

1981

Conclusion. Bibliography.

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

 Part of the [Epistemology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Legum, Richard Alan. Conclusion (chapter 7) and Bibliography of "Foundationalism." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Rochester, 1981.

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.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I have attempted to show that foundationalism is a defensible theory of knowledge. In saying that, I mean to assert that, while foundationalism is not demonstrably correct, it is a plausible theory that can be defended from the best objections which have been raised by the critics of this theory.

It seems to me that, in general, philosophical theories are not the sort of things that can be proven to be correct, but rather, that the plausibility of a theory depends on the degree to which it is in harmony with certain of our intuitions concerning the subject matter of the theory and the degree to which it can be defended from objections. To be somewhat more specific, the plausibility of a theory of knowledge depends on the degree to which it incorporates our preanalytic intuitions concerning knowledge and justification, as well as the degree to which it can meet the objections that are raised against it. In this regard, I am at odds with Lewis and in agreement with Chisholm.

Lewis seemed to be overly concerned with demonstrating the truth of foundationalism. It seems to me that he was willing to go to extremes to demonstrate the truth of

foundationalism. Lewis's demonstration of foundationalism was found to be unacceptable. Ultimately, it depended on the truth of an implausible doctrine, phenomenism. Chisholm, on the other hand, correctly suggests that foundationalism gains some plausibility from the fact that the account of epistemic justification which it provides accords with certain of our intuitions concerning justification. Chisholm suggests that we may seek our justification for a proposition by a process of Socratic interrogation, i.e., by successively questioning what evidence we do have for believing a proposition, its evidence, etc. According to Chisholm, we find that there is a proper stopping place for the process of questioning; we find that this process of Socratic interrogation ends when a proposition is cited which is claimed to constitute its own evidence. This is not taken to be a demonstration of the truth of foundationalism, however; this does suggest that foundationalism has some intuitive plausibility. Chisholm and I seem to agree that just as the proof of the pudding is in the eating, the proof of foundationalism lies in the spelling out of a detailed version of the theory which is immune to objection.

The first step that must be taken in showing that foundationalism is defensible is the explication and defense of foundationalism's most controversial tenet, the

self-justification thesis. The self-justification thesis asserts that the foundation of empirical knowledge is comprised of propositions which are initially justified independently of the justification that they receive from other propositions. Propositions which describe a person's immediate experiences or phenomenal states are alleged to be paradigm examples of such propositions.

On this issue, Lewis and Chisholm are in substantial agreement, the latter's views being a refinement of the former's. Lewis referred to the foundation of knowledge as the given. The given, according to Lewis, is a set of true propositions which assert of a person that he is having a certain sort of phenomenological experience. These propositions are supposed to be expressed by sentences of the following forms: 'I seem to see..', 'I seem to hear...', etc. Lewis supported his claim that these propositions are self-justifying by alleging that one cannot be mistaken in believing such a proposition. Lewis, however, was not terribly clear about which sentences express the given. At times, he appears to assert that any sentence of the form 'I seem to see...' expresses a given-proposition, while on other occasions, he restricts the predicates that may be used in filling in the blank to perceptual predicates. Lewis's view of the foundation of knowledge was deemed deficient because of this vagueness

in the theory.

Chisholm attempts to be more precise than Lewis in putting forth his views concerning the foundation of knowledge. He proposes that the class of foundational propositions is the class of propositions that are directly evident for a person. For Chisholm, the class of propositions that are directly evident for a person is the class of true propositions whose truth entails that they are evident (the class of self-presenting propositions) and those propositions that are entailed by self-presenting propositions. Chisholm asserts that the propositions that are directly evident for a person include true propositions that ascribe beliefs and thoughts to the person, as well as propositions which describe the ways that things seem to appear to him. The propositions of this latter class are those expressed by noncomparative appear statements, statements of the form: 'I am appeared to Φ -ly,' where 'appear' is taken in its noncomparative sense and where Φ expresses a property that is either a proper object of the various senses (e.g., red, sweet) or a common sensible (e.g., square, flat). Chisholm further alleges that these propositions are optimally reasonable, and thus provide a firm foundation for empirical knowledge.

I suggested that the problem with Chisholm's embellishment of Lewis's theory was the manner in which he

attempted to specify the class of foundation propositions. It was suggested that his characterization of the directly evident was defective, for it did not take into consideration the fact that a person may believe a proposition which describes the way that he is appeared to for an erroneous reason. It was, thus, suggested that the notion that the person bases his belief on the fact that the proposition is true must be incorporated in the characterization of the directly evident, i.e., that the class of directly evident propositions is the class of true propositions which are necessarily such that when they are true and when the person they describe bases his belief in them on the fact that they are true, they are evident for the person (i.e., self-presenting) or which are entailed by self-presenting propositions. It was then noted that the class of directly evident propositions is larger than the class of foundational propositions. Foundational propositions are directly evident and are believed for the right reasons (on the basis of their truth). When the theory is amended in this way, it overcomes the best objections that can be raised against it (provided that the notion of basing one's belief on something can be explicated in an appropriate manner).

Lewis and Chisholm give divergent accounts of the justification of nonfoundational beliefs by foundational

beliefs. Lewis claims that the justification of non-foundational beliefs is accounted for by scientific rules of inference. A scientific hypothesis is justified when sufficiently many of its test implications are verified (and sufficiently few are falsified). Lewis treated ordinary objective propositions in the way that he believed that scientific hypotheses were justified. He adhered to a form of phenomenalism which asserted that objective statements had certain test implications, terminating judgments, as analytical consequences. These terminating judgments were to the effect that given that the person was appeared to in a certain way, if he were to seem to perform an action of a certain sort, then he would be appeared to in an appropriate way. Lewis thought that when sufficiently many of these terminating judgments were verified, the statement that had these terminating judgments as an analytic consequence was rendered probable. A statement's being probable relative to a person's body of knowledge is sufficient, according to Lewis, to justify the person in believing the proposition.

Chisholm correctly argued that Lewis's phenomenalism was implausible, and, thus, concluded that Lewis's account of the justification of non-foundational beliefs must be abandoned. Chisholm suggested that rules of inductive

logic could not account for the justification of simple perceptual beliefs. He claimed that special epistemic principles were needed to account for the justification of perceptual beliefs. Unfortunately, the epistemic principles which Chisholm presented suffered from a general defect. They assumed that regardless of the way that the world is, beliefs are justified on the basis of perception, i.e., even if certain sorts of perception were not reliable, Chisholm's principles countenance these sorts of perceptions as reliable sources of knowledge or justified belief. It was argued that this is an unacceptable consequence of Chisholm's theory of the indirectly evident.

Chisholm's criticism of Lewis's phenomenalism is telling. However, I argued that Chisholm abandoned Lewis's general approach to the justification of non-foundational beliefs without good reason (and without a more palatable approach to fall back upon). It was suggested that Lewis's theory could be resurrected with slight modification. The modification that was proposed was that the phenomenalism be abandoned and replaced by the weaker claim that the relationship between an objective statement and certain terminating judgments is the same relationship that holds between a scientific hypothesis and its test implications.

From the considerations raised in this dissertation,

it is fair to conclude that foundationalism is a defensible doctrine. The version of the theory that appears to be most plausible is a hybrid of Lewis's and Chisholm's versions of foundationalism. Such a theory would adopt Chisholm's theory of the directly evident, modified as suggested above, as its account of the foundation of knowledge. It would adopt the foregoing modification of Lewis's account of the justification of nonfoundational belief to explain the relationship between the foundation and the higher tiers of knowledge. Finally, it should be noted that such a theory requires a detailed account of scientific inference which is somewhat more plausible than the one that Lewis presents. It seems to me that certain features of Chisholm's logic of epistemic preferability would have to be incorporated in such an account.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, E.M., "C.I. Lewis and the Inconsistent Triad of Modern Empiricism," in Schilpp, ed., The Philosophy of C.I. Lewis, La Salle: Open Court, (1968), 337-396.
- Alston, William, "Varieties of Privileged Access," American Philosophical Quarterly, 8 (1971), 223-241.
- Annis, David B., "A Contextualist Theory of Epistemic Justification," American Philosophical Quarterly, 15 (1978), 213-220.
- _____, "Epistemic Foundationalism," Philosophical Studies, 31 (1977), 345-352.
- Armstrong, D.M., "Is Introspective Knowledge Incorrigible?" Philosophical Review, 72 (1963), 417-432.
- Ayer, A.J., "Basic Propositions," in Black, ed., Philosophical Analysis, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1950.
- _____, Language, Truth and Logic (second edition), New York: Dover, 1946.
- Bailey, George, "Pappas, Incorrigibility, and Science," Philosophical Studies, 35 (1979), 319-322.
- Baylis, Charles A., "Lewis' Theory of Facts," in Schilpp, ed., The Philosophy of C.I. Lewis. La Salle: Open Court, (1968), 201-222.
- Bode, James, "Knowledge and the Evidential Conditional," Philosophical Studies, 31 (1977), 337-344.
- Cady, Duane L., "Avoiding Error and Getting the Truth," Philosophical Studies, 27 (1975), 419-425.
- Caufield, John V., "'I Know that I am in Pain' is Senseless," in Lehrer, ed., Analysis and Metaphysics, Dordrecht: Reidel, (1975), 129-144.
- Carnap, Rudolf, Meaning and Necessity, Chicago: Univeristy of Chicago Press, 1947.
- Chisholm, Roderick M., "The Problem of Empiricism,"

Journal of Philosophy, 45 (1948), 512-517.

Chisholm, Roderick M., "Epistemic Statements and the Ethics of Belief," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 16 (1955), 447-460.

_____, "'Appear,' 'Take,' and 'Evident'," Journal of Philosophy, 53 (1956), 722-734.

_____, Perceiving, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1957.

_____, Theory of Knowledge, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966.

_____, "The Principles of Epistemic Appraisal," in Donameyer, ed., Current Philosophical Issues: Essays in Honor of C.J. Ducasse, Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, (1966), 87-104.

_____, "Theory of Knowledge," in Chisholm, et. al., Philosophy, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, (1964), 233-344.

_____, "Lewis' Ethics of Belief," in Schilpp, ed. The Philosophy of C.I. Lewis, La Salle: Open Court, (1968), 223-242.

_____, "On a Principle of Epistemic Preferability," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 30 (1968), 294-301.

_____, "The Foundation of Empirical Statements," in Roth and Galis, eds., Knowing, New York: Random House, (1970), 39-54.

_____, "On the Nature of Empirical Evidence," in Chisholm and Swartz, eds. Empirical Knowledge, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, (1973), 224-249.

_____, Person and Object, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1976.

_____, Theory of Knowledge (second edition), Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1977.

_____, "Comments and Replies," Philosophia, 7 (1978), 597-634.

_____, "On the Nature of Empirical Evidence," in

Pappas and Swain, eds., Essays on Knowledge and Justification, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, (1978), 253-278.

Chisholm, Roderick M., "The Directly Evident," in Pappas, ed., Justification and Knowing, Dordrecht: Reidel, (1979), 115-128.

_____, and Keim, Robert G., "A System of Epistemic Logic," Ratio, 14 (1972), 99-115.

_____, and Swartz, Robert J., eds., Empirical Knowledge, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1973.

Cornman, James W., "Chisholm on Sensing and Perceiving," in Lehrer, ed., Analysis and Metaphysics, Dordrecht: Reidel, (1975), 11-33.

_____, "Foundational versus Nonfoundational Theories of Empirical Justification," American Philosophical Quarterly, 14 (1977), 287-297.

_____, "On Acceptability Without Certainty," Journal of Philosophy, 74 (1977), 29-46.

_____, "On the Certainty of Reports about What Is Given," Nous, 12 (1978), 93-118.

Crawford, Dan D., "Propositional and Nonpropositional Perceiving," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 35 (1974), 201-210.

Fair, Frank K., "Two Problems with Roderick Chisholm's Perceiving," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 36 (1976), 547-550.

Firth, Roderick, "Ultimate Evidence," Journal of Philosophy, 53 (1956), 732-739.

_____, "Chisholm and the Ethics of Belief," Philosophical Review, 68 (1959), 493-506.

_____, "Coherence, Certainty, and Epistemic Priority," Journal of Philosophy, 61 (1964), 547-557.

_____, "The Anatomy of Certainty," Philosophical Review, 76 (1967), 3-27.

_____, "Lewis on the Given," in Schilpp, ed., The Philosophy of C.I. Lewis, La Salle: Open Court,

- (1968), 329-350.
- Flint, Thomas P., "Chisholm and the Conflict of Intellectual Requirements," Philosophical Review, 37 (1970), 105-110.
- Foley, Richard, "Inferential Justification and the Infinite Regress," American Philosophical Quarterly, 15 (1978), 311-316.
- French, Peter A., Uehling, Theodore E., Jr., and Wettstein, Howard K., eds., Midwest Studies in Philosophy, Volume V, Studies in Epistemology, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980.
- Fritz, Charles A., Jr., "The 'Certainty' of Professor Lewis' Expressive Statements," Journal of Philosophy, 49 (1952), 723-732.
- Gale, Richard M., "William James and the Ethics of Belief," American Philosophical Quarterly, 17 (1980), 1-14.
- Gettier, Edmund L., "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" Analysis, 23 (1963), 121-123.
- Goodman, Nelson, "Sense and Certainty," in Problems and Projects, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill (1972)
- Hall, Richard J., "Criticism and Revision of Chisholm's Principle for Perception," Philosophia, 7 (1978), 447-487.
- Harman, Gilbert, Thought, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973.
- Heidelberger, Herbert, "Chisholm's Epistemic Principles," Nous, 3 (1969), 73-82.
- Henle, Paul, "Lewis on Meaning and Verification," in Schilpp, ed., The Philosophy of C.I. Lewis, La Salle: Open Court, (1968), 60-88.
- Hintikka, Jaakko, Knowledge and Belief, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962.
- Hooker, Michael, "Chisholm's Theory of Knowledge," Philosophia, 7 (1978), 489-500.
- Hughes, G.E. and Cresswell, M.J., An Introduction to Modal Logic, London: Methuen, 1968.

- Imlay, R.A., "Chisholm's Epistemic Logic," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 30 (1969), 290-293.
- Johnson, Oliver A., Skepticism and Cognitivism, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.
- Knox, John, Jr., "Do Appearances Exist?" American Philosophical Quarterly, Monograph #4, 79-101.
- Kyburg, Henry E., Jr. Probability and the Logic of Rational Belief, Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1961.
- _____, Probability and Inductive Logic, London: Macmillan, 1970.
- _____, "On a Certain Form of Philosophical Argument," American Philosophical Quarterly, 7 (1970), 229-237.
- _____, The Logical Foundations of Statistical Inference, Dordrecht: Reidel, 1974.
- Leeds, Stephan, "Two Senses of 'Appears Red'." Philosophical Studies, 28 (1975), 199-205.
- Legum, Richard A., "Probability and Foundationalism," (abstract), Nous, 14 (1980), 91.
- _____, "Probability and Foundationalism: Another Look at the Lewis-Reichenbach Debate," Philosophical Studies, forthcoming.
- Lehrer, Keith, "Knowledge, Truth and Evidence," Analysis, 25 (1965), 168-175.
- _____, Knowledge, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974.
- _____, ed., Analysis and Metaphysics, Dordrecht: Reidel, 1975.
- Levi, Isaac, Gambling With Truth, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1967.
- Lewis, C.I., Mind and the World Order, New York: Dover, 1929.
- _____, An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation, La Salle: Open Court, 1946.
- _____, "Professor Chisholm and Empiricism," Journal

of Philosophy, 45 (1948), 517-524.

Lewis, C.I., "The Given Element in Empirical Knowledge," Philosophical Review, 61 (1952), 168-175.

Linsky, Leonard, ed., Reference and Modality, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971.

Lucey, Kenneth G., "Scales of Epistemic Appraisal," Philosophical Studies, 29 (1976) 169-179.

Malcolm, Norman, "A Definition of Factual Memory," in Knowledge and Certainty: Essays and Lectures. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, (1963), 222-240.

Mavrodes, George, "James and Clifford on 'The Will to Believe'," in Yandell, ed., God, Man, and Religion, New York: McGraw-Hill, (1973), 524-528.

Meerbote, Ralf, "Fallibilism and the Possibility of Being Mistaken," Philosophical Studies, 32 (1977), 143-154.

Meiland, Jack W., "What Ought we to Believe? or The Ethics of Belief Revisited," American Philosophical Quarterly, 17 (1980), 15-24.

Milmed, Bella K., "Lewis's Concept of Expressive Statements," Journal of Philosophy, 51 (1954), 201-213.

Naylor, Margery Bedford, "Chisholm on the Directly Evident," Philosophia, 7 (1978), 423-440.

Nozick, Robert, Anarchy, State, and Utopia, New York: Basic Books, 1974.

Pappas, George, "Incorrigibility, Knowledge, and Justification," Philosophical Studies, 25 (1974), 219-225.

_____, "Incorrigibilism and Future Science," Philosophical Studies, 28 (1975), 207-210.

_____, ed., Justification and Knowledge, Dordrecht: Reidel, 1979.

_____, and Swain, Marshall, eds., Essays on Knowledge and Justification, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978.

Pastin, Mark, "C.I. Lewis' Radical Foundationalism," Nous, 9 (1975), 407-420.

Pastin, Mark, "Modest Foundationalism and Self-Warrant,"
American Philosophical Quarterly, Monograph #4,
141-149.

_____, "A Decision Procedure for Epistemology?"
Philosophical Studies, 35 (1979), 257-268.

Plantinga, Alvin, The Nature of Necessity, Oxford: Oxford
University Press, 1974.

Pollock, John, Knowledge and Justification, Princeton:
Princeton University Press, 1974.

_____, "A Plethora of Epistemological Theories," in
Pappas, ed., Justification and Knowledge, Dordrecht:
Reidel, (1979), 93-114.

Reichenbach, Hans, "Are Phenomenal Reports Absolutely
Certain?" Philosophical Review, 61 (1952), 147-159.

Roth, Michael D. and Galis, Leon, eds. Knowing, New York:
Random House, 1970.

Russell, Bertrand, The Problems of Philosophy, Oxford:
Oxford University Press, 1912.

_____, An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth, London:
George Allen and Unwin, 1940.

_____, Human Knowledge, New York: Simon and Shuster,
1948.

_____, Logic and Knowledge, New York: Capricorn
Books, 1956.

Scherer, Donald, "Incorrigibilist Dilemmas," Southern
Journal of Philosophy, 11 (1973), 237-239.

Schilpp, Paul Arthur, ed., The Philosophy of C.I. Lewis,
La Salle: Open Court, 1968.

Sellars, Wilfrid, "Givenness and Explanatory Coherence,"
Journal of Philosophy, 70 (1973), 612-624.

_____, "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind," in
Chisholm and Swartz, eds., Empirical Knowledge,
Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, (1973), 471-541.

Shirley, Edward S., "'Appear' and Incorrigibility,"
Southern Journal of Philosophy, 14 (1976), 197-201.

Shoemaker, Sidney, Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963.

Shope, Robert K., "Knowledge and Falsity," Philosophical Studies, 36 (1979), 389-406.

Slote, Michael A., Reason and Skepticism, New York: Humanities Press, 1970.

Smullyan, Arthur, "Sense Context and Perceptual Assurance," Journal of Philosophy, 70 (1973), 625-628.

Sosa, Ernest, "How Do You Know?" American Philosophical Quarterly, 11 (1974), 113-122.

_____, "Epistemic Presupposition," in Pappas, ed., Justification and Knowledge, Dordrecht: Reidel, (1979), 79-92.

_____, "The Raft and the Pyramid: Coherence versus Foundations in the Theory of Knowledge," in French, Uehling, and Wettstein, eds., Midwest Studies in Philosophy, Volume V, Studies in Epistemology, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, (1980), 3-26.

_____, "The Foundations of Foundationalism," Nous, forthcoming.

Steel, Thomas J., "Knowledge and the Self-Presenting," in Lehrer, ed., Analysis and Metaphysics, Dordrecht: Reidel, (1975), 145-150.

Swain, Marshall, "Justification and the Basis of Belief," in Pappas, ed., Justification and Knowledge, Dordrecht: Reidel, (1979), 25-50.

Swartz, Robert J., ed., Perceiving, Sensing and Knowing, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965.

Unger, Peter, Ignorance, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975.

Van Cleve, James, "Probability and Certainty: A Reexamination of the Lewis-Reichenbach Debate," Philosophical Studies, 32 (1977), 323-334.

_____, "Foundationalism, Epistemic Principles, and the Cartesian Circle," Philosophical Review, 88 (1979), 55-91.

Wild, John, "The Concept of The Given in Contemporary Philosophy," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 1 (1940), 70-82.

Winkler, Earl, "Incorrigible: The Standard Contemporary Doctrine," The Personalist, 50 (1969), 179-193.