



PH 501
CLASSICAL
PHILOSOPHY

PH 825
SYSTEMATIC
PHILOSOPHY

EPISTEMOLOGY:
SKEPTICISM



Relativism
vs.
Skepticism
vs.
Pluaralism

∞ Relativism ∞

denies that there is a universal or objective truth about X.

∞ Relativism ∞

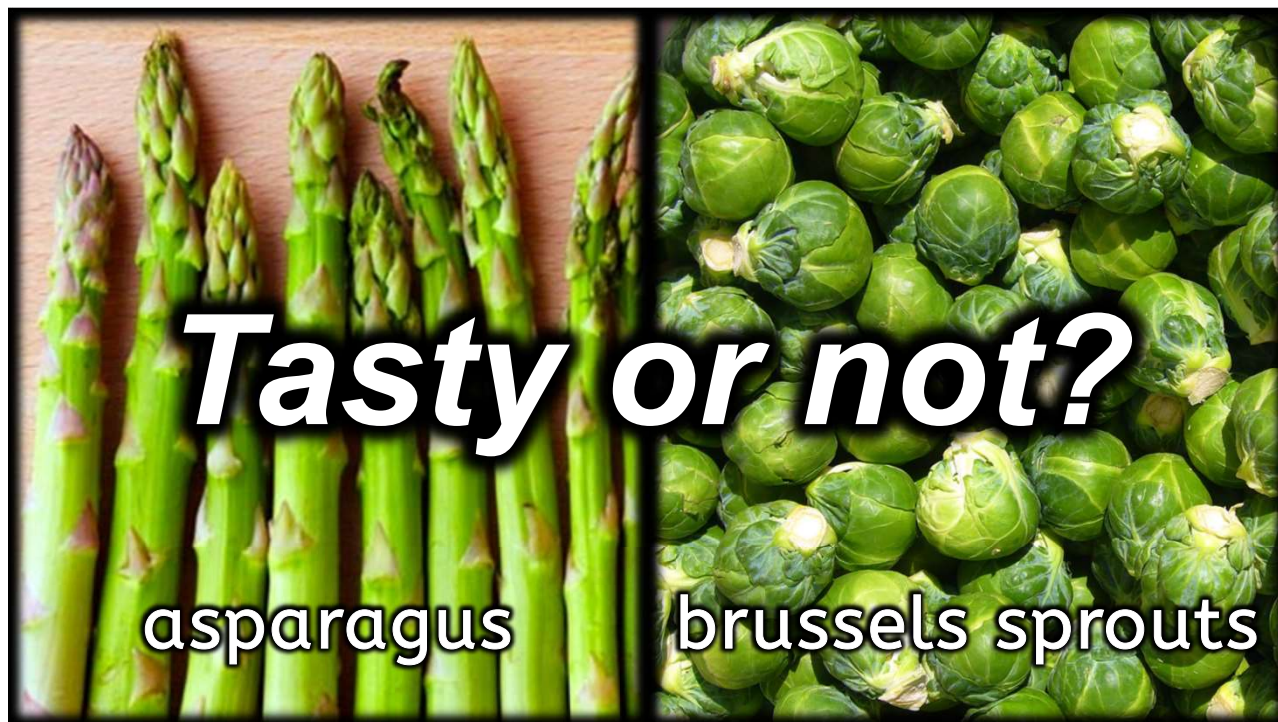
Relativism about "X" means that "X" or our knowledge of "X" is different for (i.e., relative to) different people.

∞ Relativism ∞

Another word for 'relative' or 'relativism' one might hear is 'subjective' or 'subjectivism'.

∞ Relativism ∞

Not all relativism or subjectivism is bad. Some relativism is completely normal.





∞ Skepticism ∞
says that there may be
objective truth about X,
but we cannot know what
that truth is.

∞ Pluralism ∞

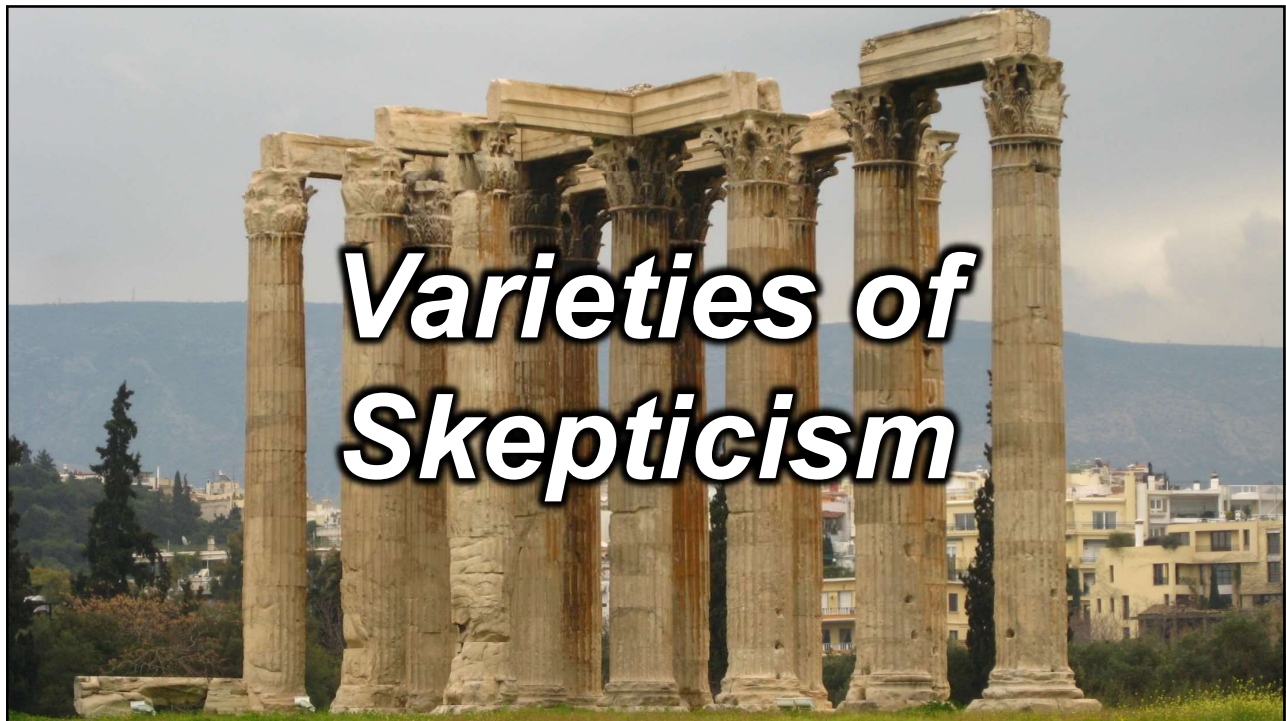
is usually in reference to religious beliefs and comes in two types.

∞ Pluralism ∞

sociologically speaking is the recognition that, within a given context, there is a variety of religious beliefs.

∞ Pluralism ∞

*philosophically speaking
is the claim that all
religious beliefs are
equally valid.*



∞ Common Sense Skepticism ∞

- *a corrective to gullibility, superstition, and prejudice*
- *amounts to saying "Don't necessarily believe everything you hear."*

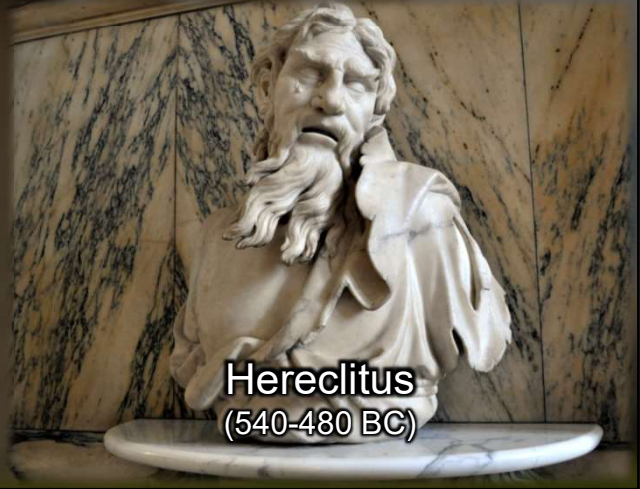
∞ Absolute Skepticism ∞

- *denies of the possibility of knowledge altogether*
- *Absolute skepticism comes in several types.*

☞ Absolute Skepticism ☞

Types of Absolute Skepticism

The nature of reality itself precludes the possibility of knowledge. (Hereclitus)



Heraclitus
(540-480 BC)

☞ Absolute Skepticism ☞

Types of Absolute Skepticism

The nature of our apparatus of knowing precludes the possibility of knowledge. (Pyrrho)



Pyrrho
(360-270 BC)

∞ Absolute Skepticism ∞

Types of Absolute Skepticism

The definition of knowledge precludes the possibility of knowledge. (Keith Lehrer)



Keith Lehrer

∞ Absolute Skepticism ∞

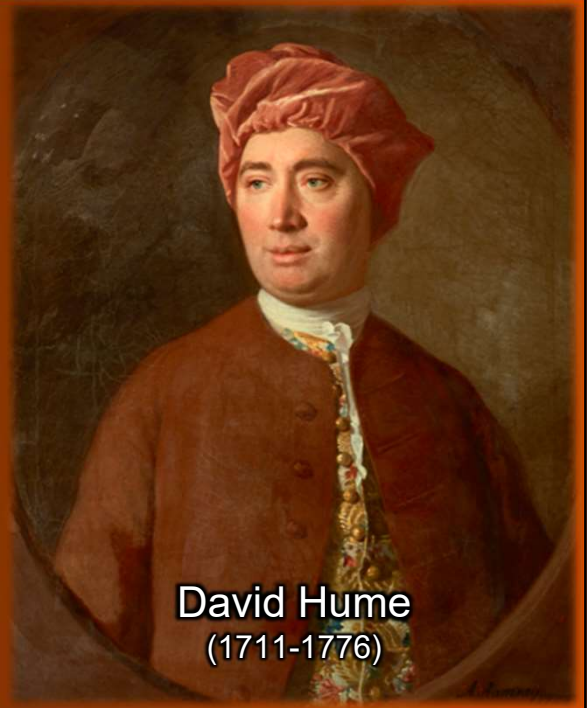
Is Absolute Skepticism Possible?

- *It seems impossible to live.*
- *It seems impossible to maintain.*
 - *Are not some things certain? e.g., $2 + 2 = 4$?*
 - *Are not some things undeniable? e.g., the existence of the sensory world? our own existence?*
- *Is not absolute skepticism self-refuting?*

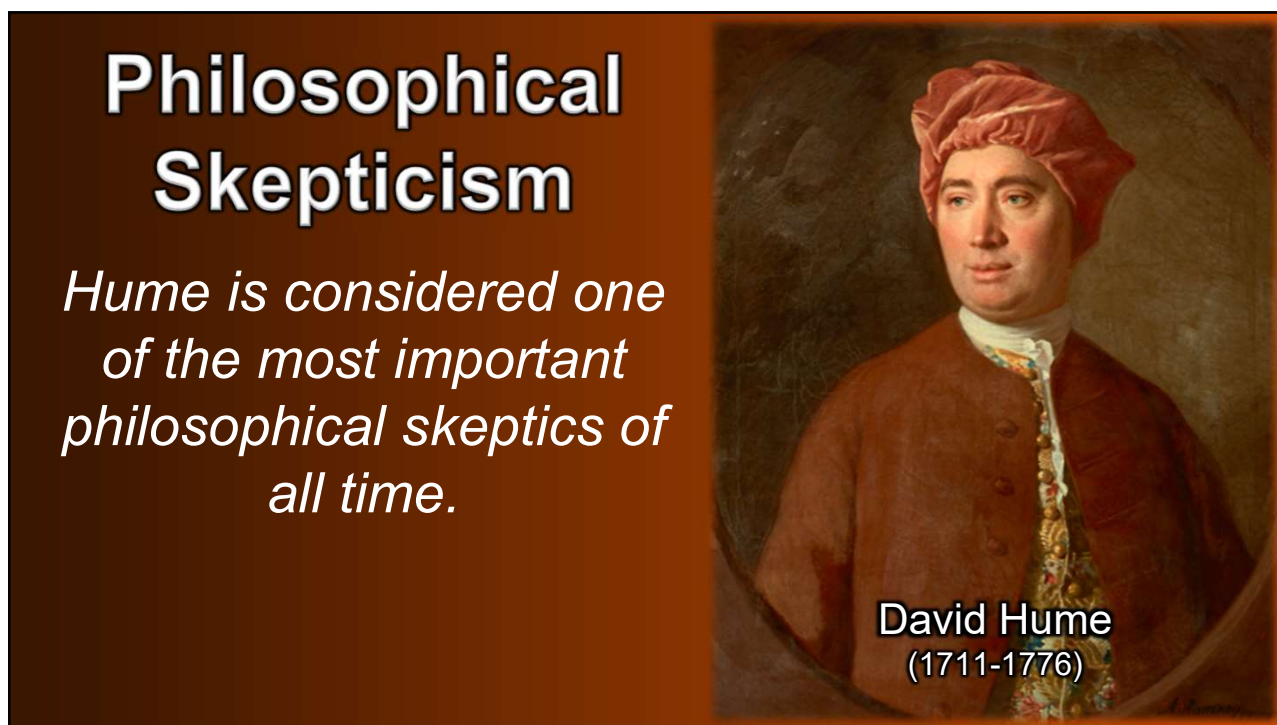
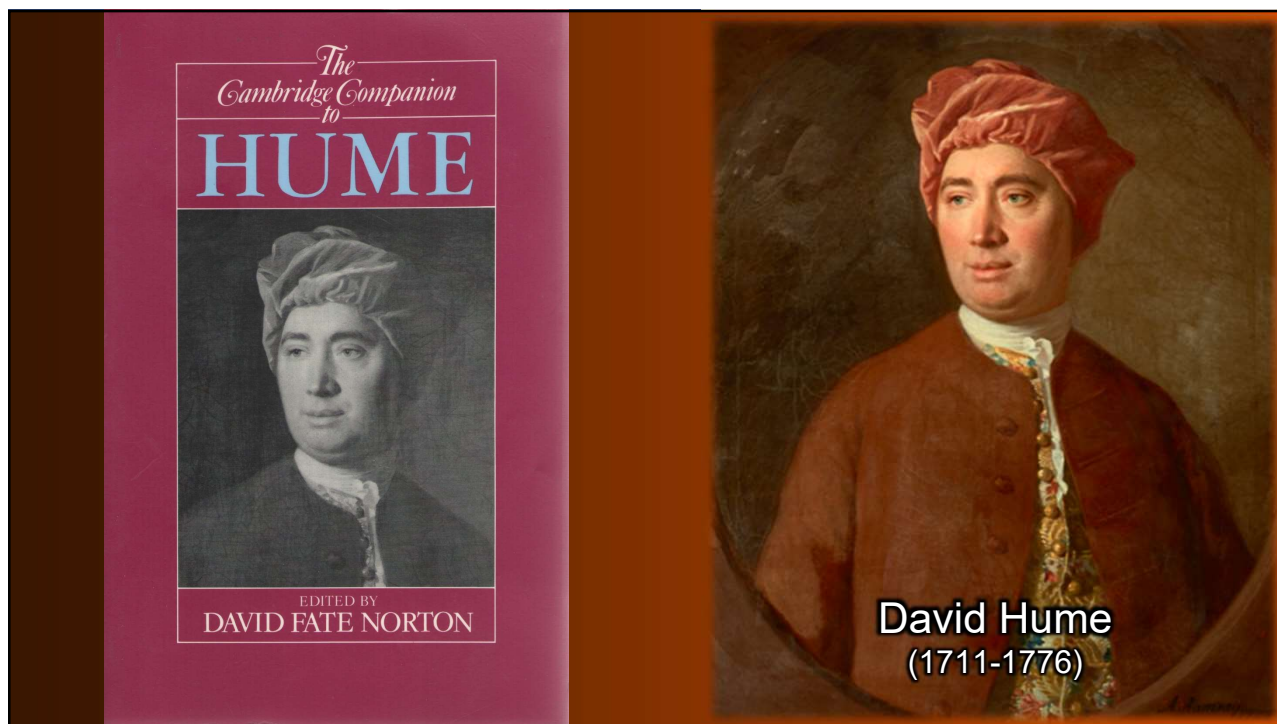
∞ Philosophical Skepticism ∞

- *The tendency of some philosophers to deny or doubt the more cherished philosophical claims.*
- *that every event must have a cause*
 - *that God exists*
 - *that the external, sensible world exists*
 - *that the external, sensible world is as we perceive it to be*

Philosophical Skepticism

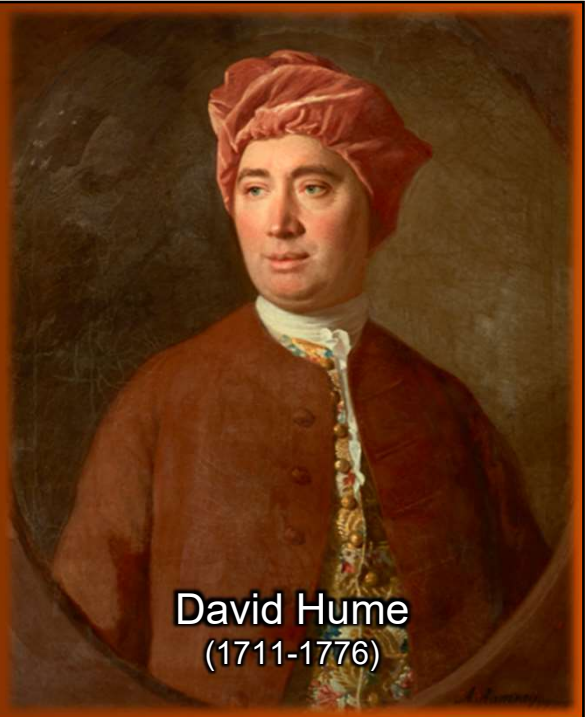


David Hume
(1711-1776)



Philosophical Skepticism

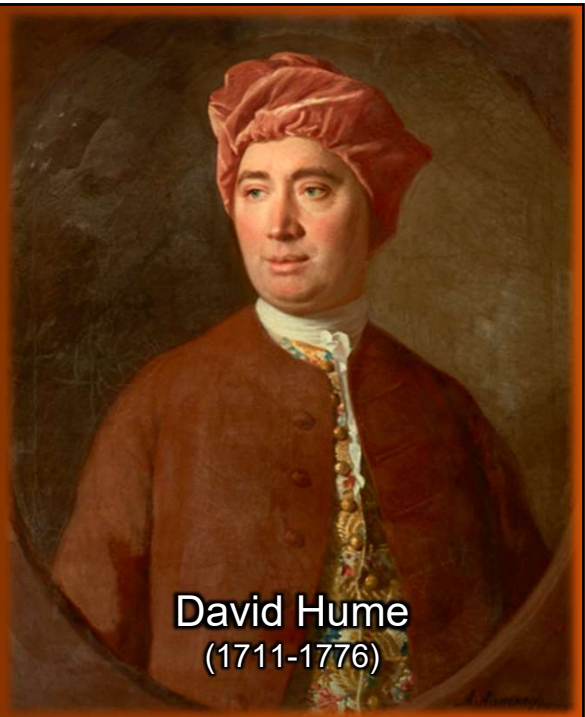
Though Hume was a skeptic, it is still accurate to call him an empiricist, for he believed that all knowledge comes through experience.



David Hume
(1711-1776)

Philosophical Skepticism

Three of the biggest apologetic issues argued today are framed and discussed the way they are because of the influence of David Hume.



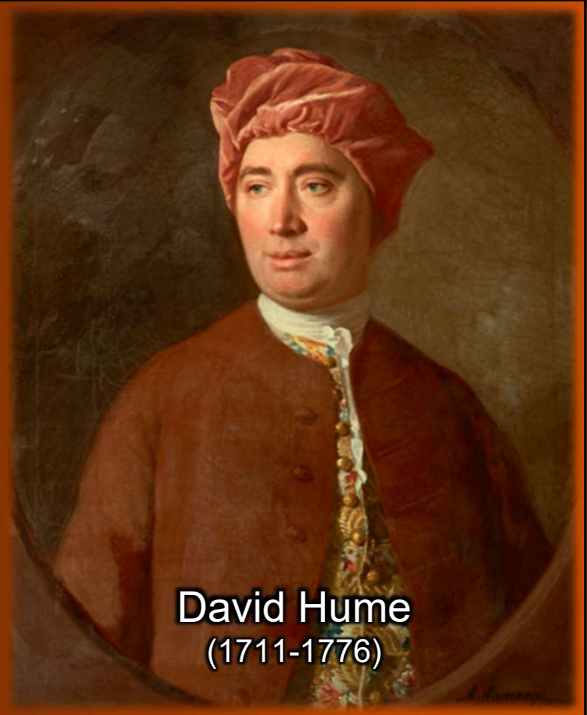
David Hume
(1711-1776)

Philosophical Skepticism

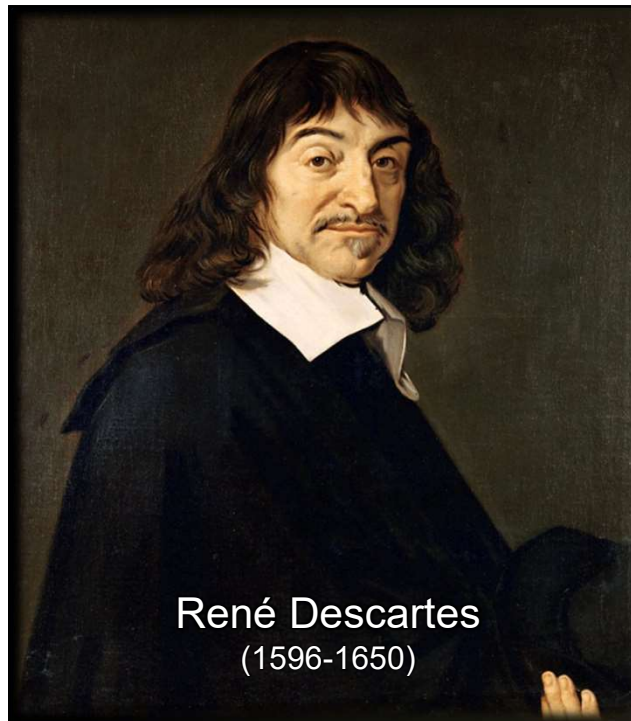
miracles

*the design argument for
the existence of God*

the problem of evil



David Hume
(1711-1776)



René Descartes
(1596-1650)

Methodological Skepticism

*Though Descartes
himself was not a
skeptic, he used
skepticism as a method
to discover if there were
any certain truths.*