

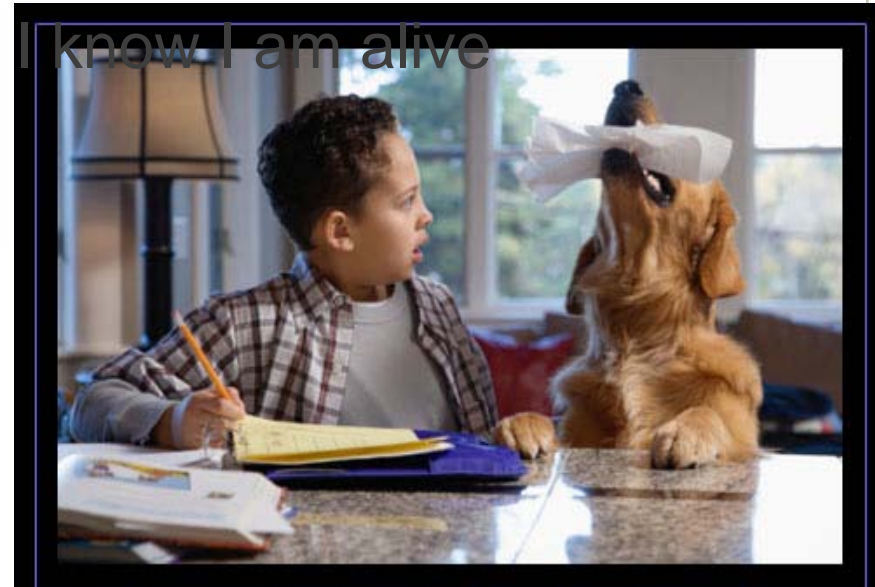
# An Analysis of Moore's “Proof of an External World”



By Bobby Hamill

# Skepticism

- Calling into question some of our most basic beliefs
- Skeptical proof structure:
  - 1) If I know that I am sitting then I know I am alive
  - 2) I do not know if I am alive
  - 3) Therefore I do not know if I am sitting
- Descartes is one famous skeptic



**SKEPTICISM**

IF WE CAN DOUBT IT, THEN IT PROBABLY ISN'T TRUE.

# Moore's Critique of Skepticism Structure

- 1) If I don't know that I am alive then I don't know that I am sitting
  - 2) I know that I am sitting
  - 3) Therefore I know that I Am alive
- People argue which proof method is correct skeptic's or Moore's



# Skepticism vs Mooreism

- 2 disclaimers of skepticism
  - 1) Imagine you were skeptical that Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny exists. I could produce a fake Santa or Easter Bunny and make you believe that they really does exist
  - 2) You can prove that it doesn't matter if a skeptic doubts things. For example if you are skeptical as to whether an external world exists, I can say that it makes no difference whether or not it does because you will act the same way regardless

# Kant

- “It seems to me that so far from its being true, as Kant declares to be his opinion, that there is only one possible proof of the existence of things outside of us...”
- Fellow philosopher lived before Moore
- We need justification for the claim that external things exist
- Space and time argument
- Distinguishing between changes in the world and in ourselves



# 3 Conditions of Moore's Proof

Moore's three conditions for a proof to be valid are

- 1) Premise must be different from the conclusion
- 2) We can't argue belief from knowledge
- 3) The proof must be of correct form

# Moore's Argument of External World Existing

1) This is a hand.

2) Here is another hand.

3) There are at least two external objects in the world.

4) Therefore an external world exists

- Is this a valid proof?
- Issue with Moore's 1<sup>st</sup> condition of a correct proof?



# Proof of Consciousness vs Dreaming

- Moore decides that in order to completely prove that his hands exist he must prove he is not dreaming
- He has conclusive evidence that he is not dreaming however he cannot prove this
- Can we know things that we can not prove?
- Does it matter?



# Conclusion

- Moore provides an alternative reasoning process to skepticism,
- He thinks that he has proven that an external world exists but did he really?
- While we are so curious and eager to prove that the external world exists, it does not matter whether or not it does because we will always act in the same manner