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FOUNDATIONALISM WITHOUT THE REGRESS ARGUMENT

In "The Foundationalism in Irrealism"[1], John Post claims, among other things, that foundationalism is false. In this paper, I will argue that Post's argument is missing a vital premise which turns out to be false, namely that foundationalism is true only if the regress argument holds. I will argue that there are reasons to believe foundationalism to be true independently of the regress argument; furthermore, I will argue that because of these arguments Post's alleged counterexample to the regress argument fails. Professor Post's work has been illuminating in another way, however. His arguments that some forms of inferential justification are not transitive (as well as his supposition that deductive inferential justification is transitive) point to a notion that is badly in need of disambiguation in epistemology, viz. what it is for one proposition to justify another. I will take up this issue. My main challenge will be to give an account of justification which distinguishes it from validity, yet avoids a popular argument for various forms of anti-foundationalism.

Post's basic argument is as follows:

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[1] John F. Post, "The Foundationalism in Irrealism", to appear in <u>Descartes, His Texts, Legacy and Prospects</u>, ed. David Weissman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

> P1   The regress argument is valid only if justification is transitive.
>
> P2   Some forms of inferential justification are not transitive.
> --
> C   Foundationalism is false.

As it is, the argument is not valid. What is needed is an additional premise:

> P3   Foundationalism is true only if the regress argument is valid.

It is this premise that I wish to take Post to task for. First, though, I have some problems with Post's arguments for P2.

One of Post's objections to the transitivity of justification has to do with arguments based on explanatory value. Actually his objection is twofold. First, he claims that "relations of explanation. . .are not in general transitive."[2] Secondly, he says that "even if explanation were transitive, <u>best explanation</u> could not be."[3] I will first deal with the former objection.

Let us first look closely at why Post thinks that justification through abductive inference is not transitive.

> Suppose x justifies y in virtue of y's being the best explanation of x, and y in turn justifies z in virtue of z's being the best explanation of y. If transitivity held, x would have to justify z in virtue of z's being the best explanation of x, a better explanatory story than any other competitor. . .Given that y is <u>the best</u> explanation of x, as

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[2]   Ibid, p. 23.

[3]   Ibid.

by hypothesis it is, and that z is the best explanation of y, z cannot also be <u>the best</u> explanation of x; there can only be one <u>best</u> explanation, and y is it.

What is erroneous in this passage is the statement that "if transitivity held, x would have to justify z in virtue of z's being the best explanation of s." This is so only if by transitivity in this sentence he means the transitivity of explanation. But we might choose to concede that relations of explanation are not transitive, but still maintain that justification is. To illustrate this point, it will be useful to show how arguments based on explanatory value must work. Consider the following argument form:

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I.      1.  If y, then x
        2.  x
        3.  y is the best explanation for x
        4.  If (1,2, and 3), then y
        ------------------------------------
Therefore, 5.  y
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This argument form is justification affording in the sense that given any substitution instance, if we are justified in believing the premises, then we are justified in believing the conclusion. It may at first seem that we have needlessly complicated the argument. In fact, it appears that Post is happy with (I.3.) by itself. One might want to argue that of (I.1), (I.2), and (I.4), we can either do without them or assume them on the basis of (I.3). On close examination, however, we see the need for the rest in order for the inference from x to y to be justification affording.

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(I.1.) is necessary (though obviously not sufficient) for us to get y from x, for it states the relationship (probably causal, though not necessarily) between the two. Nor can we derive it from (I.3), for there may be a case where even though y is the best explanation for x, it is not sufficient for x.[4]

(I.2) is also necessary. This should be clear, for even though y may be the best explanation for x if x should occur, in order to infer y we must assume that x has occurred.

(I.4) is needed in order to make the jump from a proposition's simply following from other propositions, and our being justified in believing a proposition on the basis of other justified propositions. Not only does y have to in some sense follow from these propositions, but in order for us to be justified in believing y on the basis of those propositions, we have to see that it follows. Otherwise we would be justified in believing, for instance, all the logical consequences of our beliefs, even if we didn't see that they followed from our beliefs, but instead just chose to believe them at random.[5]

Given this argument form and Post's example, we can construct an analogous example to get from y to z. That is, given any substitution instance of the following argument form,

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[4] Although I am committed to the necessity of (I.1) for explanatory arguments to work, others may not be. For the purposes of this objection to Post, however, (I.1) is not crucial.

[5] I owe this point to Andrew Cling. Also, as with (I.1), while I am committed to the need for this premise, it is not needed to make this particular point in response to Post.

if we are justified in believing the premises, then we will be
justified in believing the conclusion (i.e. z).

     II.   1. If z, then y
              2. y
              3. z is the best explanation for y
              4. If (1,2, and 3), then z.

Therefore, 5. z

In addition, since Post says that x justifies z _in virtue of_
z's being the best explanation for x, we should illustrate this
explanatory argument as well.

     III.   1. If z, then x
              2. x
              3. z is the best explanation for x
              4. If (1,2, and 3), then z

Therefore, 5. z

Post's objection is that (I.3) and (III.3) are
contradictory. Post concludes that relations of explanation are
therefore not transitive, nor are relations of best explanation.
But (III.3) is not even needed. Furthermore, as we shall see in
section III, the two are not contradictory.

To see that (III.3) is not needed, let us examine the
origins of each premise in the third argument, keeping in mind
that this is supposedly an argument whose premises follow simply
from the first two, if justification is transitive. (III.1)
follows from (II.1) and (I.1). (III.2) follows from (I.2), and
also from (II.5) and (III.1). (III.4) follows from (II.4) and
(I.4). And (III.5) follows from (II.5). Notice, though, that

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(III.3) follows from (II.3) and (I.3) only if relations of explanation are transitive. And this is in fact what Post is rejecting. Fair enough.

But what is important here is that <u>we do not need (III.3) in order for x to be a part of what justifies z</u>. In fact, we do not need the third argument at all. For z is already justified via the second argument. Moreover, a necessary premise of the second argument is y. And y is only justified (in this example) by argument (I), of which x is a crucial premise. Therefore, since x is a part of what justifies y, and y is a part of what justifies z, then x is a part of what justifies z. Transitivity holds. There is no reason to assume that x is an explanation for z at all, unless we already assume that explanations are transitive. Regardless, whether or not explanations are transitive is a question independent of whether or not justification is transitive. Once we grant that (I) and (II) are justification affording arguments, and that (I.2) is separate from (I.3), yet still crucial to the validity of the argument (and likewise with the corresponding premises in (II)), we see that explanatory arguments are not counterexamples to the claim that justification is transitive.

Now to address Post's claim that "even if explanation were transitive, best explanation could not be". Earlier I claimed that in fact (I.3) and (III.3) are not contradictory. This may at first seem like a surprising claim that can only be grounded on a misunderstanding of the superlative. Hear me out.

The solution to this riddle can be discovered by means of a careful study of the nature of abductive inference. Post does an excellent job of explaining how these arguments are supposed to work. The key to my objection to his argument can be found by noticing the distinction between competing and noncompeting explanations. To avoid confusion, I once again refer to the text: "To say that y is the best explanation of x, in the relevant sense, is to say that of the competing explanations we can generate of x, y is better than any other."[6] He illustrates this point nicely with the following example, which I will represent with the following symbols.

    P = I forgot to turn the stove on.
    Q = The temperature of the water is low.
    R = The water is not boiling.

As Post points out, both P and Q are compatible explanations for R; they are not competing, and hence neither can be said to be better than the other. He offers the following as a competing example:

S = The stove is broken.

In this case, P and S are competing explanations for R. While they are logically compatible with each other, it seems clear that one will provide a better explanation for R, and if we can find enough relevant information, we will figure out which

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[6] p. 24, my emphasis.

one to hold, given R.

But notice that in order for a contradiction to occur, we have to have two best explanations _among competing explanations_ for R. But it is not clear how in this example (or any other example that I can think of), transitivity will lead us from one explanation to a competitor. Given P, Q, and R, we can see how transitivity would, according to Post, work. R justifies Q in virtue of Q's being the best explanation for R. Likewise, Q justifies P in virtue of P's being the best explanation for Q. Therefore (according to Post), if transitivity held, R would justify P in virtue of P's being the best explanation for R. But (again, according to Post's objection), P cannot be the best explanation for R, because we have already said that Q is. But Post admits that "neither can be said, in the relevant sense, to be a better explanation." The reason is that they are not competing explanations.

In order for his objection to work, we need to find two competing explanations, one of which explains the other; it seems we have our work cut out for us. For the only way justification could be transmitted at all in an inference to the best explanation is if the proposition receiving justification explains the already justified proposition. But in order for there to be a contradiction of the sort Post claims is if the proposition which explains the other also competes with the other. I do not see how there could be such a case. If we take his own example, we can try to use S, say, instead of Q. But

this doesn't work, because while R might justify S in virtue of S's being the best explanation for R, it is hard to imagine S justifying P in virtue of P's being the best explanation for S, since P does not seem to explain S at all. Nor does it help to flip-flop them, for S does not explain P at all. The alleged counterexample has failed on both counts. For we can hold on to the transitivity of justification independently of whether or not explanation is transitive, and supposing that the notion of best explanation is transitive does not lead us to a contradiction after all.

Post's second alleged counterexample to the claim that justification is transitive involves cases of mathematical probability. Ultimately, I think it is a case where justification is not transitive. But there is still much to be said. For one thing, we shall soon see that Post's argument that foundationalism requires that all justification be transitive is not sound. Secondly, his argument for the claim that justification via probability is not transitive is not exactly valid either, even though he comes to a true conclusion. It is lacking in an interesting way, though, in that Post fails to acknowledge the distinction between one proposition's following from (or being likely given) another, and our being justified in believing one proposition on the basis of another. But more on this later. Let us first examine why his overall argument fails.

They key to Post's error lies, as I said earlier, in the missing premise P3. While Post is right to claim that the

regress argument has historically been a driving force for foundationalism, criticisms of the regress argument are not necessarily criticisms of foundationalism. I offer the following rough definition to illustrate this point. Foundationalism is the conjunction of two claims: (I) Some beliefs are basic (i.e. justified, but not by inferring them from any other beliefs), and (II) All justified beliefs are ultimately justified by basic beliefs.

Post offers the following account of the famous regress argument:

1. There are justified beliefs.
2. Every justified belief is justified by inferring it from some justified belief or beliefs.
3. No belief justifies itself.
4. If a belief x justifies a belief y, and y justifies z, then x justifies z.
5. There is no infinite sequence of beliefs each of which is justified by inferring it from its predecessor.

This is a reductio ad absurdum argument. The statement the foundationalist assumes to be true for the sake of argument but ultimately rejects is (2). It is rejected to avoid the contradiction, which shows up when (1) - (4) are held in conjunction with (5), for (1) - (4) entail the negation of (5). Post's contribution is (4). He claims it is necessary for the argument to work because of the following example:

Assume W is a possible world in which (a) there are just two beliefs, x and y; (b) x is justified by inferring it from y; and (c) y is justified by inferring it from x. Hence (1) and (2) are true of W. Assume further that (d) neither x nor y justifies itself, so that (3) is true of W. Assuming

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(d) in addition to (a)-(c) is consistent because without (4)
it does not follow from x's justifying y and y's justifying
x that x justifies itself; so too for y. Hence, (1)-(3) are
true of W. But [(5) is true]: there are only two beliefs
in W, not an infinite sequence of them. So (1)-(3) by
themselves do not entail [the negation of (5)]; (4) is
required.

But while this is an interesting critique of the regress

argument, it does not refute foundationalism. The regress

argument is only one (albeit historically important) argument for

foundationalism. There are others. I find one in particular

very persuasive, viz. the claim that we ought to in some way make

sure that our beliefs (or that those beliefs we count as

justified, anyway) are in some way connected to the world as it

is independently of what we happen to believe about it. If it is

possible for all of our beliefs to be inferred from other

beliefs, no matter how we feel about infinite regresses or

circularity, we can have a completely consistent and coherent set

of beliefs which may be in no way connected with the world which

is as it is no matter what we happen to think about it. To use

the example of C.I. Lewis, the coherence alone of a system of

beliefs gives us no more reason to believe it to be true than

does a well written novel. This argument alone, skepticism

aside, is enough reason for us to accept the two canons of

foundationalism. The requirement of a tie to experience outside

of our belief system supports the first cannon (i.e. that there

are basic beliefs) as long as we claim that we do have justified

beliefs. It also supports the second, since it rules out beliefs

which do not have the tie that basic beliefs provide.

Furthermore, once we accept these two canons, we see that Post's counterexample is no longer relevant. While world W may show that in order for the regress argument to be sound it needs premise (4), world W isn't possible for the person who accepts foundationalism on other grounds. For in W, the only two beliefs are inferred (solely, I take it) on the basis of each other; there is no ultimate reference to some non-propositional evidence which provides any justification, so x and y are not in fact justified. The regress argument is safe.

But we must still decide whether to accept it, now that we see that we do not need it to motivate foundationalism, and that the anti-foundationalists reject it. Perhaps we should take a closer look at exactly what the regress argument is supposed to be. Basically, the regress argument is a disjunctive syllogism which says that there are four possibilities for justifying a belief by inferring it from another. They are as follows:

(1) Belief A is justified by belief B, which in turn is justified by belief C, and so on ad infinitum.

(2) Belief A is justified by belief B, which is not justified.

(3) Belief A is justified by belief B, which is justified by belief C, and so on until belief A is required for justification, and a circle is formed.

(4) Belief A is justified at some point by some basic belief B, which is justified but not by inference from any other belief.

Most epistemologists that I am aware of will reject both (1)

and (2) as possibilities. The first is rejected because it seems implausible that we are even physically capable of having an infinite set of beliefs, much less justified beliefs. The second is rejected because it is clear that B cannot confer justification upon A if B is itself not justified. Foundationalists will typically reject (3) because they claim that a belief cannot justify itself. Therefore foundationalists are left with (4). Most anti-foundationalists (e.g. coherentists) reject (4), usually because they claim that there aren't any (or enough) basic beliefs to justify all the beliefs that we believe ought to be justified. They would rather accept (3), and claim that as long as our system of beliefs is coherent (where coherent usually means logically consistent plus something else, the something else varying from theory to theory), we can admit circular justification.

I am sympathetic to the regress argument for foundationalism as stated. I reject (1) and (2) for the reasons mentioned, and I reject (3), but not exactly for the typical reason. I am as yet agnostic about whether or not circular inferences are always vicious. Andrew Cling has done some interesting work suggesting that perhaps circular arguments can be justification enhancing, if not by themselves justification affording. What I am opposed to is the idea that we can justify beliefs solely by inferring them from other beliefs, without ever relying on evidence that is in any way non-inferential. If at some point in the justificatory chain we rely solely on the very belief to be

justified, then we cannot hope to get anywhere.

On the other hand, I am not sure I want to swallow foundationalism whole, at least not as it is typically presented. I am well aware of the fact that all my argument for foundationalism requires is a tie to the world as it is independently of what we happen to think about it. This does not entail, however, that basic beliefs must be completely justified without inferring them from other beliefs. In other words, the claim is that there must ultimately be some sort of non-inferential evidence, but not that this non-inferential evidence is necessarily sufficient for my being justified in a belief, merely necessary. In fact, I argue, as many coherentists do, that such non-inferential evidence is never sufficient by itself for my being justified in believing another proposition. I am still a foundationalist, though, because I argue that such non-inferential evidence is ultimately necessary.

The clue to why non-inferential evidence is not sufficient can be found in Post's arguments. Post never clearly draws the distinction between validity and justification. He assumes that if a particular, say, inference to the best explanation is a valid inference, then it is justification affording. But this is true only in the sense that it provides some potential justification which would-be knowers might or might not use. What we need to do, however, is distinguish between a proposition's being (validly) inferable on the basis of another proposition and a proposition's actually being inferred on the

basis of another. Not only are the two not the same, but the difference between them raises important questions.

First and foremost, we must ask exactly what it is for a person to have evidence for a belief. Clearly, it is not enough for there to just be evidence in the world for a belief. Likewise, it is not enough for an argument 'E therefore H' to be valid. Instead, it seems that the believer must somehow be aware of the evidence. Otherwise, there would be an infinite set of propositions which, should I only believe them, I would gain as justified beliefs, for there is an infinite set of propositions which can be validly inferred from all sorts of evidence of which I do not even know about. I might, for instance, form the belief that cows have more than one heart. This belief would be justified solely on the basis of evidence which I may or may not even be aware of.

Furthermore, I want to claim that the believer, in order to be justified, must somehow not only be aware of the evidence, but must also be aware that the evidence _is_ evidence. For if this is not the case, then I can be justified in believing any number of, say, complex mathematical theorems which follow from my justified belief in other, more simple, theorems, even though I don't see that they follow from the simple theorems. For instance, suppose I choose to believe Fermat's last theorem. Now, last I heard, this "theorem" has not been proven. It is the case, however, that either it is actually a theorem or it is not. But if we do not require that we in some sense be aware of a justification,

then my belief in the theorem is justified, as long as it actually is a theorem, even though I have no idea how to show that it follows from other theorems. I want to claim that such a belief would not be justified at all. In other words, I have to be aware that the evidence provides me with reason to believe the would-be justified proposition, and not just be justified in believing the evidence statement.[7] As one advocate of coherentism, Laurence BonJour, puts it, "it is necessary, not merely that a justification for [a belief] exist in the abstract, but that the person in question be in cognitive possession of that justification".[8]

One objection to this view is that it seems to require that in order to have knowledge we must have the concept of evidence, and maybe even of justification. But most people lack at least the concept of justification, and maybe that of evidence, too, even though we want to say that at least some people have justified beliefs. Some, such as William Alston, push the envelope further by hinting that having the concept of justification would have to mean that we be able to state our justification for a belief. If he is right, then such a requirement is obviously too strong, for most people will not be

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[7] For convenience, I have switched by now to speaking of evidence statements. This does not exclude, however, non-propositional evidence of the sort that (in part) justifies basic beliefs. In general, I mean for the claims about evidence to count for both propositional and non-propositional evidence.

[8] Laurence Bonjour, "A Critique of Foundationalism", in The Theory of Knowledge, ed. Louis P. Pojman (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing, pp. 214-226), p. 219.

able to state adequate justification even for what we take to be very simple and highly justified beliefs. Nor will most people be able to recite a definition for justification, or perhaps even for evidence. But neither of these is any reason to suppose that the average knower has no concept whatsoever of a justified belief. Non-philosophers distinguish all the time between justified beliefs and non-justified beliefs. We are likely to not trust beliefs formed by reading horoscopes. Likewise, we often consider whether or not news reporters are actually in a position to know about the information they convey. These distinctions are made on the basis of beliefs about what counts as evidence (e.g. reliable witnesses) and what does not (e.g. psychic hotlines).

Furthermore, it seems to me that we must have a concept of not only what counts as evidence, but what counts as <u>adequate</u> evidence in order for us to have justified beliefs. Again, we need not be able to state exactly what the threshold is every time, or even give an account of what 'adequate evidence' means. But we do in some sense need (and have) the concept. Probabilistic inferences illustrate this point nicely. Suppose the weather forecaster, Mr. Everwrong, says that there is a 75% chance of rain tomorrow. If I (justifiably) believe that Mr. Everwrong is an authority on the subject, then I might be inclined to form the belief that it will rain tomorrow. But I will only (justifiably) do so if I am in some sense aware that a 75% chance means that it is highly likely to rain, as opposed to

a, say, 30% chance. While I need not have a particular threshold set, nor do I need to be able to give an argument about adequate evidence, I do need to be aware in some sense that the evidence I have is in fact evidence and is adequate for my forming a belief which is likely to be true.

In Epistemic Justification, Alston offers an alternative. He claims that a belief can be justified simply be being formed in a way which is reliable. He rejects the claim made by Sellars that we have to in some way be aware that the belief forming mechanism is reliable. Alston states the issue to be decided nicely:

> Sellars thinks that if there is to be a "connection", it will have to be a relatively sophisticated one in second intention; it will have to be that the speaker makes her statement in recognition that the circumstances are propitious for its truth. But there is a humbler candidate, the one that is already built into the initial suggestion that Sellars thinks we must go beyond, viz.,. . .the mere fact that the particular utterance is a manifestation of a general tendency to make such utterances only in truth-conducive circumstances is _itself_ a "connection between the statement and its authority" that removes the case from the class of lucky guesses or accidental hits; and this is true whether or not the speaker knows _that_ the circumstances are propitious. What we need from Sellars is a reason for thinking that this simpler "connection" is not enough, and that the higher-level-knowledge connection is required for knowledge of the lower level proposition.[9]

Alston's mistake is in claiming that any "tendency to make such utterances only in truth-conducive circumstances" rules out "lucky guesses or accidental hits". As far as the believer is

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    [9]   William P. Alston, Epistemic Justification, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press) p. 67, note 18.

concerned, if the believer is not aware of this tendency, then there is no justification. The believer could still just be lucky, for though we might rule out luck for a particular proposition if we see a pattern in the believers belief forming, we must still allow for the possibility that the believer by luck or accident chose a mechanism for forming beliefs which turned out to be reliable.

The following example has been proposed by Andrew Cling in support of the position Alston advances, and as a counterexample to my view. Suppose that Smith has a dog which stays in his apartment when Smith is teaching. Furthermore, suppose that for some odd reason Smith has developed the habit of always using the shave-and-a-haircut knock on his apartment door before entering. His dog now, whenever she hears this knock, immediately forms the belief that Smith is about to open the door. But suppose one day Smith can't get away, so he sends me home to feed his dog instead. Knowing of Smith's odd habit, I also give the familiar knock on the door before opening it, thereby causing his dog to form the (this time false) belief that Smith is home. Now, the question is whether or not these beliefs on the part of the dog are justified. It is argued that while it is reasonable to suppose that Smith's dog has a justified belief in each case, it is not reasonable to suppose that the dog is in any way aware that she has adequate evidence, or that this belief has been formed in a way likely to lead to truth. Apparently the dog just forms the belief on hearing the knock, yet this method is

generally so reliable that it seems this belief could only be justified.

I think the force of this example rests on our sympathy for dogs and a willingness to believe that they must have justified beliefs, combined with a lack of faith in the ability of dogs to be aware of any justificatory processes. We can perhaps clear up this problem by modifying the example. Suppose Smith has also hired someone named Patty to do his laundry. Further suppose that she is in his apartment doing his laundry when I arrive and knock at the door. Upon hearing the knock she immediately believes (falsely) that Smith is at the door. Unlike Smith's dog, Patty has never heard Smith knock on the door in this fashion. In fact it seems that she has no reason to believe it to be Smith, for even though it is his apartment, it is unusual for someone to knock on their own door before entering. Nonetheless, on the basis of the knock at the door she forms the belief that it is Smith. But it just so happens that this is in general a reliable belief forming mechanism, for in all previous times when someone has given the shave-and-a-haircut knock on Smith's apartment door, it has been Smith; moreover, in the future the mechanism will remain reliable. But Patty has no reason to think that forming beliefs in this way will lead to true beliefs, and she is therefore not justified in believing it to be Smith. As for the dog, the dog's belief is justified, if justified, by some sort of (justified) belief that whenever she hears this knock, Smith is at the door, which is in some sense

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called to mind upon her hearing the knock. That belief is justified either by a memory of some of the previous instances of Smith's knocking, or perhaps even simply by a certain feeling of conviction in this belief which the dog somehow knows is a sign of beliefs likely to be true. And if all of this is way too much to ask of a dog, then maybe dogs do not have justified beliefs. After all, there is no reason to suppose that justification is simple and easily accessible to animals in the way that true beliefs are.

What's more, while we don't have to require that a justified believer be able to state justification, this will often be possible. In the example given, suppose Patty has often been in the apartment when Smith has knocked on the door. But this time, when it turned out to be me, she expresses surprise. If I ask her why she thought it would be Smith, she will obviously say something like, "Well, he always knocks like that," and perhaps "This is his apartment." And if she is unable to give any decent reason, but instead says, "I just thought it was Smith because of the knock", and I have no reason to believe that she has any evidence that the knock is a reliable Smith-indicator, I will be likely to suspect that she is forming beliefs without epistemic justification.

It seems, then, that no non-propositional evidence can by itself justify some statement, but that we must also be justified in believing that the evidence is evidence for that statement. Likewise, it seems that no single atomic statement can justify

another statement without a similar justified belief that such an inference would be valid. As I argued earlier, though, while BonJour is right about the need for cognitive awareness of the justificatory process, we still need a tie to the world that coherentism does not require. What we are left with is a requirement for basic beliefs, but where basic beliefs means beliefs which are justified but not _entirely_ on the basis of inference from other justified beliefs.

One reason that it might be hard to accept the claim that no single atomic sentence justifies any other is that epistemologists have generally made a distinction between a proposition's being justified for a person and a person being justified in believing a proposition. This distinction comes in many forms. For example, it is often called the distinction between doxastic and propositional justification.[10] Similarly, some distinguish between warrant and justification.[11] But I argue that if we are consistent with what justification is supposed to mean, then these terms are not really needed. If we offer 'has adequate evidence' as a rough definition for 'is justified', then distinctions between whether or not we are aware that we are justified fall away. If I am not aware of my justification, then a proposition is not justified for me, because such awareness is required. The only use such terms

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[10]   For example, Paul Moser, _Empirical Justification_, (Dordrecht: D. Reidel), p. 3.

[11]   For example, John L. Pollock, _Nomic Probability and the Foundations of Induction_, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.87.

might have is to distinguish such cases from cases where I have
and am aware that I have adequate evidence, yet for some reason I
still choose not to believe. But there should be no case where I
believe a proposition and the proposition is justified for me
even though I am not justified in believing it. For the most
part, we can settle for the distinction between validity and
justification.

I have claimed that no single atomic statement justifies any
other statement. But while there is in general a distinction
between one statement's following from another statement and our
being justified in believing a statement on the basis of another
statement, just as there is a distinction between a statement's
being true and our being justified in believing it to be true,
perhaps in some cases one is both necessary and sufficient for
the other. In other words, perhaps there are some atomic
sentences which their being true entails someone's being
justified in believing them, or which their being justified for
someone justifies some other sentence for that person.

There is in fact a set of sentences where truth and
justification are necessarily tied, namely certain sentences
about their own justification. Consider the following sentence:

> S1 Bridgeman is justified in believing that this sentence
>   is true.

Obviously, if this sentence is true, then I (Bridgeman) am
justified in believing it to be true, because that is what it

true entailed their being justified for at least one s, or (2)
There is a p such that p is a member of A and s's being justified
in believing p justifies (by itself) some other statement for s.
But since supposing we can be justified in believing any of the
members of this particular set (i.e. the set of statements which
refer to their own justification) to be true leads to a
contradiction, then we must keep looking for a suitable A. I
expect this search to be in vain.

In conclusion, I must admit that I expect criticism from
both foundationalists and coherentists for my position. It is
likely that most foundationalists, even moderate foundationalists
who allow coherence relations to be justification enhancing, will
not be happy with the claim that circular arguments are not only
justification enhancing, but are in fact necessary in order for
us to build on our foundation. Coherentists and other anti-
foundationalists, on the other hand, will probably still claim
that we do not need this foundation in the first place. I am not
yet deterred, though. We do need a foundation for our beliefs if
we are to avoid a theory of justification which does not exclude
well written novels. Likewise, we also must require that knowers
in some sense be aware that their evidence counts as evidence,
and that it is adequate. My view allows for both, resting on the
strength of foundationalism while enjoying the fruits of
coherentism.