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FOUNDATIONALISM

by

Richard Alan Legum

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the  
Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Supervised by Richard H. Feldman

Department of Philosophy  
College of Arts & Sciences

University of Rochester  
Rochester, New York

1980

## CURRICULUM VITAE

The author was born in Brooklyn, New York on February 27, 1955. He graduated from Stuyvesant High School in New York City in June, 1972. After attending Washington & Jefferson College for one year, he continued his undergraduate education at Franklin & Marshall College and was awarded an A.B. in philosophy in June, 1976. On August 12, 1976, he married Fran Wildman. He pursued graduate studies in philosophy at the University of Rochester from 1976 through 1980.

During his stay at the University of Rochester, the author served as a Rush Rhees Fellow, University Fellow, Teaching Assistant, and Assistant Lecturer. He was awarded the M.A. degree in philosophy from Rochester in February, 1980 and expects to be awarded the Ph.D. degree in June, 1981. At present, he is a Visiting Assistant Professor in Philosophy at the College of Charleston in Charleston, South Carolina.

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This dissertation would never have been undertaken without the support, encouragement, and example provided by the members of my family: my parents who insisted that I continue my education after dropping out of nursery school; my brother, Steven, who instilled in me a healthy

amount of skepticism about toothpaste; my grandparents, Bessie and Jacob Sachs, who instilled in me a certain amount of faith; and, most importantly, my wife, Fran-- "A woman of valor who can find? She is far more precious than rubies" (Proverbs, 31:10)--who provided the necessary moral support and hours at the typewriter.

## ABSTRACT

Foundationalism may be characterized as the theory whose central tenets are:

- A. Some empirical beliefs have at least some degree of initial epistemic justification which is independent of the justification that they may derive from other beliefs;

and

- B. All empirical beliefs must ultimately derive at least some of their justification from beliefs that are self-justified, i.e., beliefs that satisfy (A).

In this dissertation, I will attempt to show that some theory which affirms both of the foregoing theses is tenable. I will demonstrate the tenability of foundationalism by examining the most influential versions of the theory, and by attempting to show how the defects of these versions of the theory could be eliminated and how the conflicts between the different versions could be resolved.

I proceed by examining the versions of foundationalism advanced by C.I. Lewis and Roderick Chisholm. In presenting their views, Lewis and Chisholm have attempted to give answers to three fundamental questions: (1) Why

must the structure of empirical knowledge be foundational?  
(2) What is the nature of the foundation of knowledge?  
and (3) How does the foundation serve as the justification  
of nonfoundational beliefs? Their answers to these  
questions are the subject of examination in this  
dissertation.

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