

Einladung zum GASTVORTRAG

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Cosmic Purpose and Epistemic Self-Trust

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Cartesian skeptical arguments press skeptical worries by identifying skeptical scenarios that are allegedly compatible with our evidence. But these scenarios are presented as mere possibilities; typically, no positive reason is given for thinking that any such scenario is probable. By contrast, a “positive reason” skeptical argument challenges some outlook by showing that, on the supposition that the outlook is true, it is probable that a skeptical scenario obtains. I argue that positive reason arguments present a more serious skeptical concern than standard Cartesian skeptical arguments. Moreover, a great many outlooks fall prey to positive reason skeptical arguments. Indeed, I contend that positive reason skepticism can be reasonably resisted only by those who affirm that the world is fundamentally ordered towards goodness. But does this conclusion provide a good reason to affirm such cosmic teleology? I argue that it may, defending this answer by appealing to a modest pragmatism.



John Pittard specializes in epistemology and the philosophy of religion. A number of his publications focus on questions concerning the rational significance of disagreement with informed and intelligent interlocutors. His book, *Disagreement, Deference, and Religious Commitment* (Oxford University Press, 2019), assesses the challenge that religious disagreement poses to confident religious (or irreligious) commitment. Much of Prof. Pittard’s work in progress focuses on arguments that purport to show that some worldview or metaphysical outlook is rationally incompatible with epistemic self-trust.

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