoubtedly, it was that that Hume aimed to provide.”<sup>101</sup>

However, despite the flaws found in Hume’s phenomenalist epistemology also, his theory is still unique among his contemporaries.

David Hume, as a consistent empiricist who fought doggedly against what he called ‘dogmatic rationalism’ maintained that the foundation of abstruse philosophy must be undermined for it only serves as a shelter to superstition, and a cover to absurdity and error, he held thus that “the only method of freeing learning ... is to enquire seriously into the nature of human understanding, and show, from an exact analysis of its powers and capacity, that it is by no means fitted for remote abstruse philosophy.”<sup>102</sup>

Having used this as a launch pad against rationalism, he went further therefore to demonstrate the problem of reason as a sole source of knowledge, based on the problem of knowledge as he formulated it, which included that when teleguided by reason alone, it may be possible to come up with thoughts that will look plausible but which in the end will lead to irresolution and confusion. Hume demonstrated that knowledge is experiential, one must therefore come in contact with the external objects (phenomena) which generate sensations in order to acquire knowledge.

However, the uniqueness of Hume's empiricism lies on his division of sources of knowledge into two; knowledge derived by the operation of the rational faculty as contained in logic and mathematics and knowledge derived from sense perception. Hume is unique among prominent empiricists, he actually towed different lane from his predecessors and singles himself out as a consistent and logical empiricist. He is unique not only in advocating that metaphysics does not generate any knowledge, but that any book purporting to be on metaphysics has to be destroyed because, it can only give sophistry and illusion. Hume is a thorough going empiricist that made the same claim with Locke and Berkeley that human knowledge derive from sense perception, but took it seriously, unlike these other two empiricists mentioned; Hume would therefore have nothing to do with metaphysics which deals with knowledge that is not derived by sense perception. With this, he recommended that all metaphysics books should be burnt. It has been observed that his critique of metaphysical realities pointed to the fact that he lived as a creative thinker. As an extraordinary person, Hume was acclaimed to have brought empiricism to its logical conclusion. This was evidently seen in his argument on the "how" of our knowledge acquisition. His

works actually influenced many philosophers after him. Notably was the exclamation of Kant that Hume woke him (Kant) from dogmatic slumber.

Hume's comment that "all our knowledge begins and arises from experience" was what really agitated the mind of Kant and realizing that philosophy had been put to jeopardy, that epistemology was devastated by the position of the two opposing schools of Rationalism – holding to 'Reason' and Empiricism – holding to 'Experience'; he set out to resolve this problem initiated by these two schools.

Undoubtedly, Kant really had a lasting influence from Hume's theory of knowledge and he confessed this when he said; "I openly confess, the suggestion of David Hume, was the very thing which many years ago first interrupted my dogmatic slumber and gave my philosophy a new direction."<sup>103</sup>

In effort to resolve this problem, he wrote his famous book, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, where he inquired into the nature and limits of human knowledge. He posited such questions as; to what extent does reason know? What may I know? And in what way? The answers to these questions form the task of Kant's philosophy.

His analysis of human knowledge and faculties gave him an insight into the nature and capacity of human reason. It enabled him to agree with Hume that the genesis of human knowledge is partly from experience but he rejected Hume's derivation of knowledge entirely from experience that has led to absolute skepticism and materialism. His view was that: "With experience all our knowledge begins, but it does not follow that it all arises out of experience. For it may well be that even our empirical knowledge is made up of what we receive serving merely as the occasion supplies from itself."<sup>104</sup>

With this idea in mind, Kant set out to determine the real range, indeed the scope and limit of man's reason or the faculty of knowledge. He regarded this project as essential to determine the kind of knowledge open to man.

He started with the assumption that knowledge is a joint product of man's mind and experience. In his view, neither rationalism nor empiricism gave a credible solution to the problem of knowledge. As he viewed it, knowledge is provided for neither by the analytic *a priori* judgment of the rationalists nor by the synthetic *a posteriori* judgment of the empiricists. Kant's position is that here is a third kind of judgment known as *synthetic a priori* judgment. This third kind of judgment for Kant is necessarily true, begins with experience though it does not arise from it and, carries with it the necessity which being *a priori* cannot be derived from experience. Or Kant, both rationalism and empiricism misconceived knowledge and made it impossible because the object can always in reference to knowledge, supply constancy and necessity and the subject only universality.

But both are, by some equivalent process of reasoning, needed if knowledge is to be knowledge. Knowledge is for Kant, the synthetic outgrowth of the *a priori* (form) element of the subject and, of the *a posteriori* (matter) element of the object. To sum up Kant's view, a look at Russell's comment on Kant's doctrine in this matter:

"He (Kant) considered that the crude material given in sensation – the colour, hardness, etc is due to the object, and that what we supply is the arrangement in space and time, and all the relations between sense data which results from comparison or considering one as the cause of the other or in any other way."<sup>105</sup>

For Kant then, knowledge begins with experience as the empiricists said but, as the rationalists said, the mind is not simply passive, but actively contributes something to experience since the mind modifies its objects in the act of knowing, it can only know phenomena. Kant held that sense experience cannot conclusively provide a theory-free basis. For Kant, empirical knowledge is the knowledge possible with human nature and has its sources a posteriori, that is, in experience. It is a compound of that matter which we receive through impression and that form which the faculty of cognition supplied from itself.

However, Kant restored the activity of the human mind in the quest for knowledge and so rescued science from destruction in the hands of extreme empiricists like Hume. Kant also gave an account of knowledge which is rooted in experience as the empiricists had insisted but he did not rule out the possibility of abstract reason which the rationalists have advocated. He incorporated both abstract reason and experience into his theory of knowledge. In this way however, he tried to reconcile the two opposing schools of thought in his third judgment- *Synthetic a Priori* kind of knowledge.

However Kant's theory of synthetic a priori kind of knowledge is in error; according to Prof. Umeogu, Kant was deceived into modeling his philosophy after Euclidean geometry with which he took to state properties of space which expresses the only way in which human beings could perceive objects in space. Later however, this Euclidean geometry was dethroned and non-euclidean geometry was discovered. The Euclid axioms were geared towards developing axioms that describe concepts and items of space, a parallel axiom was discovered among this self evident axioms which did not satisfy the rules and regulations of axiomatic science and hence, non Euclidean geometry.

However, according to Umeogu, mathematicians still accepted both the axioms of Euclidean and Non Euclidean to yield truths. For this however, mathematics cannot but be in error and according to Prof. Umeogu, “it does not describe the world”.<sup>106</sup>

Consequently, what this entails is that Kant’s theory of synthetic *a priori* knowledge which he used to reconcile the two opposing schools of thought though was said to be thought provoking also is in error because he modeled his theory after the Euclidean geometry which was later overthrown by the non Euclidean geometry and for the reason of this fact, his theory of *synthetic a priori* form of knowledge could not solve the problem of knowledge, but it helps to portray what knowledge means in a way more philosophically consistent than most philosophers have done.

The point we are trying to make here is that the synthetic *a priori* knowledge of Kant in his attempt to reconcile the two schools of rationalism and empiricism is in error and so cannot solve the problem of knowledge.

Having rigorously followed Hume’s epistemology, we have been able to demonstrate what for him constitute reality and this is nothing else than the objects that generate impressions, objects of phenomena of sense but because we only can have impressions of them, he denied the existence even of phenomena of the senses. He invariably denied the existence of the external world as he argued that physical things cannot exist in themselves but as impressions we have of them. In this line, he denied causality and metaphysics in general. Hume’s position however is that; the only meaningful terms are sense impressions and concepts of mathematics that derive directly and demonstrably from these. With Hume’s phenomenalistic epistemology, he reduced all knowledge to mere flux of impressions;

impressions we derive from the perception of the empirical objects. This implies that metaphysical realities are meaningless because they cannot produce impressions as they are not objects of empirical knowledge. However Hume's reduction of human knowledge to mere impressions and ideas invariably is the rejection of physical objects and consequently, the denial of the external world. However, his proposal of vigorous sensism as an alternative to our natural and acquired scientific, metaphysical and socio-cultural deposits creates more problems than it resolves. It withers all foundations of science and philosophy and leaves us with the make-shift of sandy subjectivism of dry empiricism and vague associationism. However, as earlier noted that Hume's notion of association of ideas has implication on his idea of causality and substance; the epistemological background for his negative attitude to metaphysics invariably came from his notion of causality and substance; they are his two key areas for his metaphysical nihilism.

The theory of association of ideas is indispensable in fixing the core ideas that define human nature in Hume; the ideas included his notion of substance, personal identity and causality. These are complex ideas which according to Hume arise from association of ideas we get from impressions of phenomenon. Hume's notion of association of ideas notably has implications on his idea of substance, causality and personal identity.

Hume in his phenomenalist epistemology questioned the traditional view that human beings are essentially rational. He argued that the role of reason in human life is very limited. The rigour and originality of Hume's work are startling and radical. Hume can be described as an empiricist who blatantly rejected the importance of metaphysics in our social world with the unflinching position that we cannot claim of any knowledge beyond what our senses can afford us.

It was also noted that the wrong conception Hume had of reality are foundationally caused by the exclusion he made of the rationalist's theory and his misconception of the concept of universals where he admitted only of the existence of particulars that are distinct from one another. As a result of these, his empiricist theory becomes logically inconsistent and invariably, philosophical inconsistent. Hume was said to have overlooked the things that are internally true of facts and concentrated on what is externally true of facts.

However, also, from what has been discussed so far in Hume's epistemology, one would detect that Hume's theory is pragmatic in the sense that he took the idea of epistemology from the stand point of radical epistemology; radical in the sense of strong attachment on the critical issues concerning human understanding, The radicalism in Hume's epistemology is that he looked at sense experience beyond the physical level and vehemently took sense perception from the level of perception. The radical way of looking at epistemology from Humean tradition took his idea of epistemology to pragmatic level. Pragmatism from the word 'pragma' means things that are workable, it is a view that the meaning of a proposition should be the method of its verification, meaning that for any statement to be true, it must represent what is true of fact of the world. When one compares both epistemology and pragmatism, one would notice a close link between the two; they both deal with things that can be hold in the hand, what can empirically be tested or verified and not some sort of abstract reasoning. This is the reason Hume's position about the things –that- are as being derived from sense experience. Hume denied the possibility of miracle for example because they are not workable, cannot be felt or touched; pragmatic position. Hume however just like Charles Sanders Pierce looked at epistemology from the point of idealism and the reason was to attain knowledge that is absolute; but sense experience cannot provide us with



knowledge that is absolute, it cannot give knowledge that is beyond what the senses can give us. Hume started with platonic point of view known as synthetic philosophy. Plato's definition of belief as justified true belief is what Hume looked up to build his own philosophy. Hume's philosophy however gave birth to pragmatism and logical positivism of Ayer.

Human rationality means voice of reason; Aristotle called it Daimonia. There is a connection between reason and experience; they are interwoven or like two sides of a coin. Hume was not actually against reason but tried to strike a balance between the role of sense experience and reason in order to ascertain certainty in knowledge. The justification of human rationality as far as knowledge acquisition is concerned is problematic in the sense that, judging the process of knowledge acquisition, there is no absolute knowledge, what we normally call certainty is not really absolute, in other words, human knowledge is limited. The question now is, how do we arrive at absolute knowledge? There is none because knowledge acquisition is governed by limitations. This is why Hegel in his "absolute spirit" has an epistemological significance, that is, that absolute certainty could be traceable to absolute spirit. Hegel placed absolute certainty to absolute spirit but for Hume, the idea of absolute certainty is just governed by human limitations.

Hume's philosophy promotes rationalism but it does not stop at that but also used sense experience to back it up. His promotion of rationalism could be referred to as radical rationalism; it means the fire brand kind of rationalism. Hume did not eulogize or praise reason but went beyond just what reason can do in human knowledge, Radical rationalism from the Humean tradition which governs our form of knowledge be looked at from the critical point of view because of the differences in the degrees of reasoning; Radical

rationalists believed that our degrees of reasoning differ and due to these degrees or levels of human reasoning, it makes the idea of moral value on important areas in epistemology. How do moral values come into the perspective of epistemology? Moral values are placed within the ambit of our sense experience.

However, in the area of morals, Hume believed that society is governed by moral values; individuals are restricted by the whims and caprices of the society. What is “good” for Hume is that which is accepted by the society and vice versa. The promotion of rationalism is that what is said to be rational should be that which is supported by the society and irrational when it is rejected by the society. This Hume’s moral point of view and promotion of rationalism and Yes/No position of society based on social values, traditions, norms which govern the individual behavior. He believed that society is the arbiter of our moral values and one should not override the collective values of the society.

Hume’s psychological responses justified the concept of justification from the point of view of reconciling the individual and its immediate community, in other words, he was not against justice. He believed that the concept of justice could be well defined if we draw a proper line between the individual and his community. Also he believed that it has psychological implication in the sense that man as a rational being is well conscious of his deliberate actions. Thomas Hobbes believed that when one says that one is rational, it simply means that he knows his limit from the rational right of others. Hume’s discussion took from the point of ethics that we must define our passion not governed excessively by our passions. His concept of justice is platonic – the idea of good should be placed at the front banner of the society. Plato and Rousseau were of the same position and Hume

actually towed their line by saying that the concept of justice boiled down to the ability for us to use our reasoning properly to detect what is right from what is wrong. Hume believed that society will turn upside down and justice played down on if we are not governed by our reasoning. A society according to Hume is good when every one partakes in the common good. His concept of justice however has political implication; politics brings order just as reason does.

Hume can also be said to qualify as a proper functionalist or utilitarian. Utilitarianism talks about justice, order, legality, ethics, social values, politics in the society; their dictum is ‘the highest good for the highest numbers’; It the view that morally right action in any circumstance is the one which will maximize happiness.

According to Hume, for us to have a perfect society, we must have the highest good for the highest number of people and to have a perfect society according to Kant, reason should be used properly. However, this is not feasible because of the psychological egoism of human tendency. Hume advocated for a utilitarian society in the sense that taking that from the Kantian point of view, society will become more mature in its affairs but if we fail to use our reasons properly, the society will become immature.

Logicity in Hum causality helps us to buttress the idea of freedom and determinism. From the Greek point of view, cause is defined as whatever is moved is moved by another. Freedom is said to be the absent of constraints. Determinism is an idea that has to do with freewill. Freedom is a very complex idea, the issue of freedom is metaphysical; it is not what could be touched therefore, it has a metaphysical implication. Hume believed that the idea of freedom is governed by the power of determinism. For example, in a society, what

we call freedom is not really freedom because it is restricted by social values, ethical and social determinism. The issue of freedom according to Hume is problematic because of the implications of determinism. Determinism for Hume negates the tendency of our freewill, that is, that man is not really free the way it has been promulgated by various philosophers. The idea of freedom is basically restricted by ethical values and psychological behavior. As far as Hume is concerned, man is not totally free, he negated the idea of freedom and faulted the idea of other philosophers who think otherwise. Are we really free? From Humean tradition, we are not; we are not free and the factors responsible for this are customs, passions, norms, values, traditions, religious beliefs, individual excesses, thoughts and actions. The society however in Hume's submission becomes lawless.

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## **CHAPTER SIX.**

### **6.0 EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION.**

#### **6.1 Evaluation**

Philosophy should not be seen as a dialectical maze of problems that has no answers to our objective world. In all, we have followed Hume's notion of empiricism and have pointed out from it his radical position that only impressions from the phenomena of the senses which we get from sense perception is the limit of our knowledge; we cannot have knowledge of any physical object but only have impressions of them from which he arrived at the conclusion that physical objects do not exist in themselves but only as impressions we have of them; a phenomenistic epistemology. To demonstrate his position that sensation is the limit of human knowledge or that knowledge is acquired only through experience, he submitted that the contents of the mind are only impressions and ideas and are derived from sensory perception, also, he divided the objects of human reason into relations of ideas - relations between numbers they express, by demonstration or intuition; and matters of fact - which can be ascertained though not in the same way as the former but through experience. Anything that does not fall within the range of these two objects of human reason is therefore to him, meaningless and cannot be knowledge. On this ground, Hume predicated his rejection of causality and all other concepts that involve metaphysics. His position thus was that metaphysical concepts are not real as they cannot be known through experience, only objects that generate impressions, which the senses perceive. The physical existence of these objects he denied arguing that they can only exist as mere impressions and these impressions are in a continual flux. In this way, he denied the existence of the external world

and all metaphysical concepts thereby invariably denying the existence of the physical world; a phenomenalist epistemology.

It is evident then that Hume failed to arrive at the knowledge of the whole of reality because he underrated the power of reason as he made sense experience superior in our knowledge acquisition also, he misconceived the nature of universals, lost sight of the frame aspect of reality and so his theory becomes logically inconsistent. His approach is therefore wrong from the start; man is highly rational and reality is not only of the particulars but also of the universals. Human knowledge is neither purely sensitive nor absolutely intellective and Hume's attempt to reduce knowledge only to the sensitive presented an incomplete picture of knowledge. The whole vista of knowledge embraces both sensitive and intellective knowledge as illustrated by the traditional philosophers.

On another note, Hume's attempt of limiting man's knowing power to the knowledge of sensible things, (phenomena) was an attempt to limit the range of man's nature and equate him with mere brute (animal). But man as we know is a sensitive-intellective being, with an insatiable desire to know, to ascend the knowledge of the phenomena. These facts portrayed the metaphysical aspect of man which Hume denied.

### **Conclusion.**

However, in all, we have followed David Hume's notion of empiricism and have pointed out from his radical position that sense experience is the limit of our knowledge. Our question therefore is; does reality lie only in the experiential objects?

Critics have critically argued that, in the process of eliminating material objects from language and replacing them with hypothetical propositions about observers and

experiences, it seems to commit us to the existence of a whole new class of ontological object altogether, that of sense-data which can exist independently of experience. There is no absolute knowledge, in terms of the accuracy or certainty of things in the experiential world. Both sense perception and reason have a role to play in the process of knowledge acquisition; this means that both rationalism and empiricism needed each other to arrive at knowledge. This is evident in Kant's comment when he proclaimed that rationalism and empiricism are "two sources of representation which while quite different can supply objectively valid judgment of things, only in conjunction with each other."<sup>1</sup> This is because the whole of reality cannot be comprehended using sense experience alone as Hume would make us believe. We perceive things in the world through sensory data and the use of reason. We see or perceive things differently to the level of infinite regression.

The fundamental error characteristic of Hume's phenomenalistic epistemology is that our experience is not just enough; our experience must be matched with thoughts, feelings and actions from the natural world. Any philosophical world view is flawed if it stops at the physical level and fails to verify and explain how meaning, values and intentionality can arise from that. Physical objects are said to be defined by experience; the fact is that our empirical experience contains disconnected entities as well as various types of connections that are full of meaning and values but experience may not be able to penetrate into the connections between objects or events even though there are all convictions that there is interaction among them.

However, much as we concede that at least the greatest percentage of knowledge acquired by human beings begins with experience, we are not going to concede to Hume's exaggeration that the limit of our knowledge is sense experience and that all our knowledge

begins with experience and all our knowledge arise from experience. No doubt Hume's critique of metaphysics derived from his empiricist principle that all knowledge begins with experience and is circumscribed by experience. It is true that we gain knowledge through experience; it is also true that sense experience is not the only source of human knowledge. It is on this ground that we criticize Hume's critical position on reason and also establish reason as an inclusion to the sources of human knowledge.

Kant however contested against this latter claim of Hume as have been mentioned shortly before now when he acclaimed that the empiricist theory of Hume woke him from his dogmatic slumber and he came up with the third form of judgment – the 'synthetic *a priori* judgment' which is a connection of judgment between analytic *a priori* of the rationalists and synthetic *a posteriori* of the empiricists (though this position was criticized by Umeogu as earlier stated). This therefore implied that it is not only materialism or empiricism that attains reality but also idealism or metaphysics tells us something about reality. Jacques Maritain pointed this out when he argued that:

Every philosophical system contains some truth and tells us something about the real. No philosophy is totally false without any element of truth in it. Neither idealism nor positivism is totally false, though both theories may have some traces of inconsistencies '.... each of them tells us something about reality' though exaggerates one aspect of reality and reduces reality to that exaggerated aspect.<sup>2</sup>

Jacques Maritain has here pointed out that only positivism (empiricism) cannot exhaust reality and neither can idealism (metaphysics). Each, therefore, needs the other to attain a complete grasp of reality. This then implies that to have knowledge that is certain, each of these philosophical aspects have to merge together and with their complete grasp or mastery of those aspects of reality they have been pursuing, present a complete picture of reality which is certain because reality is pluralistic. Metaphysics which pursues the same course

through empirical process should be merged together, in other words, reason and sense experience are to be used together to attain a complete knowledge of reality, because, apart from sense experience “human knowledge has some connection with mental powers. Knowledge must be state of mind or mental disposition of some kind.”<sup>3</sup> Again, it should be noted that in the field of knowledge acquisition, both experience and reason play different distinct roles that one is incomplete without the other. This is evident in this quote that “...human knowledge is dependent on both experience and reason, experience provides the manifold or material of knowledge; reason provides the principle for ordering this material.”<sup>4</sup>

However, to be fair to all, we must concede here that as reality is pluralistic or multi-faced, both the “purely idealist metaphysicians and the hard core empiricists in the example of Hume have something to tell us about reality and therefore have their philosophical position based on facts.”<sup>5</sup> So no one position is completely nonsensical or meaningless. This is because “each has its inspiration in man’s ontological wonder which obtains from the puzzling experiences man comes across in the world.”<sup>6</sup> Though in explaining these puzzling experiences, “it must have been obscurely analyzed because of not using the appropriate language which is what Gilbert Ryle and Immanuel Kant termed “category mistake” or what Wittgenstein called “language on holidays.”<sup>7</sup> Let us take the relation of cause and effect for example under this quote, “when a plurality of cause is asserted for an effect, the effect is not analyzed very carefully, instances, which have significant differences, are taken to illustrate the same effect.”<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, Hume's attack on metaphysics in its greater percentage must have obtained from the exclusions he made in his search for knowledge of 'what there is' and his misconception of the concept of universals and of causality due to the consequences and implications of his notion of impression as the only knowledge one can have, the conception of distinct existences of objects and things and the 'category mistake' owing to the fact of some metaphysical concepts not being properly argued. But contrary to what Hume tried to demonstrate, this 'category mistake' cannot lead to complete rejection of metaphysics as all our knowledge do not end in experience, we have something to glean from metaphysics. This is why Kant pointed out that; "though all our knowledge begins with experience, it is by no means follows that all arises out of experience. For on the contrary, it is quite possible that our empirical knowledge is a compound of that which we receive through impressions and that which the faculty of cognition supplies from itself."<sup>9</sup>

We can see from the above therefore that knowledge cannot only come through experience but a constitution of what we get through experience and reason. To acquire knowledge that is certain, what we get through experience has to be acted upon by reason as earlier insinuated. Therefore "in the search for certainty, it is natural to begin with our present experiences and in some sense, no doubt, knowledge is to be derived from them."<sup>10</sup> These experiences only when reason has acted on them that the person who is living the experiences will be in a better position to pass judgment on them. This is because, it is one thing to receive sensation, but sensation alone cannot guarantee knowledge until judgment has been passed on the sense experience after reason has acted upon it. And so, we are justified in concluding that knowledge is therefore the joint product of reason and experience; "without sense data reason has nothing on which to exercise its powers; without

the organizing and conceptualizing power of reason sense data would remain momentary and unrelated impressions.”<sup>11</sup> “Consequently, even empirical concepts which for the empiricists are derived directly from experience are by abstraction viewed by Kant as products of a judgmental activity.”<sup>12</sup> If experience is left just as we perceive it, we cannot even know when we arrive at certainty. This is why Kant asked “from whence could our experiences itself acquire certainty, if all the rules on which it depends were themselves empirical and consequently fortuitous.”<sup>13</sup> It is therefore only when reason acts upon experience that we can achieve certainty. If we should rely on experience, alone, how again can we know if God exists, whether there is freedom of will, immortality of soul? Kant argued that it is only metaphysics that can tackle these questions and the only discipline, which has set itself one noble task of answering these questions, which transcends the realm of experience.

Again, let us point out here that empirical knowledge can only lead us to assumed and comparative universality, which comes through induction. Thus, the much we can say after observing something and confronted by a similar situation is that as far as we have observed before the situation we are confronted with will be of the same kind we have observed before and is going to end up in such manner, that is, what we can only claim in induction is that “one generalization has the same level of inductive support from the evidence as the others.”<sup>14</sup> Let us take for instance that the issue that we have experimentally discovered that water freezes at 0<sup>0</sup>c, the issue here is that through this particular experiment, we shall subsequently be inferring that every water that reaches 0<sup>0</sup>c will freeze. This is just as Kant called it “assumed and comparative universality” because, all we have done here is that we have observed earlier, for instance, in the example we gave, we only assumed by inferring

inductively that hence our experiment showed that the sample of water we used froze at  $0^{\circ}\text{C}$ , consequently other samples of water will freeze at that level. This is induction and does not portray certainty and therefore cannot be relied on. Yet on this induction lies the basis of positivism as Reuben Abel wrote that “In the field of quantum mechanics ... the probability state does not represent imperfect or incomplete knowledge but is all there is to be known”.<sup>15</sup> But this is not acceptable because any universality based on induction must be incomplete and in some cases, imperfect. Hence, “empirical universality is therefore only an arbitrary extension of validity from that which may be predicated of a proposition valid in most cases, to that which is asserted of a proposition which holds good in all.”<sup>16</sup>

But on the other hand, “pure or *a priori* judgment carries with it strict and absolute universality, that is, it admits of no possible exception.”<sup>17</sup> It is the “faculty of cognition”, as Kant called it or reason, that makes this judgment possible. Thus, as we have maintained earlier, sense experience can lead us to knowledge but before this happens, all information that came through sense experience must be moderated by reason before it becomes certain and holds at all times.

This supposedly also entails that man, by nature, is not an exclusive matter, he is a composite of material and immaterial elements – body and soul. This explained why the human person cannot run away from reasoning. No matter how one tends to deny the reality of metaphysics, the metaphysics character in man will continue to draw him back to metaphysics. There is always that tendency in man to go beyond sense perception. For us to understand human nature very well, it must be through the instrumentality of both reason



and experience. Kant though a critic of metaphysics, accepted the fact that human beings have irresistible tendency towards metaphysics.

Experience has shown that appearance is different from reality. The problem of appearance and reality is not just a problem that can be solved by mere sense perception. Actually, there is more to reality that meets the eyes. This saying forms the existential fact that strongly validates the enterprise of metaphysics/reasoning. The fact that we do not perceive reality as it is with one empirical sense, as Hume would say, is a pointer to the value of metaphysics/reasoning in knowledge acquisition. It is the character of metaphysics/reasoning to go beyond the physical in order to understand reality in its totality. We should appreciate the role and importance of metaphysics in its effort to- find solutions to those questions that is beyond the domain of the empirical.

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