

Handout 6a

Hume's Theory of Truth-in-Judgment

Two Kinds of Judgment

Distinguished by *what makes each type of judgment true*

Group 1

Relations of Ideas

Examples:

Bachelors are unmarried males

$2+2=4$

Pythagorean Theorem

Group 2

Matters of Fact

Examples:

Jason is a human being

What goes up must come down

The moon = green cheese

True judgments of the kind in Group 1 are all based on the meanings of the terms and their relations. These meanings, and their relations, are determined by convention according to Hume. That is, the reason that "bachelor=unmarried male" is true is very much like the reason "Bishops may only move diagonally" is true in chess: because we have just agreed that this is how we will think about bachelors, bishops, etc.

True judgments of the kind found in Group 2 are made true by a correspondence between the ideas in the judgment and the impressions from which they originated (from which they were "copied"). If there are any empty ideas in a judgment, then the judgment, if it is a matter of fact, cannot be true.

All knowledge of the world is made up out of judgments of the Group 2 kind (matters of fact).