

God
without
Proofs

On Rational Belief in God

To believe in something without justification (= sufficient reason, adequate evidence) is **irrational**.

But what counts as a justification to believe? Here we have questions of:

Quality (How is it justified?) and
Quantity (To what extent is it justified?)

Quality: justification as **subjective** vs **objective** (= intersubjective)

Quantity: justification provides:

- (1) some reason to believe P (too weak)
- (2) makes P more likely true than false (just right)
- (3) makes P certainly true (too strong)



I like this
one.

Models of Justification

Foundationalism

Knowledge as a formal system beginning with a set of self-evident axioms from which are inferred all the other beliefs.



Euclid
(c. 325-c.265 BCE)

Coherentism

Knowledge as a non-formal, non-linear, set of inter-connected and mutually supporting beliefs.

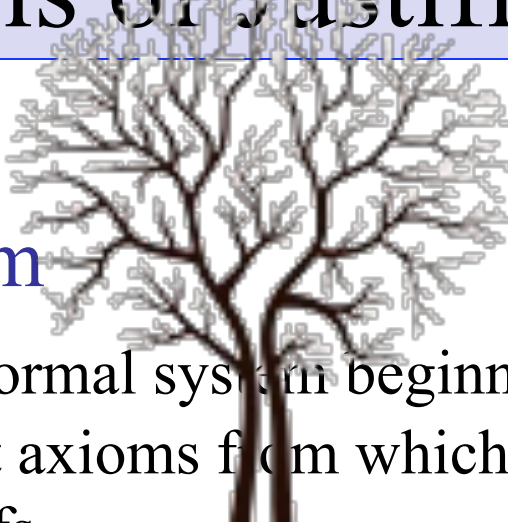


W. V. O. Quine
(1908-2000)

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Foundationalism

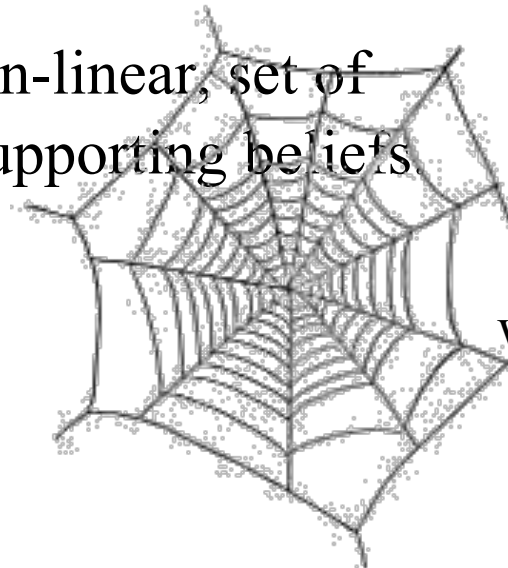
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Kinds of Foundationalism

Strong

Foundational beliefs must be absolutely certain, self-evident, incorrigible, “immune from error.”



Rene Descartes
(1596-1650)

Moderate/Weak/Reformed

Foundational beliefs must be basic (a “good reason to believe” that is non-inferential = “common-sensical”).



Al Plantinga
(b. 1932)

Noetic Structures

A person's noetic structure is the set of beliefs held and their epistemic relations.

- (1) Basic vs Inferred
- (2) Index of Degree of Belief
- (3) Index of Depth of Ingression



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(b. 1932)

Evidentialism

Is belief in God basic or inferred?

Evidentialism assumes that such a belief is inferred.

Descartes' Cogito ("I think, therefore I am") and Religious Experience: both are basic (non-inferred)

Knowing God

Given Reformed Epistemology, I can know that God exists so long as God actually does exist.



Al Plantinga
(b. 1932)