

Skepticism: Lehrer versus Mooreanism

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Abstract I will compare Lehrer's anti-skeptical strategy from a coherentist point of view with the anti-skeptical strategy of the Mooreans. I will argue that there are strong similarities between them: Neither can present a persuasive argument to the skeptic and both face the problem of easy knowledge in one way or another. However, both can offer a complete and self-explanatory explanation of knowledge although Mooreanism can offer the more natural one. Hence, one has good reasons to prefer Mooreanism to Lehrer's anti-skeptical approach, if one does not prefer coherentism to foundationalism for other reasons.

Key-words Skepticism – Lehrer – Mooreanism – Easy knowledge – Coherentism – Foundationalism

1. Introduction

Coherentists and foundationalists not only diverge over what counts as an appropriate account of the architecture of knowledge, but also over how to best meet the skeptical challenge. Over the years, Lehrer has developed his anti-skeptical response from a coherentist point of view. Proponents of Mooreanism, on the other hand, take a foundationalist anti-skeptical position. In the following, I will compare these two anti-skeptical strategies and argue that there are strong similarities between them: Neither can provide a persuasive argument to the skeptic and both face the problem of easy knowledge in one way or another. However, both can offer a complete and self-explanatory explanation of knowledge, although Mooreanism can offer the more natural one. Hence, one has good reasons to prefer Mooreanism to Lehrer's coherentism, if one does not prefer coherentism to foundationalism for other reasons.

2. Mooreanism

The canonical version of the argument for external world skepticism has the following structure:

Premise 1: If S has knowledge of the external world, then S knows that the skeptical hypotheses are false.

Premise 2: S does not know that the skeptical hypotheses are false.

Conclusion: Therefore, S does not have knowledge of the external world.

The skeptical argument is valid. Therefore, it confronts us with a kind of paradox or dilemma; each premise is plausible, but its conclusion seems unacceptable.

Arguably one of the most controversial responses to the skeptical argument comes from G. E. Moore. He is a representative of "commonsensism". Moore (1925) claims that we actually know many propositions which we think we know and that our philosophical theories should be

coherent with this claim. Moore (1959) accepts the first premise of the skeptical argument but he points out that it "cuts both ways". He considers a particular version of the skeptical argument that is based on the dreaming hypothesis. He presents the following line of argumentation:

Premise 1: If I know that I am standing up, then I know that I am not dreaming.

Premise 2: I know that I am standing up.

Conclusion: I know that I am not dreaming.

Strictly speaking, the conclusion of Moore's argument, if successful, tells us *that* we know that skeptical hypotheses are false, but not *how* we know this. However, if we interpret Moore's argument as an argument for a theory of *how* we know that skeptical hypotheses are false, as many authors do, then it is an argument for the claim that this knowledge is gained *through inference* from external world knowledge. To the best of my knowledge Moore does not offer a version of this argument. Nevertheless, I will understand Mooreanism in accordance with the contemporary literature as the following two claims:

- 1.) External world knowledge is independent from knowledge that the skeptical hypotheses are false.
- 2.) We can know partly through inference from external world knowledge that the skeptical hypotheses are false.

Hence, I understand Mooreanism as a theory about the architecture of our knowledge and not as an argument about what a person actually knows.

Recently, Mooreanism received a remarkable boost. One possibility of supporting it is dogmatism, as defended by Pryor (2000 and 2004). Pryor (2004, 356) claims that "when Moore's experiences represent there to be hands, that *by itself* makes him prima facie justified in believing there are hands." Pryor (2000, 520) makes explicit that external world knowledge is independent when he explains the dogmatist's position as the view that "not only can we have perceptual knowledge and justified perceptual belief, we might have it without being in a position to cite *anything* that could count as ampliative, non-question-begging evidence for those beliefs."

Mooreanism is also compatible with process reliabilism, the view that a belief is justified if and only if it is the result of a reliable belief forming process. If process reliabilism is true, then one can have external world knowledge simply by acquiring beliefs about the external world through reliable processes. Therefore, reliabilists can refute the skeptical claim that we cannot have external world knowledge directly. But what about knowledge that the skeptical hypotheses are false? Goldman (1979) distinguishes between belief-independent and belief-dependent processes, which start with some beliefs and yield other beliefs. Taking this distinction into account, reliabilists can reformulate Mooreanism as follows. First, we can acquire external world knowledge through reliable belief-independent processes. Second, we can know that the skeptical hypotheses are false through a reliable belief-dependent process of reasoning partly from external world knowledge.

A further approach that is compatible with Mooreanism is virtue epistemology as represented by Sosa (2007) who formulates the core idea of his virtue epistemology as following:

- (a) affirm that knowledge entails belief;
- (b) understand "animal" knowledge as requiring apt belief *without* requiring *defensibly* apt belief, i.e., apt belief that the subject aptly believes to be apt, and whose aptness the subject can therefore defend against relevant skeptical doubts; and

(c) understand “reflective” knowledge as requiring not only apt belief but *also* defensibly apt belief. (Sosa 2007, 24)

This account turns into a variant of Mooreanism, as I define it, if we also admit that a person can acquire reflective knowledge partly on basis of her animal knowledge.

I do not wish to defend a particular version of Mooreanism here, I simply want to illustrate its compatibility with various conceptions of knowledge and justification.

3. Lehrer on skepticism

Lehrer’s response to the skeptical challenge is based on his coherentist theory of knowledge. In *Theory of knowledge* (2000) Lehrer develops his model in two steps. First, he defines personal justification and, then goes on to define knowledge as undefeated justified acceptance.

Lehrer’s underlying intuition is that a person’s personal justification consists in coherence with her acceptance system:

S is personally justified in accepting that *p* at *t* if and only if everything that is an objection to *p* for S on the basis of the acceptance system of S at *t* is either answered or neutralized on the basis of the acceptance system of S at *t*.¹ (Lehrer 2000, 137)

Lehrer defines knowledge as undefeated justified acceptance, which is personal justification on the basis of the ultrasystem. An ultrasystem is, roughly speaking, a truth compatible subsystem of the evaluation system of S “containing all states of S at *t*, which are states of acceptance wherein what is accepted is true, states of preference in which something false is not preferred to something true, and states of reasoning that are sound.” Lehrer (2000, 171).² To meet the skeptical objection Lehrer relies on principle T:

T I am intellectually trustworthy (virtuous) in what I accept in a way that is reliably successful in achieving my purpose of accepting what is true and avoiding accepting what is false. (Lehrer 2000, 214)

Lehrer (2000, 214) argues that, if T is true and one accepts T, then one knows T and one can know that the skeptical hypotheses are false as a result of it.

In *Self-Trust* (1999) Lehrer presents slightly modified versions of trustworthiness and principle T. Here, accepting principle T is self-supporting, if T is true, for the following reasons:

- (1A) I accept that I am worthy of my trust concerning what I accept.
- (2A) I am worthy of my trust concerning what I accept.
- (3A) I am worthy of my trust concerning my acceptance of the premiss that I am worthy of my trust concerning what I accept.
- (4A) I am reasonable to trust my acceptance of the thesis that I am worthy of my trust concerning what I accept.

¹ For Lehrer’s definitions of an acceptance system and of answered and neutralized objections see Lehrer (2000, 130-136).

² For Lehrer’s full account of knowledge which contains further conditions that are not crucial for the following discussion see Lehrer (2000, 169-173).

(5A) I am reasonable to accept that I am worthy of my trust concerning what I accept.
(Lehrer 1999, 8)

Lehrer (1999, 8-9) argues that this line of reasoning about one's own trustworthiness has epistemic significance because it offers an explanation "of the reasonableness of accepting that I am worthy of my trust concerning what I accept, even if I cannot prove that the argument is correct." Lehrer uses the metaphor of a keystone to explain the role of the decisive second premise (2A):

Is ([2]A) thus a kind of foundation of reasonable acceptance on which the structure of reasonable acceptance rests? No, that is the wrong metaphor. The reason is that other things that I accept support and confirm premiss ([2]A). (...) ([2]A) is supported by the other things I accept, so my trust in my acceptance of those things depends on premiss ([2]A). Premiss ([2]A) is thus not a foundation, for it is supported by the acceptance of those things whose worth depends on premiss ([2]A). The correct figure is that of a keystone, a circular or looping keystone, supporting the arches of a building. (Lehrer 1999, 9)

Lehrer's theory of knowledge and his anti-skeptical program has a loop built into it, which fulfils the function of a keystone in the architecture of knowledge. Lehrer repeatedly notes that we can know that the skeptical hypotheses are false although we cannot offer an argument to convince the skeptic. However, Lehrer points out that he can offer an *explanation* of why one knows that the skeptical hypotheses are false, if one knows. In the next section I will compare Lehrer's anti-skeptical strategy and Mooreanism with respect to their persuasiveness and explanatory power.

4. Persuasiveness

Lehrer and many others think that the skeptical problem has a dialectical structure between a claimant who claims to have external world knowledge, and a virtual skeptic who denies, or at least doubts, this. Lehrer and the Mooreans assume that we have knowledge about the external world and that we know that the skeptical hypotheses are false, though they defend this thesis differently. However, do either offer an argument that is persuasive to the skeptic?

The Mooreans present the following argument to the skeptic:

Here is a hand and here is another one.

Therefore, I am not deceived in falsely believing that here are hands.

The skeptic doubts everything the claimant believes about the external world, including the premise presented by the claimant. Hence, the Mooreans do not offer an argument that would persuade the skeptic.

What about Lehrer? In *Self-trust*, he presents the argument (1A) – (5A) to the skeptic. But the skeptic doubts everything the claimant believes about the external world and the way she is connected to it. Consequently, the skeptic doubts that the claimant is worthy of her own trust and thereby doubts premise (2A) of Lehrer's argument. Thus, neither Lehrer nor the Mooreans offer an argument capable of convincing the skeptic. They fail because they base their arguments on premises that their skeptical opponents will doubt.

But is this a problem for anti-skeptical strategies? Lehrer is fully aware that he cannot offer a persuasive argument to the skeptic when he notes:

To be sure, the argument is not a proof of the truth of the conclusion, especially not to one sceptical of the premiss, especially premiss (2A). (Lehrer 1999, 8)

In *Theory of knowledge*, Lehrer comments his anti-skeptical strategy as follows:

We may not be able to refute the skeptic who denies the truth of *T* or who advances some skeptical hypotheses implying the falsity of *T*. (...) We may not have the satisfaction of demonstrating that the skeptic is in error, for the attempt to do so would beg the question. We may, nevertheless, know that the skeptical hypotheses are false. (Lehrer 2000, 214)

Pryor (2000), who defends dogmatism as a version of Mooreanism, distinguishes between an *ambitious anti-skeptical project*, which aims to refute the skeptic on his own terms, using only premises that the skeptic allows us to use, and a *modest anti-skeptical project* that means to establish to *our* satisfaction that we have external world knowledge. Furthermore, Pryor (2004, 362) argues that Moorean arguments are “persuasively crippled”, but in terms of their justificatory structure they are nothing to be ashamed of.

I think Lehrer and Pryor are right to claim that one can have external world knowledge without being able to persuade the skeptic. Knowledge and persuasiveness can easily come apart: Imagine that S1 is the most trustworthy person one can imagine and everything S1 articulates is known by S1. However, S2 is totally distrustful and thinks that everything S1 utters is false. In this case, S1 cannot offer any convincing argument to S2. However, the reason why S1 fails to convince S2 is not a shortcoming of S1, who is perfectly reasonable; S2 is simply too doubtful. If the ability to persuade *anybody* that *p* is a necessary condition for knowing that *p*, then nobody might ever know that *p*. Therefore, knowledge should not require persuasive argumentation.³

Lehrer and the Mooreans cannot offer a persuasive argument to the skeptic. However, they are correctly assuming that we can have external world knowledge and knowledge that the skeptical hypotheses are false without being able to persuade the skeptic, since the ability to offer a convincing proof would be too strong of a condition for knowledge.

5. *The structure of justification*

I will next compare the justificatory structure of Lehrer’s anti-skeptical strategy with the one of the Mooreans. Lehrer defends the view that one’s acceptances about the external world and one’s trustworthiness and the acceptance that skeptical hypotheses are false mutually support each other. He uses the metaphor of a keystone to describe the architecture of justification and the way in which the premise that I am worthy of my own trust concerning my acceptances affects one’s justification.

Mooreanism, in contrast, is based on foundationalism, at least concerning external world knowledge and knowledge that the skeptical hypotheses are false. It assumes that we have external world knowledge first and we know partly through inference from this knowledge that the skeptical hypotheses are false.

³ Hill (1996) argues in the same direction. He presents the example of a person McV with terrible headache, whose employer who has grounds for thinking that McV is a malingerer doubts this. Hill affirms that it is natural to assume that McV knows he is in pain, but that he is nevertheless unable to make his employer believe it.

Lehrer and the Mooreans share the view that we cannot have knowledge that the skeptical hypotheses are false independent of our knowledge of the external world. However, they take distinct positions on the issue of whether there exists a dependency in the opposite direction as well. The Mooreans claim that we can have external world knowledge without possessing any knowledge about our own reliability or trustworthiness; Lehrer denies this. For Lehrer, knowledge about one's own trustworthiness is necessary for any kind of external world knowledge. Furthermore, Lehrer (1999, 68) claims that I have to accept that my evidence is not deceptive and to accept that I am trustworthy in what I accept about the evidence and that these things that I accept about my trustworthiness must be true in order to have knowledge that there is a hand.

Here, I see a clear advantage for Mooreanism. I think there is a strong intuition that external world knowledge is simple and immediate. Intuitively, we attribute to infants knowledge about the surrounding world before they acquire a concept of trustworthiness or one of skeptical hypotheses and we attribute *additional* knowledge to them if they acquire these additional concepts.⁴ According to Mooreanism, we can obtain knowledge in the same way we obtain *beliefs* and *concepts* about the external world, ourselves and the way we are connected to the world. I think this is the most natural understanding of human knowledge. However, I do not see how Lehrer can account for this intuition, since he clearly indicates that knowledge about one's own trustworthiness at time *t* is necessary for any external world knowledge at *t*. His view has the counterintuitive consequence that nobody can have the simplest form of external world knowledge without possessing concepts about oneself and about the way one is connected to the world. To me this condition seems implausibly strong for ordinary knowledge about the external world. Therefore, I think that foundationalism and Mooreanism can provide a more natural account of external world knowledge than Lehrer.

6. Easy knowledge

Easy knowledge, or bootstrapping, can pose a problem for basic external world knowledge. If reliabilism is true, it is much too easy for a person to gain knowledge about the reliability of her knowledge sources via inference from knowledge arising from these sources. I will not argue for or against easy knowledge here. I simply want to show that Lehrer is in an even worse position concerning the problem of easy knowledge than the Mooreans.

Vogel (2000) argues that Moorean lines of argumentation are guilty of bootstrapping. He presents the following case as a counterexample against reliabilism: Roxanne looks at her functioning gas gauge and forms the belief that the gas tank is full. Roxanne also knows that the gas gauge reads 'F'. Therefore, Roxanne knows that, on this occasion, her gas gauge reads accurately. Roxanne does this over and over again. Roxanne concludes by induction that the gauge reads accurately all the time and thereby comes to know that the gas gauge is reliable. Vogel regards knowledge by bootstrapping as unacceptable and argues that the fact that reliabilism provides such knowledge offers counterevidence against reliabilism.

Cohen (2002) argues more generally that any theory of knowledge that rejects the principle that a potential knowledge source *K* can yield knowledge for *S*, only if *S* knows *K* is reliable, leads to the undesired result that one can acquire knowledge about the reliability of our knowledge sources much too easily by basing it on basic knowledge. Cohen (2002) calls this "The problem of easy knowledge". Since Moorean reasoning can be interpreted as an instance of

⁴ For this point, see also Pryor (2000, 536).

bootstrapping leading to easy knowledge, there is a strong intuition that Moorean proofs are unacceptable.

But is Lehrer really in any better position than the Moorean? I do not think so. Let's assume that S accepts the following classes of propositions:

A: Propositions p, q... about the external world.

B: Propositions about the truth of her acceptances of p, q...: (My acceptance that p is true) ...

T: I am intellectually trustworthy (virtuous) in what I accept in a way that is reliably successful in achieving my purpose of accepting what is true and avoiding accepting what is false.

The conclusion of bootstrapping is a proposition about the reliability of one's knowledge sources. Let's call this proposition **R**. Principle **T** as formulated above is stronger than **R** since it is a claim about one's reliability *and* one's intellectual virtue.

Easy knowledge via bootstrapping is the idea that if we know **A**, then we can know **B**, partly through inference from **A**, and we can know **R** through inference from **B**. But knowledge of **R** is much too easily acquired this way. I think the intuition underlying the view that easy knowledge is problematic is that *additional* knowledge, independent from any external world knowledge, e.g. knowledge through inference to the best explanation, is needed to exclude skeptical hypotheses. Lehrer assumes that a person can know **A**, **B** and **T**. Lehrer's *explanation* why S knows **A**, **B** and **T**, if she does, is a coherentist one; the Mooreans' explanation why one knows **A**, **B** and **R** is foundationalist. However, Lehrer admits that one can know **A**, **B** and **T** without having essential *additional* knowledge. In this respect also Lehrer faces the problem of easy knowledge. Moreover, **T** is stronger than **R**. Hence, he must acknowledge easy knowledge of an even stronger proposition than the reliabilists.

I think that Lehrer admits that the temporal order of one's *acceptance acquisition* can be first **A**, then **B**, partly through inference from **A**, and finally **T**, through inference from **B**. In this case, a person knows **A**, **B** and **T** by performing very similar mental processes as in the case of bootstrapping. The main difference between Lehrer and the Mooreans is that Lehrer offers a coherentist explanation for why the person knows and that he assumes that she comes to know **A**, **B** and **T** all at once, although the temporal order of *acceptance acquisition* is first **A**, then **B** and last **T**. However, I do not think that the temporal order of *knowledge acquisition* is the reason why we regard easy knowledge as problematic; I think it is rather a problem of missing further evidence. So, if bootstrapping provides knowledge too easily, why doesn't Lehrer's coherence theory as well? Moreover, according to Lehrer a person need not perform an inference from **A** to **B** and from **B** to **T** in order to know **A**, **B** and **T**. But if knowledge based on these inferences is already too easy, then acquiring knowledge without performing any inferences is *much too easy*.

The problem of easy knowledge arises if one can know propositions **A**, **B** and **R** without having any essential additional knowledge. The Mooreans have to accept easy knowledge but Lehrer is committed to the even stronger claim that one can know **A**, **B** and **T** without having any additional knowledge and possibly without even performing any inference at all. Hence, Lehrer is in an even worse situation than the Mooreans when it comes to the problem of easy knowledge.

I think there exists a persistent intuition that the solutions to the skeptical problem that Lehrer and the Mooreans propose are unsatisfactory for at least two reasons. First, they cannot offer a persuasive argument against the skeptic, and, second, they face the problem of easy knowledge in one way or the other. Each of these two intuitive shortcomings is based on the *independent knowledge intuition*: we need an argument against skeptical hypotheses that does not rely on

external world knowledge. Lehrer and Mooreans offer solutions which are too easy according to this intuition.

I will not delve into whether this intuition is true, I simply think that it exists. Its advocates must explain why we need knowledge that is independent from external world knowledge in order to know that the skeptical hypotheses are false, despite the intuition that inferences from external world knowledge are benign according to ordinary standards. Those like Lehrer and the Mooreans who think that the independent knowledge intuition is false must explain its persistence. Perhaps Lehrer and the Mooreans could argue that the objection is based on a confusion of knowledge acquisition with persuasive argumentation. However, I do not think that this line of argumentation can explain the counter-intuitiveness of easy knowledge, since easy knowledge is not more plausible, if it is not embedded in an argumentation situation. In order to achieve a full explanation of the skeptical problem, Lehrer and the Mooreans must provide a satisfactory explanation of the persistency of the independent knowledge intuition.

7. *Explanatory power*

Lehrer and the Mooreans cannot offer a persuasive argument against the skeptic and they face the problem of easy knowledge in one way or the other. Hence, the dispute about who has the better anti-skeptical strategy comes down to whether Lehrer's coherentism or a foundationalism that is compatible with Mooreanism can offer a better *explanation* of why we have external world knowledge and knowledge that the skeptical hypotheses are false, given that we know. Lehrer emphasizes that he can offer such an explanation, although he cannot offer a persuasive argument against the skeptic. Lehrer formulates this point as follows:

[T]he reasonableness of accepting my trustworthiness is not unexplained. (...) [T]he argument, though not a proof that could refute a sceptic, does explain my reasonableness in accepting that I am trustworthy, for the simple reason that my trustworthiness in what I accept explains why I am trustworthy, in accepting my trustworthiness. (...) The point of the argument is the explanation of the reasonableness of accepting that I am worthy of my trust concerning what I accept, even if I cannot prove that the argument is correct. (Lehrer 1999, 8-9)

Lehrer formulates the value of explanation as follows:

So, proof cannot be circular but explanation may be. (...) When we come to explaining things, assuming our explanations are finite, we either end with some principle which is unexplained, a kind of explanatory surd, or we come to some principle that explains not only other principles but itself as well. We must choose between the surd and the loop. The advantage of the loop is that nothing need be left unexplained. Those who seek to maximize explanation will prefer the loop, as I do. (...) The preference for leaving nothing unexplained, and entering the loop of explanation as a result, is one I act upon in developing my philosophy. (Lehrer 1999, 22-23)

On Lehrer's account, there is a strong analogy between the structure of *explanation* and the structure of *justification*. A person who is justified in accepting that p is also in a position to explain why she is justified in accepting that p. Lehrer regards his theory's full explanatory power that need not leave anything unexplained as an advantage.

But what about the explanatory power of Mooreanism? On this view, the structure of *justification* begins with basic knowledge about the external world and provides the knowledge that the skeptical hypotheses are false through inference. This basic knowledge can take different forms, depending on which account of primitive knowledge one holds. Candidates include dogmatism, reliabilism, or virtue epistemology.

Mooreanism allows one to have external world knowledge without being in a position to explain it. If, for example, one accepts reliabilism, then any explanation of knowing that *p* must include the fact that the belief that *p* is the result of a reliable process. But having this kind of knowledge of reliability is not necessary for having basic knowledge. Hence, the structure of explanation and justification come apart on Moorean theories. Nevertheless, reliabilism, dogmatism and virtue epistemology can explain why a person knows, given that she knows. Moreover, these accounts can provide a complete explanation. Knowledge about our reliability or about epistemic virtue can explain itself and many other things we know in exactly the same way Lehrer argues that knowledge about our own trustworthiness can.⁵ Therefore, Lehrer cannot use the explanatory power of coherentism as an argument against foundationalism and Mooreanism. Moreover, Mooreanism can provide not only a full explanation of human knowledge, it can also offer the *most natural* one. It explains how we acquire knowledge about the world, about ourselves and about our connection to the world in the process of our cognitive development that includes concept-acquisition and belief-acquisition.

Mooreanism is a version of foundationalism. The direction of *justification* is a one way street from external world beliefs to beliefs about the falsity of the skeptical hypotheses. Hence, Mooreanism can achieve a complete explanation of our knowledge that leaves nothing unexplained by accepting a loop of *explanation*, and by refusing to accept a loop of *justification*. Epistemologists who, unlike Lehrer, prefer to avoid loops, will prefer Mooreanism on this analysis.

8. Summary

I have compared Mooreanism and Lehrer's anti-skeptical approach with respect to persuasiveness, structure of justification, the problem of easy knowledge and explanatory power. Neither offers a persuasive argument against the skeptic. However, persuasiveness is not required for knowledge and thus neither account is defective in this respect. Mooreanism and Lehrer share the view that we cannot have knowledge that the skeptical hypotheses are false that is entirely independent from any knowledge about the external world. However, the Mooreans assume that our external world knowledge is independent from the knowledge that the skeptical hypotheses are false, whereas Lehrer supposes a mutual dependency. In this respect, there is a clear advantage for Mooreanism, since it can capture the natural intuition that external world knowledge is simple and immediate, whereas Lehrer cannot. Mooreanism is attacked for allowing knowledge about the reliability of a knowledge source to be gained too easily. But Lehrer is in this respect in an even worse position. Finally, Lehrer regards it as a crucial advantage of coherentism that it provides a full explanation of why one knows, given that one

⁵ For Lehrer's reconstruction of the self-explanatory power of reliabilism see Lehrer (1999, chap. 3. In defending coherentism, Lehrer (1999) argues that basic epistemic notions cannot supervene on any non-epistemic natural concepts, since nature is silent about what has worth, about what is worthy of our trust and, hence, about what is justified. (See Lehrer 1999, 72) However, this line of argumentation is only a viable strategy against reliabilism, but not against other versions of foundationalism and Mooreanism, especially not against virtue epistemological accounts that are compatible with Mooreanism.

knows. However, Mooreanism can offer a full explanation *and* avoid a loop of justification by distinguishing the structure of justification and the structure of explanation. Mooreanism can achieve what Lehrer's coherentism does by accepting the plausible assumption that external world knowledge is immediate and independent from knowledge about our own trustworthiness. Lehrer must deny this assumption. Hence, one should only prefer Lehrer's coherentism to Mooreanism, if one regards coherence, keystones and loops as enhancing the value of a theory of knowledge. Lehrer might take this road, but those who prefer solid foundations need not sidestep Mooreanism.

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