

# Why Be a Fundamentalist: Reply to Schaffer

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## Abstract

This is my commentary on Jonathan Schaffer's paper "Evidence for Fundamentality?"; both the paper and comments were presented at the Pacific APA, San Francisco, March 2001.

Schaffer argues against the view that there is an ultimate fundamental level to the world. Seeing that quarks and leptons may have an infinite hierarchy of constituents, he claims, "empowers and dignifies the whole of nature" (15). Like Kant he holds that there are as good reasons for believing matter infinitely divisible as composed of fundamental simples.

I'm afraid that Schaffer's provocative arguments have not convinced me. In the paper, I criticize the idea that fundamentalism 'weakens' and 'denigrates' the whole of nature and try to show that an infinite hierarchy can not do the work Schaffer needs it to. I then argue that we should not in fact be agnostic between the two rival hypotheses.

**Keywords:** fundamentalism; particles; infinite hierarchy

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