

1981

## Foundationalism

Richard Legum

*CUNY Kingsborough Community College*

[How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!](#)

Follow this and additional works at: [http://academicworks.cuny.edu/kb\\_pubs](http://academicworks.cuny.edu/kb_pubs)

 Part of the [Epistemology Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Legum, Richard, "Foundationalism" (1981). *CUNY Academic Works*.

[http://academicworks.cuny.edu/kb\\_pubs/71](http://academicworks.cuny.edu/kb_pubs/71)

This Book Chapter or Section is brought to you for free and open access by the Kingsborough Community College at CUNY Academic Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Publications and Research by an authorized administrator of CUNY Academic Works. For more information, please contact [AcademicWorks@cuny.edu](mailto:AcademicWorks@cuny.edu).

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.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In writing this dissertation, I have incurred many debts that I wish to acknowledge with gratitude.

Professor Richard Feldman has been a constant source of philosophical guidance and of helpful suggestions and criticisms concerning this dissertation. He is clearly entitled to overtime or combat pay (or, at least, to a semester of peaceful dinners) for the numerous hours which he spent discussing philosophy with me. Professor Henry Kyburg provided me with helpful criticisms, especially concerning some claims that I made concerning probability, induction, and statistical inferences. I have also profitted from discussions with members of the philosophy faculty at Rochester, including Professors Rolf Eberle, Paul Weirich, and Harmon Holcomb, fellow graduate students, including Bill Pastor, Madhab Mitra, Michael Losonsky, John McNeill, Gary Brummel, Ken Ferguson, and Greg Goode, and my colleagues at the College of Charleston.

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.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Curriculum Vitae	ii
II.	Acknowledgments	iii
III.	Abstract	v
IV.	Introduction	1
V.	Chapter One--Probability and Foundationalism	18
	§1. The Argument	19
	§2. Reichenbach's Objection	22
	§3. Van Cleve's Defense	23
	§4. Pastin's Suggestion	27
	§5. Lewis Defended	30
	§6. Conclusion	33
	Footnotes	35
VI.	Chapter Two--The Given	37
	§1. The Given	38
	§2. The Epistemic Status of Given-Propositions	49
	§3. A Reichenbachian Objection	51
	§4. A Goodmanian Objection	56
	§5. Future Defeaters	57
	§6. Conflict with Future Scientific Discoveries	60
	§7. A Final Objection	63
	§8. Conclusion	72
	Footnotes	73
VII.	Chapter Three--Probability, Terminating Judgments, Memory, and Justified Belief	75
	§1. Justification Generating Principles	76
	§2. Probability	78
	§3. Terminating Judgments and Objective Beliefs	83
	§4. Memory	94
	§5. Summary of the Theory	97
	§6. Chisholm's Objection	99
	§7. The Epistemological Priority of Memory	120



§8. Conclusion	122
Footnotes	124
VIII. Chapter Four--Foundationalism and the Proper Stopping Place for Socratic Questioning	126
§1. The Myth of the Given	126
§2. Socratic Questions	127
§3. A Stopping Place	129
Footnotes	133
IX. Chapter Five--The Directly Evident	134
§1. The Directly Evident and Self- Presentation	135
§2. Seeming and Appearing	140
§3. The Epistemic Status of Appearances	150
§4. Summary of the Theory	153
§5. Leeds's Objection	154
§6. Naylor's Objection	165
§7. The Directly Evident and the Basis of Belief	169
§8. Conclusion	177
Footnotes	178
X. Chapter Six--Chisholm's Rules of Evidence	181
§1. Epistemic Principles and the Laws of Logic	182
§2. The Logic of Epistemic Terms	185
§3. More Reasonable Than	192
§4. Rules of Evidence	211
§5. A Defect in Chisholm's Epistemic Principles	220
§6. Epistemic Principles and Inductive Logic	227
Footnotes	230
XI. Chapter Seven--Conclusion	233
XII. Bibliography	241