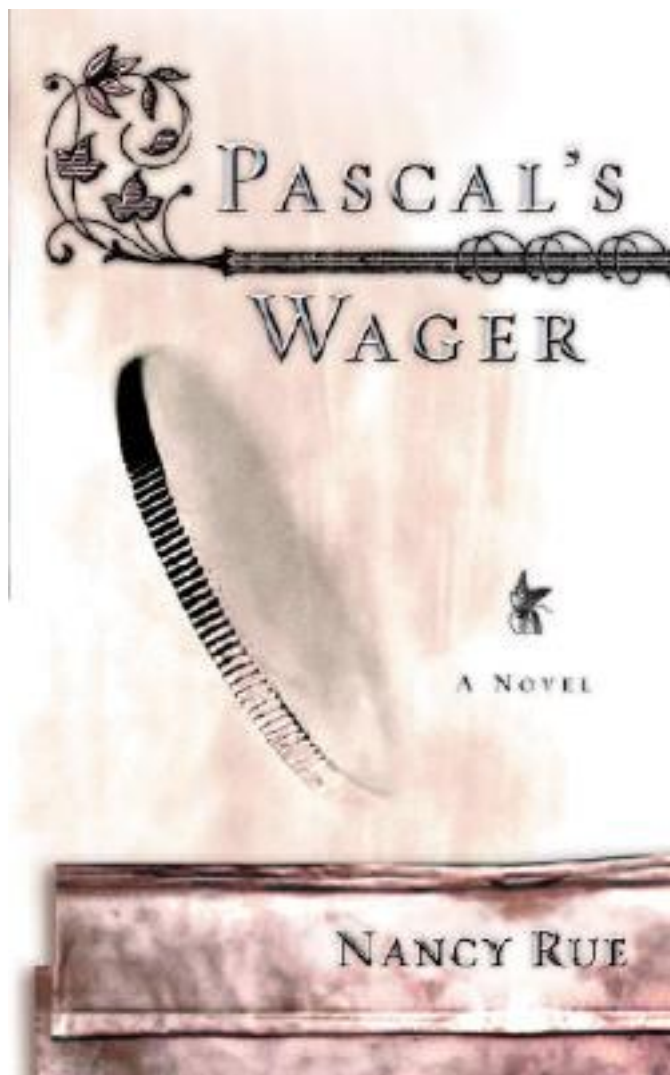


Pascal's Wager



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出版者:Oxford University Press, USA

出版时间:2006-12-28

装帧:Hardcover

isbn:9780199291328

What if there is no strong evidence that God exists? Is belief in God when faced with a lack of evidence illegitimate and improper? Evidentialism answers yes. According to Evidentialism, it is impermissible to believe any proposition lacking adequate evidence. And if any thesis enjoys the status of a dogma among philosophers, it is Evidentialism. Presenting a direct challenge to Evidentialism are pragmatic arguments for theism, which are designed to support belief in the absence of adequate evidence. Pascal's Wager is the most prominent theistic pragmatic argument, and issues in epistemology, the ethics of belief, and decision theory, as well as philosophical theology, all intersect at the Wager. Other prominent theistic pragmatic arguments include William James's celebrated essay, 'The Will to Believe'; a posthumously published and largely ignored pragmatic argument authored by J.S. Mill, supporting the propriety of hoping that quasi-theism is true; the eighteenth-century Scottish essayist James Beattie's argument that the consoling benefit of theistic belief is so great that theistic belief is permissible even when one thinks that the existence of God is less likely than not; and an argument championed by the nineteenth-century French philosopher Jules Lachelier, which based its case for theistic belief on the empirical benefits of believing as a theist, even if theism was very probably false. In *Pascal's Wager: Pragmatic Arguments and Belief in God*, Jeff Jordan explores various theistic pragmatic arguments, and the objections employed against them. Jordan presents a new version of the Wager, what he calls the 'Jamesian Wager', and argues that the Jamesian Wager survives the objections hurled against theistic pragmatic arguments and provides strong support for theistic belief. In addition to arguing for a sound version of the Wager, Jordan also argues that there is a version of Evidentialism compatible with a principled use of pragmatic arguments, and that the Argument from Divine Silence fails. Objections found in Voltaire, Hume, and Nietzsche against the Wager are scrutinized, as are objections issued by Richard Swinburne, Richard Gale, and other contemporary philosophers. The ethics of belief, the many-gods objection, the problem of infinite utilities, and the propriety of a hope based acceptance are also examined.

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评论

Reason can decide nothing here.

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