

God And Other Minds A Study Of The Rational Justification Of Belief In God Cornell Paperbacks

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the contours of christian philosophy series will consist of short introductory level textbooks in the
various fields of philosophy these books will introduce readers to major problems and alternative
ways of dealing with those problems these books however will differ from most in that they will
evaluate alternative viewpoints not only with regard to their general strength but also with regard
to their value in the construction of a christian world and life view thus the books will explore the
implications of the various views for christian theology as well as the implications that christian
convictions might have for the philosophical issues discussed it is crucial that christians attain a
greater degree of philosophical awareness in order to improve the quality of general scholarship
and evangelical theology

with one exception all of the papers in this volume were originally presented at a conference
held in april 1978 at the ohio state university the excep tion is the paper by wilfrid sellars which
is a revised version of a paper he originally published in the journal of philosophy 1973 however

the present version of sellars paper is so thoroughly changed from its original that it is now virtually a new paper none of the other nine papers has been published previously the bibliography prepared by nancy kelsik is very extensive and it is tempting to think that it is complete but i believe that virtual completeness is more likely to prove correct the conference was made possible by grants from the college of humanities and the graduate school ohio state university as well as by a grant from the philosophy department on behalf of the contributors i want to thank these institutions for their support i also want to thank marshall swain and robert turnbull for early help and encouragement bette hellinger for assistance in setting up the conference and mary raines and virginia foster for considerable aid in the preparation of papers and many other conference matters the friendly advice of the late james cornman was also importantly helpful april 1979 george s pappas ix introduction the papers in this volume deal in different ways with the related issues of epistemic justification or warrant and the analysis of factual knowledge

this collection of papers transcends two of the most widely misunderstood positions in philosophy foundationalism and coherentism

traditionally the notion of defeat has been central to epistemology practical reasoning and ethics within epistemology it is standardly assumed that a subject who knows that p or justifiably believes that p can lose this knowledge or justified belief by acquiring a so called defeater whether that is evidence that not p evidence that the process that produced her belief is unreliable or evidence that she has likely misevaluated her own evidence within ethics and practical reasoning it is widely accepted that a subject may initially have a reason to do something although this reason is later defeated by her acquisition of further information however the traditional conception of defeat has recently come under attack some have argued that the notion of defeat is problematically motivated others that defeat is hard to accommodate within externalist or naturalistic accounts of knowledge or justification and still others that the intuitions that support defeat can be explained in other ways this volume presents new work reexamining the very notion of defeat and its place in epistemology and in normativity theory at large

ever since plato it has been thought that one knows only if one's belief hits the mark of truth and does so with adequate justification the issues debated by laurence Bonjour and Ernest Sosa concern mostly the nature and conditions of such epistemic justification and its place in our understanding of human knowledge presents central issues pertaining to internalism vs externalism and foundationalism vs virtue epistemology in the form of a philosophical debate introduces students to fundamental questions within epistemology while engaging in contemporary debates written by two of today's foremost epistemologists includes an extensive bibliography

martin smith explores a question central to philosophy namely what does it take for a belief to be justified or rational according to a widespread view whether one has justification for believing a proposition is determined by how probable that proposition is given one's evidence in the present book this view is rejected and replaced with another in order for one to have justification

for believing a proposition one's evidence must normically support it roughly one's evidence must make the falsity of that proposition abnormal in the sense of calling for special independent explanation this conception of justification bears upon a range of topics in epistemology and beyond including the relation between justification and knowledge the force of statistical evidence the problem of scepticism the lottery and preface paradoxes the viability of multiple premise closure the internalist externalist debate the psychology of human reasoning and the relation between belief and degrees of belief ultimately this way of looking at justification guides us to a new unfamiliar picture of how we should respond to our evidence and manage our own fallibility this picture is developed here

in this critical examination of recent accounts of the nature of science and of its justification given by kuhn popper lakatos laudan and newton smith banner contends that models of scientific rationality which are used in criticism of religious beliefs are in fact often inadequate as accounts of the nature of science he argues that a realist philosophy of science both reflects the character of science and scientific justifications and suggests that religious belief could be given a justification of the same sort

richard swinburne offers an original treatment of a question at the heart of epistemology what makes a belief a rational one or one which the believer is justified in holding he maps the various totally different and purportedly rival accounts that philosophers give of epistemic justification internalist and externalist and argues that they are really accounts of different concepts he distinguishes as most epistemologists do not between synchronic justification justification at a time and diachronic justification synchronic justification resulting from adequate investigation both internalist and externalist he argues that most kinds of justification are worth having because for different reasons indicative of truth however it is only justification of internalist kinds that can guide a believer's actions swinburne goes on to show the usefulness of the probability calculus in elucidating how empirical evidence makes beliefs probably true every proposition has an intrinsic probability an a priori probability independent of empirical evidence which may be increased or decreased by empirical evidence this innovative and challenging book will refresh epistemology and rewrite its agenda

much of the writing in anglo american epistemology in the twentieth century focused on the conditions for beliefs being justified in a book that seeks to shift the ground of debate within theory of knowledge william p alston finds that the century long search for a correct account of the nature and conditions of epistemic justification misses the point alston calls for that search to be suspended and for talk of epistemic justification to cease he proposes instead an approach to the epistemology of belief that focuses on the evaluation of various epistemic desiderata that may be satisfied by beliefs alston finds that features of belief that are desirable for the goals of cognition include having an adequate basis being formed in a reliable way and coherence within bodies of belief in alston's view a belief's being based on an adequate ground and its being formed in a reliable way though often treated as competing accounts of justification are virtually identical beyond justification also contains discussions of fundamental questions about the epistemic status of principles and beliefs and appropriate responses to various kinds of

skepticism

knowledge from plato onwards has been considered in relation to justified belief current debate has centred around the nature of the justification and whether justified belief can be considered an internal or external matter epistemological internalists argue that the subject must be able to reflect upon a belief to complete the process of justification the externalists on the other hand claim that it is only necessary to consider whether the belief is reliably formed and argue that the ability to know by reflection is not required for a justified belief in the historical section of this book the three most important epistemologists plato descartes and hume as well as the ancient epistemologies of the stoics academics and pyrrhonians are considered in reconsidering the history of epistemology the author is led to argue against the view that internalism is historically dominant his critique of internalism is then developed into a sustained argument against many of its forms and he goes on to defend an externalist reliabilist epistemology

presents and defends a bold new approach to the ethics of belief and to resolving the internalism externalism debate in epistemology

a crossroad book

this book is a manuscript that was virtually complete when james w cornman died most of the chapters were in final form and all but the last had been revised by the author the last chapter was in handwritten form and the concluding remarks were not finished swain took charge of the proofreading and john l thomas compiled the indices with the assistance of lehrer it is our opinion that this manuscript like the other books cornman published is one of exceptional scholarly and philosophical importance as do all of his philosophical publications this work reflects cornman's great love for philosophy and his commitment to the search for truth every serious student and author of epistemology will benefit from and admire the thorough scholarship and rigorous argumentation they will find herein it has been our privilege to participate in the preparation of the manuscript for the philosophical public keith lehrer marshall swain ix introduction introduction to epistemological skepticism many philosophers try to refute skepticism but few try to give a precise characterization of the thesis they attack my first aim consequently is to characterize skepticism or more precisely several species of skepticism then i shall choose those species i wish to consider and justify my choice to begin let me distinguish what i shall call epistemological skepticism from the thesis i shall call ontological nihilism and from what is believed by someone whom i shall call an ontological skeptic

an international journal of general philosophy

broadly speaking this is a book about truth and the criteria thereof thus it is in a sense a book about justification and rationality but it does not purport to be about the notion of justification or the notion of rationality for the assumption that there is just one notion of justification or just one notion of rationality is as the book explains very misleading justification and rationality come in various kinds and to that extent at least we should recognize a variety of notions of justification and rationality this at any rate is one of the morals of chapter vi this book in chapters i v is

mainly concerned with the kind of justification and rationality characteristic of a truth seeker specifically a seeker of truth about the world impinging upon the senses the so called empirical world hence the book s title but since the prominent contemporary approaches to empirical justification are many and varied so also are the epistemological issues taken up in the following chapters for instance there will be questions about so called coherence and its role if any in empirical justification and there will be questions about social consensus whatever it is and its significance or the lack thereof to empirical justification furthermore the perennial question of whether and if so how empirical knowledge has so called founda tions will be given special attention

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