

# David Hume



Empiricism



# Empiricism



- ∞ Some knowledge is acquired via the senses.
- ∞ Some knowledge is supplied by reason.

# Two types of propositions

## ☞ Analytic



- ☞ Predicate is completely contained in the subject.
  - ☞ A bachelor is an unmarried male.
  - ☞ A sister is a female sibling.
  - ☞ A triangle is a closed, planar figure with three-sides and three angles.

## ☞ Synthetic

- ☞ Predicate is not contained in the subject.
- ☞ Predicate provides information about the subject.
  - ☞ The grass is green.
  - ☞ The classroom contains 60 chairs.

# Two types of judgments



## ☞ *A priori*

- ☞ Knowable independent of observation.
  - ☞  $3 < 4$
  - ☞ P and  $\sim$ P is always false
  - ☞ The whole is greater than any singular part.
  - ☞ (Logic and all mathematics<sup>1</sup>)

## ☞ *A posteriori*

- ☞ Knowable as a result of observation only
  - ☞ Some apples are red.
  - ☞ A dog is a mammal.

1. Kant and Hume disagree on whether *all* mathematics is *a priori*. Hume argued that  $1+1=2$  is *a priori* whereas Kant argued that *some* mathematics such as  $1+1=2$  is *a posteriori*.

# Empiricism



	<i>A priori</i>	<i>A posteriori</i>
<b>Analytic</b>	Knowledge independent of observation derived from reason alone. Redundant tautologies. Not informative; at best	(vacant)
<b>Synthetic</b>	(vacant) <sup>2</sup>	Knowledge based upon observation alone. Provides information.

2. Kant will argue in favor of this category.

# Hume's Fork



- ☞ Everything that can be known is either derived from reason or based upon experience.
- ☞ If an idea is not traceable to either reason or experience, “...commit it then to the flames, for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion.”

# What do we know?



- ☞ Causation?
- ☞ External World?
- ☞ Personal Identity?
- ☞ God?

# Causation



- ⌘ Do I know that pressing the right arrow key causes the slide to progress?
- ⌘ Is it analytic?
  - ⌘ Is the predicate (causes the slide to progress) contained in the subject (pressing the right arrow key)?
- ⌘ Is it synthetic?

# Experiencing a cause



- ⌘ Do we experience “causation”?
  - ⌘  $X \rightarrow Y$
  
- ⌘ What is “causation”?
  - ⌘ Where is the experience of “ $\rightarrow$ ”?

# Regularity



- ☞ X regularly precedes Y.
- ☞ I come to expect X to be followed by Y.
- ☞ I can predict, with degrees of certainty, that X will be followed by Y.
- ☞ Regularity and predictability are not the same as causation.

# To the fire!



- ☞ “There are no terms more mysterious in all the English language than “power,” “force,” and “energy”.
- ☞ Therefore, we cannot make any knowledge claims about causation.