

Agnosticism

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Here's an argument for agnosticism: The universe is vast, whereas in comparison human beings are infinitesimal and puny. In particular, every individual human consciousness is puny and error-prone. If they weren't error-prone we wouldn't have needed to invent science - and we might not even need consciousness (which provides a capacity for reevaluation). If a supreme deity exists, it follows that if a supreme deity is infinite, any grasp we might have of such a being will be an infinitesimal, puny, error-prone grasp. It doesn't really matter whether the attempt at a grasp is made subjectively or objectively. Subjectively, the attempt at a grasp could be just a tiny, vanity-laden, delusion. Objectively, our collected science doesn't know everything yet - and claims to the contrary are in fact, compared to the size of the universe, tiny and vanity-laden. But claims about the non-existence of a supreme deity fall under exactly the same template for the same reasons.

Therefore, this argument runs, not enough people are sufficiently humble before *the question* of whether a supreme deity exists. It could be claimed that no human being is ever in a position to make a believable claim about the existence or non-existence of a supreme deity, because they haven't first addressed the matter of whether they could ever be remotely competent enough to generate an acceptable answer.

Plenty of people claim to have had a revelation where they were visited by a supreme deity. These people often do not ask whether they were in fact visited by their own egos. If asked, I wonder how intelligible their answers would really be. Other people claim that a supreme deity cannot possibly exist. Those that make such claims based upon sophisticated arguments might be more inclined to ask themselves whether they were in fact visited by their own egos. And I suspect that the answer they would have to give would be that they could not be sure.

Some might think that there is gap in the above argument: Does a supreme deity need to be infinite? Clever arguments about higher dimensions might be put forward to suggest that a supreme deity could appear in human perception to be locally small, while technically being connected to everything, everywhere. But the response to this is the same: Is any person's perception sufficiently powerful and free from error to verify or disprove this, subjectively or objectively? Imagine that many people simultaneously filmed the appearance of a type of creature in many different locations at once. How would these people know that it wasn't many separate creatures or a clever projection? How would they know if these manifestations were a supreme deity as opposed to a technologically advanced space alien?

So I'll repeat the hypothesis. It is claimed that no human being is ever in a position to make a believable claim about the existence or non-existence of a supreme deity, because they haven't first addressed the matter of whether they could ever be remotely competent enough to generate an acceptable answer.

It also follows from this that no person should ever be allowed to force the choice of unreasoned faith in existence or non-existence of a supreme deity on another person, because no person can justify being competent enough to make the choice on the behalf of others.