

Why agnostic and theist are subsets of atheist, and all fall under God.

© Copyright 2016 by Colin James III All rights reserved.

Definitions by affirmation:

A1. Agnostic means no proof of gods and no proof of no gods (without knowledge of either state of affairs).

A2. Theist means proof of god(s) and thus proof of many gods (2.1 polytheist) and proof of one god (2.2 monotheist).

A3. Atheist means proof of no gods.

Approach:

1. The distinctions between agnostic, theist, and atheist are contrasted by the respective denial of the affirmation stated in A1, A2, and A3 above. The similarities are compared, and then summarized.

2. The existential quantifier (\exists there exists for at least one case) is introduced for the singular of god as opposed to the universal quantifier (\forall for all cases) for the plural of gods in the definitions above. The definition of god as inanimate omnipotence is then replaced by the definition of God as a personal spirit with the qualities of omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence.

Part 1.

D1. Denial of agnostic is Not(no proof of gods and no proof of no gods). The expression no proof of gods and no proof of no gods is a contradiction because neither state of affairs can exist with the other state. The negation of the contradiction is proof of gods and proof of no gods, to rephrase the contradiction. However, the negation of the contradiction is not a tautology as proof of gods *or* proof of no gods.

D2. Denial of theist is Not(proof of gods). The expression proof of gods is universal for all gods (polytheist) and existential for at least one god (monotheist). The negation is no proof of gods.

D3. Denial of atheist is Not(proof of no gods). The negation is no proof of no gods.

The distinctions and similarities are summarized as:

- A1. Agnostic is no proof of gods and no proof of no gods.
- A2. Theist is proof of gods
- A3. Atheist is proof of no gods.

- D1. Not agnostic is proof of gods and proof of no gods.
- D2. Not theist is no proof of gods.
- D3. Not atheist is no proof of no gods.

Theist should be the negation of atheist: proof of gods should be the negation of proof of no gods, that is, theist as proof of gods should be equivalent to not atheist as no proof of no gods. But that is not the case which would have proof of gods as proof of gods, but not proof of no gods.

In the alternative, atheist should be the negation of theist: proof of no gods should be the negation of proof of gods, that is, atheist as proof of no gods should be equivalent to not theist as no proof of gods. But again that is not the case which would have proof of no gods as proof of no gods, but not no proof of gods.

Hence theist falls as a subset under atheist because theist as proof of gods is less general and excludes atheist as proof of no gods.

Agnostic falls as a subset under atheist because atheist as proof of no gods is more general and includes the agnostic contradiction as no proof of gods and no proof of no gods. In the alternative, the negation of the agnostic contradiction as proof of gods and proof of no gods is more specific and excludes the negation of atheist as no proof of no gods.

Theist also falls as a subset under agnostic because the negation of theist as no proof of gods is more specific and excludes the affirmation of agnostic as no proof of gods and no proof of no gods.

Part 2.

When the universal quantifier \forall for the plural of gods is replaced by the existential quantifier \exists for the singular of god, the definitions read the same as A1-3 and D1-3, and the classification of general to specific is preserved for atheist, agnostic, and theist.

When the definition of singular, lower case god (inanimate omnipotence) is replaced by that for singular, upper case God (personal spirit of omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence), then the classification of general to specific is preserved for atheist, agnostic, and theist. However the grouping of the inanimate objects of gods and god fall under the more general animate definition of God.