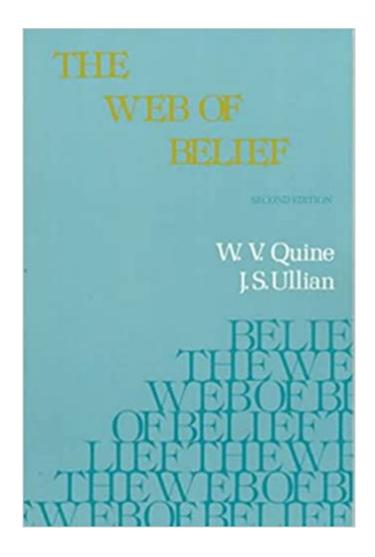The book was found

The Web Of Belief

Synopsis

A compact, coherent introduction to the study of rational belief, this text provides points of entry to such areas of philosophy as theory of knowledge, methodology of science, and philosophy of language. The book is accessible to all undergraduates and presupposes no philosophical training.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Many of Quine's writings are aimed at scholarly readers who are already steeped in the subject-matters he addresses. And, in any event, his readers are usually assumed to be scholars who are interested in this-or-that matter of philosophical or logical esoterica. But not here! THE WEB OF BELIEF is beautifully written for a general audience, especially high schoolers, clearly its "target audience".The metaphor that Quine uses to explain the nature of science it that of a circular rug, woven from its interior outward, to its, um, uttermost tether. And, being a rug, it is of one piece: unitary, interconnected, complex. Albeit one that gets somewhat frayed at those outermost edges, its periphery, over the decades: one in need of repair there from time to time. In the way that, say, Newton¢Â Â™s rug needed to be repaired where it was frayed Ã¢Â Â" fixed up a bit and extended Ã¢Â Â" by 20th-century master-weavers like Einstein and his ilk.WhatÃ¢Â Â™s particularly valuable about this book Ã¢Â Â" this clear explication of the nature of science Ã¢Â Â" is the care taken to rid science, and its methods, of random vulgarizations of the technical terms it uses, for example, Ã¢Â ÂœtheoryÃ¢Â Â• to mean Ã¢Â Âœa simple, isolated conjecture or guessÃ¢Â Â•. Again, the Ã¢Â ÂœrugÃ¢Â Â• Ã¢Â Â" as explained by Quine and Ullian Ã¢Â Â" is of one piece; thus, each part of it is inextricably connected to every other partÃ¢Â Â¦so that a scientific theory, rightly so-called,

isn't akin to, say Jones's "theory" that the Cubs will win the upcoming World Series!Anyway, I HIGHLY recommend this book. For bright high school students and, indeed, for anyone who wants to learn of the workings and nature of science. And its history. Also on my list of recommendations is A.N. Whitehead's SCIENCE AND THE MODERN WORLD! That gent is Quine's next door neighbor, atop Mt. Olympus. And what those gods offer is VERY accessible! To demi-gods and even to mortals like me.

good

excellent

Willard Van Orman Quine (1908-2000) was an American philosopher and logician who taught at Harvard University, and wrote many books such as Word and Object,From a Logical Point of View: Logici-Philosophical Essays, etc. J.S. Ullian is a professor of philosophy.The Preface states, "This little book is a compact introduction to the study of rational belief. It is meant to afford a coherent view of a broad philosophical terrain, providing points of entry to such areas of philosophy as theory of knowledge, methodology of science, and philosophy of language. It was commissioned ... for inclusion in a series intended for freshman courses in English... To our surprise it made its way mainly into introductory philosophy courses."They outline in the first chapter, "we will broach many of the criteria by which reasonable belief may be discriminated from unreasonable belief. But not only are the criteria not foolproof; they do not always even point in a unique direction. When we meet the Virtues for assessing hypotheses we will find that they require us to look at candidates for belief in multiple ways, to weigh together a variety of considerations. Decisions in science, as in life, can be difficult. There is no simple touchstone for responsible belief." (Pg. 8)They admit, "Logic and mathematics seem to be the only domains where self-evidence manages to rise above triviality; and this it does, in those domains by a linking of self-evidence on to self-evidence in the chain reaction known as proof. And even mathematics lends itself only partially to such treatment; this was brought home to us by Russell's paradox, Euclid's postulate of parallels, and Godel's incompleteness theorem." (Pg. 48)They state, "One is sometimes called upon, notably in religion, to believe testimony in the face of strong contrary evidence. The Danish philosopher Kierkegaard remarked that the ability to do this is a test of one's faith. His ancient predecessor Tertullian even abjured reason altogether, declaring `I believe because it is absurd.' Believing an absurdity is already cause for alarm, but believing it because it is absurd is incoherent... Yet it must be said that we do quite

reasonably believe some claims in the face of strong contrary evidence, and this is indeed, as Kierkegaard said, a test of our faith. It is a test of our faith in the claimant, and the belief is reasonable if that contrary evidence is outweighed by still stronger evidence underlying that faith. Science is rich in examples." (Pg. 60-61)They argue, "In the notion of simplicity there is a nagging subjectivity... Why should the subjectively simpler of two hypotheses stand a better chance of predicting objective events? Why should we expect nature to submit to out subjective standards of simplicity?... Considering how subjective our standards of simplicity are, we wondered why we should expect nature to submit to them. Our first answer was that we need not expect it; the strategy of favoring the simple at each step is good anyway... Darwin's theory of natural selection offers a causal connection between subjective simplicity and objective truth in the following way. Innate subjective standards of simplicity that make people prefer some hypotheses to others will have survival value insofar as they favor successful prediction. Those who predict best are likeliest to survive and reproduce their kind..." (Pg. 71-73)They reject the argument from Design "because of problems it raises and leaves open regarding the mechanism of the creation and its overall purpose. Pleading the inscrutability of the ways of God has not appeased our appetite for explanation. Charles Darwin, then, to the rescue, with his abundantly documented hypothesis of natural selection... Darwin's ... explanatory hypothesis ... reduces the teleological explanations of biology sweepingly to explanations in the proper causal sense... The hostility aroused by Darwin's theory was no doubt due only in part due to the indignity and representing man as descended from other animals, and in part rather to its circumvention of the argument from design." (Pg. 117-118)Not only useful as an "intro" to philosophical and rational thinking, this short book is also interesting for the light it sheds on Quine's opinions on subjects---such as religion, and Darwin---on which he seldom comments elsewhere.

Accessing the Deep Web & Dark Web with Tor: How to Set Up Tor, Stay Anonymous Online, Avoid NSA Spying & Access the Deep Web & Dark Web The Web of Belief Steve's Web Operation: Stay Safe Online & Lucy's Web: Omnibus Edition Web Diva Wisdom: How to Find, Hire, and Partner with the Right Web Designer for You Weaving the Web: The Original Design and Ultimate Destiny of the World Wide Web The Tangled Web: A Guide to Securing Modern Web Applications Secure Web Application Deployment using OWASP Standards: An expert way of Secure Web Application deployment Sociology: Web-Linked Dictionary (Collins Web-Linked Dictionary) The Web as History: Using Web Archives to Understand the Past and the Present Learning Web Design: A Beginner's Guide to HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and Web Graphics Cosmos & Transcendence: Breaking Through

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