CHAPTER 15

Atheology

John R. Shook
Research Associate, Philosophy Department
University at Buffalo, NY

Atheology is the intellectual defense of atheism and the argumentative counterpart to theology. To be effective against theology's efforts to make god-belief reasonable, atheology accurately defines atheism, analyzes theological positions, and methodically constructs arguments why no one should think any god exists. Atheology makes a substantial contribution to secular philosophy. It is also extremely practical. Successful atheology explains why religious beliefs aren't needed for being a reasonable person, a moral individual, and a responsible citizen. These explanations support secular justifications for restraining religion's control over society and the lives of its members. Atheology indirectly assists the effort of political secularism to advocate for limiting the amount of control that religion and government can exercise over each other (Berlinerblau 2012; Blackford 2012), and to defend the rights of individuals to dissent from religion and live their lives as nonbelievers (Marshall and Shea 2011; Dacey 2012; Boyle and Sheen 2013).

IDENTIFYING ATHEOLOGY

Historians confess difficulties with identifying secular philosophical systems. They have a hard enough time even identifying atheist philosophers. "Not before Marx," says one; "Not before Hume," says another. Even twentieth-century philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) couldn't detect much before his own existentialism: "it seemed to me that a great atheist, truly atheist philosophy was something philosophy lacked" (de Beauvoir 1984, 436). Yet Sartre's own communism should have brought one exemplar to mind. Could communist Karl Marx (1818–1883) mark the start of secular philosophizing? No atheistic philosophy existed before Marx's generation, declares James P. Mackey (2000, 26).

But what about feminist Frances Wright (1795–1852)? Her 1829 public lectures across America delivered a resounding atheist, feminist, and socialist stance against religion and its evils, shocking both sides of the Atlantic and provoking a flurry of theological responses. Minister and Oxford classicist Benjamin Godwin took notice, but his *Lectures on the Atheistic Controversy* (1834) selected a different target for refutation in the name of Christianity. Godwin chose the notorious atheist Mirabaud, whose 1770 treatise *Systeme de la nature* (1770), translated as *The System of Nature* (1889), represented atheism for theologians before they ever heard of Marx. This Mirabaud was the pseudonym of Paul-Henri Thiry, Baron d'Holbach (1723–1789), a completely materialist philosopher, whose audacious atheism astonished Europe before David Hume's (1711–1776) skeptical work,

Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion (1779), was posthumously published. Hume wouldn't openly defend atheism, although he denied the possibility of knowing whether any gods exist. Yet Hume knew well the bold materialism and anti-theism of Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679). Another philosophical authority, Bishop George Berkeley, declared Hobbes an unmistakable atheist in *The Theory of Vision* (1732, 374). Cambridge philosopher Ralph Cudworth (1617–1688) agreed about Hobbes, but his own treatise *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* (1678) battled atheist philosophers of ancient Greece, especially the great atomist Epicurus (third century BCE). Epicurus and his devoted Roman poet Lucretius (first century BCE) appear on every list of atheist philosophers assembled by medieval, Renaissance, and Enlightenment historians and theologians. Before Epicurus, the great Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle (fourth century BCE) designed philosophical systems that included a place for a god knowable to philosophy but not to any religion, because the popular religions are just ignorant myths. They both could also look back further in time to the dawn of philosophy, where cosmologies such as the one framed by Anaxagoras (sixth century BCE) left no place for gods to do anything and gave no reason to be religious.

Although this chapter focuses on atheology as it developed in Western thought, skepticism toward deities and philosophical atheists can be found in the ancient world from Egypt and Persia to India and China. Doubt about the gods is given voice in the earliest Hindu Veda, the *Ṛig Veda* (King 1999, 201–202). Early Buddhism and Jainism had no interest in a supreme deity, and important schools of Confucian thought made no use of gods, heavens, or immortality (Martin 2007). In Muslim and Hindu regions, minority traditions of freethought and secularity are not unknown to this day (Strousma 1999; Quack 2011).

ATHEOLOGY AND THEOLOGY

Atheology is more than the rejection of gods—atheism does that. Atheology explains what atheism is, and how to effectively defend atheism.

A term ending with *-ology* points to the exploration of something, so atheology is the exploration of individual disbelief and public atheism. More specifically, atheology explores varieties of disbelief in religions, explains how atheists justify and encourage nonreligious views, and defends their secular engagement with religion and religious aspects of society. There are boundaries to atheology. Atheology isn't responsible for describing the lives of nonbelievers in general, or the ways they manifest their secularity in their personal lifestyles, their social responsibilities, or their political stances. Hundreds of millions of people live nonreligious lives all around the world without bothering to engage with religion or explain why they disbelieve in gods. Atheology is specifically concerned with defending disbelief and denials of religious claims about otherworldly matters. Atheology is not concerned with studying how people in the world are disengaging from religious practices or distancing themselves from religious institutions. The field of secular studies is the wider interdisciplinary area of research into the psychological, social, cultural, and political phenomena associated with nonbelief, secularity, and disengagement from religion (Flynn 2007; Zuckerman 2010; Arweck et al. 2013; Beamon and Tomlins 2015). Religious scholars and theologians have a more venerable, but less objective, tradition of investigating kinds and causes of unbelief (Borne 1961; Marty 1964; Caporale and Grumelli 1971; Jossua and Geffre 1983; Habgood 2000).

Atheology is not just opposition to theology, although responding to theological arguments is included in atheology. Atheology and some kinds of theology could converge in a surprising agreement. Liberal theology, postmodern theology, existentialist theology, and radical theology have all been deprioritizing God as a supernatural reality, or having any reality at all. Perhaps *God* should only be a symbol of sacredness, a pointer toward mystery, a label for nature's immensities, a character in a religious narrative, an ideal of moral perfection, a proxy for ethical absolutes, an expression of hope, a heartfelt response to beauty (or other elevated feelings), an encounter with a source of awe, and so on. Atheology can easily agree that any meaning to *God* is reducible to these thoroughly human matters.

Furthermore, a worldview that leaves out God could approve some features of religions. Examples include religious humanism and religious naturalism (Schulz 2002; Stone 2008). A philosophical perspective could agree with religion about the value of uplifting emotions, the benefits of ritual and meditation, the rightness of ethical principles, the high worth of human life, and responsibilities to take care of the planet. Is belief in a god always necessary for these important things?

The investigation of nontheistic religiosity is exemplified by some European thinkers such as Georges Bataille as read in his *L'expérience intérieure* (1943). Simone Weil (1909–1943) and Emmanuel Levinas (1906–1995) also found religiosity in the absence of god. Alasdair MacIntyre (1929–) and Paul Ricœur (1913–2005) explored a "post-theology" in *The Religious Significance of Atheism* (1969). Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) refused to call himself an atheist, because he questioned the philosophical and logical presumptions required for denying existence of God. All the same, God is dead, along with all metaphysics, necessities, and absolute values. An American version of this Death of God movement was established by Thomas Altizer (1927–). Whether this perspective is labeled as a-theology, (a)theology, or a/theology, it deserves close attention from philosophy (Taylor 1987; Westphal 1993).

In America, the term *atheology* was independently used by a philosopher of religion, Alvin Plantinga (1932–). He defined natural atheology as "the attempt, roughly, to show that, given what we know, it is impossible or unlikely that God exists" (1967, vii). Plantinga was probably aware that the term *atheology* was old, brought into wide usage by Ralph Cudworth (1617–1688), the great Cambridge scholar of the seventeenth century. Cudworth vaulted to prominence with his defense of religion, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe, Wherein All the Reason and Philosophy of Atheism Is Confuted and its Impossibility Demonstrated*. Chapter two of the first volume starts with a list of accusations against atheism, and defines a "system of Atheology" as "Atheism swaggering under the glorious appearance of philosophy" (1820, 175). In Cudworth's view, atheism is the denial of religion, and atheology is the effort to rationally justify atheism by constructing an intellectual worldview that lacks a god—or at least the true God.

Writing during the seventeenth century, Cudworth expected that theology could rely on sound philosophy to prove that a God exists. By the end of the seventeenth century, however, dissenters and freethinkers were pondering alternatives to Christianity.

FREETHOUGHT, RELIGIOUS CRITICISM, AND ATHEOLOGY

Freethought supplies the general aims and tactics for questioning and criticizing religion, religious leadership, and any other authority relying on religion. Freethought does not always involve rejecting scripture or defying God's divinity (blasphemy), discrediting

religious authorities (anticlericalism), abandoning the true faith (apostasy), or disbelieving God's existence (atheism). Most of the history of freethought involves core concerns such as philosophizing about God, humanity, and nature (potential heresies), reveling in altered states of intense emotions (promoting spiritualisms), reforming religious practice and religious institutions (risking schisms), and rearranging church-state politics (seeking religious liberties).

Freethought raises critical challenges to conformist and conservative religion, but only a portion of freethought has been devoted to impiety and irreligion: denying all religious claims, abandoning religion, and encouraging disbelief in religion (Robertson 1936; Larue 1996; Israel 2001; Watson 2014). The destination of atheism is not the exclusive destiny of freethought, but fears over apostasy have largely determined the hostile religious agenda against all freethought. It is specifically freethought atheology that can more directly lead toward atheism.

Religion's defenders are not mistaken about the threats to orthodoxy posed by freethinking, religious criticism, and civic dissent. Arguing that religious authorities cannot actually know what they think they know, and are not as holy as they seem, can make others doubt what is knowable and holy about God. Arguing that the stories recounted in scriptures could not be as truthful and testimonial as they appear can make others wonder how much human wit is actually responsible for holy writ. Arguing that scriptural commandments and holy laws are contrary to what people really know is right can make others wonder if anything divine stands behind their edicts. Arguing that God cannot fulfill our expectations about true righteousness and goodness can make others wonder why such a god is worthy of faith. These sorts of criticisms, taken individually, may not suffice to inspire apostasy or produce many atheists. Yet they can be selectively wielded by freethinking reformers who want to remain religious but escape dogma and church. Taken collectively, the religious criticism fostered by freethinking can produce serious questioning, wavering faith, uncaring agnostics, doubting skeptics, and bold atheists, and it may push some trends toward rising secularity and some degree of irreligion across a population (Bruce 2011).

Religious criticism in general is the intellectual effort to justify either certain religious reforms or the entire elimination of religious practices and commitments. Religious criticism, whether undertaken by the faithful or the nonreligious, judges religion against the sensibilities and tastes of most people in the area, the moral standards peculiar to a society, a society's standards of public responsibility, or the prevailing laws in that region or nation. Religious critics communicate with targeted audiences who share some local norms, but these critics don't think about where those norms came from, how they might be objectively valid for all humanity, or whether they could be justified on solely secular grounds. Religious criticism is all the more effective when it has local force, but there it can only have relative force. Atheology, by contrast, holds religious institutions and individuals to objective and universal standards, expecting religious people to rise to those standards by dropping obstructing religious beliefs, at least to the point of admitting skeptical doubt.

Four primary methods of atheology can be distinguished, depending on whether atheology relies on rationality alone; rationality plus science; moral norms of health, personal conduct, and social ethics; or human rights, civil rights, and justice. We may accordingly speak of rationalist atheology, scientific atheology, moral atheology, and civic atheology. The next section explains them in detail.

The four atheologies match up against the four primary kinds of theology:

Numinal theology asks and answers the question, is a god needed to explain numinous experiences? If so, then we should regard the gods with awe as supreme. Rationalist atheology, by contrast, finds no logical way to conclude anything about gods from human experience.

Natural theology asks and answers the question, is a god needed to explain the order and course of the cosmos? If so, then we should revere the gods for our existence. Scientific atheology opposes natural theology because it finds no explanatory role for any gods while exploring and explaining nature.

Moral theology asks and answers the question, is a god needed to ensure a natural and human orientation toward goodness? If so, then we should accordingly harmonize our personal and social lives. Moral atheology, by contrast, finds more ethical options by leaving belief in all gods behind.

Civic theology asks and answers the question, is a god needed to ensure that society conforms to civil order? If so, then we should ensure that everyone in society is properly religious. Civic atheology opposes civic theology by arguing that greater justice and social harmony is achieved by insulating politics away from religious control.

The four primary atheologies, itemized in contrast to the four theologies listed here, were sporadically defended in classical Greece and Rome, and they all were completely revived in the eighteenth century in Europe.

Although these four atheologies can cohere and support each other, it should never be assumed that a freethinker pursing one also endorses the others. For many centuries, the skepticism inherent to rationalist atheology prevented many skeptics from supposing that materialism could be reasonably affirmed. And both skeptics and materialists were torn over whether to abandon religious morality, or call for revolutions of civil order. Each atheist freethinker was free to decide whether a personal intellectual dissent from religion would pair up with the public behavior of impiety. For example, many freethinkers over recent centuries have denied God but upheld religion's ethos as a guide to morality, or encouraged religious observance as beneficial to civic life.

What should be the right relationship between our knowledge of reality and our duty to society? By the late eighteenth century, representative freethinkers had notably occupied four primary options. First, Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), an English philosopher, defended materialism based on science while also upholding popular religion as a political tool for maintaining social harmony and government stability. Second, Epicurus (341–270 BCE), an ancient Greek philosopher, was known for preferring naturalism (before modern science) but casting scorn against popular religion and urging that people seek their own personal happiness. Third, Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592), a French philosopher, perceived how religion has no basis in reason but he defended each person's duty to maintain faith in God. Fourth, Denis Diderot (1713–1784), another French philosopher, couldn't find where reason could justify religion either, but he regarded blind faith as the enemy of badly needed reforms to society and government.

There is an additional category for atheologians making a place for godly or divine or transcendent matters in their worldviews while denying most everything about the gods worshipped by the world's religions. Prominent thinkers in this additional category include Giordano Bruno (1548–1600), Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677), Voltaire (1694–1778),

G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831), Charles Peirce (1839–1914), Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), A. N. Whitehead (1861–1947), and Paul Tillich (1886–1965).

THE FOUR ATHEOLOGIES

The method of atheology appealing only to simple matters such as common sense, simple reasoning, and basic logic can be distinguished first. Because this atheology relies on ordinary rational capacities possessed and understood by (nearly) everyone to justify disbelief toward religious claims, it is labeled as rationalist atheology. By contrast, a second method of philosophical atheology that appeals to both common rationality and specialized scientific knowledge to justify rejecting religious worldviews is scientific atheology. The third and fourth atheologies appeal to established norms and values. Arguments against religion that point out its violations of healthy living and deviations from moral norms are provided by moral atheology. Arguments against religion that point out its violations of social ethics, standards of civic responsibility, and principles of good government are provided by civic atheology. Typical atheological works focus on just one or another of these four atheologies. Essays applying all of these atheologies are collected in two volumes edited by Michael Martin and Ricki Monnier (2003, 2006).

Rationalist atheology applies common rationality and basic logical thinking to support the denial that gods exist (Le Poidevin 1996; Everett 2004; Oppy 2006; Shook 2000). Rationalist atheology skeptically rejects theology's arguments for whatever divine entity it proposes, aiming at doubt, not disproof, of that proposal. Successful rationalist atheology demonstrates that no person is reasonable for thinking that anything godly or divine (supernatural, transcendent, etc.) exists. Rationalist atheology doesn't first define God and then disprove it, so theology cannot complain about misunderstandings or missed targets. If a theology cannot make its own conception of its god(s) comprehensible enough for its own argumentative support, rationalist atheology only need point this out to win by default, because it remains reasonable for anyone to decline to believe in an incomprehensible deity. If a theology could argue for some conception of a god without a single fallacious misstep, then rationalist atheology fails, and anyone would be reasonable for thinking that such a god really exists.

Naturally, theology and rationalist atheology strongly disagree about whether any nonfallacious theological argument can be formulated. Here is one simplified example, following an argument for God made by medieval theologian St. Thomas Aquinas (1997, 22).

1. The things we observe in the world come into existence because they are created by some other thing(s).
2. Trying to imagine anything causing its own creation is a bad explanation for 1.
3. Trying to imagine an endless chain of causes going back into an infinite past is a bad explanation for 1.
4. A First Cause that causes everything else, but wasn't caused itself, is the only other explanation for 1.
5. When other explanations are bad explanations, one must accept any remaining explanation as correct.
6. A First Cause must have caused everything else, due to 4 and 5.

7. Everyone thinks that a First Cause of everything else is basically the same thing as a God.
8. A God is the explanation for everything else, because 6 and 7 are correct.Therefore, God exists.

Rationalist atheology exposes false premises and fallacious gaps in this reasoning.

Premise 1 assumes that everything in and about nature has to be created, but some unchanging things might not have been created, such as fundamental physical energies and the laws they obey. Theology would first have to prove that nothing natural is uncreated. Pointing to the Big Bang can't help, because cosmological science suggests that some forces (quantum matters, for example) prevailed prior to our universe. Theology can argue with scientific atheology about that issue; rationalist atheology only needs to point out that premise 1 hasn't been established. Premise 2 seems plausible, but premise 3 can be disputed. An infinite chain of past causes could conceivably be correct, because that would account for all created things, although an image of something infinite won't arise in the imagination. Conceivability mustn't be confused with imaginability. Just because something can't be imagined doesn't leave it inconceivable, or useless for explanations. Mathematicians work with concepts of infinity without trying to picture them imaginatively, and scientists work with theoretical concepts too complex to be imagined in any detail. Premise 4 may not be identifying the only other explanation, because premise 3 may be wrong. Even if a First Cause had to be the only remaining explanation, that doesn't make it a good explanation. A First Cause has to be conceived as a necessarily existing and uncaused entity, which is so far beyond anything experienced or imagined that it can't seem more plausible than the other options. Besides, even if it could be a good explanation because it is an ultimate explanation, an infinite chain of causes is similarly an ultimate explanation that would necessarily exist in an uncaused way. Furthermore, premise 5 is false—premises 2, 3, and 4 could all be rejected as unsatisfactory. It always remains possible that no good explanation is available, so premise 6 can be rejected and nothing should be believed about the creation of everything, halting this argument at skeptical doubt. Finally, Premise 7 is false. Nonreligious people don't have to presume that this First Cause is God; a primeval creative power might be nothing like a god. Furthermore, even if there really is a First Cause, religious people might not want to assume it has to be their God, either. That entity would be truly powerful but it could also be entirely physical, such as a fundamental energy or force, obeying only natural laws. Even a religious person thinks of a God as something more than a merely physical matter to be understood by science. Premise 8 has nothing to support it because premises 6 and 7 don't have to be accepted, so this argument cannot supply enough reasons to think that God exists.

Scientific atheology is different from rationalist atheology by applying a wider body of knowledge from science, in addition to common sense and rational principles, to skeptically doubt whether any god exists (Stenger 2007; Philipse 2012; Shook 2014). That knowledge needn't exceed the comprehension of most people, if they have some education. Basic information from geology, astronomy, biology, or human physiology can often suffice to show that no religious explanation for worldly matters is required. Science can explain matters once taken to be signs from God, such as earthquakes and comets. No deity had to design the structure of the eye or the brain, arrange the order of our solar system's planets, and place the stars in the heavens. Rarely does scientific atheology have to rely on sophisticated advances of research science, such as quantum physics, big bang cosmology, or neuroscience. The need to use knowledge from those advanced fields usually arises only

when a theology thinks that it can make god-belief more plausible by appealing to those fields first. For example, if a theological argument asks us to detect a miraculous intervention in the Big Bang's start to our universe, or quantum level randomness, or a quantum holism that connects minds, scientific atheology counters by explaining why divine activity cannot be concluded from the scientific evidence (Stenger 2009).

Scientific atheology's aim is not to demonstrate that naturalism is correct, nor may it presume that naturalism is correct. Modern naturalism is a vaster ongoing project, because it is a type of secular philosophy about the capacity of the sciences to satisfy the intellect, take priority over other sorts of explanations, and have the primary responsibility for knowing what reality ultimately includes and what it does not (Fales 2007). Because naturalism as a complete worldview is not yet part of the established body of human knowledge (although it is growing into that role), scientific atheology cannot directly appeal to the authority of naturalism. Scientific atheology only appeals to the knowledge that the social, biological, and natural sciences have thoroughly (but not infallibly) confirmed, so it constitutes knowledge that all humanity can reliably use. Even scientific theories deemed unacceptable by conservative religions still remain available to scientific atheology, such as biological evolution, because a theory's unacceptability to some religion or another has no intellectual relevance to whether science has firmly established that knowledge. Science alone confirms its growing stock of confirmed knowledge, and nothing other than science controls its experimental methods. (If religion, or philosophy, held veto power over whether science could acquire knowledge, science would hardly flourish.)

Moral atheology criticizes religious institutions, practices, and personal commitments toward God on the basis of normative values that all humanity should respect (Kurtz 1987; Howard-Snyder 2006; Hitchens 2007; Aiken and Talisse 2011). The schematic form to a typical argument is this: "If religion's god is real, then a follower must accept a violation of an important value, but it is unreasonable to accept that violation, therefore belief in that god should be abandoned." Moral atheology specifically appeals to standards for healthy human functioning, basic moral norms, and reasonable social ethics. These standards are those most widely shared by civilized societies. Most of the world's religions, by now, endorse basic standards. Plenty of agreement about right and wrong, and good and evil, is already available even if religious ethics and secular ethics cannot agree about all moral matters. Nor does moral atheology have to wait for ethical theories, such as deontology and utilitarianism, to converge in agreement. The civilized world knows enough about right and wrong. Any deity commanding or encouraging murder, terror, suicide, harm to innocent people, and harm to oneself isn't worthy of anyone's faith.

The problem of evil is an example from moral atheology. No one should have to think that tragic evils are actually good or beneficial events. Knowing the difference between good and evil and hating evil are important moral standards to uphold. However, someone believing that a good God exists, but this God allows evils to happen, must look at evils differently. A good God would only allow good things to happen (if this being can't prevent some events from happening, it is no God at all), so evils must actually be acceptable. The religious believer is caught in a dilemma. If evils are not good, then a good God can't really exist; to affirm a good God is to surrender one's ability to tell good from evil. There are only two ways out of this dilemma: either give up thinking any God exists, or begin to think that God isn't good. Theology can try to evade the dilemma by faulting us humans for choosing evil, but that doesn't explain natural disasters or the consequences of using our freedom. No person chose living on a planet where earthquakes and hurricanes and plagues kill

thousands. When we do choose, and happen to choose sin, God uses hell for punishment, but hell is supposedly a great evil that somehow also must be good for God. Creative religions can avoid moral atheology's condemnations by (1) ensuring conformity with civilized standards for the moral treatment of all people, and (2) changing God's job description to relieve any responsibility, directly or indirectly, for anything evil. Moral atheology cannot disprove every god imaginable; it only urges religions to abandon uncivilized and immoral deities.

Civic atheology appeals to human rights, political rights such as civil rights and liberties, and principles of social justice in order to criticize religion and religious belief (Cliteur 2010; Kurtz 2010). Although the concept of human rights is not yet as universal as could be hoped, most cultures and religions are able to recognize many of them. Civilized societies regard degradations to life, safety, liberty, and property seriously. Complete agreement about human rights is a goal for the future, not an accomplishment. That is why civic atheology doesn't require a presumption that the universalization of a specific set of human rights or civil rights is practically achievable or even theoretically demonstrable. If a demonstrably universal ethics were assured by secular philosophizing, laying moral foundations for human rights, civil rights, and social justice would be greatly facilitated. Secular political philosophy has also tried to justify a few human rights, civil rights, and principles of social justice without presuming a prior moral consensus or a proven universal ethics. Civic atheology cannot accomplish any of these things, nor take them for granted. Only a current consensus among civilized peoples about rights and justice, however minimal, can be included with the body of human knowledge about proper civic affairs. That consensus is a reasonable basis for rejecting religious convictions responsible for any violations. Gods requiring disrespect for human dignity and human rights, or gods that demand social injustice or degrading inequalities, are gods that must be abandoned as unreal. Like moral atheology, civic atheology cannot disprove every kind of deity, but religions are firmly told to abandon uncivilized and unjust gods.

MODES OF ATHEOLOGY

There are three primary modes of pursuing atheology: the pedagogical, practical, and philosophical modes.

Pedagogical atheology is instruction for children and young adults explaining why faith, religion, and quasi-religious beliefs should be avoided (McGowan 2007; McGowen et al. 2009; Hitchcock 2009). This age-appropriate atheology tackles only broad concerns with only mild intensity, without any indoctrination into atheism as if it were a creed to be blindly accepted. Children can be introduced to asking questions and thinking critically about such things as empirical exploration, basic science, exposing superstition and magical thinking, and skeptical inquiry into the paranormal and supernatural. Children can also be introduced to the world's major religions, pointing out all their different gods and notions of afterlives, along with the disagreements about moral expectations that religions perpetuate.

Paired with a cross-cultural and historical interest in religion in general, and humanistic encouragement of respect and toleration, pedagogical atheology needn't inspire anger or hostility toward religious people or any religion. The primary goals are helping children with their critical thinking skills, the confidence to question everything, and the methods of self-

guided inquiry. Pedagogical atheology, along with humanist education for children, is a rich field for expansion and enrichment. Future progress will take advantage of developmental and educational psychology, the study of cognitive biases, and research into magical thinking and religious susceptibility.

Practical atheology offers persuasive discussions about atheism designed for adult audiences. It utilizes common sense and logic, a measure of science, moral and civic norms, and a judicious selection of life wisdom to explain religion's failings, recount theology's fallacies, encourage the naturalistic worldview, sustain a lifetime nonreligious stance, and utilize secular ethics such as utilitarianism and humanism (Smith 2000; Grayling 2002; Price 2006; Barker 2011; Rosenberg 2011; McGowan 2013; Ruse 2015). Intellectual history can also introduce a wide audience to the legacy of irreligion (Hecht 2010; Schneider 2013).

This genre of popular practical atheology has been around a long time, going back to nineteenth-century nonbelievers such as Robert Green Ingersoll (1833–1899) in America and Charles Bradlaugh (1833–1891) in England (Turner 1985; Radest 1990; Jacoby 2004). During the first half of the twentieth century, the Little Blue Books series of hundreds of pamphlets published by Emanuel Haldeman-Julius (1889–1951) connected numerous freethinking and atheist writers with a vast readership across America—over 20 million copies sold in the single year of 1927. Publishing over one hundred of his pamphlets in this series, Joseph McCabe (1867–1955) was a leading voice of rationalism, atheism, and irreligion in America (Cooke 2001). In England, Harold Blackham (1903–2009) popularized humanism with his books such as *The Human Tradition* (1953), and he led the British Humanist Association for many years. Paul Kurtz (1925–2012) reinvigorated popular atheism in America, founding the Council for Secular Humanism and its magazine *Free Inquiry* in 1980.

Practical atheology offers well-rounded insights into living without religion and holding a secular worldview, designed for adults wavering away from religion or seeking an affirmative nonbelieving life stance (Kurtz 2000). Practical atheology is also related to counseling for psychological issues and mental trauma that people suffer within religious settings. Helping people obtain access to mental health care and transition their lives away from harmful religiosity can assist people deciding for themselves to become nonreligious (Winell 1993; Ray 2012). Even clergy are admitting disbelief and contemplating how to walk away from their churches (Dennett and LaScola 2013).

Philosophical atheology takes atheology to its highest intellectual level, separating its tasks into rational, scientific, moral, and civic atheologies. It applies anything and everything within the realm of human knowledge, from logic and observation to confirmed science and objective values, to its agenda of showing how nothing godly need be taken as real and nothing religious is needed for life. Philosophical atheology does not primarily aim at persuasively deconverting the religious toward nonbelieving secularity, or exhorting nonbelievers toward firm atheist or humanist commitments. Those are goals of practical atheology, which can speak to wide audiences with straightforward and inspirational language. Practical atheology can rhetorically engage religion and effectively rehearse simpler counterarguments against basic theology, but the sophisticated arguments handling theology's intricacies and novelties are developed by philosophical atheology. In the academic world, philosophical atheology is the application of secular philosophy best equipped to engage in dialogue and debate with theologies.

COMPLETE ATHEOLOGY

The four philosophical atheologies—rationalist, scientific, moral, and civic—offer intellectual challenges capable of showing that worldviews omitting gods or anything supernatural or transcendent can be reasonable. Typical works of atheology fall into just one of these four kinds. Quite rare are thinkers comprehensively covering all four atheologies; rarer still are those coherently uniting all four atheologies to work together.

Comprehensive atheologies are rare because thinkers have their own preferred methods for tackling philosophical and religious issues. The logical skeptic may not be a scientific worldview builder, the scientific mind may not be a sage moralist or a social reformer, and a political revolutionary may have no patience for metaphysical disputations. An even higher standard beyond comprehensive atheology is its coherent unification on entirely rational-naturalistic-secular grounds without internal inconsistencies or lingering hints of reliance, positively or negatively, on religious ideas or sentiments. Coherence is not easily achieved. For example, skeptical reason may deny the scientific realism sufficient for naturalism; naturalism may deny the moral agency required for secular ethics; and political rights may require other foundations besides reason and nature. Appealing to metaphysical necessities, cognitive necessities and a prioris, and fixed absolutes, whether in the guise of reason, science, or ethics, has also remained a powerful secular temptation. If those last temptations can all be avoided, then a comprehensively coherent atheology can become a complete atheology.

Complete atheology had been beyond the grasp of Western atheism for a long time, since the classical era of atomistic materialism from Epicurus and Lucretius. Within a brief period of less than two centuries, the foundations of modern science restored that opportunity. Isaac Newton's theories of motion and gravity and Darwin's theory of evolution eliminated God's jobs of guiding all the heavenly bodies and creating every species of life. With scientific knowledge on the ascendant and natural explanations for our intellectual capacities in development, skepticism began to ally with naturalism by the end of the nineteenth century. The nineteenth century also witnessed dramatic alliances between naturalism and ethics, for example, in the philosophies of Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, John Stuart Mill, and Herbert Spencer. Atheologians sustained the Enlightenment's momentum by forecasting endless human progress thanks to biological evolution and cultural evolution.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) announced that "God is dead" at the hands of humanity, yet he doubted evolutionary atheological schemes. He also perceived how atheism may stand transfixed in the "shadows" of god that linger after the death of god, continuing to seek its own necessities, absolutes, and finalities. The four volumes of his middle period represent his great effort at a complete atheology: *The Gay Science* (1882), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883–1885), *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), and *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887). At the start of the twentieth century, there appeared two ambitious attempts to satisfy the highest atheological standards. Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce (1866–1952) published his *Filosofia come scienza dello spirit* (Philosophy of the Spirit) in four volumes from 1902 to 1917, with *Philosophy of the Practical: Economic and Ethic* (1913) as its centerpiece. Spanish-born American philosopher George Santayana (1863–1952) published his five-volume *The Life of Reason: The Phases of Human Progress* (1905–1906). Santayana's philosophy assigns an important role for metaphysical thinking and religious experience, ensuring that secular philosophy can explain religion. That was also true of American philosopher John Dewey's (1859–1952) *Experience and*

Nature (1925) and German philosopher Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1927). Both awarded philosophical priority to the environs of lived experience—this life-world or the realm of human "being-in-the world." For this sort of phenomenology, plenty of earthly religiosity, but no unnatural deity, enlivens the human world.

Forging a complete atheology would evidently be neither automatic nor easy. Could skepticism really be compatible with naturalism? Would ethics really be based only on our human biology? How could politics start from inalienable rights that science can't locate in nature?

The vulnerabilities arising when atheology stays at a level below comprehensiveness and coherence remain on display in New Atheism. Most writings related to this upstart genre, inaugurated by Sam Harris (1967–) and Richard Dawkins (1941–), only engage in religious criticism for public audiences to polemical and political effect, offering an entryway into practical theology. The vulnerabilities of New Atheism aren't about whether it grapples with every twist and turn of academic theology, but rather with its lack of atheological comprehensiveness, much less coherence. New Atheism's criticisms against religion tend to be narrow, leaving broader issues about atheism unanswered. Skepticism is sharply wielded against anything religious, whereas no skepticism is permitted about the capacity of science to explain the world's ways or the ability of a materialistic lifestyle to fulfill human lives. Many books in this genre defend science over religion while ignoring problems establishing naturalism, as if atheism's own worldview was secure (Pigliucci 2013). Others decry religion's irrationalities, and the naïve credulity of the faithful, as if the nonreligious are always paragons of rationality.

Religion has been raising concerns about atheism's values for millennia, but New Atheism as a whole hasn't inspired consistent or coherent answers. Many authors in the New Atheist genre criticize religion's moral failings without accounting for ethics among nonbelievers, as if sound morals or social justice automatically comes with irreligion. Atheists disparaging religion's notion of free will overlook explaining how anyone is morally responsible in a deterministic world. Some atheists do reject moral responsibility, even as they denounce the behavior of religious people. Many writing in this genre are pleased to announce that after religion, no one has to think that there are any worthy values beyond what is personally satisfying, and no one is bound by an objective code of ethics. Yet other atheists blithely announce that scientific research into human genes, or brains, will soon deliver verdicts on what constitutes human happiness, moral value, and ethical duty (Kaufman 2012). This genre agrees that religion's dangers must be exposed to scorn, but can't see any harms to eliminating religiosity in the face of much evidence. In general, authors start from diverse viewpoints and apply all sorts of satirical, rhetorical, and argumentative tactics without much concern for overall clarity or coherence. Religious reactions to New Atheism are similarly disorganized in response (Haught 2008; Mohler 2008; Zacharias 2008; McGrath 2011; Hughes 2013).

Atheology can only improve popular atheism, but it can display its own limitations. Theology's criticism that much of atheology may yet be a misbegotten creature of theology has some merit (Dupré 1999; Onfray 2007). Falling short of comprehensiveness and coherence despite the assistance of secular philosophy can leave an atheology vulnerable due to incompleteness. Few examples of comprehensive atheology are available after Dewey and Heidegger. One was assembled by American philosopher Corliss Lamont in *Humanism as a Philosophy*, later retitled *The Philosophy of Humanism* (1997). Indian socialist and freethinker M. N. Roy composed a set of tracts during the 1940s and early 1950s presenting a broad

philosophical and scientific humanism, including *Science and Philosophy* (1947) and *Radical Humanism* (1952). British philosopher Antony Flew's work *Atheistic Humanism* (1993) offered a single-volume comprehensive atheology. German philosopher Jürgen Habermas developed an entirely secular worldview in major works including *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* (Theory of Communicative Action, 1981) and *Faktizität und Geltung* (Between Facts and Norms, 1992), and specifically in *Zwischen Naturalismus und Religion* (Between Naturalism and Religion, 2005). Canadian philosopher Kai Nielsen's two works, *God and the Grounding of Morality* (1991) and *Naturalism and Religion* (2001), together provide a comprehensive atheological philosophy.

Complete atheology sets an even higher standard. Too many atheologians end up unable to adequately ground their own positions, and they leave key tenets at odds with each other, or they ground their views on foundations favorable to religion. Some examples include pursuing their humanism spiritually (yearning for transcendence), resigning themselves to naturalism nihilistically (leaving only subjectivism), bracing knowledge with a priori necessities (leading to platonism), abandoning objective truth methodologically (embracing just relativism), discerning values and ideals existentially (while demoting science), endorsing moral rules traditionally (relying on religion), or grounding their political systems rationalistically or idealistically (ignoring human nature).

Examples of complete atheology since Marx, Büchner, and Nietzsche are rare. It could be argued that Heidegger is one example, in the German language; Habermas is another. In the English language, after Santayana and Dewey, the next complete atheological effort came from philosopher Paul Kurtz. In a trilogy of works—*In Defense of Secular Humanism* (1983), *The Transcendental Temptation: A Critique of Religion and the Paranormal* (1986), and *Forbidden Fruit: The Ethics of Humanism* (1987)—he offered a complete atheology in exclusively secular terms without appeals to transcendence, existentialism, subjectivism, nihilism, moral absolutes, a priori principles, or a God's-eye view of the world.

Summary

Atheology explores what atheists think, why they are not religious, and how they defend the reasonableness of their disbelief in religion. Atheology's defenses of atheism are more sophisticated than the wider genre of religious criticism, which secular people also undertake. Religious criticism provides simpler and practical ways to point out how religion is harming people and societies, and why religion has no reasonable basis in fact or logic. Because religious criticism only appeals to what is already locally taken to be common knowledge and sound morality, it cannot offer justifications why no one, anywhere, shouldn't be religious. Atheology encompasses the intellectual efforts to explain why it would be reasonable for anyone to lack religious convictions and think that no gods exist.

Philosophy provides essential tools for conducting atheology. Atheology borrows philosophy's logical methods, ethical wisdom, and long experience with debating theology. Philosophy itself is neither religious nor antireligious. Indeed, theologies from the ancient world and the modern world, representing major religions all around the globe, have borrowed heavily from philosophy. When philosophy finds that it cannot agree with religious views about ultimate or divine realities, and assists nonreligious worldviews with the tools for constructing atheology, that aspect of philosophizing may be labeled as secular

philosophy. Secular philosophy and atheology together supply foundational principles for the various kinds of secularisms promoting secularization: the diminishment of religious influences over culture, society, and personal belief.

Four primary kinds of atheology have been conducted across the long history of philosophy: the rationalist, scientific, moral, and civic atheologies. For the purposes of teaching people about atheism, the three modes to atheology handle separate educational levels. Pedagogical atheology is instruction guiding children and young adults away from religiosity toward secular and scientific worldviews. Practical atheology is designed for public adult audiences who want to understand their secularity, find nonreligious answers to the big questions in life, and defend their viewpoint against religions. Philosophical atheology assembles sophisticated intellectual justifications for disbelief in the ultimate realities proclaimed by religions and defended by theologies. The highest achievement for philosophical atheology is complete atheology: a fully secular system of all four atheologies working harmoniously together.

Bibliography

Aikin, Scott F., and Robert B. Talisse. *Reasonable Atheism: A Moral Case for Respectful Disbelief*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2011.

Altizer, Thomas. *The Gospel of Christian Atheism*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966.

Aquinas, Thomas. *Basic Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. 1, translated by Anton C. Pegis. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1997.

Arweck, Elisabeth, Stephen Bullivant, and Lois Lee, eds. *Secularity and Non-Religion*. London and New York: Routledge, 2013.

Barker, Dan. *The Good Atheist: Living a Purpose-Filled Life Without God*. Berkeley, CA: Ulysses Press, 2011.

Bataille, Georges. *L'expérience intérieure*. Paris: Gallimard, 1943.

Bataille, Georges. *The Unfinished System of Nonknowledge*, edited by Stuart Kendall, translated by Michelle Kendall and Stuart Kendall. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

Beaman, Lori, and Steven Tomlins, eds. *Atheist Identities: Spaces and Social Contexts*. Berlin: Springer, 2015.

Berkeley, George. *The Works of George Berkeley*, Vol. 1, edited by A. C. Fraser. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1871.

Berlinerblau, Jacques. *How to Be Secular: A Call to Arms for Religious Freedom*. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012.

Blackford, Russell. *Freedom of Religion and the Secular State*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

Blackham, Harold. *The Human Tradition*. London: Routledge, 1953.

Borne, Étienne. *Atheism*, translated by S. J. Tester. New York: Hawthorne, 1961.

Boyle, Kevin, and Juliet Sheen, eds. *Freedom of Religion and Belief: A World Report*. London and New York: Routledge, 2013.

Bruce, Steve. *Secularization: In Defense of an Unfashionable Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Caporale, Rocco, and Antonio Grumelli, eds. *The Culture of Unbelief*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971.

Cliteur, Paul. *The Secular Outlook: In Defense of Moral and Political Secularism*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Cooke, Bill. *A Rebel to His Last Breath: Joseph McCabe and Rationalism*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2001.

Croce, Benedetto. *Philosophy of the Practical: Economic and Ethic*, translated by Douglas Ainslie. London: Macmillan, 1913.

Cudworth, Ralph. *The True Intellectual System of the Universe, Wherein All the Reason and Philosophy of Atheism is Confuted and its Impossibility Demonstrated*, Vol. 1. London: for Richard Priestly, 1820. First published 1678.

Dacey, Austin. *The Future of Blasphemy: Speaking of the Sacred in an Age of Human Rights*. London: Continuum, 2012.

Dawkins, Richard. *The God Delusion*. London: Bantam Press, 2006.

de Beauvoir, Simone. *Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre*. New York: Pantheon, 1984.

Dennett, Daniel, and Linda LaScola. *Caught in the Pulpit: Leaving Belief Behind*. Durham, NC: Pitchstone, 2015.

Derrida, Jacques. "Ellipsis." In *Writing and Difference*, translated by Alan Bass. London and New York: Routledge, 2001. First published 1967.

Dewey, John. *Experience and Nature*. Chicago: Open Court, 1925.

d'Holbach, Paul-Henri Thiry. *The System of Nature: Or, Laws of the Moral and Physical World*, translated by H. D. Robinson. Boston: J. P. Mendum, 1889.

Dupré, Louis. "On the Intellectual Sources of Modern Atheism." *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 45, no. 1 (1999): 1–11.

Erdmann, Johann Eduard. *A History of Philosophy*, 3 volumes, edited by Williston Hough. London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1890. First published 1865.

Everitt, Nicholas. *The Non-Existence of God*. London and New York: Routledge, 2004.

Fales, Evan. "Naturalism and Physicalism." In *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism*, edited by Michael Martin, 118–134. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Flew, Antony. *Atheistic Humanism*. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1993.

Flynn, Tom. *The New Encyclopedia of Unbelief*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2007.

Godwin, Benjamin. *Lectures on the Atheistic Controversy*. London: Jackson and Walford, 1834.

Grayling, A. C. *Meditations for the Humanist: Ethics for a Secular Age*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Habermas, Jürgen. *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, translated by William Rehg. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996.

Habermas, Jürgen. *Between Naturalism and Religion*, translated by Ciaran Cronin. Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2008.

Habermas, Jürgen. *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 2 volumes, translated by Thomas McCarthy. Boston: Beacon, 1984–1987.

Habgood, John. *Varieties of Unbelief*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2000.

Harris, Sam. *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason*. New York: Norton, 2004.

Haught, John F. *God and the New Atheism: A Critical Response to Dawkins, Harris, and Hitchens*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008.

Hecht, Jennifer Michael. *Doubt, A History: The Great Doubters and Their Legacy of Innovation from Socrates and Jesus to Thomas Jefferson and Emily Dickinson*. New York: HarperCollins, 2010.

Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*, translated by Joan Stambaugh. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996. First published 1927.

Hitchcock, S. C. *Disbelief 101: A Young Person's Guide to Atheism*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2009.

Hitchens, Christopher. *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*. New York: Hachette Book Group, 2007.

Howard-Snyder, Daniel, ed. *The Evidential Argument from Evil*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.

Hughes, John, ed. *The Unknown God: Sermons Responding to the New Atheists*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013.

Hume, David. *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. First published 1779.

Hurd, Elizabeth Shakman. *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009.

Israel, Jonathan. *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650–1750*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Jacoby, Susan. *Freethinkers: A History of American Secularism*. New York: Henry Holt, 2004.

Jossua, Jean-Pierre, and Claude Geffre, eds. *Indifference to Religion*. Edinburgh, UK: T. & T. Clark, 1983.

Kaufman, Whitley. "Can Science Determine Moral Values? A Reply to Sam Harris." *Neuroethics* 5, no. 1 (2012): 55–65.

King, Richard. *Indian Philosophy: An Introduction to Hindu and Buddhist Thought*. Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 1999.

Kurtz, Paul. *Embracing the Power of Humanism*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000.

Kurtz, Paul. *Forbidden Fruit: The Ethics of Humanism*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1987.

Kurtz, Paul. *In Defense of Secular Humanism*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1983.

Kurtz, Paul. *Multi-Secularism: A New Agenda*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2010.

Kurtz, Paul. *The Transcendental Temptation: A Critique of Religion and the Paranormal*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1986.

Lamont, Corliss. *The Philosophy of Humanism*, 8th ed. Amherst, NY: Humanist Press, 1997.

Larue, Gerald A. *Freethought Across the Centuries*. Amherst, NY: Humanist Press, 1996.

Le Poidevin, Robin. *Arguing for Atheism: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*. London and New York: Routledge, 1996.

Levinas, Emmanuel. *Of God Who Comes to Mind*. Translated by Bettina Bergo. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998.

Levinas, Emmanuel. *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, translated by Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1969.

MacIntyre, Alasdair C., and Paul Ricœur. *The Religious Significance of Atheism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1969.

Mackey, James P. *The Critique of Theological Reason*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Marshall, Paul, and Nina Shea. *Silenced: How Apostasy and Blasphemy Codes Are Choking Freedom Worldwide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Martin, Michael. "Atheism and Religion." In *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism*, ed. Michael Martin, 217–232. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Martin, Michael, and Ricki Monnier, eds. *The Impossibility of God*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2003.

Martin, Michael, and Ricki Monnier, eds. *The Improbability of God*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2006.

Marty, Martin E. *Varieties of Unbelief*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964.

McGowan, Dale. *Atheism For Dummies*. Mississauga, Canada: John Wiley & Sons Canada, 2013.

McGowan, Dale, ed. *Parenting Beyond Belief: On Raising Ethical, Caring Kids Without Religion*. New York: AMACOM Books, 2007.

McGowan, Dale, Molleen Matsumura, Amanda Metskas, and Jan Devor. *Raising Freethinkers: A Practical Guide for Parenting Beyond Belief*. New York: AMACOM Books, 2009.

McGrath, Alister. *Why God Won't Go Away: Engaging with the New Atheism*. London: SPCK, 2011.

Mohler, R. Albert Jr. *Atheism Remix: A Christian Confronts the New Atheists*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008.

Nielsen, Kai. *God and the Grounding of Morality*. Ottawa, Canada: University of Ottawa Press, 1991.

Nielsen, Kai. *Naturalism and Religion*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2001.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil*. Translated by Judith Norman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. First published 1886.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Gay Science*, translated by Josefine Nauckhoff and Adrian Del Caro. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. First published 1882.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Translated by Douglas Smith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. First published 1887.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, translated by Adrian Del Caro. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. First published 1883–1885.

Onfray, Michael. *Atheist Manifesto*, translated by Jeremy Leggatt. New York: Arcade, 2007.

Oppy, Graham. *Arguing about Gods*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Philipse, Herman. *God in the Age of Science? A Critique of Religious Reason*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Pigliucci, Massimo. "New Atheism and the Scientistic Turn in the Atheism Movement." *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 37, no. 1 (2013): 142–153.

Plantinga, Alvin. *God and Other Minds: A Study of the Rational Justification of Belief in God*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967.

Price, Robert M. *The Reason-Driven Life: What Am I Here on Earth For?* Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2006.

Quack, Johannes. *Disenchanting India: Organized Rationalism and Criticism of Religion in India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Radest, Howard B. *The Devil and Secular Humanism: The Children of the Enlightenment*. New York: Praeger, 1990.

Ray, Darryl. *Sex & God: How Religion Distorts Sexuality*. Bonner Springs, KS: IPC Press, 2012.

Robertson, J. M. *A History of Freethought*, 4th ed. London: Watts and Co., 1936.

Rosenberg, Alex. *The Atheist's Guide to Reality: Enjoying Life without Illusions*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2011.

Roy, M. N. *Radical Humanism*. New Delhi: n.p., 1952.

Roy, M. N. *Science and Philosophy*. Calcutta: Renaissance Publishers, 1947.

Ruse, Michael. *Atheism: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Santayana, George. *The Life of Reason; or, The Phases of Human Progress*, 5 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905–1906.

Schneider, Nathan. *God in Proof: The Story of a Search from the Ancients to the Internet*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013.

Schulz, William F. *Making the Manifesto: The Birth of Religious Humanism*. Boston: Skinner House, 2002.

Shook, John R. *The God Debates: A Twenty-First Century Guide for Atheists and Believers (and Everyone in Between)*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Shook, John R. "Scientific Atheology." *Science, Religion and Culture* 1, no. 1 (2014): 32–48.

Smith, George H. *Why Atheism?* Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2000.

Stenger, Victor. *God: The Failed Hypothesis: How Science Shows That God Does Not Exist*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2007.

Stenger, Victor. *Quantum Gods: Creation, Chaos, and the Search for Cosmic Consciousness*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2009.

Stone, Jerome A. *Religious Naturalism Today: The Rebirth of a Forgotten Alternative*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008.

Stroumsa, Sarah. *Freethinkers of Medieval Islam: Ibn al-Rāwandī, Abū Bakr al-Rāzī and Their Impact on Islamic Thought*. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 1999.

Taylor, Mark C. *Erring: A Postmodern A/theology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

Turner, James. *Without God, Without Creed: The Origins of Unbelief in America*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985.

Watson, Peter. *The Age of Atheists: How We Have Sought to Live Since the Death of God*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014.

Weil, Simone. *Waiting for God*, translated by Emma Craufurd. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951.

Westphal, Merold. *Suspicion & Faith: The Religious Uses of Modern Atheism*. New York: Fordham University Press, 1993.

Winell, Marlene. *Leaving the Fold: A Guide for Former Fundamentalists and Others Leaving Their Religion*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger, 1993.

Zacharias, Ravi K. *The End of Reason: A Response to the New Atheists*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008.

Zuckerman, Phil, ed. *Atheism and Secularity*, 2 volumes. Santa Barbara, CA: Preager, 2010.