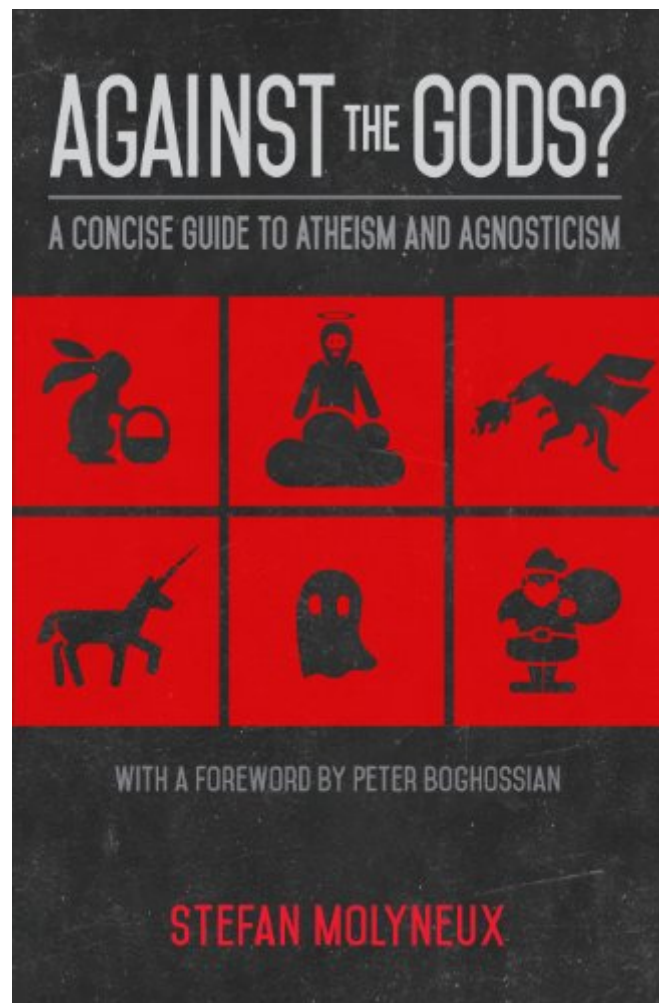




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Against The Gods?: A Concise Guide To Atheism And Agnosticism



Synopsis

Between the poles of strong atheism and strict theism lies agnosticism, the argument that gods are very unlikely, but cannot logically be ruled out as utterly impossible. Agnosticism is considered a cautious, tentative and scientific approach to the question of the existence of gods - Stefan Molyneux's seminal book "Against the Gods?" makes a powerful case against agnosticism and for the positive acceptance of the nonexistence of supernatural beings. It is not rational to even entertain the possibility of the existence of irrational entities. We do not accept agnosticism about unicorns, fairies, square circles, pixies on the proposition that two and two make five - "why do we create a special exception in the realm of deities? Surely it is because the social cost of rejecting God's is far higher than the social cost of rejecting goblins." "Against the Gods?" provides essential ammunition to those fighting the virus of faith, and clears the mental fog of the irrational middle ground between atheism and theism. "Against the Gods" is a nail in agnosticism's coffin. Stefan Molyneux is a pallbearer. Once agnosticism can finally and permanently be put to rest, we can turn our attention to an even more pernicious scourge - faith. Molyneux has begun this journey for us by making an extraordinarily contribution to the much-overlooked dangers of agnosticism." - Peter Boghossian

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Customer Reviews

His arguments for the self-contradictory nature of the concept of deity depend on highly-controversial assumptions, and his defenses of these assumptions are very short and weak. For example, he claims that gods are portrayed as the most complex being imaginable (never mind the doctrine of divine simplicity; he probably doesn't know what that is), but they couldn't be complex because they are eternal and thus could never have evolved into this complex state. That is assuming that biological evolution is the only method to achieve complexity, and that an eternal being could never have evolved. However, eternal might mean everlasting, having no end. In that case, even granting these two assumptions (both of which are doubtful), a god might have evolved and become complex. He assumes that consciousness is an effect of matter, but this is also highly controversial; it is one of the major questions of philosophy, and it certainly hasn't been 'solved' definitively one way or the other. Stefan doesn't spend much time defending this assertion, either. He says that omniscience cannot coexist with omnipotence, since if an omnipotent being changed the future, it would invalidate its knowledge. There are different definitions of what omniscience might mean: It might be that God knows everything past present or future, or that God knows everything until the present (since the future doesn't exist yet, God doesn't yet know it), or it might mean that God knows every possibility of what might happen in each chain of events and the precise result of alteration from every contingent action. He seems to choose the first description. In that case, we could substitute God changing the future 'invalidating' his knowledge to simply 'modifying' it without any problems; the god would still know everything, despite the fact that the subject of its knowledge had changed. Also, putting God outside time is not an ad-hoc response to this claim, as he portrays it. Even if it were, he does not show how this matter would be logically contradictory once God were outside time. His argument that the only things that exist are what can be detected (physically). This is also highly controversial. Of course, a theist could simply say that gods revealed themselves in ways that are physically detectable. That aside, the existence of abstract objects and other nonphysical entities are still the subject of philosophical debate. He might also point out the cliché that even theists are atheists because they deny all the gods but one. Disregarding the question of whether this is relevant or even makes sense, I think that this varies significantly from theist to theist. Some might decidedly deny the existence of all other so-called deities. Others might be agnostic regarding their existence -- maybe they exist, but there doesn't

seem to be compelling evidence. Where are the apologists for Zeus and Thor? Even if they did exist, are they more powerful/worthy of praise than the god(s) that the theist already believes in? Then, of course, there are polytheists, who really do believe in and actively worship multiple gods. There might be Christians, Buddhists, and Muslims who believe that Thor, Zeus, Hera, et cetera exist, but since the God of the Bible/Quran or Buddha is obviously much greater, the others are not really worth bothering with.

In some places the author hits the nail on the head, such as, 'telling a child that "Jesus died for your sins" is a form of child abuse'. In others, he shows as much presumption and prejudice as those he accuses of presumption and prejudice. The book is worth reading, but with the understanding that there is definitely a bit of flawed and/or presumptuous thinking, and you are going to need to supply some of your own common sense to bring the subjects into balance. For instance, he treats taxes as though they were willful theft by "the government", not giving the full story that, (a) left to ourselves, we would not pay taxes, (b) we citizens ARE the government, and (c) if we don't set up a tax base, we are not going to have the amenities we need and have grown accustomed to, like clean water and paved roads. You are going to need to bring more of yourself into reading this book than you will to most books. Still, there are some valid points that have not necessarily shown up elsewhere.

It was a nice argument to read though-out the book but it was clear that Stefan was hell bent on destroying a few arguments put forward to prove god did exist. It was too narrow and didn't expand as much as I thought it would. If he would of expend the book more and fought different arguments this book would of gotten a five star.

There are some excellent points in this little book. However it is very narrowly constructed and not really a guide to atheism. He continually beats on the same point about agnostics treating gods as a special case and the by the same logic they reject many things as outright false but they are too cowardly to do the same thing with the existence of gods. He is right but I got it early and it didn't need so much repetition. Regardless it's inexpensive and has some good points. Worth reading. I think it is free on his website.

In under 100 pages Molyneux has surpassed the most important figures in the atheist movement with the highest clarity and most concise argument ever put forth against the existence of god: the

concept itself is a contradiction. While scholars such as Ludwig von Mises have suggested some arguments in the vain going back as far as 1949 (the Praxeological argument that you cannot be omnipotent--have everything--and act at the same time, because action itself implies the desire to acquire something that you do not have), Molyneux stands as the first philosopher to hold the position vociferously. Not stopping there, Molyneux merges the very best of his investigations into the trauma of childhood and takes his position one step further: he demonstrates the cowardice (while always maintaining compassion for the victims of abuse) of agnostics. This quick read is a must for any young mind thirsty to cut through the fog of a world gone bonkers by the ideas of those who wish to control them. Skip Dawkins. Skip Hitchens. Skip Harris. Read Molyneux.

Not for everyone but certainly for me!

If you're still an agnostic after reading this, you're probably annoying AF.

revealing

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