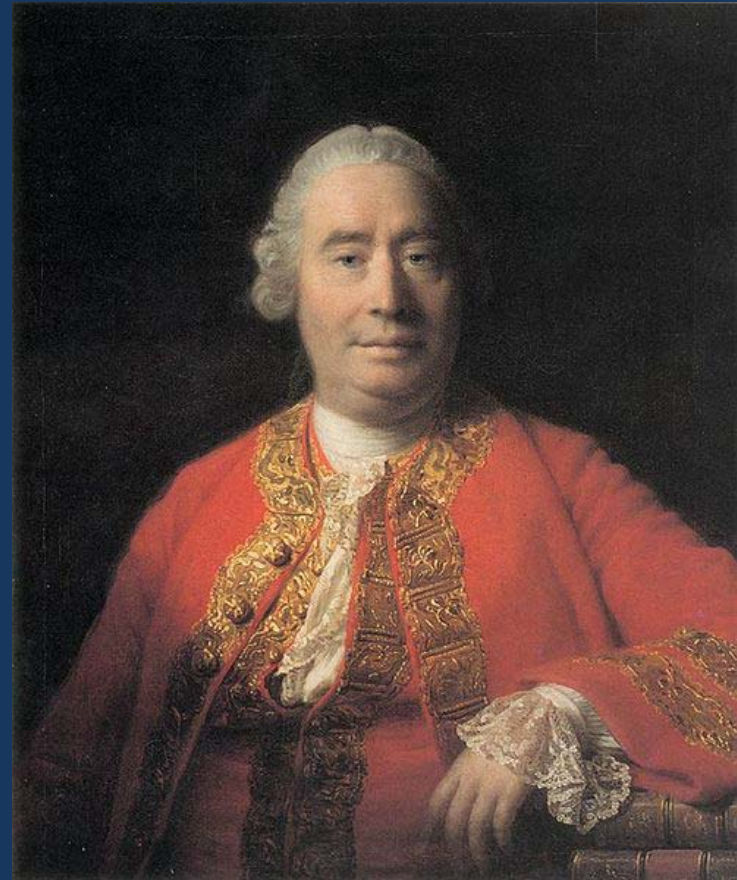


Hume  
*The Self*

# The Man

- 1711-1776
- Published *A Treatise of Human Nature* (from which we read an excerpt for today) in 1738—he was 26 years old



• Again, thank you Wikipedia.

# Primary Argument

- Some people think that we are always aware of the self and the self is the same our entire lives
- This must come from an impression
- That impression—in order for us to always be aware of it—must be a single, constant impression that makes us who we are
- But we are not just one impression
- We are a series of impressions
- There is also no impression that stays with us our entire lives
  
- So if we are a series of impressions and none of them stay with us our entire lives then there cannot be a solid notion of the self
  
- Actually—Hume goes on to deny that there is a self
- Now we have the no-self theory of self

# The Easter Bunny

(thank you Professor Marcus)

- Hume is trying to prove that something that most people believe exists does not exist
- To do this he must explain why we (incorrectly) think that the self exists
- Why did I think that there was a giant rabbit that would lay chocolate eggs around my house at the end of Lent?
  
- This leads us to the Bundle Theory

# Hume's Bundle Theory

- What we have are a series of experiences
- Those experiences have to do with sensing different objects
- So when asked: how do you know there is a self? We are that which experiences those things
- But how do you sense the self?
- You would have to have a super-self—wouldn't you? This is a contradiction

# The Ship

- The ship is not some inherent thing—it is a bundle of objects over time that are sensed as one thing
- Similarly, the self, as we see it, is simply what senses a bundle of experiences
- But as Hume pointed out earlier it is a contradiction to say that we can experience the self
- Even though there is no truly independent self there is still a practical reason to use the sensing of the bundle of experiences as our definition of the self