

PARATHEISM

A Proof that God neither Exists nor Does Not Exist

Steven James Bartlett, Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

Theism and its cousins, atheism and agnosticism, are seldom taken to task for logical-epistemological incoherence. This paper provides a condensed proof that not only theism, but atheism and agnosticism as well, are all of them conceptually self-undermining, and for the same reason: All attempt to make use of the concept of “transcendent reality,” which here is shown not only to lack meaning, but to preclude the very possibility of meaning. In doing this, the incoherence of theism, atheism, and agnosticism is secondary to the more general incoherence of any attempts to refer to so-called “transcendent realities.”

A recognition of the conceptually fundamental incoherence of theism, atheism, and agnosticism compels our rational assent to a position the author names “*paratheism*.”

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A Proof that God neither Exists nor Does Not Exist

Steven James Bartlett

[R]eligious beliefs lack rational support; ... they are positively irrational, ... the several parts of the essential theological doctrine are inconsistent with one another, so that the theologian can maintain his position as a whole only by a[n] ... extreme rejection of reason.... He must now be prepared to believe, not merely what cannot be proved, but what can be disproved from other beliefs that he also holds.

– J. L. Mackie (1955, p. 200)

For a great many people, life is undeniably very hard, and, at one time or another during their lives, living can be very hard for nearly everyone. Suffering, fear, loss, physical pain, despair, the many other forms of hardship, and personal mortality lead people to seek whatever comfort they can. Though the longing for comfort calls for compassion and is understandable, we should not be blind to human shortcomings that lead people to embrace sometimes baseless and sometimes incoherent beliefs, which often, instead of bringing only comfort, motivate men, women, and frequently even children to regard one another with enmity, and result in increased rather than lessened suffering.

The search for a solid explanation for these phenomena, one based on evidence, has absorbed a large part of my professional life. As discussed in detail in *The Pathology of Man* (Bartlett, 2005), studies by leading contributors to psychiatry, clinical psychology, ethology, anthropology, sociology, and history have shown that the human species is gullible, credulous, and afflicted by compelling needs for self-gratification, traits which are invested in rigid, self-enclosed systems of belief that then become group ideologies, and which in turn too often lead to widespread

aggression and destructiveness.¹

These traits dominate the minds and conduct of the great human majority, and nowhere do they exercise such supreme suppression of mankind's rationality than in humanity's embrace and willful defense of religious beliefs, our species' primary source of existential comfort. Human history has been dominated by a grotesquely crowded universe of countless varied fantastic religious fictions and wishful thinking. Such a universe overflowing populated by every imaginable fabulous variation of myth and the occult staggers the serious rational mind. Nonetheless, many who regard themselves as rational can and do take their own individual religious preferences very seriously, and are willing to fight to the death on behalf of what they want urgently to believe and to convince others to accept. Both history and psychology have shown that once enough people share a belief, it becomes truth for them.

Over the millennia, philosophy and theology have recommended a grand smorgasbord of alleged "proofs" that God exists, while only a few brave thinkers have taken a stand against the religious majority and expressed disapproval that exhibits a genuine degree of critical thinking. Their disapproval has usually been voiced in highly cautious, tentative, respectfully phrased, and at times even fearful ways. Bertrand Russell explained why he is not a Christian, Freud judged religion to be a childish illusion, Marx considered it to be the opium of the people, and more recently Richard Dawkins has daringly challenged the permissive reverencing and privileging of religious beliefs. But among those who have censured religion—here I specifically have theism in view, and, related to it, atheism² and agnosticism—none,

¹ See Bartlett (2005; relevant to the present paper, see in particular Chapter 19, "The Pathology of Everyday Thought": § "The Delusion of Transcendence and Human Evil.").

² In this essay, I understand 'atheism' in the ordinary sense of the word, that is, to refer to the position that denies the existence of God (or gods). Some authors (e.g., Martin, 1990) prefer to distinguish "negative" and "positive" atheism: The "negative" variety refers to the simple abstention from belief in a god (from the Greek, 'a' meaning 'without' or 'not' and 'theos' meaning 'god'). "From this standpoint an atheist would simply be someone without a belief in God, not necessarily someone who believes that God does not exist" (Martin, 1990, p. 463). In contrast, Martin's "positive" atheist, the

to my knowledge, have offered *rationaly compelling* reasons why *all three* of these religious viewpoints should be dismissed as—not simply false—but rather as fundamentally *incoherent*.

Various arguments have been proposed that purport to show that God does not or cannot exist. These arguments have been of two kinds: those that attempt to show that the existence of God is improbable (e.g., Martin & Monnier, 2006), and those that seek to prove that the very idea of God leads to logical contradiction (e.g., Martin & Monnier, 2003). Arguments of the first kind claim that available evidence strongly supports the conclusion that God does not exist, whereas the second kind claim that the concept of God is self-contradictory; these focus on one or more properties ascribed to God—for example, omniscience, necessary existence, omnipotence, moral perfection, etc.—and argue that such a property, or combination of properties, leads to contradiction.³

The approach developed here leads to a third and more fundamental kind of proof: It identifies a conceptually central attribute shared by the God-concept that is relied upon by theists, atheists, and agnostics alike when they propound claims concerning God, and shows that necessarily presupposed referential preconditions are denied in their very concept of God. This *self-undermining overreach* that is at the core of the traditional concept of God does not result in a simple logical contradiction of incompatible attributes, but rather it results, as we shall see, in a variety of inconsistency that precludes *the very possibility of meaning*. The result is an *incoherence of meaning* on a much more fundamental level than previous arguments for God's nonexistence have attempted to expose. We shall find that not only theism, but atheism and agnosticism as well, are inherently incoherent for the same reason.

sense I intend in this essay, does take a definite position, advocating belief in the nonexistence of God (or gods).

³ Some authors have equated the self-contradictoriness of the concept of God with incoherence (e.g., Martin, 1990, Chap. 12). However, although the notion of a “square circle” is logically contradictory, it is not “incoherent” in the way in which the following claim is: “I am referring to something that cannot possibly be referred to”—which undercuts and destroys its own meaning so that the claim makes no sense.

In this essay, I outline a proof that leads to this result.⁴ But no rational proof can pretend to be capable of shaking, even ever so slightly, the unshakable foundation of that variety of human conviction which not only rejects appeals to rationality, but indeed finds rational opposition *reinforcing*—buttressing its rejection of reason by the assurance that there is no faith stronger than that faith which believes *in spite of the sheer absence of evidence*, and which, moreover, *prides itself* in investing utter and total belief *in spite of all evidence to the contrary*, whether drawn, for example, from psychiatric and neurological studies, physical observation, or from rational justification.

There is—in principle—no rational response that *can* be given to this “*credo quia absurdum*”⁵ — “I believe [precisely] because it is absurd.” This is the credo of Kierkegaard’s knight of faith who judges that an ardent, total commitment to a God whose lack of evidence strains reason beyond its limit is itself a prerequisite to salvation (Kierkegaard, 1941). This, too, was the model of faith propounded by G. K. Chesterton (1905) when he praised such faith: “faith means believing the incredible, or it is no virtue at all.” He nodded with approval at the “childish definition” according to which “faith is the power of believing that which we know to be untrue.”

But such blindly embraced faith is essentially fanaticism, as Martin (1991) remarked. Fanaticism’s mind-surrendering devotion to the obsessive blinkering of its own faith has for millennia led to such an overwhelming amount of human conflict, suffering, and death that it makes more sense to claim that “faith as Kierkegaard conceives of it is not a virtue but a vice” (Martin, 1991, p. 24)

No rational response *can* be given to the immovable conviction that the *very existence* of the human longings expressed in religious faith is itself *evidence enough* that reality must satisfy them. As long as men, women, and children remain enthusiastic prisoners in their own intractably self-enclosed, gratifying worlds of wishful fantasy,

⁴ Its full formulation is technical, lengthy, and would overburden this short essay. For a complete account of the methodology employed, see the works cited in note 7.

⁵ Freud (1952/1930, p. 786).

proofs that would dissolve their fictions of course can only fall on deaf ears. As a result, a proof that “God neither exists nor does not exist” *can have* no relevance or significance for people who *prefer* and indeed *will to abdicate* their reason to religious commitment that will heed no other view but its own dogma. The potentially receptive audience for such a proof is, at the present stage of human development, admittedly very small.

...

In the pages that follow, I shall initially have *theistic* religion (whether poly or mono) in my sights, and later turn to atheism and agnosticism. I do not discuss the more naturalistic, or pantheistic, or meditative spiritual-philosophic attitudes and disciplines that claim to enrich human living through *immanent* experience. Immanent experience is experience bounded by the here-and-now; it is in contrast to experience that—so the theist claims—relates to “*transcendent reality*,” which theists propound and in terms of which their God is alleged to have the properties of a deity and to situate His existence. A God whose existence is wholly reduced to immanent experience cannot be satisfying to the theist, who insists as a matter of theological principle in a deity whose being is “more” than what can be experienced. Such a transcendent God is

... the metaphysical whole of which it is impossible for man to form to himself any correct idea. In this abstract being, everything is infinity, immensity, spirituality, omniscience, order, wisdom, intelligence, omnipotence. In combining these vague terms ... the priests believed they formed something; they extended these qualities by thought and they imagined they made a God, while they only composed a chimera. They imagined that these perfections or these qualities must be suitable to this God because they were not suitable to anything of which they had a knowledge; they believed that an incomprehensible being must have inconceivable qualities. These were

the materials of which theology availed itself to
compose the inexplicable phantom before which they
commanded the human race to bend the knee.
(D'Holbach, 2003, pp. 424-5)

'Transcendent' is a term familiar to philosophers, and as is usual in philosophy, philosophers use the word in many ways. Here, my reference to the word is specific: 'Transcendent' is, as I propose to show, a word that claims to have a meaning that it cannot—*in principle* (that is, logically and rationally)—have.

It is important that we distinguish two radically different varieties of "meaning": There is the primitive, inarticulate, "felt" variety of "meaning" which nonverbal incantations, the mystery-cloaked murmurs and cries of sacerdotal rites, the mind-numbing pounding of drums, and any of the many other hypnosis- or hallucination-inducing practices are capable of suggesting. Without a doubt, such evocative, emotionally charged experiences have a "felt meaning" for their practitioners, but this variety of "meaning" is not the kind we shall have in view. Rather, it is the variety of meaning often called "propositional" or "informative" or "cognitive" that shall be our exclusive concern. This is the kind of meaning that claims to truth must possess in order to be intelligible as potentially true; that propositions, whether true or false, must have in order that their truth or falsity can have possible sense; that informative assertions must have in order to be potential conveyors of information; that thoughts which propound alleged facts must have in order to be capable of communicating their intent.

The informative-cognitive meaning that the word 'transcendent' is believed to possess, by those who advocate its use, rests on their claim that the word refers "beyond" experience: So-called "transcendent realities," of which the theistic notion of God is the supreme example, are believed to "lie beyond human experience," perhaps "even beyond *possible* human experience." The allegedly infinitely remote, inexhaustible, and ultimately unfathomable existence of such putative realities is said to be—encapsulated in a single word—"transcendent."

Most people, including many philosophers, are happy to endorse this general kind of claim, and make use of it in many varied forms, as when they think there is nothing particularly strange about hypothesizing the sound of trees that fall in a forest with no one around, as when metaphysicians postulate “extra-mental reality,” or when people invest beliefs in life after death, or speculate about times in the future when no human being remains.⁶ All such claims exemplify the wish of people to refer beyond their frameworks of reference, positing realities that supposedly reside “out there,” and who see nothing at all wrong—nothing wrong in terms of logic or rationality—in attempting to make references just like this.

Transcendent references are attempts to go beyond, to transcend, whatever frame of reference or standpoint a person is using. There is no more exemplary instance of such transcendent reference than that encountered in theism.

The human insistence that *there must always be more* than the species experiences is deeply rooted; it is a kind of unreasoning infantile petulance that *there has got to be more!*—always more “behind” or “beyond” whatever is experienced. *Things as such* cannot of themselves be sufficient; there *must* be powers beyond them, behind the scenes, that explain them or give them value or offer control over them. Anselm’s “than which no greater being can be conceived” expresses this human stretching for a transcendent “more,” a more that is believed *must* reside “out there, beyond all human conceiving, beyond all human experience.” Omniscience, omnipotence, and the other omnis yearn to point to this “beyond,” a beyond which has become so habitually a part of the human mental vocabulary, and forms the very basis for theism, as to resist placing it in question.

In a series of publications now stretching over nearly half a century, and in several disciplinary contexts, I have examined and criticized this human drive to propound realities beyond reality.⁷ Much of this work has been technical, intended

⁶ Claims such as these are examined in several publications, see note 7.

⁷ See, for example, Bartlett (1970, 1975, 1976, 1982, 1983, 1988, 2005 (Part III), 2011 (Chap. 2 and *passim*), 2016).

for professional phenomenologists, epistemologists, logicians, or psychologists. But the basic idea is simple to explain, although for many people that idea is felt to be “elusive” or “conceptually slippery.”⁸ In addition, to be sure, it can be difficult, and sometimes a seemingly hopeless task, to challenge the current fashion and paradigm, to revise customary thinking, or to break through the intellectual recalcitrance of the ideologically self-absorbed.

“If you can’t explain it simply,” Einstein commented, “you don’t understand it well enough.” This essay provides a simplified version and application of previously published studies,⁹ one that should be accessible, even to theists.

...

To many people the very idea of an argument for the nonexistence of God is shocking and implausible. Such an idea is usually a source of amusement, if not derision. How can there be a serious argument for the nonexistence of God when so many people “simply know” that God exists? How can there be a successful proof that God does not exist when it is “common knowledge” that you cannot prove a negative? Indeed, almost everyone in the world today—theist, agnostic, and atheist alike—believes that God is, at the very least, possible. But almost everyone might be mistaken.

– Michael Martin and Ricki Monnier (2003, p. 13)

⁸ There are other—psychologically more basic—reasons why people find this variety of thinking to be challenging and often inapplicable to their outlooks. Three of these reasons are: first, the deeply rooted human recalcitrance to revise or give up beliefs that are emotionally gratifying, already mentioned briefly in the text; second, the inability and unwillingness of many people to transfer rationally compelling results to their own points of view, which I have elsewhere called “the rational bridge problem”; and, third, my observation that the majority of adult human beings are largely, in Piagetian terms, “concrete operational,” that is, people who have not become capable “formal operational” thinkers. Individuals who are largely concrete operational in their thinking often find it difficult or impossible to integrate and apply theoretically compelling conclusions within their own concrete world views. For further discussion, see Piaget (1970, 1977) and Bartlett (1977, 2005, 2011, 2016).

⁹ See references in note 7.

The human propensity to attempt to refer beyond the limits of our frameworks of reference brings with it a multitude of sins, both intellectual and behavioral. The clarity, consistency, and self-critical ability to think are severely compromised, and as this occurs, people are often led to behave in ways that are destructive to others and often to themselves.¹⁰ I have called this propensity to refer beyond the boundaries of frames of reference *projection*, for the believer in transcendent realities gives the impression that he wishes to *project* them beyond his conceptual framework.

It is important to recognize that this is not a matter of the believer who wishes to *reify* objects, to endow mere fictions or constructs with real being, but it is rather a matter of the believer who states claims that rely fundamentally upon a given framework of reference, and yet who asserts that those very claims are made in radical independence of it.¹¹ Such a claim pulls the carpet out from under the believer's feet, or as it once was said, the believer is hoisted by his or her own petards.¹² —This is *projection*, a serious conceptual malady, one which there is compelling justification to call a “*conceptual pathology*,” so mentally handicapping and destructive are its consequences.¹³

It is like trying to say in words what words *cannot* say, or think thoughts that no mind *can* think, or generally to refer to things while one divests oneself of the very *ability* to refer.

How do we recognize that something—anything at all, whatever it may be—exists? We make use of any number of reference frames in terms of which what we wish to refer to can be identified. There are many possible senses of the casually used term ‘existence’, ranging from the physical variety, to the existence of facts, to that of truths, and, some would add, to the existence of literary fictions. Usually we have the

¹⁰ See Bartlett (2005).

¹¹ Metaphorically: The cripple who must depend upon his crutch even to stand upright and walk, nonetheless claims that he runs without it.

¹² Bartlett (1988).

¹³ Cf., e.g., Bartlett (1970, 1983, 2005 (Part III), 2011 (Chapter 2: “Real Definition and Reification” and *passim*), 2016).

physical variety of existence in view, but no matter which variety is at issue, reference to it requires some appropriate framework of reference in terms of which we can know what we're talking about. There is a reference framework in terms of which physical things can be identified, factual and truth-establishing reference frames, and literary frames of reference (for example, Dostoevsky's novels or Tolkein's hobbit-populated universe). Physical objects, facts, truths, and hobbits are identifiable objects of reference from the standpoint of such frames of reference; philosophers endlessly debate whether these should all be thought to "exist" in these respective contexts; here it is enough that they *are* objects of reference relative to their appropriate frames of reference.

Both relativity physics and quantum theory share the recognition of the "framework relativity" of physical observations and of physical laws. Whether an observer's judgments of the simultaneity of macrophysical events or his measurements of the properties of quantum events are at issue, physicists have come to recognize that all physical observations and all formulations of physical laws must necessarily take into account their own relativity to the reference frames that they presuppose.¹⁴

It is no different when it comes to any claim about an object's, a fact's, or a truth's existence: a background framework of reference is and must always be presupposed. Deny the preceding sentence, and you are hoisted by your own petards; you pull the carpet, which you require to stand on, out from under your own feet. You cannot refer while denying the framework that permits such reference.

This is what the theist does when he propounds the existence of a transcendent God. The theist's intention is to *project* the existence of the wished-for deity or deities *beyond* the framework which the theist must, of necessity, employ in order to conceptualize and articulate his intention. In doing this, he falls victim to his own

¹⁴ Both the special and the general theories of relativity, as well as Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, can be understood as direct theoretical consequences of a physical understanding of framework-relativity. Cf., e.g., Bartlett (1970, 1980).

willful trespassing beyond the limits of that not only to which he refers, but of that to which he can *possibly* refer. —This is an important point, and is not as subtle as it might at first glance seem. It is not that the theist *happens factually* to be so limited, but he is limited by *the very preconditions of all referring*—by, that is, the framework-relativity of all referring. No one *can*—in principle, logically and rationally—refer to anything at all without presupposing a suitable framework of reference.

But so-called “transcendent realities” are believed to lie “beyond” whatever framework is employed. Yet the very notion of a “beyond” is itself, like any concept we are capable of employing, framework-relative; the word derives its meaning in terms of the frameworks that permit its meaningful use and application. To push the word ‘beyond’ so as to transgress the limits of contexts in terms of which it is meaningful, is necessarily to become incoherent. We may choose to apply the word to facts or events “beyond” our present knowledge or perception (as when I say, “I don’t know the answer to your question, it’s beyond my knowledge, I’ll look it up”), but we cannot apply the word meaningfully “beyond” the very frameworks in terms of which the word possesses the meaning that it does. There is a limit beyond which applications of the word ‘beyond’ become gibberish: The following statements make no sense: “I mean to use the word ‘beyond’ in a way that goes beyond any frame of reference in which it can be used”; “God exists in a way that goes beyond any frame of reference a human being can employ.”¹⁵

This theoretically fundamental reasoning—itsself a compressed proof—I have elsewhere called “self-validating”;¹⁶ it *rationally compels* us to reject the theist’s claim

¹⁵ A related example of the human desire to stretch a concept beyond its limits of applicability is frequently encountered in discussions of general relativity: Suppose our physical universe is topologically recurved upon itself so that a space traveler who heads continuously in one direction will eventually come back to his or her starting point. Physical space would then be finite but unbounded; there would be no *space*, given our understanding of this term, “outside” our universe. Were such a topologically self-enclosed space actually to be the physical space we inhabit, then to ask what lies “outside” or “beyond” that space, employing the meaning that such terms have come to have for us, is illegitimately to apply spatial concepts that are only meaningful and applicable to such physical space as we know.

¹⁶ See note 7.

that God exists as a transcendent reality. The theist's own projective claim pulls the carpet out from under his or her own feet: the claim cannot *possibly* be made coherently; therefore such a claim *can have* no meaning.

Those who have become so inured to transcendent references that these have become mentally habitual find it difficult to see this fact: The fact that the individual mind has succumbed to its own mental posits is concealed from the mind making them. It is as though such habituated people have become self-inflicting victims of their own minds' unperceived "sleight-of-mind." I use this expression half-metaphorically to point to the thinker's own "magical thinking" that tricks the thinker himself into *overreaching* the referential capacity of the frame of reference in terms of which he attempts to make transcendent references. Habituated by daily use of the referential means afforded by a frame of reference that has become second nature, the individual is lulled into overreaching that frame of reference's referential capacity by seeking—usually unreflectingly and often impulsively—to extend that capacity in ways that are in principle impossible, and therefore incoherent.

The half-metaphor I've used may have some suggestive pictorial merit, but it is essentially incomplete: By likening projections to the psychological results of a kind of "magical thinking," this ignores the fact that certain *concepts*—and not only their psychologically based *use*—are themselves projective: by their own putative meaning, they trespass beyond the framework-relative limits of the referential frames those concepts presuppose.

In short, transcendent reference *can have* no meaning; such attempts to refer are necessarily incoherent.

This result does not single out only the theist for the sin of incoherence; it applies equally both to atheists and to agnostics: Like the theist's claim, the atheist's counter-claim similarly cannot possibly be made coherently: The atheist wishes to deny the existence of a transcendent God, but the very conditions of referring to that to which he or she intends to refer cannot be met. There is no possible way to refer

to a “transcendent God,” even if only in concept with the intent to *deny* that such a deity exists; the last phrase in quotes self-destructs its own possible meaning.

Even agnosticism falls prey to this result: In claiming not to know whether a transcendent God exists, the agnostic presupposes that there is in view something *meaningful* which can, at least in principle, be known. Something meaningful there is not. Agnosticism, like theism and atheism, is not tenable because, in a most fundamental way, the same projective incoherence lies at its core.

The very phrase “transcendent God” (or “transcendent reality” of any kind) is self-defeating. It does not just *happen* to be self-defeating; it is *necessarily* self-defeating since all possible avenues of reference to that to which theists, atheists, and agnostics wish to refer have been given up in the very insistence to go beyond them.

This fact leads—necessarily—to the conclusion that theism is not false, but rather *incoherent* because theism undercuts the very preconditions of meaningful reference. Similarly, atheism is not false, but also incoherent, since it succumbs to the same self-defeating fate. Agnosticism, with a projective self-destructive petard at its heart, collapses, too.

A proof that “God neither exists nor does not exist” would normally be taken to mean a proof that the proposition “God exists” is false, and that the proposition “God does not exist” is also false. But the argument presented in this paper is not normal: It is not a normal proof, but it is rather a proof situated on a meta-level that concerns the preconditions of reference and of meaning; it is a proof that *neither* of the preceding quoted propositions can *potentially* be considered *either true or false*, because both are, on a radically fundamental level, incoherent.

For a proposition to be true *or* false it must first of all be *meaningful*, and this the “God propositions” we have been considering *cannot be*, for they deny the very conditions that must be met in order for *any* referring proposition to have a *possible* meaning. The God propositions of theism, atheism, and agnosticism are, all of them, of this kind; they employ *a projectively self-undermining concept*, that of “transcendent

reality,” and by doing this, they abnegate the very possibility of possession of meaning. They are therefore incoherent on a truly basic level and do not meet the minimum standard, that of possession of meaning, to be considered potentially true *or* false.

Religious belief that is founded upon a framework-transcending wish to trespass beyond the very boundaries of that to which we are capable of referring is “positively irrational,” as Mackie expressed this in the opening quotation of this paper (he had an altogether different context and purpose in view): Theists and atheists alike employ the inherently projective concept of transcendent reality, upon which they rest (and agnostics withhold) their beliefs, a concept that not only lacks sense, but is undermined by its denial of the very preconditions of reference that it must presuppose.

We are left in a position that it is appropriate to name “*paratheism*.” The Greek prefix ‘*para*’ has the two following meanings that apply here: *opposing* (as in the ancient Greek *παρὰ δόξαν*, paradoxical, contrary to expectation) and *surpassing*. Paratheism is a position that recognizes, first, that the transcendent God-concept shared by theism, atheism, and agnosticism must be rejected, and hence paratheism is *opposed* to these religious views, and, second, that it is necessary for the rational mind to develop *beyond* theism, atheism, and agnosticism by dismissing transcendent reference as without possible meaning. It would of course be naive to hope that the reasoning developed here will motivate many people to relinquish their theistic, atheistic, or agnostic beliefs.

It is important to bear in mind, as shown in other publications,¹⁷ that the projective variety of incoherence, which lies at the core of theism and its cousins, also permeates much ordinary as well as specialized thinking and discourse. It is possible to avoid and eliminate projective thinking, and by so doing to develop a thoroughly “*de-projective*” understanding of the world—an integrated, systematic,

¹⁷ See note 7.

rationality compelling, and methodologically rigorous worldview. But this is of course a subject that cannot be explored in a brief essay; for this, interested readers are directed elsewhere.¹⁸



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¹⁸ Again, see references cited in note 7.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Homepage: <http://www.willamette.edu/~sbartlet>

Steven James Bartlett was born in Mexico City and educated in Mexico, the United States, and France. His undergraduate work was at the University of Santa Clara and at Raymond College, an Oxford-style honors college of the University of the Pacific. He received his master's degree from the University of California, Santa Barbara; his doctorate from the Université de Paris, where his research was directed by Paul Ricoeur; and he has done post-doctoral study in psychology and psychotherapy at Saint Louis University and Washington University. He has been the recipient of many honors, awards, grants, scholarships, and fellowships. His research has been supported under contract or grant by the Alliance Française, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, the Lilly Endowment, the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, the National Science Foundation, the Rand Corporation, and others.

Bartlett has an unusual background consisting of training in microbiology, pathology, psychology, and epistemology. He is the author or editor of twenty-one books and research monographs, and many papers in the fields of psychology, epistemology, mathematical logic, and philosophy of science. He has held professorships at Saint Louis University and the University of Florida, and research positions at the Max-Planck-Institut in Starnberg, Germany and at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara. He has received honorary faculty research appointments from Willamette University and Oregon State University, and devotes full-time to research and publication.