Philosophy A220: **Epistemology** **QUIZ**

iClicker Q: **Select the best single answer**

(1)	*Moore thinks there are things he can know that he can't prove.* **(A) True (B) False**
(2)	*Moore thinks that only the only certain knowledge is whatever can't be denied without self-contradiction (e.g. A is A)* **(A) True (B) False**
(3)	*Moore thinks he knows that he is not dreaming.* **(A) True (B) False**
(4)	*Moore thinks it is logically possible that we can have all of the sensory experiences and memories we now have and that all of this is part of a dream.* **(A) True (B) False**

Philosophy A220: **Epistemology**

LECTURE 6: **MOORE'S COMMON SENSE RESPONSE TO SKEPTICISM**

Material today:

1. Moore's proof of an external world
2. Proof and knowledge
3. Skeptical arguments that "cut both ways"

Moore's proof of an external world

◉ G.E. Moore (1873–1958)
  - British philosopher, mainly at Cambridge
  - advocate of "common sense" philosophy
  - early forerunner of "ordinary language philosophy"

◉ He gives a famous "Proof of the External World":

> arg. 1. Here is one hand.
> 2. Here is another.
> 3. Therefore, external things exist.

iClicker Q: **Do you think this is a good proof?**

(A) Yes (B) No

Moore's proof of an external world

> arg. 1. Here is one hand.
> 2. Here is another.
> 3. Therefore, external things exist.

◉ Moore says this has everything a proof should have:
  - (A) the premises are different from the conclusion
  - (B) the premises are known to be true, not just believed
  - (C) the conclusion really follows from the premises

iClicker Q: **Which of these advantages are skeptics most likely to dispute?**

(A) (B) (C)

Moore's proof of an external world

> arg. 1. Here is one hand.
> 2. Here is another.
> 3. Therefore, external things exist.

◉ Moore says this has everything a proof should have:
  - (A) the premises are different from the conclusion
  - **(B) the premises are known to be true, not just believed (?)**
  - (C) the conclusion really follows from the premises

◉ Skeptics will say we don't know the premises
  - *they're precisely what skeptical arguments say we don't know*
  - Moore, of course, knows skeptics will not be satisfied

Proof and knowledge

◉ *Moore's responses to the critics of his proof:*

1. Taking objects for granted is how we offer conclusive proofs all the time:

> ex. There are three misprints in this book. We prove it by showing one *here*, another *here*, a third *here*.

  - a linguistic point: this is a *paradigm case* of the concept "proof"

2. We can't prove we have hands, but we can know things we can't prove
  - and this doesn't make it mere faith
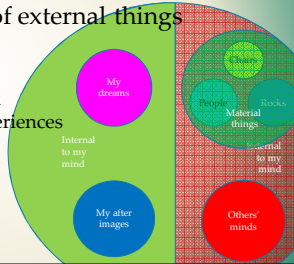 - (here he concedes we can't prove we're not dreaming)

Proof and knowledge

- *Moore's responses to the critics of his proof:*
3. Hands are paradigm cases of external things
   - "external things" just means e.g. *hands*—as opposed to e.g. *dreams*
   - this challenges idealists who think "hands" might name internal experiences

My dreams

My after images

Internal to my mind

Chairs
People   Material things   Rocks
External to my mind

Others' minds

Proof and knowledge

arg   1. Here is one hand.
2. Here is another.
3. Therefore, external things exist.

iClicker Q: Do you still think this is a good proof?
(A) Yes   (B) No

➤ *But how this could be a proof if the <u>skeptic's</u> argument is left unanswered?*
   - Moore's other two articles more concerned to address the skeptic's argument

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Skeptical arguments that "cut both ways"

- In "Certainty," he considers this kind of argument:
arg 1. If I know that here is a hand, then I know I'm not dreaming.
2. I don't know I'm not dreaming.
3. Therefore I don't know that here is a hand.
- Rather than answering it directly, Moore notes correctly that these arguments are equally valid:

arg 1. If p then q.   arg 1. If p then q.
2. Not q.   2. p.
3. Therefore, not p.   3. Therefore, q.

   - that means *this* is also valid:
arg 1. If I know that here is a hand, then I know I'm not dreaming.
2. I know that here is a hand.
3. Therefore, I know I'm not dreaming

Skeptical arguments that "cut both ways"

- *Which of these arguments should we advance?*

arg
2. **I don't know I'm not dreaming.**

arg
2. **I know that here is a hand.**

- Moore: it will depend on which premise (2) is more certain:
   - is it more certain *that we don't know we're not dreaming,* or *that we know we have hands??*
   - next time we'll consider his case for why the second is more certain

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Skeptical arguments that "cut both ways"

- *Which of these arguments should we advance?*

arg
2. **I don't know I'm not dreaming.**
3. Therefore I don't know that here is a hand.

arg
2. **I know that here is a hand.**
3. Therefore, I know I'm not dreaming

iClicker Q: Which do you think is more certain?
(A) I don't know I'm not dreaming
(B) I know I have hands

Philosophy A220:   Epistemology

LECTURE 7: MOORE'S COMMON SENSE RESPONSE TO SKEPTICISM

PART II

Material today:

1. Review of skeptical arguments that "cut both ways"
2. Challenging the certainty of the skeptic's premise

Skeptical arguments that "cut both ways"

- Last time: *which argument should we advance?*
  - arg. 1. If I know that here is a hand, then I know I'm not dreaming.
    2. I don't know I'm not dreaming.
    3. Therefore I don't know that here is a hand.
  - arg. 1. If I know that here is a hand, then I know I'm not dreaming.
    2. I know that here is a hand.
    3. Therefore, I know I'm not dreaming
  - • the answer turns on which second premise is more certain
    - **iClicker Q: Which do you think is more certain?**
      (A) I don't know I'm not dreaming
      (B) I know I have hands
- Moore:
  - • challenges the certainty of "I don't know I'm not dreaming"

Challenging the skeptic's premise

> arg. 2. **I don't know I'm not dreaming.**

- The skeptic can support this by claiming that our dreaming is a "logical possibility" on this principle:
  - (KLP) If I know that not *p*, it's not logically possible that *p*.
- But what is a "logical possibility"? Three options:
  1. Anything not self-contradictory
  2. Anything not logically incompatible with what I know
  3. Anything not logically incompatible with what I know immediately
  - • Moore raises questions about each…

Challenging the skeptic's premise

- *What is "logical possibility"?*
  1. Anything not self-contradictory
     - • that we're dreaming now is not self-contradictory, so "logically possible"
     - • but there are some *certainties* which are "possibly false" in this sense:
       - ex. Certainly there **is** a white patch right now.
         There being **no** white patch right now is not self-contradictory.
     - • so that dreaming is possible *in this sense* doesn't mean we don't know we're not dreaming
       - ex. Certainly we are **not** dreaming right now.
         That we **are** dreaming right now is not self-contradictory.

Challenging the skeptic's premise

- *What is "logical possibility"?*
  2. Anything not logically incompatible **with what I know**
     - • to say dreaming is logically possible in this sense is to say nothing we know rules it out
     - • but there's a candidate for something that could rule it out
       - ex. I know that here is a hand.
         Therefore I know I'm not dreaming.
     - • assuming in advance that we *don't* know this leads to *a circular argument*:
       - ex. I don't know that here is a hand.
         So nothing rules out that I'm dreaming.
         So it's logically possible that I'm dreaming.
         So I don't know that I'm not dreaming. (….)
         Therefore, I don't know that here is a hand.

Challenging the skeptic's premise

- *What is "logical possibility"?*
  3. Anything not logically incompatible **with what I know immediately**
     - • by "immediately" he seems to mean "directly observed" (in mentalist terms)
     - • then dreaming is logically possible in this sense, because:
       - ex. I am dreaming right now.
         is not logically incompatible with something like
         There is a white percept right now. [Known immediately.]
     - • but then further support is needed for:
       - (KLP*) If I know that not *p*, there's something I know immediately that is incompatible with *p*.
     - • **Moore's basic challenge: why is immediate knowledge the only certain knowledge?**

Challenging the skeptic's premise

⊙ Another way of packaging this whole dispute:
- expand the overall argument in the following way:

arg 1. If I know that here is a hand, then I know I'm not dreaming.
    2. **I can only know I'm not dreaming if I know something immediate that rules it out.**
    3. Nothing I know immediately rules out that I'm dreaming.
4. I don't know I'm not dreaming.
5. **Therefore I don't know that here is a hand.**

iClicker Q: Which do you think is more certain?
(A) I can only know I'm not dreaming if I know something immediate that rules it out.
(B) I know I have hands

Challenging the skeptic's premise

⊙ One last way of understanding this argument:

arg 1. If I know that here is a hand, then I know I'm not dreaming.
    2. If I know that I'm not dreaming, it's not possible for all sensory experiences to be dream images.
    3. It is possible for all sensory experiences to be dream images.
4. I don't know I'm not dreaming.
5. Therefore I don't know that here is a hand.

⊙ Moore says that (3) is either unsupported, or inconsistent with the conclusion
- we would need to know of past dream images that they were similar to sensory experiences—but that presupposes a contrast
- Bayer: later we'll consider idea that we need positive evidence for these possibilities