

Philosophy 5340 – Epistemology

Topic 6: Theories of Justification: Foundationalism versus Coherentism

Part 2: Susan Haack's 'Foundherentist' Approach

Susan Haack, "A Foundherentist Theory of Empirical Justification"

1. The main theme will be that **foundationalism** and **coherentism** do not exhaust the alternatives with regard to the structure of justification.

Susan Haack's Case for Foundherentism

1. Foundationalism involves (1) a distinction between basic beliefs and derived beliefs, and (2) "an essentially one-directional notion of evidential support . . ." (418)

2. Coherentism "holds that beliefs can be justified only by mutual support among themselves." (418)

3. The merit of foundationalism is that it acknowledges the relevance of a person's experience to the justification of one's beliefs.

4. The **drawbacks** are that it requires a privileged class of basic beliefs, and that it "ignores the pervasive interdependence among a person's beliefs." (418)

Comments

1. As we shall see, Haack's foundherentist view allows quite different sorts of beliefs to be noninferentially justified.

2. Not all foundationalist approaches involve a privileged class of non-inferentially justified beliefs – as we shall see when we consider Mike Huemer's account of noninferential justification.

3. Traditional formulations of foundationalism are perfectly compatible with the view that a belief that is non-inferentially justified can have its degree of justification changed, either by other beliefs that are non-inferentially justified, or by beliefs that are inferentially justified. This is obvious in the case of direct realism, but it is equally true on an indirect realist approach.

5. The merit of coherentism is that it acknowledges that pervasive independence.

6. The **drawback** of coherentism is that "it allows no role for the subject's experience." (418)

7. Haack distinguishes four different versions of foundationalism:

(1) **Strong Foundationalism** = The view that basic beliefs are "fully justified by the subject's experience."

(2) **Pure Foundationalism** = The view that derived beliefs are "justified exclusively by the support, direct or indirect, of basic beliefs." (418)

(3) **Weak Foundationalism** = The view that basic beliefs are "justified to some degree by the experience."

(4) **Impure Foundationalism** = The view that although all derived beliefs must "have some support from basic beliefs", derived beliefs can also have their levels of justification raised by relations of mutual support among derived beliefs. (418)

Comments

1. The distinction between **pure foundationalism** and **impure foundationalism** is not as clearly stated as one would like.
2. One way of thinking about it is this. Consider two people, A and B, who have precisely the same sorts of experiences and memory beliefs. Suppose A has a single, isolated, theoretical belief, N – say, the belief that there are neutrons – while B also has that belief, but along with a wide range of other theoretical beliefs – T – about protons and electrons, about atoms, and molecules, about electromagnetic theory, etc. Perhaps pure foundationalism is the view that A's belief that N is precisely as justified as B's belief that N, whereas, according to impure foundationalism, A's belief that N is less justified than B's belief that N.
3. If so, then impure foundationalism looks more plausible to me. For suppose that one thinks in terms of inference to the best explanation, or in terms of hypothetico-deductive method. N, on its own, will explain virtually nothing, and it will generate virtually no predictions whose accuracy could serve to confirm N, whereas N, if embedded within theory T, may be a crucial part of the best explanation of various observations, and may, together with the rest of T, generate many accurate predictions. Consequently, it seems plausible that A's belief that N will be much less justified than B's belief that N.
4. The logical probability of N relative to the propositions that one is non-inferentially justified in believing is, however, the same for A as for B, since, by hypothesis, they are non-inferentially justified in believing the same things. But B, because of the embedding of N in a wider theory, will be able to see the relevant connections, and thus will be justified in assigning a probability to N that A, not seeing those connections, will not be justified in assigning. B will be able to see, for example, that various true predictions result from having N in one's system of beliefs.

8. Haack also distinguishes two different versions of coherentism:

- (1) **Uncompromisingly Egalitarian Coherentism** = The view that "only overall coherence matters." (418)
 - (2) **Moderated, Inegalitarian Coherentism** = The view either that "a subject's beliefs about his present experience" have a "distinguished initial status," or else the view that "beliefs that are spontaneous rather than inferential in origin" have a special status. (419)
9. In the case of coherentism, consider Laurence Bonjour's "Observation Requirement". On one interpretation, it is "genuinely coherentist, but doesn't allow the relevance of experience", while on another interpretation, "it allows the relevance of experience, but isn't genuinely coherentist." (419)

Haack's Explication of Foundherentism

1. Foundherentism can be characterized as follows:

- (1) Sensory experience has a role with respect to how justified a person is in accepting a given empirical belief.
- (2) Introspective awareness of one's own mental states has a role with respect to how justified a person is in accepting a given empirical belief.
- (3) Justification is a "double-aspect concept, partly causal as well as partly logical in character." (419)
- (4) Justification admits of degrees.
- (5) The concepts of evidence and justification are "internally connected: how justified a person is in believing something depends on the quality of his evidence with respect to that belief." (420)

Comment

As we shall see later, Haack uses the term "evidence" in a way that differs from the ordinary use of this term, and this in two ways. First, what she calls 'S-evidence' consists simply of certain psychological states of the person, **including ones that the person may have no beliefs about**. Secondly, while what she calls 'C-evidence' consists of propositions, **they need not be propositions that the person in question believes**.

- (6) Different people can be justified to different degrees in accepting a given belief, since one's justification depends upon the quality of the evidence that one possesses.
- (7) Justification is also relative to a time, since one's justification for accepting a given belief at a given time depends upon the quality of the evidence that one possesses at that time.

2. Haack notes that the term "belief" is ambiguous, as sometimes it refers to a **mental state** – that is, to one's believing something – while sometimes it refers instead to **the content** of what is believed – that is to a **proposition**. Accordingly, Haack introduces the following distinction:

"A's **S-belief** that *p*": A **mental state** of A that is A's believing that *p*.

"A's **C-belief** that *p*": The **content** of A's S-belief that *p* – namely, the proposition that *p*.

3. Next Haack says that evidence needs to be related to both of these:

"'A's evidence' needs to be tied somehow to what causes A's S-belief, but also must be capable of standing in logical or quasi-logical relations to the C-belief, the proposition believed." (420-1)

Comments

1. Although Haack speaks here of "A's evidence", it would be more accurate to speak of "A's evidence **for p**".
2. The reason is that what causes A's S-belief that *p* may generate evidence for *p* without generating evidence for some other belief, *q*, that A has, not because it has no bearing upon the probability that *q* is true, but because it played no causal role in generating A's S-belief that *q*.
3. Haack's view would, then, be better formulated as follows:

***"A's evidence **for** p ' needs to be tied somehow to what causes A's S-belief **that** p , but also must be capable of standing in logical or quasi-logical relations to the C-belief **that** p , the proposition believed." **

4. Haack distinguishes next between "S-evidence" and "C-evidence":

(1) A's **S-evidence** with respect to p consists of the "set of states of A causally related to his S-belief that p ."

(2) A's **C-evidence** with respect to p consists of "a set of propositions capable of standing in logical or quasi-logical relations to the C-belief that p ."

5. Not just any type of state can be part of a person's **S-evidence**:

"A's S-evidence with respect to p ' will refer to those experiential and belief-states of A's which belong, at the time in question, to the causal nexus of A's S-belief that p ." (421)

6. Haack divides S-evidence with respect to p up into **two components**:

(1) A's **S-reasons** with respect to p is that part of A's S-evidence with respect to p that consists of other **beliefs**.

(2) A's **experiential S-evidence** with respect to p is that part of A's S-evidence with respect to p that consists of A's "perceptions, his introspective awareness of his own mental goings-on, and memory traces of his earlier perceptual and introspective states." (421)

Comments

1. It is unclear why **memory traces** are included in A's **experiential S-evidence**, rather than in A's **S-reasons**. For aren't memory traces **beliefs**?

2. Most of the time, there are no conscious mental states that involve awareness of one's memories. So what Haack calls "experiential S-evidence" appears to require only **potential** experiences, rather than **actual** experiences.

3. Is the same true with regard to one's "introspective awareness" of one's own mental states and activities? If not, then one's beliefs about, for example, one's own present beliefs, will generally turn out to be unjustified. But if "introspective awareness" covers potential awareness, it is a rather unhappy and misleading expression.

4. Note that A's experiential S-evidence includes A's **perceptions**. But by "perceptions" Haack means, here, perceptual states in the sense of **perceptual experiences**.

7. Next, Haack describes what determines the C-evidence:

"The two aspects interlock: A's C-evidence with respect to p will be a set of propositions, and how good it is will depend on those propositions' logical or quasi-logical relations to p ; but *which* propositions A's C-evidence with respect to p consists of, depends on which of A's S-beliefs and perceptual, etc. states belong to the causal nexus of the S-belief in question." (422)

8. Haack now divides C-evidence with respect to p up into **two components**:

(1) A's **C-reasons** with respect to p is that part of A's C-evidence with respect to p that consists of his **C-beliefs** – that is, the propositions that are the contents of his S-reasons.

(2) A's **experiential C-evidence** with respect to p is that part of A's C-evidence with respect to p that consists of "propositions to the effect that A is in the perceptual/introspective/memory states that constitute his experiential S-evidence with respect to p ." (422)

9. Haack then goes on to note two things:

(1) "Since a perceptual, etc., state cannot be part of the causal nexus of A's S-belief that p unless A is *in* that state, these propositions are all true."

(2) "But they need not be propositions that A believes." (422)

Comment

By counting propositions that are not believed as evidence, Haack is abandoning **internalism**. Her reasons for wanting to do this are not clear. In footnote 10 she notes that her theory is "not straightforwardly externalist", nor "straightforwardly internalist", and she also notes that "A's experiential evidence consists of propositions that A need not believe or even conceive." (430) It would be nice to have some discussion of the rationale that she sees for this.

10. Haack says that the incorporation of these true propositions into the experiential C-evidence is "the foundherentist way of acknowledging that the ultimate evidence for empirical beliefs is experience – very different from the forced and unnatural way in which foundationalism tries to acknowledge it, by requiring basic *beliefs* justified by experience alone." (422)

Comments

1. On Haack's view, as long as a state of certain restricted sorts – perceptual, introspective, or memory – causes some belief that p , the relevant proposition about the existence of that state is **evidence** for that belief.

2. If a state of one of the three restricted sorts – perceptual, introspective, or memory – causes the belief that a state **of the sort in question** exists, the belief will automatically be a **noninferentially justified** belief.

3. Evidence need not be good evidence, so Haack is not claiming, for example, that if a given experience causes one to believe that God exists, then the latter belief is necessarily justified.

4. **If**, however, the belief **is** justified on that basis, then it will be **noninferentially justified**.

5. So while beliefs about one's present perceptual, introspective, or memory states can be noninferentially justified, and will be if they are both caused by those states, and have the right content, **noninferentially justified beliefs** are **not restricted** to beliefs about such states.

6. One objection to this model is that there could be causal connections that did not in general lead to beliefs that are justified **according to this account**, but that might do so **by accident**. For consider the following:

- (1) Suppose that whenever a person has two experiences involving qualitative properties that are either identical, or very similar, those two experiences are **phenomenologically indistinguishable** for the person, and that that causes him to believe that precisely the same property is present in both cases.
- (2) It might be that that belief is almost always false: the properties are very similar, but not identical.
- (3) Indeed, one might be able to argue that it is **very likely** that such a belief is false, since continuity considerations rather suggest that there may be an **infinite** number of different qualitative properties that are phenomenologically indistinguishable from one another.
- (4) The experiential C-evidence in the case where the properties are different will, then, not justify the belief that the properties are the same.
- (5) But in the rare case where the properties **are** identical, the experiential C-evidence will contain the proposition that the properties are identical, and so, on Haack's account, that belief will be justified.

Is this right? When one is right by accident, and where the situation is one where it is much more likely that one's belief would be false than that it would be true, does one want to say that the belief in question is a (noninferentially) justified one?

7. In the case of ordinary beliefs about physical objects – leaving aside beliefs about identity of properties of physical objects that rest upon beliefs about identity of properties of experiences – any such belief that turns out to be **noninferentially justified** on Haack's model will turn out to be inferentially justified on an indirect realist model. So if there is a problem of justifying the relevant inference in an indirect realist model, a precisely parallel problem will be present for Haack's model.

11. Haack goes on, however, to suggest that the propositions that one should use in describing perceptual experiences are ones that characterize the experiences by means of **comparative looks-locutions**. So, for example, "the corresponding experiential C-evidence will be a proposition to the effect that A is in the kind of perceptual state a normal observer would be in when looking at a female bird in those circumstances." (422)

Comments

1. This means that what Haack takes to be **experiential S-evidence** generates experiential C-evidence that implicitly incorporates generalizations to the effect that physical states of some type P are **causally sufficient** to produce experiences of some **non-comparative type E** in normal observers.
2. This seems misguided. Why should propositions be used whose falsity is **logically compatible** with one's having an experience of the type in question?
3. The use of such propositions will not, however – as far as I can see – enable Haack to justify a claim to the effect that the experience is caused by a physical object **if it could not be justified otherwise**.

12. Next, Haack asks why sensory states are treated differently than extrasensory states. Her answer is that ESP is "excluded because – unlike sensory experience – it has no role in the implicit conception of evidence I am trying to make explicit." (423)

Comments

1. If experiential S-evidence were restricted to **experiences**, this reply might be right.
2. But once certain **beliefs** are included in experiential S-evidence – namely, memory beliefs – then the exclusion of other beliefs – including extrasensory beliefs – appears arbitrary.

13. Haack now asks, "What factors raise, and what lower, degree of justification?" (423)

14. Haack's answer is complicated, but it seems clear, in the end, that it involves the following claims:

- (1) Both (a) **experiential C-evidence** and (b) **C-reasons** are relevant.
- (2) **Experiential C-evidence** is always necessary; **C-reasons** on their own are not sufficient.

15. The analogy that Haack appeals to is that of a crossword puzzle: the **clues** correspond to experiential C-evidence, and the **intersections of words** correspond to C-reasons. So just as clues are necessary for a crossword puzzle, so **experiential C-evidence** is necessary in the justification of beliefs.

16. Haack describes her own view of the factors that are relevant to the justification of beliefs as follows:

"How justified A is in believing that p , analogously, depends on how well the belief in question is supported by his experiential evidence and reasons [supportiveness]; how justified his reasons are, independent of the belief in question [independent security]; and how much of the relevant evidence his evidence includes [comprehensiveness]." (423)

17. Haack points out that the fact that evidence E entails p does not mean that E is conclusive evidence for p , since E might be inconsistent.

Comment

When evidence is **experiential C-evidence**, inconsistency is not possible, since experiential C-evidence consists of true propositions. So Haack's claim here is not really relevant.

18. Haack proceeds to talk about **supportiveness** when the relation is not deductive:

"The word 'integration' was chosen to indicate that E may support p either because p explains E or some component of E, or vice versa – that there is 'mutual reinforcement between an explanation and what it explains.' (So the concept of explanatory integration is closer kin to the coherentist concept of explanatory coherence than to the foundationalist concept of inference to the best explanation.)" (424)

Comment

Given that inferences can run either from cause to effect or from effect to cause, this seems fair enough. But this is no less true on a foundationalist view.

19. Haack characterizes **independent security** as follows:

"Similarly, how justified a person is in believing something depends in part on how well it is supported by his other beliefs, and hence on how justified he is in believing those reasons, independently of the belief in question." (425)

20. Haack now argues that **no circularity** threatens here:

"And, though 'justified' appears on the right-hand side of the independent security clause, there is no danger of an infinite regress – any more than with a crossword puzzle. As in the case of the crossword eventually we reach the clues, so with empirical justification eventually we reach the experiential evidence. And experiential evidence does not consist of other C-beliefs of the subject, but of propositions all of which are, *ex hypothesi*, true, and with respect to which the question of justification does not arise." (425)

Comments

1. Haack is here affirming that evidential C-evidence is always necessary.
2. However, although it is not mentioned at this point, Haack indicates later that the C-evidence for a belief might be only indirect – that is, it might be C-evidence for some other belief that is appropriately related to the belief in question.
3. One thing that is not clear is whether the evidential C-evidence must raise the probability of the belief in question to greater than one half.
4. If the latter is not required, there does not appear to be any non-arbitrary line that one can draw, other than the requirement that the evidential C-evidence must raise the probability above the *a priori* probability.

21. The final factor that is relevant to the degree of justification is **comprehensiveness**:

". . .degree of justification depends not only on supportiveness and independent security, but also on comprehensiveness – on how much of the relevant evidence the subject's evidence includes." (425)

Comment

But surely comprehensiveness is not really relevant if *p* is a belief about one's own present experiences.

22. The following are **necessary conditions** of A's being justified to any degree in believing that *p*:

- (1) A has some C-evidence with respect to *p*.
- (2) If *p* is an empirical belief, A has some experiential C-evidence with respect to *p*.

(It is at this point that Haack says that the C-evidence for p could be indirect – that is, it could be direct experiential C-evidence for some other belief q , where p and q are appropriately related.)

(3) "A third necessary condition is that A's C-evidence with respect to p should meet minimal conditions of supportiveness, independent security, and comprehensiveness . . ." (426)

Comments

1. As noted earlier, comprehensiveness is surely not really relevant if p is a belief about one's own present experiences.
2. Notice that Haack says that the C-evidence for a belief could be only **indirect** – that is, it could be C-evidence for some other belief that is appropriately related to the belief in question.
3. This has an important consequence that seems to me undesirable, since if the C-evidence for a belief can be indirect, it appears to follow, given to Haack's account of justification, that one could have **good C-evidence** for the belief that **one is presently having an experience of type E even though one is not having an experience of type E**.

Here's the argument for this claim:

- (1) Suppose that one has good evidence that whenever one is in a brain state of type B, one is having an experience of type E. (This might consist of justified beliefs about **past conjunctions** of being in a brain state of type B and having an experience of type E.)
- (2) Suppose, also, that one has good evidence that one is now in a brain state of type B.
- (3) Then one may very well thereby have good evidence that one is now having an experience of type E.
- (4) All of this is compatible with its being **false** that whenever one is in a brain state of type B, one is having an experience of type E: perhaps it is not brain states of type B that always give rise to experiences of type E, but brain states of a slightly different type B*.
- (5) But, then, if one were in a brain state of type B, but not in one of type B*, one could have good evidence, on Haack's approach, that one was now having an experience of type E, even though one was not having an experience of type E.

4. It also follows from Haack's account that one could be **justified** in believing that one is presently having an experience of type E even though one is **not** having an experience of type E.

(1) How can this be, given that if one is not having an experience of type E, then one will necessarily be justified in believing that one is not having an experience of type E, since the proposition that one is not having an experience of type E will be part of one's experiential C-evidence for the belief that one is not having an experience of type E?

(2) The answer is, first, that the fact that one is not having an experience of type E does not entail that one **believes** that one is not having an experience of type E, and secondly, that since one's not having an experience of type E is not part of the cause of the belief that is inferred from the information that one is in a brain state of type B –

namely, the belief that one **is** having an experience of type E – the proposition that one is not having an experience of type E is **not** part of one's **experiential C-evidence with regard to the belief that one is having an experience of type E.**

5. Contrast how things are on a certain type of foundationalist approach. First, recall Alston's idea of **Minimal Foundationalism**:

(1) Beliefs can be noninferentially justified.

(2) Any inferentially justified belief is justified on the basis of noninferentially justified beliefs.

Secondly, consider the following two-part, **Privileged Class Thesis**:

(PCT) There is some type, T, of propositions, such that, first, a proposition can be non-inferentially justified only if it is a proposition of type T, and, secondly, a proposition of type T can be justified only if it is noninferentially justified.

Now define **Privileged Class Foundationalism** as follows:

**Privileged Class Foundationalism =
Minimal Foundationalism + the Privileged Class Thesis**

Third, consider the following **Thesis of Direct Acquaintance**:

(DA) A belief that *p* can be noninferentially justified only if one is directly acquainted with a state of affairs that makes it true that *p*.

Now define **Direct Acquaintance Foundationalism** as follows:

**Direct Acquaintance Foundationalism = Minimal Foundationalism
+ the Privileged Class Thesis + the Thesis of Direct Acquaintance**

Suppose, finally, that the Privileged Class, T, consists of propositions about **one's own, present, mental states, including experiences**. Then according to the Privileged Class Thesis, one's belief that one is now having an experience of type E cannot be justified unless it is noninferentially justified. But according to the thesis of Direct Acquaintance, one cannot have a noninferentially justified belief that one is now having an experience of type E unless one is directly acquainted with some state of affairs that makes it true that one is now having an experience of type E.

The upshot is that, according to Direct Acquaintance Foundationalism, it is impossible to be justified in believing that one is now having an experience of type E if one is **not** now having an experience of type E.

Haack's Foundherentist approach, by contrast, entails that it is possible to be justified in believing that one is now having an experience of type E even if one is **not** now having an experience of type E.

The Ratification of Foundherentism

1. Here Haack affirms the view that there are standards that are objective in a certain sense:

"Rather, I see these standards – essentially, how well a belief is anchored in experience and how tightly it is woven into an explanatory mesh – as rooted in human nature, in the cognitive capacities and limitations of all normal human beings." (427)

Comments

1. It seems to me that an ultimate account of justification should be free of any dependence upon contingent truths.
2. In what follows, Haack does not consider the possibility of such an account of justification. Instead she is content to say, ". . . the assumptions referred to in my 'supposing' clauses, though empirical in nature, are of such generality as to be rather philosophical than scientific in nature." (428)

2. Haack considers the Evil Demon hypothesis. Her response is as follows:

"And what am I to say to readers worried about the Evil Demon, who are bound to object that I have not ruled out the possibility that our senses are not a source of information about the external world at all? After pointing out that since, *ex hypothesi*, his machinations would be absolutely undetectable, if there were an Evil Demon *no* truth-indication would be possible for us – only that my claim is a conditional one: that if any truth indication is possible for us, the Foundherentist criteria are truth-indicative." (429)

Comments

1. The possibility of an Evil Demon does not show that *no* beliefs are justified: it shows at most that some beliefs are not justified.
2. Haack is failing to distinguish between the question of whether Foundherentist criteria are truth-indicative and the question of whether applying those criteria leads to the conclusion that **the belief that there is a mind-independent external world is justified**.
3. The situation is that Foundherentism is a satisfactory answer to skepticism concerning the existence of a **mind-independent, external world** only if indirect realism is also a satisfactory answer.

Concluding Critical Comments on Susan Haack's Paper

1. Theories of Justification and Necessary Truths

1. In setting out an account of the justification of beliefs, one should set out an account that applies to **any possible believer**, regardless of its cognitive abilities.
2. Such an account will consist of **necessary** truths only.
3. Haack does not attempt to construct such an account. What she offers, instead, is an account that incorporates, in effect, contingent truths about the cognitive abilities that humans actually possess.

4. One consequence is that if – contrary to what seems very likely, given our current experimental knowledge – humans had paranormal abilities, Haack's account would be unsatisfactory by her own lights.

2. The Lack of Clarity with regard to the Idea of Experiential Evidence

1. Haack characterizes A's **experiential S-evidence** in terms of A's "perceptions, his introspective awareness of his own mental goings-on, and memory traces of his earlier perceptual and introspective states." (421). Given the term "experiential", it sounds as if perceptions, introspective awareness, and memory traces are all being thought of as experiences. But unless "memory traces" are either memory **thoughts** or memory **images**, this won't be so.

2. If the expression "memory traces" is also supposed to cover **beliefs** about previous perceptual experiences and introspective states, then the question arises as to why **these** beliefs form part of one's experiential S-evidence, and not other beliefs.

3. Are states of introspective awareness **first-order** mental states – such as bodily sensations – or **second-order** mental states – such as thoughts about sensations? Or do **beliefs** about one's current experiences, either perceptual or otherwise, also count as introspective states?

4. If certain beliefs do count as introspective states, then the question once again arises as to why these belief states form part of one's experiential S-evidence, and not various other beliefs.

3. The Unusual Use of the Term "Evidence"

1. The word "evidence" is closely related to the word "evident". Thus one of the definitions of "evidence" that is offered by the *American College Dictionary* is "something that makes evident".

2. C-evidence, by contrast, as defined by Haack consists of propositions about one's perceptual experiences and introspective states that one may not believe – since one can, for example, have experiences that one does not notice, because one is paying attention to something else.

4. The Lack of Clarity about When Experiential C-Evidence is Necessary for Justification

1. Haack holds that no belief can be justified unless it is supported, at least indirectly, by experiential C-evidence.

2. But how much experiential C-evidence is needed in order to have a system of justified beliefs? Consider, here, Haack's crossword-puzzle analogy. All ordinary crossword puzzles have clues for every entry. A system of justified beliefs need not be like that, since it is not necessary that there be experiential C-evidence **directly** associated with every one of the justified beliefs. So consider, then, crossword puzzles where **some** of the entries have no clues. If there were **no clues at all**, the puzzle would be analogous to a coherentist view of justification, where there is no experiential C-evidence. Such a system of beliefs is, on Haack's view, not a system of justified beliefs. But what about a system of beliefs that was like a massive crossword puzzle in which

only one entry had a clue? Could there be a system of justified beliefs in which only one of the beliefs had a direct connection with experiential C-evidence?

Haack's account does not provide, as far as I can see, any answer to that question.

5. Justification and Epistemically Isolated Beliefs

1. One important argument for Foundationalism is that there can be beliefs that are justified, and that are not supported by any other beliefs at all. An example is any belief about one's own present sensations.

2. Haack, however, says, "A third necessary condition is that A's C-evidence with respect to p should meet minimal conditions of supportiveness, independent security, and comprehensiveness . . ." (426). She does not specify what the minimal condition with regard to comprehensiveness is, but if it requires anything at all, then this requirement can be seen to be mistaken in view of the case of epistemically isolated beliefs.

6. The Absence of a Quantitative Measure

1. Haack suggests that there may be no linear ordering of beliefs with regard to the degree of justification since there may be no plausible way of generating a quantitative measure of justification based on the three factors of support, explanatory interrelations, and comprehensiveness.

2. If so, the third problem mentioned above is very serious, since there will be no way of answering the question of whether a **single** belief's being directly connected with experiential C-evidence is sufficient to give one a system of justified beliefs, or whether more connections with experiential C-evidence are needed, and, if so, how many.

3. A foundationalist approach, by contrast, can hold that a person, S , is justified in believing the proposition that p at level k if (1) the logical probability of p relative to the totality of S 's noninferentially justified beliefs is equal to k , and (2) S is justified in believing that the logical probability of p relative to the totality of S 's noninferentially justified beliefs is equal to k .

4. The basic point here is that foundationalism is a one-factor theory – the one factor being logical probability. Haack's theory, by contrast, is a three factor theory, and not only are there no measures associated with the three factors of support, explanatory interrelations, and comprehensiveness, but also, even if one had such measures, there would be there is no non-arbitrary way of combining them to get a single measure of degree of justification.

7. Beliefs that Wrongly Get Classified as Justified

1. As I pointed out earlier, if, as Haack holds, beliefs about states other than one's own present perceptual experiences, introspective states, and memory traces of previous perceptual experiences and introspective states can be justified without being justified on the basis of justified beliefs about present perceptual experiences, introspective states, and memory traces of previous perceptual experiences and introspective states, then it is possible that beliefs that are caused by a process that does not **normally** generate true beliefs will sometimes turn out to be justified.

2. My earlier example involved a causal process in which whenever a person had two indistinguishable experiences, he formed the belief that precisely the same property was present in both cases.

3. A different example is this. Suppose that whenever a person has **any** sort of visual experience, the occurrence of that visual experience gives rise, in the person, to a belief that part of his current visual experience involves the property of qualitative purpleness. Suppose, now, that on some occasion the person has a visual experience that does involve a small part that has the property of qualitative purpleness, and that the general causal process in which the mere having of any sort of visual experience gives rise to the belief that one is having an experience at least part of which involves qualitative purpleness operates to produce the belief that part of his current visual experience involves the property of qualitative purpleness. According to Haack's account, that belief will on that occasion turn out to be noninferentially justified, since the **experiential C-evidence**, which will be completely consistent, will entail that the proposition in question.