

# Flat-Earth Atheist

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*"It was all very well going on about pure logic and how the universe was ruled by logic and the harmony of numbers, but the plain fact of the matter was that the Disc was manifestly traversing space on the back of a giant turtle and the gods had a habit of going round to atheists' houses and smashing their windows."*

— *The Colour of Magic* by Terry Pratchett

**Atheism** in a clockwork universe ostensibly overseen by a completely non-interventionist divinity is one thing, but what about a world that's practically the playground of the mythic forces that created it?

While some authors do this as an honest philosophical exercise, it's almost always **Played for Laughs**. A self-styled hardline atheist that just happens to live in a high fantasy setting brimming with both **huge pantheons of gods** rampaging around the landscape constantly causing all sorts of things to happen, and the worshipers that pray to (and immediately hear back from) said pantheons of rampaging deities. Maybe they don't believe in the gods at all, and are totally nuts, maybe they're completely in denial about the existence of gods, or maybe they're feigning disbelief in hopes of ending their worship and bringing about some kind of **Götterdämmerung** or whatever. Sometimes the character *himself* is a god (typically a loony one). Sometimes this is a direct attempt to discredit science by comparing it to religion: instead of using the scientific method, as a scientist does, the strawman atheist relies himself on a devout faith — in this case a faith that "**science**" holds all the answers, despite obvious proof to the contrary.

The trope can be justified in some ways. It's relatively common to have a character who openly acknowledges the existence of beings of great power, but refuses to accept their divinity (either because he believes them to be **Sufficiently Advanced Aliens** using technological trickery, or because he differentiates between a "real" god and a supernatural being that is merely *very powerful*). For instance, in **The DCU** (see below) there's no *practical* difference between, say, angels and alien

energy beings. The main difference often comes down to whether or not the subject in question has deep personal implications, like an afterlife. On the other hand, in a world where magic is commonly known to be real, it becomes a lot easier for con artists to pull the wool over the eyes of innocents, so a skeptic to differentiate between "real" magic and "fake" magic can come in handy.

After a certain point, however, it can devolve into semantics, and you can start to wonder what exactly a character defines a god or magic *as*, especially considering some of the entities they encounter are even *more* powerful than most gods of myth.

A subtrope of this is the atheist who's plucked out of the normal world and forced to acknowledge the existence of the supernatural, usually only accepting it after something wildly impossible is done to them (like being turned into a dragon and back in [C. S. Lewis' \*The Voyage of the Dawn Treader\*](#) or having the flesh burned off his bones and regrown in Niven and Pournelle's *Inferno*-even then, it took a long time for the protagonist to drop the idea that it was a theme park for sadistic [sufficiently advanced aliens](#)).

Compare with [Agent Scully](#); [Magic Versus Science](#); [Sufficiently Analyzed Magic](#); [No Such Thing as Space Jesus](#); and [No Such Thing as Wizard Jesus](#). See also [Crossover Cosmology](#) and [Negative Continuity](#) for two possible justifications, along with [Arbitrary Skepticism](#), [God Test](#), and [Grumpy Bear](#). Sometimes one too many strange things happening will lead these characters into [Giving Up on Logic](#).

Don't confuse this with the [Nay-Theist](#), who *knows* supernatural forces exist, but refuses to obey or worship them, often thinking that they should mind their own business and leave mortals alone. Also compare [Eskimos Aren't Real](#), which is when a character does not believe in something that everyone else believes, but may in fact have never seen it. The trope also applies to other examples which aren't specifically atheism, but irrational disbelief in some things (such as ghosts) where incontrovertible proof exists of them being real. This also does not relate to atheists literally believing that the Earth is flat.

### Examples:

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Anime and Manga

- [England](#) of [Axis Powers Hetalia](#) constantly mocks [America](#)'s belief in extraterrestrial life, despite the fact that the world of *Hetalia* is a [Fantasy Kitchen Sink](#), and the fact that the main characters are [personified nations](#). This dips into [Hypocritical Humor](#), as England is the same guy who is [good friends with all manner of fairy creatures](#), and regularly speaks and interacts with them even in the open, despite the fact that they are [Invisible to Normals](#) and [cannot be seen by the majority of other nations](#).<sup>note</sup>

- In *Black Butler* Ciel makes a [contract with a demon](#), promising his soul to said demon. He is not unaware of this fact. Yet, in the anime version, somewhere between dealings with soul collecting [Shinigami](#) and psycho [fallen angels](#), he, while *sitting next the demon he sold his soul to*, claims that he **doesn't believe in souls**. And although he doesn't go so far in the manga, he does regularly express disbelief when confronted with the supernatural, dismissing ghosts and curses even after encountering the real thing.
- *Bleach*: [Played for Laughs](#) in the first chapter when Karin states that despite seeing ghosts [she does not believe in them](#). The ghosts give up haunting her because they feel so rejected by her cold dismissal.
- Early in *A Certain Magical Index*, Touma is dumbstruck upon seeing someone control fire, because "there's no such thing as sorcerers" and "magic isn't real" ... even though he personally knows people who can manipulate lightning, and teleport at will. In other words, while magic is as unrealistic to him as it would be in real life, espers can do comparable things and are scientifically proven in his world, so the powers shouldn't be surprising.
  - Done later in *The Movie, Miracle of Endymion*, with Shutaura Sequenzia, with a mixture of [Hollywood Atheist](#). She doesn't hate religion because she explicitly doesn't believe it to be true, but rather because her father died on a space plane crash that was otherwise declared deathless by the media. She eventually gets over it by the end.
- Mr. Satan/Hercule of *Dragon Ball Z* was completely oblivious that the superpowered main characters were stronger than him, thinking it all to be a trick (he doesn't appear to have done the research on Roshi, Tien, and Goku, all of whom were champions of previous editions of the World Martial Arts Tournament that Mr. Satan rose to fame by winning) and later on a dream. Toward the end of the Cell saga, he seems to be trying to convince himself that it's not real. After the Cell saga, it becomes a [Kayfabe](#) put up by Goku and his fellows. Mr. Satan ends up bribing Android 18 to throw a fight against him so as to maintain the illusion that he's the strongest. By the end of the series, with, among other things, holding the leash of an ice cream-loving [Eldritch Abomination](#) and his beloved daughter marrying the strongest man on the planet, he's fully in the know but helps maintain [The Masquerade](#) so as to keep the general population blissfully unaware of the constant danger they're usually in.
- In *Ghost Sweeper Mikami*, the protagonist is called in to help with a possessed patient of a Western-trained doctor. The doctor claims he cannot determine a cause of sickness, which is incredulous taking into account the levitation, horror face and swirling ghost energy around the victim. Doc responds by rolling around on the floor loudly denying the existence of the supernatural in a "La la la I can't hear you" fashion. He gets better by the end after encountering the possessing spirit and personally aiding in the fight with what he learned in medical school... A flying drop kick from his amateur wrestling team days! After acknowledging that the supernatural exists, he vows to prepare for any future occurrences... By training in his wrestling again.

- **InuYasha**: In the anime, Bankotsu of the Band of Seven explicitly tells Kikyo that he doesn't believe in an afterlife, despite the fact that he lives in a world where **youkai** and magic are general knowledge, as well as the fact that he's an **undead** human talking to another undead human who has to **absorb souls** to survive.
- In one episode of **Lupin III (Red Jacket)**, the gang teams up with the ghost of the Japanese historical figure **Kira Yoshinaka**. Despite the fact that Fujiko, Goemon and Jigen are all smart enough to realize that Kira really is a ghost, Lupin steadfastly refuses to believe the old man's claims, and consistently dismisses his supernatural feats as mere sleight of hand or advanced technology. The fact that Lupin and his pals encounter explicitly supernatural beings multiple times over the course of the franchise's **decades-long history** (including vampires, aliens, zombies, dragons and mermaids) makes it even more bizarre that Lupin apparently chooses to draw the line at the existence of ghosts.
- **Played for Laughs** in **Makai Ouji** where it's first exaggerated and then subverted with the protagonist William, who takes a ridiculously long time to accept that demons are real despite having witnessed numerous inexplicable phenomena and the fact that *two of them follow him around all the time*.
- In **Naruto**, Tsunade states the **ghouls and ghosts** are "just a bunch of hooley". But she's *saying* it to the guy with **a demon spirit sealed inside him**. Also, Tsunade's grand-uncle and one of her ex-teammates know resurrection jutsu. And her two immediate predecessors as Hokage each knew how to summon a **Shinigami**. And her dead boyfriend had invented a jutsu to temporarily transform himself into something akin to a ghost.
- **Occult Academy** has Maya, who is **constantly assaulted by occult forces**, yet for most of the series continues to loudly deny their existence — even while being attacked by a zombie in the first episode. She is often described as **tsundere** for the occult (even in the series itself once or twice), particularly since despite her (backstory-related) hatred of the occult, she is practically a walking encyclopedia on the subject, and is usually the one explaining occult concepts to the other characters. It's no surprise that people keep pairing her with Umineko's Battler (above), who is similarly tsundere towards witches and magic.
- **One Piece**
  - In the Skypiea arc, Zoro says he doesn't believe in God. Considering the main enemy in that arc is apparently God... Justified however in that BECAUSE of all the crazy things they've seen, Zoro simply believes the main enemy could easily be just another crazy situation that's explainable and not actually divine. And he's completely right. Eneru just had a ton of coincidental abilities that looked divine like electricity powers, sensing life and attacks, and that the title he stole was 'God' (which really only meant the equivalent of 'governor' in Skypiea).
  - **Devil Fruits** are regarded as mythical in certain parts of the East Blue. While devil fruits and their users are rare, especially outside of the Grand Line (where the main adventure takes place), most of the world's most prominent military figures and the most widely known and feared

pirates do possess devil fruit powers, and there is known scientific literature seemingly available to the general public describing devil fruits and their effects.

- Moderate example, Blueno from the Water 7 Arc. He has a policy never to believe anything that he cannot be proven to him, as demonstrated when Jabra was scared of other devil fruits due to [Urban Legends](#) about devil fruits containing actual devils.
- *Pokémon* has Cilan, who seems to come up with every "logical" explanation he can think of for supernatural events, such as an object floating through glass, EXCEPT that a Pokemon might be using Psychic.
- One of the hardest things for newcomers to *Umineko: When They Cry* to [get their heads around](#) is that the main character is having a very intense and logical debate denying the existence of a witch that haunts his family's mansion... with the witch in question. And his only tools in this debate? [The magic text she grants to him](#). (In episode 6, [however, he's part of the pro-witch side, since he's the new GM.](#)) This starts making a lot more sense as the story goes on. By the fourth arc, he's not fighting to deny magic in itself but the fact that the murders were committed by that witch. By the fifth, [there's another witch who brings in a piece to do the same thing \(in her words, "dispel the Illusion of the witch"\)](#), though in a some different and more brutal way.
- In the anime movie *Rebirth of Buddha*, a news reporter in a courtroom tells a judge that he rejects Buddha and God, and rejects all notions of a spirit world, after the judge is asking him why he committed suicide. The judge asks him, "Where do you think you are right now?" Here's a [link to the scene](#) .
- Seto Kaiba in *Yu-Gi-Oh!* says [Screw Destiny](#) to the long history of Duel Monsters and of his rivalry with Yugi, even when he is told outright *and* went through the entire Millennium World arc. He goes on to found Duel Academy, a school existing solely for the purpose of being a roach motel for [Eldritch Abominations](#), but not until the main *Yu-Gi-Oh* series itself is over.
  - Kaiba reaches levels of this where he's a damn near parody. In the filler arc, he and Yugi are fighting monster spirits outside of duels, and despite the fact that this crazy stuff is happening right in front of him, he's still adamant that it's all a magic trick that Yugi is doing.
  - Kaiba's denial of magic is far more pronounced in [the English dub by 4Kids](#). In the original, it didn't take him long to get to the point that he recognized that magic is real. He just didn't *care*. Whether there was a historic and magical importance to Duel Monsters didn't matter to him, winning at it did.
  - Naturally made fun of at least one in *Yu-Gi-Oh! The Abridged Series*.
 

**Ishizu:** (after using magical powers to show him a vision of the past) Now do you believe me, Kaiba?

**Kaiba:** Since I'm the most skeptical person on the planet, I'm going to say no.
- Deishuu Kaiki in *Bakemonogatari* is a very odd example in that he might actually be *right*. Throughout the story, monsters, spirits and ghosts plague character as metaphors for their emotional and psychological issues. They're very much there in that you see them damage things and affect the real world and such. However, Kaiki doesn't believe that any of them exist even as he

speaks with them, considering them hallucinations and lies. Normally he'd come off as crazy, but there's actual support for this viewpoint in the story. For example, he sets a magic bee on the main character's little sister that gives her a burning fever, which an expert says is a magic disease that caused a plague long ago. However, Kaiki has actually researched said plague only to find absolutely no evidence of its existence nor the people it supposedly destroyed. The bee? He actually just hypnotized her [and gave her a fever like that](#). The bee doesn't actually exist. The whole worldbuilding in the series is based on the dual nature of the supernatural: it is real, as in it's not just in people's heads, and it is fake, as in it requires people's heads to exist. Oddities find it hard to exist on the South Pole for example. Thus both believing in it and disbelieving in it are completely legitimate viewpoints, and your own interaction with the oddities will be determined by that.

- In [Ascendance of a Bookworm](#) Maine ignores everything people say about magic or all evidence that some plants have magic powers because she simply assumes that magic can't possibly exist. It takes her a long time to realize that not only is magic real, but she has pretty high ability for it herself.

## Comic Books

- A fairly complex example: the Eidolon was a man who died, and instead of reaching the afterlife, he was trapped in a place between life and death—a living ghost who wished to kill people to show the world God didn't exist and this was the only life we have...ok, but here's the issue: he lived in the shared universe of *Image Comics*. Not only is there documented evidence of *MULTIPLE* Gods existing in Image—in particular in the Wildstorm universe he originated from but also the other universes in the Image multiverse—but many of the heroes received powers from or have in some way come into physical contact with Gods. This includes the Judaeo-Christian God, who isn't nearly as nice as he is in the Bible but is, without question, an actual life form. Also, as if this weren't enough, he was a member of a team with no less than three other people who were either Gods, related to Gods or received powers from Gods, including the Goddess of Murder. *Also also*, Eidolon existed in a world where the ability to travel between universes, access to the afterlife, and even technological exploration of other dimensions—many of which were also ruled by or inhabited by Gods—was not only commonplace but well known to the public. One of the teams in this world, The Authority, rode around in a spacecraft inside of the **fucking arteries** of a being best described as a nicer version of Azathoth! Not just a God, *the* God! So, in other words, Eidolon is just some mutant who has immortality of a sort, didn't clinically die after being in some accident or whatever years ago, and interpreted this as a confirmation of atheism—even though he has access to a mountain of *publicly available* scientific evidence debunking atheism top to bottom!
- Ted Knight, [Starman](#), who hung around the [JSA](#) for a long time but was still convinced that science explained all of it... somehow. [Depending on the Writer](#), it sometimes did ([for a certain definition of](#)

"science", anyhow...) And most of the actual "gods" in the setting were actually [sufficiently advanced aliens](#) anyway.

- The modern Mr. Terrific in the [Justice Society of America](#) is an atheist, and he was questioned about this and gave the example mentioned (that there were godlike, or close enough entities running around who didn't call themselves gods). Sometimes he has excellent reasons for his beliefs and sometimes he doesn't, [Depending on the Writer](#). Some writers like to use him as a [Strawman Atheist](#).
- Doctor Terrance Thirteen, the Ghost Breaker, is [The DCU's](#) preeminent example, earnestly believing that aliens (like [Superman](#)), magicians (like [Doctor Fate](#)) and supernatural beings (like [The Spectre](#)) simply don't exist at all. He's treated unilaterally as a joke. Ironically, in his original appearances before continuity held sway (that is, before [The DCU](#) was firmly established as a [Shared Universe](#) where nearly all DC properties resided), the ghosts and magicians he went up against always *were* fake and his skepticism was presented as a virtuous trait; but when continuity started drawing all DC books into one reality, he was first shown the spirit of his dead father by the Spectre, then he was teamed with the very mystical [Phantom Stranger](#), and from then on he was always wrong, simply because the Stranger's very existence demanded it be so. Dr. 13 currently lives outside of the time stream, aware of his own fictional nature; he is teamed with an alien, a vampire, a French caveman, and a talking vampire gorilla with Nazi leanings, his daughter is a rather powerful witch, and he believes none of this.
  - There have been two alternate takes on Dr. 13, making his skepticism something other than the [Idiot Ball](#). In [Neil Gaiman's The Books of Magic](#), the fact he doesn't believe in magic means it simply doesn't work around him, in a cross between [Clap Your Hands If You Believe](#) and [Weirdness Censor](#). In [Grant Morrison's Zatanna](#) he visits a mystical dimension and is happy to admit *something's* happening, but defines it all in scientific terms. (Quantum mechanics and M-theory get a lot of crap past the scientific radar.) There's also the [Architecture and Morality](#) take, wherein he's simply strongly in denial of reality.
  - He's met the DC comic staff so he knows they're all fiction.
  - Dr. 13 frequently alternated in stories where the Phantom Stranger appeared opposite him showing a prior story that was pure trickery he'd revealed only to have things a bit more supernatural (obviously) much of but not always when they were together. He also once disproved that ghosts haunted a house by showing it was actually ALIENS using the house as a stopover point as they teleported across the universe. He's always been the example of the devout worshiper of science whose blind-spot always has him refusing to accept the evidence of supernatural things because he operates under the (obviously proven wrong) premise that nothing supernatural actually exists.
  - In the [New 52 The Phantom Stranger](#) title, he's been reinvented as a "scientific occultist" in the mould of [Egon Spengler](#). His ancestor, the [original](#) Terrence Thirteen in [All-Star Western](#), on the other hand, is the ultimate Flat-Earth Atheist: at one point his *ghost* chides the modern-day Terry for believing in the supernatural.

- In an issue of DC's *Checkmate*, a wizard describes magic to an atheist skeptic as "the cheat codes to the universe".
- In an issue of *Planetary*, The Drummer uses almost the exact same explanation to *Hand Wave* magic into the realm of his infomancer powers.
- In the *Marvel Universe*, *Science Heroes* like *Iron Man* and *Hank Pym* acknowledge that *The Mighty Thor* *might* be an actual god (though they tend to think of him and all other mythological beings as closer to *sufficiently advanced aliens*; Thor was actually *retconned* to be this by *Warren Ellis*, but who knows if it stuck) and that characters like *Doctor Strange*, The Beyonder, and the *Scarlet Witch* are doing *something* beyond their comprehension. That doesn't mean they're comfortable with not understanding what's going on, don't stop looking for ways to explain it, or that they're specifically religious. The closest we ever get is one or two incidents of straight-up desperation praying after all viable options have been exhausted. The only science hero that has no problem accepting all of this is *Bruce Banner*. Though this is a relatively recent development and there are several older stories where these guys have little problem accepting magic and gods, or at least being convinced of it rather quickly. *Flanderization* in action.
- This is true for most of the characters in the *Ultimate Marvel* universe, where magic and mysticism are far less common. For instance, *Hawkeye* refuses to believe that *Ghost Rider* is an actual servant of hell, despite the fact that he *personally witnessed Thor leading an army of Asgardians into battle against Loki's demonic hordes*. Even if the reader knows better, a lot of the magical characters like *Ghost Rider* and *Doctor Strange* are just assumed to be mutants or *Reality Warpers* by the rest of the cast.
- *Quasar* started out his series as an atheist/antitheist, but after the seminal "Cosmos In Collision" storyline a couple of years in, he became more of an agnostic ("Maybe I'm not the atheist I thought I was. Maybe I just haven't discovered the god that's right for me..."). This was likely helped by the fact that in said storyline, he died and was resurrected. God in the Marvel Universe is called The One-Above-All who *appeared to the Fantastic Four* as *Jack Kirby*, a person they know. It runs a bit in the family: at one point *Quasar* has a conversation with his by-then deceased father who is quick to point out that the fact the conversation is happening is *still* no proof of such a thing as an afterlife.
- Touched on by the *City of Heroes* comic books. A sizable portion of the eponymous city has been overrun by zombies powered by the magics of ancient evil "gods", another group of mages summon ghosts and devils and gods regularly within city limits, and one of the major canon heroes makes his armor out of demons. Many heroes still scoff at the concept of Prometheus and Zeus when talking to the former is an important part of making the local phlebotinum work again.
- The hero of *The Savage Dragon* remained an atheist even after being sent to Hell (by a villain's magic), witnessing a fistfight between God and Satan, and *having a conversation with God*. His rationale throughout the whole ordeal was that it was just some weird dream. Later storylines have involved Godworld, a planet housing every god of every pantheon, but these gods are treated like



any other superpowered menace, with the question of their legitimacy being unimportant to the story.

- Of course, this *is* the [Image Verse](#), where Heaven and Hell interact with the human world very explicitly *all the time*, but inter-title continuity among the Image books has been always a dicey proposition.
- Brainiac 5 of the [Legion of Super-Heroes](#). In the postboot continuity he scoffs at his teammate Shikari's feelings about finding a way home during the "Legion Lost" storyline. (In his defense, though, the setting he lives in is at the "sufficiently advanced technology" stage or close to it.) If anything, the end of that arc justifies Brainiac 5's skepticism, as the creator deity worshiped by all the local lifeforms turns out to be a [Sufficiently Advanced Alien](#) and former teammate Element Lad.
  - On the other hand, *this* version of Brainy is the one who had his appearance and personality "upgraded" by the godlike Anomaly, an encounter that [M'Onel](#) and especially Andromeda considered nothing less than a religious experience. On the *other* other hand, Brainy had eventually expressed worry over the sudden change in his personality, and had deliberately begun reverting back to a muted form of his earlier snarkiness, so who knows how he felt at this point about the Anomaly that caused it.
- The snarky [Loveable Rogue](#) drow elf Downer from Kyle Stanley Hunter's comics *Downer: Wandering Monster* and *Downer: Fool's Errand* calls himself an atheist, despite the fact that he lives in a [Dungeons & Dragons](#) world rife with magic and deities. This leads to problems, as no normal cleric will heal his injuries or resurrect him when he dies. [Ironically](#), in the end it was Downer himself who ascended to become the *God of the Game* (for about five minutes) when the Ulolok channeled its power through a slain Downer.
- In the [Age of Ultron](#) tie-in for [Fantastic Four](#), Mr. Fantastic tells his views on afterlife thus: "I am a man of science. There is no God. There is no Heaven. There is no Hell." Just to put this in perspective, not only does he personally know Thor and [Hercules](#) (and incidentally was established as believing in a God many times in the past), but *he's actually been to Heaven and met God*<sup>note</sup> as well.
  - Heck, just a page or so earlier *in that very issue* with the above quote, Ben talks about Doctor Doom's machine for contacting the afterlife, which everyone present knows about.
  - There's also the fact that an earlier FF story<sup>note</sup> was entirely devoted to Franklin and Reed talking this over in a fairly sensitive manner, ending with Reed stating that although he didn't subscribe to any particular organized religion, he *did* believe in God.
- *JLA: Heaven's Ladder* had the [Justice League](#) meet an alien race that had no religious beliefs... and as a result were doomed to [cease to exist](#) when they died, as they had no specific afterlife to go to after death. Using their incredible technology, they decided to [create their own heaven instead!](#) The plot of the series is kicked off when their lack of a religious belief means they have no frame of reference, leading them to kidnap several planets (Not just the populations of planets, the

planets themselves and everything on them) to study the civilizations and figure out how to make a perfect heaven.

- [Marvel 1602](#) has a variation on this in its version of [Thor](#). He's not an atheist, but he refuses to accept his own divinity because he's a member of [The Knights Templar](#), and a devout Christian.
- [Beta Ray Bill](#) is an atheist who *hangs out* with the Norse gods.
  - Bill:** I am alone. I look at the heavens and think them empty. And if not empty, I find the idea of worshiping whatever dwells there obscene. It doesn't change what is right. If there is nothing but what we make in this world, brothers... let us make it good.
  - Bill has never outright dismissed or challenged Thor's claims to godhood and made this statement after witnessing the damage of religious wars. His people were destroyed over the struggle between the traditional religions and the new belief of Bill as a god, the Skrull invasion of Earth in the name of their god, a madman causing genocide in the name of his religion, and further Skrull infighting over whether to follow the traditional Skrull gods or take Bill as their new god.
- The [X-Men](#) were once sent to a world shaped according to Dante's [Inferno](#). Colossus claimed he was proud to be an atheist when he saw how cruel God was. Nobody pointed this out.
- [Achille Talon](#) has a guy claiming he isn't afraid of ghost because he talks with his revenant cousin at every full moon, and he is a skeptic. Actually the guy was part of the fake ghost conspiracy, but still...
- Nicely justified in [Neil Gaiman's](#) take on [The Eternals](#), when Mark Curry refuses to believe Ikarus is an ancient immortal who was worshiped as a god because he lives in the [Marvel Universe](#). "It's a weird world out there, dude. But if [Spider-Man](#) said he got his powers from reading *Chariots Of The Gods*, guess I'd figure he was crazy too."
- This is essentially the whole *point* of [SHOOT First](#). The agents of the Secular Humanist Occult Obliteration Taskforce are atheistic as a rule, despite fighting supernatural forces from various religions. SHOOT considers such entities "Outside Actors" and characterizes them as powerful aliens or somesuch (more "not what they claim" than "not real") — and furthermore holds that buying into the idea that, say, the giant rock guy with writing on his chest is a golem, [gives him greater power](#). At various points, many of the characters wonder if they're actually "right"; while the Outside Actors that they encounter seem pretty villainous, SHOOT has no real proof that their interpretation of their actions or their existence is at all accurate. One member actually secretly secured a document from the Vatican ensuring his passage into Heaven, just in case. He claims there's no doubt in his mind that his position is the right one, but that from a scientific standpoint it would be idiotic to not have a Plan B.
  - Another character has been trying to avoid her son's questions about what happens after you die, even though his father was a fire-breathing demon with horns and wings and the kid may be the Antichrist.

- This trope is parodied in one part of a [MAD](#) article, "What if God Were One of Us?" In one of the gags, [Woody Allen](#) is having lunch with God in a restaurant (where God is eating spaghetti); Allen tells Him, "I want you to know I'm still an agnostic, even though you're right here in front of me, because it's hard to believe the omnipotence of a man with crab meat in his beard."
- Miguel O'Hara, [Spider-Man of the year 2099](#) has been shown to be openly atheistic. Not believing there is a God is one thing, but then he also has explicitly said that upon death a person's soul or mind does not "go" anywhere, but simply ceases to exist. That second one seems a strange claim for an atheist in a world where it has been shown a person's mind can exist as a psychic entity completely separated from the body, and several people have blatantly returned from the dead.
- After the pro-registration forces won Marvel Comics' "Civil War" crossover, [Howard the Duck](#) reluctantly went to the local government office to register as a non-human. There he was informed that the Cleveland government had been aware of the rumors of the "Cleveland Duck Man" for years, and their official policy had always been that he didn't exist. The fact that he was now standing there in front of them was not sufficient reason for them to change that policy. Howard leaves the office in an excellent mood, reassured that he'll never have to pay taxes, be drafted, or interact with the government in any way. Naturally, his luck being what it is, he's eventually forced to register anyway.
- *Emilka Sza* (Emily Hush) by Maciej Kur and Magdalena "Meago" Kania. Emilka spends one entire story finding it just hilarious that Justyna believes in ghosts. Emilka being a sceptic is pretty ironic since she herself has supernatural powers and zombies are apparently a normal thing in their universe.
- Subverted in the latest [Scarlet Spider](#) series, starring Ben Reilly. He was resurrected and killed through cloning multiple times, and he remembers every one of those instances. The experience has left him with a rather nihilistic outlook on life, as he ponders how he only ever experienced nothingness beyond death. To his credit, he quickly throws this all aside after he encounters *the personification of Death, who shows him his own soul*. It's like the writer specifically wanted to show how ridiculous strict atheism is in such a fantastical setting.
- [Jenny Sparks](#) is an [Anthropomorphic Personification](#) of an abstract concept, who is an atheist.
- Ratchet in [The Transformers: More Than Meets the Eye](#) is a die-hard atheist. One of his crewmates is eventually revealed to be the literal personification of Primus, the Transformers' god (the IDW comics are set in a universe where Primus doesn't turn into Cybertron), which actually seems to briefly make him *even less* religious because he views the whole thing as "deeply silly" <sup>note</sup>. To be fair to Ratchet, this also means that the fake Afterspark in the "Lost Light" arc doesn't fool him for more than a minute. And in the Distant Finale, after he's married [Drift](#), he lightens up a bit and starts being willing to meet Drift halfway.

**Ratchet:** I'd like an explanation so I can *reject* it.

## Fanfiction

- In *Eugenesis* Nightbeat angrily decries the existence of Primus, despite having [seen him and been teleported across the universe by him](#), before taking part in a battle against Unicron, his religion's devil. Of course, he did watch Primus get killed a short time later as well. And as later events in the story prove, he might have a reason to doubt Primus after all...
- In *Celestia Isn't Real*<sup>▣</sup>, Diamond Tiara is discovered to [not believe that Celestia exists](#), and even puts forth some convincing arguments in a discussion with the *actual* Celestia (who is there in disguise). [Hilarity Ensues](#).
- **Dr. Maggie Walsh** in *Xendra*<sup>▣</sup> adamantly refuses to believe in magic, even when witnessing it in effect, such as the titular character [changing back](#) into Xander. This is particularly jarring when she brushes off the events of Graduation Day as a mass hallucination and in the same breath talks about the massive pieces of organic matter recovered (the Mayor's corpse) that contain no DNA or RNA but also possess compounds either not found in organic matter, anywhere on Earth, or both.
  - Forrest Gates refuses to believe Buffy's superhuman even after she lets him try to bend a piece of rebar then twists it into a pretzel and lets him try again. This despite having spent months hunting vampires and demons (though his company calls them Hostile Subterrestrials) and being currently bound to a chair with magic.
- In *Robb Returns*, in spite of all increasing proof that magic is back, Tywin refuses to consider the idea. He also tries to ignore the pull towards a room his father seemed to be obsessed with, claiming it nonsense. [Gives up when he goes to said room and finds proof that cannot be denied](#).
- Downplayed in *Don't Look*<sup>▣</sup>. Ritsuko doesn't believe Misato about the Slender Man despite working with Evas and [Angels](#), but admits that she can't explain the facts she has with science. Misato was cut open with what could only be specialty surgery machinery but there's no evidence of it at the site of the attack and she fired three full clips of armor piercing rounds yet they can only find the shell casings and none of the bullets. Lastly, the Slender Man's victims had their organs wrapped in a materiel that looked like saran wrap but couldn't be analyzed even by the MAGI. So while Ritsuko thinks Misato might be insane for her recollection of what happened, she doesn't know what actually did.
- *The Pieces Lie Where They Fell*: Some believe Celestia and Luna are still responsible for the sun and moon rotating around the world, even a thousand years after their deaths, while others, including Rex, believe gravity is responsible. He also firmly believes that magic, or thaumatology as he calls it, can be broken down into and understood in terms of scientific principles.
- *Escape From the Moon*: Spliced Genome denies that magic is real - she refers to it as "thaumatics", an energy that can be manipulated by ponies in certain forms, and firmly believes it has a scientific explanation. It's noted in the sequel *The Mare From the Moon* that she's also convinced that one of their [most powerful enemies in the past](#) was just a creature with a far greater ability to manipulate

thaumatics than any normal pony rather than any sort of magical entity. By the end of the story, nearly six hundred years later, she's not only changed to thinking of it as magic, her powers have developed considerably and she can now teleport.

- **Shard**: In the prologue, Rize tells Aero point-blank that he doesn't believe in souls, despite it being established in-universe that a person's Aura is the manifestation of their soul.

## Film

- In *The Coffin Joe Trilogy*, the title character refuses in to believe in God, Satan, and general supernatural activity, despite frequently being a target of ghostly/demonic apparitions within the trilogy. It's never confirmed if the apparitions are **real or a product of his mind**.
- Referenced in *Dogma* when Loki, the former Angel of Death, talks to a Nun early and claims to have become an atheist due to a bizarre interpretation of **Lewis Carroll's** poem *The Walrus and the Carpenter*, which convinces her **somehow** to give up organized religion. His friend Bartleby points out that he *knows* for a fact there is a God, that Loki has stood in His presence, and He has spoken to Loki personally, yet Loki just claimed to be an atheist. Loki replies he just likes fucking with the clergy.
- Not quite atheism, but in *Erik the Viking* Harald the Missionary, who accompanies the Vikings on their quest, staunchly refuses to believe in the Norse gods and their mythology... even when they're *standing outside the gates of Valhalla*. He *can't* see it, because he doesn't believe in it (he is a Christian, after all), but it certainly causes a great deal of frustration with his crewmates. Turns out to be a plot device when the Missionary is the only one who can leave Valhalla to save them all, since he doesn't believe in it.
- **Ghostbusters**
  - **Walter Peck** in the **first movie** firmly refuses to believe in ghosts even when his own actions cause the rampaging ghost menace in the first place (or maybe he had his denial blinders on). Plus the hundreds of eyewitnesses who have seen ghosts and seen the Ghostbusters at work. Peck's accusation that the Ghostbusters use gas to cause hallucinations is made without the slightest shred of evidence.
  - In *Ghostbusters II*, the Ghostbusters have been shut down as frauds and many characters don't **believe in ghosts**. This is despite **New York City** having been attacked by a giant marshmallow man at the end of the first movie, which hundreds of people must have witnessed, and possibly being captured on film.
- In *Jason and the Argonauts*:
  - Jason**: They won't answer the believers. Would they answer a non-believer?
  - Later, after lots of divine intervention, he pulls a **Gods Need Prayer Badly**.
    - Jason**: In time, all men shall learn to do without them!

- In [Jesus Christ: Vampire Hunter](#), the title character gets attacked by a mob of atheists. "You don't know us, because we've never talked to you before!" Yeah, it's a weird movie.
- In [Second Glance](#), a movie that's essentially [It's a Wonderful Life](#) but with a young Christian wishing he wasn't a believer, rather than never having existed. So an angel makes it happen and walks him through a day in his life as a non-believer. The problem of living as an unbeliever while also witnessing a supernatural event and chatting with an agent of God isn't adressed.
- In the B-Movie [Voyage To The Planet Of Prehistoric Women](#), the eponymous women come to accept that their various nature gods are false after they fail to kill the human astronauts. At the end, they declare the humans' dead robot to be their new god. This ignores the fact that their prayers to the gods, although failing to kill the humans, *did* cause volcanic eruptions and floods, *and* killed the robot that they accept as the "strongest god".
- [A Matter of Faith: Discussed](#). Portland claims that even if the stars fell from the sky to form the phrase "God is real", it would still be deemed a trick by atheist evolutionists.
- In the original [Star Wars](#) trilogy, there are characters who don't believe that the Force is real, despite it being common knowledge in the prequels (which take place only about 20 years prior, meaning some of said characters would have been alive at the time and seen them first hand). It's partly justifiable as the galaxy is a *vast* place (about 400 billion stars, 3.2 million inhabitable solar systems, 100,000 light years across and with countless sentient species) so many likely never saw the Force personally, or thought it was exaggerations from the stories they heard (as Han seems to think at first).
- In [Red Lights](#), Buckley becomes this near the end of the film.
- In Tim Burton's [Batman \(1989\)](#) it takes a great many characters quite a while to acknowledge that Batman *might* exist, and even then they're not willing to say so publicly. Alexander Knox (the only halfway-credible person who believes in Batman from the beginning) points out early on that, for the past month, there has been at least one sighting of Batman every week. But Harvey Dent dismisses the stories of Batman sightings as tales of "ghosts and goblins", and Eckhardt the police lieutenant insists that the slum dwellers who claim to have seen a bat-creature are "drinkin' Drano." Vicki Vale does *pretend* to believe, but this is only to convince Knox to join her in an official investigation of the sightings, which [Vale hopes will advance her career and maybe even win her a Pulitzer Prize](#). Commissioner Gordon is the second major character to catch a glimpse of Batman... but he'd rather just sweep the truth under the rug, partly because it would embarrass Gotham City's police and partly because, since [Batman was directly responsible for Jack Napier's near-death when the police needed Napier alive as a mob informant](#), Gordon frankly would rather believe that Batman does *not* exist.

Literature

- The Tolnedrans in *The Belgariad* worship a god that loves money, which sent them down a road to love money more than Gods, so that they're effectively atheist merchants, and their god couldn't be happier with them. Most Tolnedran characters will cling to their atheism no matter how much the world's supernatural elements prod at them, including a scene where General Varana spends a tactical meeting facing away from the other commanders so that he won't have to see the sorcerers he's working with shapeshifting and casting spells. However, many acknowledge these things do exist, they just "officially" disbelieve them.
  - Further proof of this trope by the Tolnedrans: according to any Tolnedran, and the entire Tolnedran government, there is no such thing as magic, yet there are also specific laws making it illegal to use the very magic the law makers agree does not exist.
  - Inverted by Brador, the chief of the Mallorean Empire's Bureau of Internal Affairs. He is a Melcene, who, like the Tolnedrans, don't believe in anything supernatural. Along comes Book 3 of *the Malloreon*, at which point demons start butchering whole cities under the command of a Grolim priest. Brador not only doesn't seem to have any trouble believing demons exist, but he begs Belgarath and Belgarion to help him convince his even more skeptical emperor to call off his [Roaring Rampage of Revenge](#) so they can go back and deal with the situation.
- *The Chronicles of Narnia*
  - In *The Last Battle*, a group of [dwarfs](#) who had turned atheist after being burned by the cult of "Tashlan" manages to trap themselves in an inverted [Lotus-Eater Machine](#) effect when they were brought into Heaven during [the end of Narnia as we know it](#).
  - Also, Uncle Andrew, who refused to believe that the animals were talking and trapped himself in a [Weirdness Censor](#).
  - And then there's Eustace in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. He refuses to believe that Narnia isn't on Earth, while on a ship whose X.O. is a three-foot-tall *talking* mouse. The movie throws in a *minotaur* as the Master at Arms to make this even more ridiculous. The inclusion of the minotaur is made even funnier when he and a human shipmate *make fun of* Eustace for talking to a seagull and expecting it to respond, with their implication that Eustace [ought to have known better](#).
  - [Prince Rabadash](#) is a variation - although he believes in the Calormene Gods, he also believes that the ending of the [White Witch's](#) eternal winter has come about through "the alteration of the stars and the operation of natural causes." Despite the fact that the Calormenes have been entertaining fauns, talking animals, they know that Narnia is guarded by "a demon...in the shape of a lion" and that the long winter was caused by a witch.
- Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever from *The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant* is a good example of the subtrope of the atheist dropped into a supernatural world. It takes him the whole first trilogy to accept that The Land isn't just a figment of his imagination. Even then, he doesn't stop believing the Land is a hallucination. He just concludes that it's an *important* hallucination.

- Frequently parodied in [Discworld](#), where atheists are often [hit with lightning](#) on clear and sunny days. [Feet of Clay](#) features Dorfl, a golem who will only believe in gods when they can be proven by rational debate. Offler decides to settle this by hitting him with a lightning bolt but Dorfl simply shrugs this off, saying, "I Don't Call That Much Of An Argument". It seems that Dorfl is the gods' worst nightmare — a *ceramic* atheist. Fireproof!
  - In [Small Gods](#), a bartender in an Ephebian bar for philosophers says: "We get that in here some nights, when someone's had a few. Cosmic speculation about whether gods really exist. Next thing, there's a bolt of lightning through the roof with a note wrapped round it saying 'Yes, we do' and [a pair of sandals with smoke coming out](#). That sort of thing, it takes all the interest out of metaphysical speculation."
    - Which is why the Library of Ephebe is roofed in copper.
  - The gods also aren't very fond of being fooled with. A footnote in [Hogfather](#) describes one philosopher indulging in the Discworld equivalent of Pascal's Wager<sup>note</sup> ... only to wake up in the afterlife surrounded by a lot of deities with pointed sticks saying, "We're going to show you what we think of Mr. Clever Dick in these parts."
  - Sergeant Simony in [Small Gods](#), who tells the manifested god Om, "Don't think you can get round me by existing!" Interestingly, Om doesn't actually mind this, and notes that, as the reason gods want worshipers is because [Gods Need Prayer Badly](#), such fervent belief in nonexistence works just as well, so an atheist that enthusiastic is actually worth more to a god than a casual churchgoer. Note that Simony literally means the act of selling church offices for profit, something which a true believer would probably not dare to do.
  - Played with in the opposite direction with Mightily Oats from [Carpe Jugulum](#), an Omnian reverend who has a crisis of faith throughout the story. Granny Weatherwax helps snap him out of it by telling him that if she saw her god personally save one of his greatest disciples in front of a large crowd, she'd live her life defending her religion to the bitter end.
    - Granny's standard approach to gods is that just because they exist is no reason to go around worshiping them - it only makes them start putting on airs.

It would be like believing in the mailman.
- The God of Evolution from [The Last Continent](#), who manages to exist in a world where [Gods Need Prayer Badly](#) even though *he himself is an atheist*.
- In [The Science of Discworld](#), it's mentioned that the wizards don't believe in the gods- They know the gods exist, they just don't believe in them- because Unseen University has very good anti-lightning spells, and being immune from godly wrath does wonders for free-thinking. The fact that the Archchancellor and the High Priest are very similar brothers might have something to do with it.
- Susan Sto Helit was raised to believe that supernatural creatures were nice stories but not actually real, because her parents thought this would shield her from [her grandfather's](#) world. As the [Lemony Narrator](#) puts it, this was a bit like not teaching someone self-defence so that



nobody would attack them. (In later books she's become a [Nay-Theist](#); she knows the world of her grandfather and the Tooth Fairy and the Soul Cake Tuesday Duck exists, and she wishes it didn't.)

- [Downplayed Example](#) from [The Divine Comedy](#). The heretic Farinata degli Uberti spends his time in Hell glaring contemptuously at every aspect of the afterlife he denied the existence of. He fails to acknowledge his mistake when Dante talks to him and seems single-mindedly fixated on his family's reputation in the physical world, which he still treats as if it was the only world that exists.
- [The Dresden Files](#):
  - [Recurring Character](#) Sanya is a Russian man who was once [possessed by a Fallen Angel](#) and offered [redemption](#) and a kick-ass magic sword wrought from one of the nails that crucified Jesus, from the hand of [the Archangel Michael himself](#). He describes himself as agnostic. After all, the whole thing might be caused by [Sufficiently Advanced Aliens](#), [a dream he's currently having in a coma](#), or [a hallucination of some sort](#). On the complete other hand, he takes the existence of [demons](#), [faeries](#), and [wizards](#) without much question. Sanya's attitude about the whole thing is that it doesn't matter if his power came from God or not, he's helping people who need it, and that's all that matters. Or he's just insane. He's in no hurry to figure out which explanation is true.
  - Dresden himself, despite being best friends with *another* sword-bearer, and having had open discussions with Archangels, doesn't consider himself a "Believer", either. This is less a lack or weak belief, but more of a difference of opinion about a certain Deity's *Modus Operandi*.
- In [David Eddings' The Elenium](#), the Elene people believe in only one God and their religion is [almost exactly like the Catholic Church](#). Their God doesn't respond directly to them and they never see him. However, they do live on a planet with about 1,000 other gods. What is really weird is when the Church Knights (the military arm of the Church) need magic to fight magic, they get four priests from four of the other gods (who, again, the Church says don't exist) to teach them magic. And that magic is praying to the other gods (who according to them don't exist) for spells. Other races of people do find the Elene religion strange that way, especially the ones who actually meet *their* gods. Amazingly enough, Eddings gets it to work. The Elene god, in fact, is even okay with this. He and the Styric pantheon have a *deal* worked out.
- In S. M. Stirling's [Emberverse](#), a universe that's kicked off when a bright light rends inoperable all modern technology at once, [The Chessmaster](#) Sandra Armingier remains one of the few atheists. She admits that the evidence in favor of religion and magic in her universe makes this an illogical position, and says that she has attempted to pray. Her prayers have been ineffective, however, because in her heart she does not believe.
 

**Juniper:** You believe in nothing, you pray to nothing, and you are answered by — nothing!

**Sandra (wryly):** Is *nothing* sacred?
- Jalil in the [Everworld](#) books is a teen-aged atheist from this world sucked into a world where various mythological deities are real. He's fairly smart about it, but more-or-less claims them to

be [Sufficiently Advanced Aliens](#) and/or that the laws of physics in this world are just different and assumed to be "magic".

- Interestingly, this series plays with the trope with another character: April, a devout *Christian* brought to Everworld. While she seems more open to displays of the obviously supernatural, she also claims the various deities aren't "real gods" while at the same time having a small crisis of faith.
- Jalil's issues are further examined by the other characters' opinions. The acid-tongued, magic-loving Senna in particular has a few interesting things to say about it. "No wonder you don't believe in [God](#) or [gods](#): Thou shalt have no other gods before Jalil."
- The Mi-Go, [H. P. Lovecraft's \*Fungi from Yuggoth\*](#), live in a world overflowing with monstrous, supernatural beings with horrific powers. Rather than worshipping them as gods like most mortals aware of their existence, they plan to use their science to either control or destroy these entities. In contrast to the hopelessness that surrounds any human confrontation with the Mythos' various horrifying creatures, you get the feeling that the Mi-Go might just have some chance of pulling it off, probably because, unlike humans, their science is not inhibited by old-fashioned limitations like ethics. When you think about it, they may just be the scariest damn things in the entire Mythos.
  - Alternatively, they may just have [Outgrown Such Silly Superstitions](#). After all, many if not all of the 'supernatural' entities of Lovecraft's creation are themselves 'only' alien lifeforms that humans — and insane cultists in particular — simply easily *mistake* for gods or demons.
    - According to [The Whisperer in Darkness](#), where the Mi-Go are introduced, they do seem to worship Shub-Niggurath and Nyarlathotep. It does sound like a pragmatic relationship, though; you really don't want to annoy forces like that, no matter how great your civilization is.

**The Whisper:** To Nyarlathotep, Mighty Messenger, must all things be told.
- Allan Carpentier, the hero of [Larry Niven](#) and Jerry Pournelle's *Inferno*, believes that the world he finds himself in is just a copy of Dante's *Inferno* built by sadistic [Sufficiently Advanced Aliens](#). By the end of the first book he has become convinced otherwise but has yet to decide whether or not [God Is Evil](#).
- In the [Kitty Norville](#) series, [the masquerade was broken](#) in the first book of the series. *Kitty's House of Horrors* is the seventh book, set about four years after the start of the series, and is probably the first time the reader meets a person who doubts the existence of the supernatural. Author Conrad Garrett argues that people who claim to have supernatural powers are frauds or crazy, that video footage of a werewolf shapeshifting is CGI, and that CDC reports on were-people and vampires are the result of collusion with drug companies who want to make money off the conditions. He only changes his mind when he sees Kitty shapeshift.
- The [Left Behind](#) series. After a wide variety of miracles, divine intervention, etc. it began to strain disbelief that so few people would convert.

- [Lampshaded](#) in some of Patricia Briggs' *Mercy Thompson* novels. Werewolves have recently gone public; the fae have been officially out for a decade or so, and demons are also real, but the protagonist meets quite a few people who don't believe in vampires or ghosts, and her friend Adam, a werewolf, doesn't believe in God (although she does herself).
- In [Stephen King's](#) novella *The Mist*, the main character refers to a group of "rationalists" who refuse to accept that something very strange and dangerous is happening out in the eponymous mist as "The Flat Earth Society." The Flat Earth Society is a Real Life group of modern day people who believe that the Earth is in fact flat.
- Mau, the hero of [Terry Pratchett's](#) *Nation*, refuses to believe that the gods are anything more than superstition and lazy thinking — despite being periodically shouted at by the spirits of his ancestors, and courted by [Locaha, the god of death](#). As the old priest points out, though, this may be more [anger that the gods have so thoroughly let him down](#) than genuine atheism — after all, being the sole survivor of a tsunami has left him [pretty goddamn traumatized](#). As the priest says to Mau, "You want the Gods to exist just enough that you can be angry at them for not existing."
  - The gods themselves seem more like ineffectual echoes than genuine powers of the universe, so disbelieving them can be seen more as disbelief in their hype of themselves, rather than in their subjective existence (all observations of gods in the book are subjective — no omnipotent narrator's solution is presented).
  - "Why do they want gods? We need people. That is what I believe. Without other people, we are nothing."
- In *Oracle of Tao*, because [Religion Is Magic](#), atheists get cool antimagic powers, which in a large group of people causes an antimagic field called "unbelief." It is explained that in order to be atheists in a world where God has literally appeared to everyone, and can be visited, they basically are denying that their world is real. They're half-right.
- *The Secrets of Drearcliff Grange School* and *The Haunting of Drearcliff Grange School* are set in an [Extranormal Institute](#) whose students include psychics, shapechangers, werewolves, and fish-people, in a setting where there are publicly active superheroes like the Aviatrix, who flies with wings that appear and disappear as needed. Charlotte Knowles' father writes detective novels about impossible crimes that always turn out to have non-supernatural explanations, even though he lives in a world where "the murderer used telekinesis to kill the victim from outside the locked room" is entirely possible and much more straightforward than the kind of solution his novels usually have, and refuses to believe that his wife's and daughter's psychic abilities are not some kind of trick that he can't figure out and that they won't admit to. Charlotte says at one point that she suspects on some level he's aggrieved that they both got abilities that let them absorb vast amounts of information instantaneously while he has to do research the difficult and time-consuming way.
- In *A Song of Ice and Fire*, the character Stannis Baratheon expresses atheist sentiments while using the magic of a particular religion to accomplish his own ends. He's portrayed very differently in the TV adaptation. It's somewhat justified as magic in general is proven to exist and there are

magic users who belong to other religions or who are not religious. The fact that Red Priests are able to use magic and produce what appear to be miracles isn't necessarily proof that their god is real.

- Richard from *The [Sword of Truth](#)* series denounces the concept of an afterlife where people are rewarded or punished for their actions, because "nobody has ever come back from the grave to describe conditions in the next life." This despite having personally conversed with the spirits of the dead at least *three times*, and having *gone to the underworld and come back*.
- In *[Saturn's Children](#)* by Charles Stross, all the characters are robots (though that word is considered obscene). Most of them, based on design schematics and such, believe that they were created by human beings. A few, however, believe in [the holy doctrine of Evolution](#), and its prophets [Darwin](#), [Dawkins](#), and Gould.
- Also by [Charles Stross](#), Bob Howard of *[The Laundry Files](#)* describes himself as an atheist because he doesn't believe in God. He then turns the trope inside-out by saying that he definitely does believe in [non-Euclidean monsters from outside our universe](#) that think human souls are crunchy and good with ketchup.
- In *[Warbreaker](#)*, Lightsong is a god who doesn't believe in his own religion. He has an epiphany towards the end. Another character, Siri, is married to the God King but doesn't believe in him. In both cases, though, they believe in the existence of the potential deities, just not their divinity. Siri does believe in 'a' god, just not the one she's married to.
- In *[Towing Jehovah](#)* by James Morrow, [God Is Dead](#) and his two-mile corpse is floating in the Atlantic Ocean. The Vatican hires a disgraced oil tanker captain to tow God's body to the Arctic where it can be kept on ice before it rots away or is devoured by sharks. One of their primary antagonists is the Central Park West Enlightenment League, who upon hearing the news, [try to destroy the corpse with bombs](#) to remove concrete evidence of a deity. One of their members does remark that if they were truly committed to scientific reasoning they should try to study the corpse and accept the possibility they'd been wrong all along, but the majority reject her.
- In Caitlin R. Kernan's novels, the characters spend a [suspicious amount of time](#) fervently denying anything supernatural is happening... including when they're blasting [ghouls](#) into [chunky salsa](#) with shotguns. Former *psychic detective* Deacon Silvey is a repeat offender.
- In Christopher Stasheff's *[Her Majesty's Wizard](#)*, an agnostic from Earth is transported to another world where he discovers not only his magical powers, but the unequivocal Judeo-Christian deity ([God](#)) and opponent ([Satan](#)) who directly and consistently interfere in human affairs. Priestly blessings have direct and easily detectable effects, the hero interacts directly with his personal devil who tries to drag him into hell, he runs into at least one saint who tells him what to do after transporting him from a wrecked church into a fully restored one and back again, the act of being knighted by a king (who rules by divine right, and who happens to be mostly dead at the time) actually confers martial abilities, and at the end after the chief bad guy is defeated we see hordes of devils stream out of the sky and compete for his soul, only being banished by the intervention of

priests. He converts to the local version of Catholicism by the end of the first book. Stasheff pointed out in the afterword that medieval people saw God and the Devil everywhere in their daily lives, and this book is an attempt to show that where most fiction of this type completely ignores this aspect of their lives.

- In [Robert E. Howard's Conan the Barbarian](#) story "[The God in the Bowl](#)", Dionus is a materialist in a world with plentiful magic.
- In the setting of [Philip K. Dick's A Maze of Death](#) God is openly real, and prayers are a commonly accepted way of solving problems, though they usually have to be carefully composed and transmitted by radio into outer space in order to work. Dr. Babble, however, is an atheist who believes that the "God" in question is just a [Sufficiently Advanced Alien](#).
- The characters in the [Knight and Rogue Series](#) are fully aware that there are two gods out there who somewhat violently protect plants and animals, but as no greater being guards humans there's no serious religious practices.
- In the [Warrior Cats](#) series, there are two. Clodtail refuses to believe that StarClan exists, despite seeing his leader come back to life after being killed and the fatal wounds healing themselves. But even more notable is Mothwing, a medicine cat. She had a prophetic dream herself right after being apprenticed, and everything that Leafpool has told her, which she couldn't possibly have known on her own, happens to be true. She has also seen her own leader lose lives and come back to life. As part of a medicine cat's job is to be the spiritual leader of the Clan, this makes her the equivalent of an atheist priest.
  - She later starts training a religious apprentice, Willowshine, who knows that Mothwing's an atheist and interprets mystical dreams and omens for her. Mothwing did originally believe in StarClan and see them, but her brother (an evil, manipulative bastard) convinced her that they weren't, and after he dies, she can't quite bring herself to trust in them again. Essentially, she *wants* to believe in StarClan, but she can't risk getting her hopes dashed again.
  - And in the fourth series, Mothwing's disbelief is finally broken, (according to the author) when *the feline equivalent of Heaven and Hell take physical forms on Earth to battle against each other*. That's what it took.
  - And earlier in said fourth series, after seeing something that was clearly an omen by cat standards (a burning reed that wasn't extinguished, even by constant rainfall over it) she brought another medicine cat over to see it, saying that she didn't believe it was a sign, but she knew that he would and that it might be important. One imagines that she was just in denial to begin with.
- Dunk, the hero of the [Blood Bowl](#) novel *Rumble in the Jungle*. In that book he encounters his long-lost sister who is haunted by the ghost of their late mother. Dunk is unshakably convinced that the ghost isn't a real ghost at all but merely a daemon who (somehow) gained the shape and memories of their mother despite no particular evidence such a thing is possible and his own frequent encounters with more physical undead like vampires.

- [Chanters of Tremaris](#) has a non-deity version of this trope in the character of Trout, who refuses to believe in the existence of magic, even after he's seen it used. It later turns out to be a [Justified Trope](#), as the spell in question was a very, very [high-pitched](#) spell of illusion, and Trout is deaf to high noises which rendered him immune to its effects. After further exposure to magic that he *can* see and hear, he gets over it.
- [C. S. Lewis's \*The Great Divorce\*](#) takes this a step further; there are atheists who persist in their unbelief despite *being in the afterlife*.
- [Harry Turtledove's \*Videssos Cycle\*](#) has Marcus Aemilius Scaurus who doesn't believe in the opposing Scotos and Phos, despite all evidence, until one of them practically bites him on the ankle.
- In [Dangerous Spirits](#), Meg maintains her position on the reality (or lack thereof) of Sol and Alexei's spiritual encounters, even after witnessing it first-hand.
- In [Gifts](#) by [Ursula K. Le Guin](#), Orrec's mother Melle has a difficult time fitting the magical powers of the domains into her lowlander, anti-magic worldview. The people of Caspromant try not to use their gift of unmaking for her comfort.
- In [John Ringo's 'Queen of Wands'](#), all of the deities and devils in all religions exist and interact with human beings, with "The White God" (the Judeo-Christian Trinity, directly from the Christian Bible, Old Testament in this case) being the most powerful but still only one of the gods. The main driver of one of the stories in that book is that an "Old One" is summoned, and is well on its way to destroying the USA. During a conference call with government officials who are deciding how to deal with the Old One, the White God personally speaks through his representative, the main character, and lays down the law. And even then, multiple people in the government still don't believe in deities, and/or refuse to accept their divinity, and refuse to support any actions which might violate the principle of separation of church and state, such as having the President go on television to pray for deliverance from the Old One (who at this point has been shown to be immune to nuclear weapons). Their insistence on not believing, in the face of unequivocal evidence to the contrary, is this trope.<sup>note</sup>
- [The Pilgrim's Progress](#): Unsurprisingly, the character of Atheist gets depicted this way, since in the story Heaven is a place that you can actually see and walk up to, yet he claims not to have found it after twenty years in searching. Hopeful says he is "blinded by the god of this World" (i.e. Satan).
- [Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard](#): Samirah refuses to believe that the Norse gods are divine, as she's a devout Muslim for whom there is only one God. Magnus, on the other hand, is an atheist. Samirah says that it sounds like the beginning of a bad joke: "An atheist and a Muslim walk into a pagan afterlife..."
  - Magnus has even more reason to not see any of the Gods in the Riordanverse as capital G beings: his cousin is Annabeth Chase, Daughter of Athena. Bit hard for there to be a Great Plan

when there are two wisdom gods (that he knows about) running around, and two gods of thunder, and two gods of the sea....

- A good deal of golden-age SF is [Doing In the Wizard](#) stories where the science explorer or hard-nosed common-sense guy seems to be a Flat Earth atheist, but turns out to be right. This mostly faded away after the heyday of [John W. Campbell](#) era *Astounding* (when the guy who decides what gets published believes every kind of pseudoscience will definitely be proven true next week, "it's not magic, it's just chi powers" is a lot easier)—still plenty of wizard-abolishing stories, but on the softer side of the spectrum, and rarely led by Flat Earth atheist heroes (unless you count [Doctor Who](#)).
- In [You Are Dead \(Sign Here Please\)](#) Travis Habsworth of 2388 Shillington Road, Albany very specifically disbelieves in a huge number of things that most people would agree are real, including but not limited to: money, bus drivers, skepticism and Australia.
- The [Star Wars Expanded Universe](#):
  - The Yuuzhan Vong follow a [Religion of Evil](#) and truly believe the gods that they worship exist. They think The Force isn't real and that the Jedi and Sith are just charlatans. Their unbelief in The Force is helped by the fact that the Yuuzhan Vong are immune to most Force abilities. Later, after seeing some Jedi's extraordinary powers, some Yuuzhan Vong [come to see the Jedi as the avatars of their gods](#).
  - In the Clone Wars novel *Med Star I: Battle Surgeons*, arrogant mercenary Phow Ji refuses to believe in the Force, even when it's demonstrated in front of his eyes. This appears to stem largely from his insufferable [arrogance](#) - he beat a Jedi in unarmed combat (because the Jedi didn't use the Force, to be fair) and is therefore convinced their powers are simply tricks. Notably it's heavily implied that the reason he launches a suicide attack at the end is because he has been forced to accept that the Force is real and that therefore he wasn't the best.

### Live-Action TV

- [Babylon 5 Zig-zags](#) on this topic, Garibaldi doesn't believe in souls, but the Soul Hunters routinely trap them. Dr. Franklin suggests that it may be possible to [encode a personality matrix and create a clone of a human mind](#), though, and the Soul Hunters themselves do not believe in an afterlife, hence their obsession with gathering up souls that would otherwise be lost.
  - His friend Lyta Alexander tells him that when a telepath is scanning the mind of a person who dies, he or she can see the person's soul going through a portal to the beyond, although she acknowledges that it may just be the only way the brain can interpret what is happening.
  - And the Minbari broke off the war with the Earth Alliance because they found "undeniable proof" of Minbari souls being reincarnated in humans, namely Sinclair and other pilots they captured.

Apparently they have technology that can scan and identify souls. Except it's later revealed that it didn't detect souls, but Sinclair/Valen's DNA.

- [Game of Thrones](#): Euron scoffs at the Drowned God and all manner of faith, despite living in a universe where magic is evidently real.
- An episode of the [Hercules: The Legendary Journeys spinoff](#) series [Young Hercules](#) featured a teenage, atheist [Pythagoras](#) who refuses to believe in the Greek gods. This puts him and everyone around him in extreme danger of said gods striking them down, until Hercules, and a run-in with [Strife](#), manages to convince him that the gods are real after all. Or at least, he quickly adds, there are beings that [seem to be gods...](#)
- [Star Trek: Deep Space Nine](#) also offers many classic examples, specifically in regard to the Bajoran Religion. Despite the existence of bona-fide *holy relics* in the form of the Orbs of the Prophets and the sworn statements of several high-ranking Starfleet officers, the Federation still treats the Bajoran Religion as little more than fairy tales. Prophecies and visions of the future are almost always dismissed as hallucinations and wild speculation, despite the *well known fact* that the incredibly powerful beings known as "the Prophets" exist in a state outside of time and are perfectly capable of giving visions and inspiring prophecies. That's still more along the lines of the [Trek No Such Thing as Space Jesus](#) staple than this, though. A few officers at least come around to the idea that the "wormhole aliens" are definitely powerful beings that have a relationship with Bajor, but worshipping them is exclusively the province of Bajorans themselves.
  - *DS9* actually spends a lot of time playing with this trope, with both the Prophets and the Founders worshipped as Gods by some groups while others view them as simply non-humanoid aliens with advanced knowledge. The question the show never quite spells out is "what makes a god?" The Founders, despite their legitimate claim to [Physical Godhood](#), are portrayed as just arrogant genetic-engineers (albeit engineers capable of uplifting or even creating entire sentient species). The Prophets, on the other hand, are left more ambiguous in the veracity of their divinity (ultimately a matter of faith): it's granted that they are essentially omniscient, but the matter of their intentions (benevolent or ambivalent) and their power over the physical (or spiritual) world can be unclear.
    - [Lampshaded](#) in the episode "[Tears of the Prophets](#)":
      - Weyoun**: "All this talk of gods strikes me as nothing more than superstitious nonsense!"
      - Damar**: "You believe that the Founders are gods, don't you?"
      - Weyoun**: "That's different."
      - Damar**: "In what way?"
      - Weyoun**: "The Founders **are** gods."
  - The show also gets a lot of dramatic mileage out of Sisko being the Messiah of a religion he *doesn't believe in*.
  - Of course various [Star Trek](#) crews have met many instances of [Sufficiently Advanced Aliens](#). Since some have claimed divinity and others haven't, it makes sense for Starfleet officers to doubt it, even with concrete evidence.



- In particular, the Q Continuum are [literally omnipotent](#), but they normally don't claim to be gods. The Q who usually interacts with Starfleet characters claimed to be [God](#) a couple of times in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, but only to [troll](#) the heroes. He later admits to having lied in those cases, though he also claims to be personally acquainted with the Judeo-Christian God and never renounced that particular claim. And in both of those cases, Captain Picard averts this trope. Though he never comes off as religious, his rejection of Q's claims to godhood never involve claims that God doesn't exist. He simply rejects the idea that **Q** could be God, because despite being omnipotent, Q is ultimately just an [immature trickster](#). Picard might well have believed him if he claimed to be [Loki, Coyote, or Puck](#).

**Picard:** I refuse to believe that the afterlife is run by you. The universe is not so badly designed.

- And then there's the Klingons, who sidestep the issue by believing their ancestors *killed* the gods that created them.

**Worf:** Our gods are dead. Ancient Klingon warriors slew them millennia ago. They were more trouble than they were worth.

- In *The Suite Life on Deck* episode, "The Ghost and Mr. Martin", Cody scoffs at the idea that there's a ghost on the ship despite the fact that in [the previous series](#), he and Zack had encountered a woman's ghost at the Tipton hotel. Lampshaded by Zack when he points this out to which Cody dismisses that experience as them being "hormone-crazed 12 year old boys seeing women popping out of a lot of places".
- *Torchwood*'s Jack Harkness is a possible example. The finale of the first series opens with him scoffing while another character reads from [The Bible](#). By the end of the episode, he's fought a monster named Abaddon. Whether or not a lot of the characters are supernatural, though, is ambiguous. [Justified](#) in that at this point Jack has died and come back to life several hundred times and does not consider the resulting experiences consistent with the existence of God. He's also been consistently searching for proof of *something* after death, but all he's gotten from people who've been there is, "None, I got nuthin'." However, Owen says maybe they're not meant to remember.
- On *Doctor Who*, The Doctor often appears to be one of these. Generally it's more a case of [No Such Thing as Space Jesus](#). Ghosts? Silly human superstition caused by psychic echoes in the morphic field. And that's even before you get to all the sufficiently advanced aliens (like himself). But occasionally he does run into something he can't explain, as in "[Battlefield](#)" or "[The Satan Pit](#)", and it generally only takes him a couple weeks to go back to disbelieving.
  - In the Expanded Universe, the Doctor discovers beyond a shadow of a doubt, multiple times, that the universe is only scientific in the first place because, in effect, his ancestors ([and maybe himself](#)) cast a magic spell to trick it into working that way. It's up to each author whether this makes his beliefs right or wrong.
- Both Cavil and Adama present themselves as atheists in *Battlestar Galactica*, long after it seems that either souls, gods or super-human / super-Cylon beings almost have to exist. Eventually, after revelations and character development, the trope applies to neither man: Adama's point of view

shifts from "The gods don't exist" to "[Screw you! Where were you when we needed you?](#)" Caryl is revealed to be [A Cylon who hates his creator gods](#).

- In a non-fantasy version of this trope, [United States of Tara](#) features [Bryce Crane](#), one of Tara's [multiple personalities](#) who doesn't believe in DID.
- While Agent Scully in [The X-Files](#) is an example of, well, an [Agent Scully](#), Mulder qualifies on notable occasions. He is more than happy to believe in Yetis, Psychics, Vampires and Little Green Men, but any hint of an Omnipotent God in the equation and he suddenly becomes more skeptical than Scully at her most ardent. Which makes quite a bit of sense if you consider that he does not need an omnipotent god to explain anything strange until such a being is necessarily part of the occurrence. Scully herself, a Catholic, reverses roles with him on any occasion when the phenomena is religious (nearly always Christian) in nature, immediately shedding any skepticism. It gets very bad in the eleventh season when Scully denies ghosts and the Devil exist-both were shown to be quite real in earlier seasons.
- Inverted in [Stargate SG-1](#). Many worshipers of the Goa'uld and Ori see SG-1 as this. When the heroes try to explain that the "gods" they worship are in fact [Sufficiently Advanced Aliens](#), a frequent response is "what's the difference?" This is particularly true with the Ori, given that they are ageless beings without physical form who [gain power from being worshiped](#). [Or at least they were, before the heroes killed them](#).
- The show [Supernatural](#) is much like [The X-Files](#) in how it features Flat Earth Atheism. Dean is the primary example. While he very easily believes in the supernatural (hence the name of the show) and Hell, he simply flat-out refuses to believe in things like angels, Heaven, and God. "Gods" are simply very powerful monsters, but you can still "gank" them. Dean is forced to face his lack of belief after he returns from Hell, when faced with the angel Castiel. Cas becomes a regular on the show, as does their "prophet" Chuck [who is later implied to actually be God](#). Even the demons (re Lucifer, who is actually a [Fallen Angel](#)) end up stressing the fact that God exists—[He might not be there](#), but He does exist.
  - Dean's an interesting case in that it's not the Angels and God part he struggles with - it's the fact that benevolent powerful, omniscience beings can exist while doing nothing about the suffering and death going on. He accepts them more readily when it becomes apparent that "Angels are dicks with wings" and [God Is Flawed](#). Dean's worldview hasn't fundamentally changed and in fact he's actually proven right.
- Jack in [Lost](#) is set up early on as the "man of science" who refuses to believe anything weird is going on with the island for far, far longer than any reasonable person. The worst of it is when he flatly denies seeing the island *disappear* right in front of him.
- Eddie and Richie from [Bottom](#) are both atheists. [Even when God saves them from death and they're both standing on his hand, they still refuse to believe...](#)
- [Hand of God](#): Pernell dips into this when angrily declaring that God doesn't exist after losing faith, despite having far better evidence of the contrary than most.

- On *Bones* Dr. Temperance Brennan repeatedly denies the existence of God. She is repeatedly undermined by episodes which implicitly support the existence of supernatural forces, including ghosts, "faith" as a supernatural concept and God himself. To remain skeptical at that point is not scientific, but she persists.
- Klaus of *The Umbrella Academy* calls himself an atheist, and he's somewhat justified in doing so: none of the ghosts he summons ever mention Heaven, so why should he believe in it? He keeps up this belief even when talking to God Herself in Heaven after being temporarily killed at a rave however.
- *American Gods (2017)*: Laura doesn't give up her atheism even after seeing several gods, insisting they're not really divine but just created by humans (which is [sort of the case](#)). God singular, meanwhile, is not seen (but multiple forms of Jesus are) and it's him she most insists isn't a real being.
- In the fourth season of *Lucifer*, formerly devout Catholic Ella loses her faith following a friend's death and how unfair it is. She even rants about how "there is no God"...to a man who just happens to be the Devil himself, his cop partner who knows he's the Devil, his brother who's an angel, another friend who's a demon as well, a shrink who's carrying the angel's baby and, oh yes, has her "imaginary friend" from childhood is the Angel of Death.
- *The Good Place*: Simone initially maintains that she's suffering from a [hallucination as her brain dies](#) upon dying and entering the afterlife, claiming everyone else to be a figment of her imagination. Michael relates that some people sent to the Bad Place would also claim this, although they got over it as the torments started. Simone gradually admits it's real over time after this.
- *The Flash (2014)*: Gods, angels, demons, the afterlife and even magic have all been confirmed to exist in the [Arrowverse](#), but [Harrison Nash Wells](#) scoffs at the idea of gods, insisting that anything that appears to be one is simply a [metahuman](#) or [Sufficiently Advanced Alien](#) *posing* as one. This drives him on an obsessive quest to rid the multiverse of one such "false god", Mar Novu aka The Monitor, which inadvertently leads to [the release of the Anti-Monitor](#), kicking off the [Crisis on Infinite Earths](#) and resulting in Nash becoming the Arrowverse's version of Pariah. \*

## Mythology and Religion

- *The Bible* features several characters who refuse to believe in Jesus despite personally witnessing his miracles, prescribing them rather to him [being in league with Satan](#). In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man begs Abraham to let him warn his relatives of hell after he's sent there, but Abraham cites this trope, saying if they did not believe Moses and the prophets, they would not even if a man came [back from the dead](#). Additionally, some modern apologists argue that all atheists are this, claiming they truly do know God exists but simply refuse him worship (i.e. making them actually [Nay Theists](#)). Others dispute this, naturally. It has to be noted that the terms

"unbelievers" and "atheists" had broader meanings back in the day, and referred mostly to [Nay Theists](#) and people who might believe God (or gods) *existed*, but did not *have faith* in Him / them, though atheists in the sense we know it were also known (from other places largely, such as ancient Greece). There were also of course who didn't believe the Judeo-Christian god existed, but had their own.

- o Very frequently in both the Old and New Testaments, people who have seen indisputable miracles firsthand still find it hard over the long haul to maintain faith in God — faith that the things they saw were what they clearly were, and meant what they clearly meant. The most striking example is the Hebrews making the Golden Calf idol even after the Lord had performed all the miracles of the Exodus in freeing them from Egypt. One interpretation is that when our preconceived notions of the world are rocked, especially in a way that is inconvenient or makes moral demands of us, the human capacity for denial is *enormous*, whereas in the text itself it seems possibly a case of looking for another god that is viewed as better (since at the time it seems Hebrews believed other gods existed, but forbid worshiping them).

### Newspaper Comics

- In [The Perishers](#), the crabs in the rock pool have a [Parody Religion](#) worshipping "The Eyeballs In The Sky" (which appear on an annual basis) complete with its own skeptic movement trying to disprove their existence scientifically. The Eyeballs do, in fact exist: they belong to Boot the dog who goes along with Wellington and the other kids to the seaside on their annual holiday.

### Radio

- A truly bizarre variant in [Bleak Expectations](#), where Harry Biscuit claims to be an Agnostic despite having just fought an army of demons from Hell itself. It gets even more bizarre later on, when we find out God exists. [And He is Harry Biscuit.](#)
- At least for the first few episodes, The Professor in [Old Harry's Game](#) vehemently denies the existence of God, despite being in Hell. Then again, he spends those episodes convinced that his experience in Hell is [All Just a Dream](#) as well.
- The atheist philosopher Oolon Coluphid in [The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy](#) is a variation. One of his antitheistic books, "Well, That Just About Wraps It Up For God", is said by the Guide to hinge entirely on the argument that God refuses to prove that he exists, for proof denies faith, and [without it, he is nothing](#) - but he did prove that he existed as the Babel Fish is a creature far too useful not to be intelligently designed, and therefore [God cannot exist as he has proven his own existence](#). The Guide acknowledges that this argument is 'a bunch of dingo's kidneys'. The book version of the

story expands on the theism of the setting, where God does definitely exist and even left a final message to humanity. Unfortunately, [God Is Inept](#) as well.

## Theater

- In [Hamlet](#), the title character gives a speech in which he calls death "The undiscovered country from whose bourn / No traveler returns" in spite of the fact that he's spoken with the ghost of his father.
- In [Doctor Faustus](#), right after he summons Mephistopheles and proceeds to sell his immortal soul to the Devil, Faustus makes comments to the effect that he doesn't believe in Hell or damnation and thinks that they are just metaphorical. This rather annoys Mephistopheles, who is a [Fallen Angel](#), and who dryly notes that his own person rather proves the reality of those things.

## Tabletop Games

- A few [Dungeons & Dragons](#) settings have examples of this:
  - In the [Forgotten Realms](#), there are still atheists. This is despite the fact that gods regularly take physical forms and rampage around the countryside, and that new gods rise while others die in every decade. Really, the existence of gods would be no more questionable than that of the President... Incidentally, there's a [Fate Worse than Death](#) reserved for atheists (and those who, ironically, decide to worship the [Overgod](#) Ao).
    - Or if they believe in the existence of the gods in general but doesn't choose a specific patron deity. Or their patron deity happens to be dead. Or if this patron deity rejects the worshiper for whatever reason. The fate in question: one's soul is strapped to the Wall of the Faithless and slowly digested by it over the course of millennia.
    - In the new edition, a continent as well as two countries have been brought over from a world where gods haven't existed for about 30,000 years, so anyone from there might have a justification.
    - *Yet another* reasoning behind it is the old Athar standby of agreeing that there does indeed exist powerful planar beings called gods that are worshiped by many — but that doesn't make them *proper* gods. Considering that (up until 4th Edition) several gods had died within human living memory, you can see where they're coming from. The Defiant (a group of former clerics and paladins) uses this basis to reject belief in the gods' divinity too. Others simply view the gods as [unworthy of worship](#).
    - In the backstory of the setting, the empire of Netheril ultimately fell (and magic across the Realms was diminished from what it once used to be) because its wizard-rulers convinced

themselves that the "gods" were really just other wizards who knew tricks they didn't feel like sharing. Eventually, one wizard called Karsus *did* come up with a spell designed to let him attain godhood, and from a certain point of view could be said to have succeeded in casting it, too...but he couldn't handle the sheer *power* that came with his "success", and that's why the title of the Realms' goddess of magic changed hands from Mystryl (who performed a [heroic sacrifice](#) to save the world) to the first Mystra (Karsus himself, unusually for a Netherese archmage, never actually planned to become a god — he was aware that his spell would end with his death, and the entire thing was intended to be a [Heroic Sacrifice](#) where he used his temporary godly power to save his people).

- o [Greyhawk](#): In Oerth, the native clergy of the Flanaess is opposed by the so-called *Skeptics* movement established primarily in the County and Duchy of Urnst. The more extreme members of the movement believe that the gods of Oerth are pure fiction and that their clerics are frauds, with clerical magic not granted by divine sources but coming from within like arcane magic or psionics. The more moderate Skeptics admit the *existence* of beings called gods, but they claim that these gods did not actually create Oerth and furthermore many of them started out as mortals who ascended to demigod status and later to godhood. Therefore the Skeptics deny these gods their faith. They're little more than a fringe group, and the one time a Skeptic gained political power, it turned out to be a disaster—one of the previous Dukes of Urnst drastically raised church taxes when he took the throne, caused a series of riots in the nation's capital, and ended up dying when no cleric would heal him after he was wounded in battle with mountain raiders.
- o Since [Planescape](#) is a [Clap Your Hands If You Believe](#) setting, this is common; although the Athar tend to be more [Nay-Theist](#) than this, there are others who are not (the fact that the Powers, while existing, aren't necessarily the prime movers and shakers of the setting helps). There is also an adventure involving killing a god by *inducing* Flat Earth Atheism: a [Mind-Control Device](#) that you could use to give a suggestion to the entire population of a prime-material plane that their god did not exist... which would make that belief come true.
- o [Ravenloft](#):
  - Atheism is common in Lamordia, a domain where mad-scientist-style skepticism prevails. In other domains, heretical philosophers sometimes speculate that divine magic is actually derived from the Dark Powers, rather than the gods it's commonly attributed to; however, as most ordinary people have never even *heard* of the Dark Powers, theirs remains a minority opinion. (Out of character, it's left up to the DM to choose.)
  - In fact, this was why Dr. Mordenheim was damned and cursed in the first place. He refused to believe in any power greater than man, being an admitted atheist all his life. However, the gods did exist, and they saw his attempts to create life using technology as blasphemies. To punish him, they granted his wish, breathing life into his creation, cursing him with something that would condemn him forever for the evil he was bringing into the world. While Adam, his creation, is the true darklord of Lamordia, Mordenheim is as much a prisoner of the [Ironic Hell](#) as Adam is.

- In a metagame example, a minority of *Ravenloft* game masters opt to assume that there *areno* "Dark Powers" in their individual campaigns, and phenomena such as the Mists, curses and Powers checks are simply a byproduct of innate metaphysical laws that operate within the setting.
  - The *Eberron* setting *avoids* this trope. Divine Magic is the product of faith, Arcane Magic is just a force of the world. Someone with the proper training could have divine magic if he believed enough. It's even possible for clerics to turn from their religion and keep their spells. In fact, some mortals (and undead) have set up faiths centered around them, and their clerics get divine magic. Gods do not take physical form (except for one, The Traveler, and it's more the stuff of myth, like in ancient Greece). There are miracles which *could* be the work of the gods, but that is open to interpretation. In the setting, the actual existence of gods is up to a character's belief, as the gods do not act as proactively as they do in the Forgotten Realms, for example. Fiends are the original occupants of the material plane, and their religious implications are downplayed. Angels and Devils are just Outsiders. There are even some books that suggest the gods are based on the legends of certain Dragons.
  - One *AD&D* sourcebook reveals that Asmodeus feeds on the souls of atheists. The book acknowledged that this is difficult in a setting where Gods are manifestly real. The tactic of Asmodeus is to grant magical powers to someone, allow a cult to grow, and then withdraw those powers. The cultists become disillusioned and believe their leader a charlatan, at which point they are "vulnerable" to atheism.
  - The Ethergaunts are *Humanoid Abominations* that have "rationalized divinity" out of their racial philosophy". This actually weakens them: while that philosophy lets them *No-Sell* many arcane spells, they have no such defense against *divine magic* because they don't acknowledge or understand its source.
- *Pathfinder*: Gods are real, active, and extensively documented in the default setting, so local atheists usually accept their existence but believe that they're just powerful supernatural entities with an unusually high *Super Weight*, not anything to be worshiped. Justified in that there are quite a few *Deities of Human Origin* and at least one well-known way to ascend to godhood — to say nothing of the mercenary who deified himself by mistake while black-out drunk.
  - *Warhammer 40,000*:
    - The Emperor of Mankind wanted to eliminate all religious beliefs from the Imperium and make mankind trust in science and logic. However, it's heavily implied that the Emperor was more than aware that *actual* demons existed, but was *trying to starve them*, essentially. All was going swimmingly until some of his sons sided with the aforementioned, very real, Chaos Gods and started a galactic-wide rebellion. The cosmic irony is that after these events the Emperor became the official divinity of the Imperium, and it seems he is now forced to work by his faithful people to save mankind from extinction...
    - The Tau also qualify — they believe in the power of logic and science, and refuse to believe in the idea of the truly supernatural, even after repeated battles with Chaos, the Eldar, and the

Sisters of Battle. These races employ, respectively, daemons and humans mutated by the Dark Gods (and sometimes both in the same creatures), living avatars of a war god present as figures of molten iron carrying a giant sword and an ever-bleeding hand, and what can only be described as divine magic to the point of one of their heroines self-resurrecting and having a few beings tantamount to angels.

- There *are* alternative explanations (they're *wrong*, but that doesn't mean they don't exist). Mutant humans could have been physically modified like Space Marines, some forms of daemon could be aliens with teleport gear, and *Soulstorm* shows the Tau hunting for the technology behind the Battle Sister acts of faith (needless to say, without finding it).
- This seems to be less that the Tau don't believe in things like Chaos and psykers and more that they're unfamiliar with them. Being inherently less psionic than humans, there are no Tau psykers, so they've never had any experience with things like daemons. They aren't disbelievers, they're outright ignorant. Hence the short story where a Tau army believes they [slew Slaanesh](#) — they had no idea about the existence of Chaos Space Marines at the time, so they were unaware that Slaanesh was the name of that band's patron deity as opposed to their commander. It's this ignorance that makes them so dangerous in the eyes of the Imperium; they consider the Tau [Too Dumb to Live](#).
- This also makes them dangerous to Chaos as well. As the Tau have a Warp presence that's practically nonexistent, they have an innate resistance if not immunity to daemonic influence. This means that the usual tricks employed against the Eldar or Imperium don't work on them. But if anything, the Tau *at best* see the servants of the Dark Gods as psychotic maniacs and would rather not tamper with their tools, seeing as they *might* have something to do with the madness. They even go so far as to kill Kroots who [consume](#) Chaos Space Marines.
- Turns out the Ethereals know damn well that Chaos is real but hide this knowledge from the rest of the Tau. The main reason Commander Farsight formed his own breakaway colony away from the Ethereals is because he figured this out. He believes that denying the existence of the supernatural is a mistake and that the Tau cannot prevail with their technology alone. They need magic of their own. Farsight puts this philosophy into practice on the battlefield, wielding a Warp-based sword called the Dawn Blade.

- [Warhammer](#):

- The official policy of the Empire is that the Skaven don't exist. Apparently dragons, giants, lizardmen, zombies, goat-headed mutants, and inconceivably powerful chaos gods are fine but [five-foot-tall intelligent bipedal rats](#) are just too much. Its unclear if anyone actually believes this policy, however. Indeed one sourcebook states that "there are two myths about the Skaven: The first is that they don't exist. The second is that anyone believes in the first." In general, it seems that there are two reasons for the stories of Skaven not existing:
  - Firstly, the Skaven themselves put a lot of work into maintaining this status quo, killing or bribing people who learn too much, and stealing physical evidence. They even have magic that makes people not want to believe in them.



- The second reason is that the Skaven are large, organized, and extremely close (as in [everywhere](#) all the time). Every other threat to humanity is either small (like chaos cults), disorganized (like beastmen), or far away (like the gods of chaos). So while the Skaven aren't the most serious threat they're the one most likely to cause paranoia and constant terror.
  - You also got Necoho the Doubter, the chaos god of... atheism... ([Worship makes him weaker.](#)) Given how long it's been since he was mentioned in canon, he must be one of the most powerful gods around by now.
- The Palladium RPG *Beyond The Supernatural* featured Nega-Psychics, whose unbelief was so strong it actually (if ironically) disrupts any magic or psionics around them. In [Rifts](#), however, where it's kind of hard to disbelieve a dragon staring you in the face, it became more of a matter of defiance.
  - Similarly, [GURPS](#) has the Mundane advantage, which at its highest level will enforce dull normality around its owner by turning werewolves and aliens into guys in rubber masks and magic into cheap fireworks.
  - The same thing appears in [Unknown Armies](#). There is an NPC whose skepticism is so strong, he has an antimagic aura. Which, in turn, makes any attempt to prove the existence of the Unnatural to him impossible.
  - And in [Over the Edge](#) with Evan MacDonald, whose skepticism is so great he nullifies *anything* beyond the mundane around him, be it magic or "just" mad science. In one sample adventure the world is conquered by necromancy, leaving everyone helpless to resist — but MacDonald is still walking around in a bubble of normal reality.
- The [Low Fantasy](#) RPGs [Ironclaw](#) and [Jadeclaw](#) had agnosticism as a character flaw in 1st edition, flaws were removed from the main rules in 2nd. Interestingly it notes that wizards who consider magic more of a science are likely to take it.

## Video Games

- [Demon's Souls](#): Patches the Hyena could be considered this. He claims that "praying never killed demons for [him]", when you can directly call down miracles — including "God's Wrath" — at will. He's absolutely right, as the "miracles" are just another form of the Soul Arts. "God" is actually the ancient demon known as [the Old One](#).
- [Planescape: Torment](#) has the NPC Fall-From-Grace who, in a world brimming with gods and monsters and other such things, is agnostic. She's the party cleric. She's also a chaste succubus and proprietress of a brothel that doesn't involve sex. *Planescape*, as mentioned above, is a [Clap Your Hands If You Believe](#) setting, where belief shapes reality (and clerical magic is just one form of reality-shaping). Grace draws her power from the Sensate Philosophy.
- [Metal Gear](#)

- In *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty*, Ocelot loudly decries the existence of the supernatural, despite the fact that he used to work with an *Ax-Crazy* floating psychic, a shaman with flying tattoos, an arguable vampire who could pin people to their shadows, a ridiculously old man who only comes to life in battle and can communicate with forest spirits, a man who could shoot bees, and a ghost; once manipulated an elaborate chain of events involving two (arguably *three*) non-floating psychics; and is *routinely being possessed by a ghost living in Ocelot's transplanted arm*. However, this line was added by the translator; in the original Japanese, he only says that technology can replicate the supernatural. See also *Doing In the Wizard* and *Voodoo Shark* for more discussion of the possessed arm and the vampire, among other things.
- Solid Snake denounces the supernatural in numerous occasions, doubting and mocking Mantis's extremely potent psychic powers (as well as Alice Hazel's in *Metal Gear Ac!d*) and refusing to accept Fortune could really be a witch. He's proven wrong about the latter and admits it, but in 4 belligerently tells Otacon that Vamp's powers can't be real. On the other side, he's reasonably respectful of Vulcan Raven and his magic, *if not of Raven himself*.
- There happens to be an antitheist in *Black & White*. None of the godly power you throw at him can persuade him. But that's all right, tossing him about is quite amusing. What's rather interesting is that he was a significant source of belief anyway, if used properly; while he claimed not to believe in you, you could pick him up anywhere he was — even if he was outside of your control, which is something you can't do for anything else in the game, except for your creature. He also extended a small radius of influence around him, so in effect, he *was* a believer, he just didn't like you.
- *Prince of Persia (2008)* featured a protagonist who didn't believe in either of the two gods, despite all the demons he fights and *seeing one of said gods try to escape from his prison*. When you see inky blackness spilling into the sky and corrupting the planet, and then deny that your antagonist is real, you're just being thickheaded.
- In *World of Warcraft*, Gnome characters were initially limited to classes that practice mundane martial arts (warriors and rogues) or arcane magic (magi and warlocks). The reason? They are a race of primarily atheists who can't play any class that requires faith in a higher power, such as the Light or nature spirits. Despite living with and fighting alongside priests, paladins, druids, and the like. Even after the introduction of gnome priests, *Word of God* clarified that they were just doctors and medics who believe that the healing powers of the Holy Light are just another science they can use to their advantage.
  - Which they aren't entirely wrong about. Besides which, this is frankly a healthier attitude towards the Light than some of the other races have. Worshipping the Light doesn't do anything directly: actually using the Light only requires being willing to sacrifice for one's cause. That cause can be anything, from the social or political to the personal. Belief in a higher power of some kind or worship of anything in particular. Though higher powers definitely DO exist in the setting (but seeing as they tend to be *Jerkasses* as often as not, worshipping them is not always the best idea).

- **Neverwinter Nights 2:** Gannayev from *Mask of the Betrayer* adamantly refuses to believe that gods exist and has been known to get into massive bitchfights with the priests of Kelemvor over it (one of which you get to jump into. We suggest you don't try to prove Gann wrong, if you value your [relationship-related stat boosts](#)). He persists in this delusion even after he meets not one but *twogods* in person (or switches to [Nay-Theism](#), he doesn't clarify which). The only thing he doesn't believe in is the wall of the faithless, which, considering the horror it represents, is fairly logical when supposedly good gods are involved in its preservation. It's obvious well before the assault on Kelemvor's domain that he thinks the gods are hypocritical assholes.
- **The Elder Scrolls**
  - In the backstory, the extinct [Dwemer](#) were a played-deadly-serious version of this trope. While they acknowledged the existence of some of the entities that the other races considered "gods" ([Aedra](#), [Daedra](#), etc.), the Dwemer refused to *accept* their divinity. They were said to especially despise the Daedra, mocking and scorning the "foolish" rituals of their followers (primarily their greatest rivals in Morrowind, the Chimer). They would even summon Daedra [specifically to test their divinity](#). The science and reason focused Dwemer even extended this skepticism to *reality* itself, [refuting anything as truly "real"](#). It is implied that this belief is a core element of how [their technology](#) functions. They devised technology that [ignored the laws of reality or outright manipulated the tonal architecture of the Earth-Bones](#) (the spirits of creation who gave their lives to set up the laws of nature and physics) simply through [sheer refusal to accept physical and magical limitations](#). The Dwemer would all [disappear entirely](#) from any known plane of existence after discovering and tampering with the [heart](#) of the "dead" god, Lorkhan.
    - One Dwemer tale (notably written by an [Unreliable Narrator](#)) tells of a Dwemer who tricks the Daedric Prince Azura with a box containing a mirror. After she correctly guesses what the box holds, he opens the box and the mirror makes it appear as if the box was empty,<sup>note</sup> 'proving' she is fallible and so not a god. He dies that night, a smile on his face. The Dunmer tell a different story: Azura sees through the tricks and strikes him down there and then.
  - Many in Tamriel are this toward the Nine Divines, the Aedra who sacrificed themselves in the creation of Mundus (the mortal world), while acknowledging the existence of the Daedra. Basically every example of the Divines [influencing the world](#) are either [ambiguous](#), [a matter of legend](#), very personal incidents that only happens to special people (like *Elder Scrolls* protagonists), or a combination, while the Daedric Princes influencing the world is a matter of historical record.
  - In *Morrowind*, the [Nerevarine](#) ends up [outright killing 2-3 Physical Gods](#) during the course of the game and first expansion while gaining some borderline god-like powers him/herself. Some NPCs even seem to believe you *are* a god, but the [circumstances](#) around these events can lead the player to believe that this is not the case.
  - **Oblivion:**
    - Ilsi God-Hater appears to be this at first. Turns out she actually worships Mehrunes Dagon, and doesn't want anyone to guess.

"The gods don't do a damn thing. Do they even exist? How could anyone tell? Daedra Lords, sure. They exist. They do things. Bad things, mostly, but things you can see. The gods? They don't do a damn thing. So why do we build big chapels and sit around and mumble, and ask them to save us from this and that? It's stupid. And chapels and priests and folks grovelling on their knees, they're stupid, too."

- There's also Ulene Hlervu, castle mage to Count Indarys of Cheydinhal. She scoffs at the practice of worshipping the Nine, stating that worshipping Daedra is more reasonable, though still foolish, because it produces [dramatic results](#).
  - Quill-Weave, an adventure novelist and scholar, doesn't believe that Doomstones have magic powers (they do), despite plenty of powerful magic artifacts and devices left over from [precursors](#) being an everyday reality. [Fanon](#) tries to explain that one in [Prequel](#), suggesting that she just can't get it to work because she's not [The Chosen One](#) (i.e., the [Player Character](#)).
- In [Skyrim](#) the Altmeri (High Elven) Thalmor have banned the worship of Talos in the Empire via treaty because they find it offensive that a [mortal man can become a god](#). This is actually a cover story for the Thalmor's true desires, they know Talos exists, they also believe that he's a [Barrier Maiden](#) holding the mortal plane together, [if he stops being worshiped, his power will fade and the world will end](#), which is exactly what the [Thalmor](#) want, as they believe this will return their spirits to a state of pre-creation divinity.
- [Touhou](#): The plot for the tenth game, *Mountain of Faith*, involves a god attempting to collect the faith of everyone in Gensokyo because she believed the dwindling faith its inhabitants had in its deities would cause massive chaos (that said faith [would be an enormous boost to her power](#) was apparently just a bonus). Considering gods in Gensokyo not only have human-like forms but regularly chat with humans and [youkai](#) alike (or pelt them with [danmaku](#), whichever seems more fun), either its inhabitants are this trope or don't find it necessary to have faith in beings that are readily defeated by a [Cute Witch](#) and a [Miko](#) or are [Nay-Theist](#). Reimu's shrine famously [never gets donations](#). However, this is explained as being less that the people have no faith in the god, and more that they have no faith in [the miko](#).
- [Ghostbusters](#) again! By the time of the [Video Game](#), the events of the two films — including *two* massive ghostly uprisings in New York, a God of Destruction in the form of a marshmallow mascot attacking the city, the Museum of Natural History being engulfed by goo, and the Statue of Liberty taking a stroll through Manhattan — mean that *everyone* believes the Ghostbusters are the real thing... except [Obstructive Bureaucrat](#) Walter Peck, who continues to believe they're nothing but dangerous frauds pulling an impossibly elaborate hoax. It's implied he might be a [Gozer cultist](#) that's just [faking it to cover his sinister true motivations](#). Turns out he's not, and after the events of the game, which include another Gozer attack, a supernatural event at the Museum of Natural History at which Peck is personally present and is *actually possessed*, an island rising out of the Hudson River then sinking back into it again, *another* massive ghostly uprising — this time including Central Park turning into a massive otherworldly graveyard, and being personally abducted by the ghost of Ivo Shandor who had been possessing the Mayor and personally

witnessing the first half of the Ghostbusters' battle with him... he *still* thinks they're nothing more than dangerous frauds that need to be shut down.

- In [Star Ocean](#), after you've visited the king of Van and been told the legend of the Demon World, Iria and Ronixis (your two teammates who are from a scientifically advanced Earth) have a private talk about gods and demons and superstition, and why they shouldn't just accept the supernatural elements of planet Roak and instead look for logical explanations. This flies in the face of the fact that Iria can [shoot energy from her hands](#), while Ronixis has put aside his starship captain commission to become a [powerful Heraldric mage who calls down lightning and fire on his foes](#).
- [Guild Wars](#):
  - The original campaign, [Prophecies](#), has a wonderful moment where an NPC rants about how she doesn't believe in any Gods after your latest mission goes awry. This is a bit ridiculous, since she's standing next to a person who can revive the dead using the power of faith and lives in a world where praying at a shrine will grant you improved skills. Since the plot of that campaign can be summed up as: "[Oh hey, you just made everything worse! Again!](#)" it may be safe to assume that the Gods are helping you just so that they can point and laugh when you fail.
  - In [Guild Wars 2](#), each race has a view on the gods. While only the humans believe in them, the other races are not atheist *per se*: the Asura simply consider the gods as part of the Eternal Alchemy, like everything else; the Charr were so scarred by the Shamans that they decide to not *revere* the gods, but do not deny their existence; the Norn simply have their own deities in the Spirits of the Wild. As for the Sylvari, since they only appeared a few decades ago, i.e. 1300 years after the Gods left Tyria, they just want evidence, making them the closest example of this trope, considering that, y'know, humans are able to summon Hounds of Balthazar and stuff like that. The Sylvari have the innate ability to bring huge trees to life, so they aren't completely unreasonable in wanting proof those hounds come from a higher power.
- In [Quest for Glory IV](#), Dr. Cranium does not believe in magic, insisting that any claims are merely the result of superstition and that everything can be explained by science. The game even suggests that there's probably magic involved in the healing potions he makes for you, but advises you not to point that out to him. If you're a Wizard, you can try to debate him, at which point he brings up [Clarke's Third Law](#), and he can give you a magic scroll that he claims is full of illegible scrawlings: when you read it and learn the spell, prompting the scroll to vanish, he points out that it was a particularly shoddy piece of parchment to "fall right apart" like that.
  - The same "ignorance" pops up in [Quest for Glory V](#). It seems to be a core feature of the scientist subculture that Dr. Cranium is a part of. However, towards the end it is revealed that this subculture has been well aware of magic all along. Their denial of magic is not ignorance, but instead a dogma about magic being a heinous crime against reality itself. If you're a Wizard, they even try to assassinate you for your crimes.

- In *Dungeons and Dragons: Order of the Griffon*, the heroes are hired by Lord Korrigan of Radlebb Keep to investigate and debunk the rumors of the vampire Koriszegy in the ruins of Koriszegy Keep. He insists that the vampire is a myth and he's only hiring you to debunk the rumors to end the panic. He does tell you that you might meet some minor undead like skeletons and zombies, maybe a ghoul or something. Needless to say, Koriszegy is quite real, and quite dangerous: he nearly succeeds in destroying Karamaikos. Somewhat justified by the fact that it's an established fact of the setting that the Thyatian rulers of what used to be Traladara, now Karamaikos, tend to hold their Traladaran subjects in contempt as superstitious and ignorant.
- The [Pretentious Artist](#) from *Kingdom of Loathing* is one of these. You only find this out if you show up at his place decked out in all of the Bad Moon rewards, and he states that he isn't sure whether he believes in Hey Deze, "even though people go there all the time and bring back souvenirs."
- Dr. Aleister Grout, the Malkavian Primogen from *Vampire: The Masquerade – Bloodlines* firmly believes there's a rational explanation for the fact that he's a vampire and all the obviously supernatural things they can do. It's somewhat implied that this is actually the manifestation of his Malkavian insanity. Also implied to be his insanity is his methods. The good doctor is a clinical case of antisocial personality disorder taken to eleven.
- Arcoscephalean skeptics in the *Dominions* world are atheistic philosophers who use their acerbic wit to mock belief in the gods. This is quite strange during an epic war between demigods battling to become the one true [God](#). Even worse, the nation of [Arcoscephale itself](#) is ruled by a pretender god who can order the skeptics about.
- Another one like Han Solo; Tharan Cedrax, one of the Consular's companions in *Star Wars: The Old Republic*, travels with a Jedi and was acquainted with Master Syo. Yet, he *really* dislikes anything that smells of Jedi mysticism and overt Force use in his presence (especially the [Jedi Mind Trick](#)). It could be explained by the fact that a [Muggle](#) like himself cannot analyze, measure, or experiment with it.
- In *Wolfenstein*, after the mission where BJ receives the Thule Medallion and first learns of the Golden Dawn (a benevolent order of mystics), he can talk to the [La Résistance](#) radio operator who claims that the Golden Dawn's leader seeks to "save the world from black magic. Which means he's either insane or an idiot". You could interpret that as BJ keeping the Medallion's powers a secret...if not for the fact that completing the aforementioned mission also causes *black clad Nazi sorcerers* to fight openly in the city they are in.
- *Diablo III* brings us Leah, whose childhood was spent following her uncle Deckard Cain, who was trying to research ways to prevent the forces of Hell from bringing about the End Times. In fairness, Deckard admits that things were peaceful the last twenty years, but one would think that she might give her uncle the benefit of the doubt after seeing zombies rise in front of her and experiencing her own supernatural powers. She only decides Deckard might have a point after he is murdered by cultists and then finding out that one of her companions is a literal Angel.

- In *Ghost Trick*, the justice minister loudly denies the existence of ghosts, even after Sissel goes back and saves him from dying of a heart attack. Then it turns out he was mostly trying to convince himself, after being manipulated by Yomiel into signing Jowd's execution order and spending the last few weeks covering it up.
- *NetHack* is particularly ridiculous, where you can play as an atheist even though your mission is to preform a sacrifice to your god in the astral plane.
- In *Persona 4*, Detective Dojima refuses to believe his nephew when he tells him that the murders were committed by supernatural means, even though the very-much supernatural Midnight Channel-rumor, which can be easily observed, proven and linked to the murders (and that the police was actually quite aware of, as several other characters' knowledge of it, such as that of Naoto Shirogane, proves). This is averted in *Persona 4 Dancing All Night*, where Dojima is a bit more open-minded to Kanami's claims that several people were kidnapped by demonic ribbons from an inter-dimensional portal, due to his experiences in the original game.
- Wol in *Mobius Final Fantasy* refuses to accept that gods exist in Palamecia because they would have stopped Chaos from appearing. This, despite the fact that he was brought to Palamecia from his own planet by a near-omniscient, all-powerful astral being attempting to find the Chosen Oneable to stop Chaos. The setting he admits this in is a part of the world created by the Warring Triad, to boot.
- Any Empire with the *Materialist* ethos in *Stellaris* have *Outgrown Such Silly Superstitions*. Yeah, go ahead and tell that to the Extradimensional Invaders, Dimensional Horrors, the Worm-in-Waiting, those entities in The Shroud offering you to make *covenants* with them (which materialists will technically never encounter), or any Spiritualist Empire wielding *Psionic techs*. Of course, thanks to the research bonuses that come with the ethos they can do so *with gusto*.
  - Materialists actually have easy explanations for these things, since sufficiently advanced technology is literally everywhere and alternate dimensions and realities aren't much less common than that so what's one more? There are even late game events that hint that the materialists might be right after all. The game does a decent job of keeping it ambiguous.
- *Dragon Age*: Dialogue options allow the player character (in every game) to be atheistic, or at least reject the Chantry faith (despite events in *Dragon Age: Origins*, at least, reinforcing their concept of Andraste as divine.) The Dalish gods are similarly rejected by many characters, mostly the Chantry they did exist, although it's revealed in *Dragon Age: Inquisition* that they weren't much more than powerful mages. And while what Dwarves believe are usually down to the individual, they generally focus their worship on Ancestors and Paragons, and reject all other faiths as a breach of tradition.
- Though we don't see them, they do exist in *Skullgirls*. Unlike most examples, it's not so much that they don't believe the goddesses exist, but that they're mortals with extremely powerful Parasites rather than divine beings. Considering that one playable character - Eliza - is exactly that and incredibly long-lived, it's a lot more reasonable than you'd expect.

## Visual Novels

- [Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney](#):
  - While not God, in the third game, Edgeworth's disbelief in Spirit Channeling is odd, seeing as how he has sat across from a dead woman (whose murder he prosecuted!) in court.
  - Later on, in *Justice For All*, the Judge expresses disbelief in Spirit Channeling. This is despite Maya's ability to channel dead spirits being a critical point in the trial.
  - It's implied that most people have somewhat of a [Weirdness Censor](#) when it comes to spirit channelling, perhaps in no small part to a highly publicized murder case where a spirit medium was used to communicate with the victim, who named the wrong person as his killer, which gave spirit channelling a reputation for being fraudulent. And if spirit channelling is fraudulent, then there must therefore be some other, not-weird reason why that eight-year-old girl is suddenly a foot and a half taller than she was a minute ago and now has an amazing rack, so it's not worth fussing over.
- *Spirit Hunter* series:
  - Even with all the supernatural events she's personally exposed to, Madoka Hiroo from [Death Mark](#) completely refuses to believe in anything "unscientific".
  - Subverted with Seiji from [Spirit Hunter: NG](#). He's clearly terrified of the supernatural and initially refuses to believe Akira's story about ghosts and spirits, but when he's forced to confront them himself he concedes to the evidence and doesn't try to deny their existence. That said, he still will only consider the supernatural as a very last option, preferring mundane explanations for the various murders throughout the game.

## Webcomics

- [Saturday Morning Breakfast Cereal](#):
  - In one [comic](#), we see [God](#) accommodating this kind of person in Heaven.
  - There are also shades of this at work in [atheist hell](#).
- Tycho of [Penny Arcade](#) maintains his atheism despite [regularly hanging out with Jesus](#).
- In [Ozy and Millie](#), an [ambassador](#) sent to Greater Llewellynland to discuss foreign policy with Llewellyn, a dragon. Said ambassador refused to believe in dragons. Hence, he mostly hung around the castle and annoyed Ozy.
- [Shortpacked!](#):



- [A transformer claims to be an atheist](#)<sup>Ⓜ</sup>. This wouldn't be a problem, except they live on their planet-sized creator. This is actually based on Jetfire's personality in the comics. It's a long-running implicit joke that he believes in some odd kind of evolution which is obviously ridiculous (although the levers-and-pulleys thing *was* actually canon at one point). The above comic is not exaggerating. The fact that he was *made* by a *very* intelligent designer (Shockwave) in the Marvel comics makes this even funnier.
- Leslie insists that there was no historical Jesus even after Galasso, who had been proven to have the ability, brings him back from the dead, despite the fact that his teachings, appearance, and demeanor all line up with euhemerist study of the Bible rather than modern Christian caricatures, getting so frustrated with her cognitive dissonance that she physically attacks him.
- Likewise, Dreadmoon of the [Insecticomics](#) is an atheist and skeptic. Somehow he manages to reconcile this with the fact that his commander has an immortal spark, people can and have been brought back from the dead, and they have done battle against the powerful minions of a chaos god who is the closest thing Transformers have to the Devil. And then they did battle against the chaos god himself. This does not seem to have caused any crises of faith.
- [8-Bit Theater](#):
  - There's a [Running Gag](#) with Thief believing dragons are extinct despite encountering (and getting mauled by) them several times. Eventually Red Mage asks why he keeps saying this. His response?
 

**Thief:** "Wishful thinking."
  - Also Cleric, who doesn't believe in the gods he gets spells from. This actually makes Cleric's job easier: the gods know he's not trying to suck up to him by worship, so they actually pay attention to him. Black Mage gets his nasty [Eye Twitch](#) again.
- [Exterminatus Now](#): After getting chewed out by Virus for trying to arrest a Dagohma's Witness, Eastwood reveals that he does not believe in gods, demons, or the supernatural, despite personally witnessing the existence of such as [part of his job](#). "[It's easy. All it takes is a little faith.](#)"<sup>Ⓜ</sup>
- In [Sluggy Freelance](#) Kent [refuses to believe in vampires](#)<sup>Ⓜ</sup> even after [seeing several for himself](#)<sup>Ⓜ</sup>. It's later theorized, however, that Kent *does* realize vampires are real, but admitting that would *al*somean [admitting he was wrong](#)<sup>Ⓜ</sup>. Ain't no way *that's* gonna happen.
- [Bruno the Bandit](#): Dibunquer, somewhat modelled after James Randi. He debunks everything in a world that is obviously full of magic, though he also represents a sensible sceptical viewpoint sometimes. Eventually he realises the truth, [which is that magic does work in the world except when he destroys it by making people disbelieve it](#), but that doesn't ultimately deter his skeptical ways any. He eventually disbelieves a manifestation of Ailix to His face, but still comes across as more reasonable than [the pope](#), who first gets the inspiration to start revering rubber duckies (Ailix got summoned in the middle of a bath, and the pope [fixates on what He happens to have on Him at the time instead of what He's saying](#)) and then gets all "sceptical" himself when Ailix asks him to change his ostentatious ways. Can you tell it's a [satire](#) yet?

- In *Sinfest*, Lil' E tells Jesus that he's a myth. [a]
- *Gunnerkrigg Court*:
  - *Coyote* berates humans for being so preoccupied with trying to find a cause or meaning behind everything that they place their own imaginary answers behind anything they *can't* explain; Coyote is essentially criticizing a form of the "god of the gaps" argument. Coyote even has an (unconfirmed) theory that he and other supernatural beings are merely physical manifestations of human belief, and as such, do not truly "exist". Whether this is *true* or not has been left up in the air (Coyote believes it to be true, but he is a very far cry from being omniscient or infallible).
  - Antimony's father is stated to have a dislike of anything that can't be explained logically. His friends include a half-fire-elemental, a magic-user, and *the Valkyrie Brunhilde*, though his closest friend was an "ordinary" *Gadgeteer Genius*. It's revealed that he completely ignored any "magical" explanation for why his wife, the aforementioned half-elemental, was slowly dying after giving birth nor could he accept that (as far as has been shown) it couldn't be stopped — her elemental half had to transfer to her daughter. He starts looking for supernatural answers after her death, starting with *psychopomps* — the same beings his wife and daughter could have introduced to him at any time if he had wanted to listen.
- *Homestuck*
  - Eridan lives in a world which canonically contains ghosts, telekinesis, clairvoyance, psychic mind control, dragons, telepathy, time-travelling demons, trolls who spontaneously sprout butterfly wings enabling them to fly, *cosmic horrors*, vampires, and Sgrub/Sburd itself. But he doesn't believe in magic. That stuff's fake.
  - Cronus also follows the same path, though it's *justified*, as he USED to believe in magic, but someone decided to take a sledgehammer to his faith.
- In *Slightly Damned*, Rhea (and many other Medians) apparently are skeptical about the existence of divine beings, despite the fact that angels, demons, and *gods* are just walking around in the open. Somewhat justified, however, as it's implied that these things are unique to Riverside, and the 'verse's equivalents of God and Satan really *have* never been seen.
- *City of Reality*: The Dreaming Witch, despite living in a world of magic, is convinced the magic she does is impossible<sup>note</sup>, and hence she must be dreaming. Needless to say, she's *a wee bit mad*.
- *1/0* featured the character Marcus, who became so angry at the comic's creator Tailsteak that he willingly acquired a fourth wall — an inability to hear Tailsteak, see the comic's layout, have real-world knowledge, to realise in any way he was a character in a comic. Marcus remained stolidly convinced he was the *Only Sane Man* despite Tailsteak's continuous creation of life, inventing laws of physics, and generally interfering with the comic's world in an obvious fashion. Ironically, to rationalise all the ghosts and golems and such, Marcus eventually had to create his own increasingly-convoluted religion. Eventually, he reaches such levels of *Strawman Political* (very clearly representing atheism, agnosticism, pantheism, and polytheism at various points) that *Petitus chews out the Christian author* for his *anvilicious Author Tract*.

- In *Chaos Pet*, Nester proves atheism is irrational [quite convincingly](#).
- *Stand Still, Stay Silent*: Danes and Swedes. Icelanders, Norwegians and Finns have all attributed the *The Magic Comes Back* episode their world underwent to *The Old Gods*, in which Swedes and Danes do not believe. A downplayed version of this trope kicks in due to the Swedish and Danish atheism extending to magic (mages are only found in the theistic nations) and spirits/ghosts (visible only to mages), which *have* been proven to exist in the setting's *After the End* world. As for the members of the main cast that hail from these nations, their days of lack of belief may numbered as threats that can be dealt with *only* by the mages become more frequent.
- *Awkward Zombie* has one issue with many of the characters of *Super Smash Bros.* starting a theological debate, with Fox thinking is primitive to believe in deities. This lasts until Palutenacasually walks into the room.
- In *El Goonish Shive*, a mall cop that catches up with Kitty [witnesses](#) her sweater's sleeves reverting to normal from being oversized yet he dismisses it as a neat trick.
 

**Dan:** Oh my god. We found him! We found the one character in EGS who makes excuses when he sees obvious magic and doesn't just accept it as a thing!
- *The Order of the Stick*: When the Order [finds a message](#) left by Girard Draketooth for Azurite Paladin Soon Kim, he disdainfully comments on how logic is "the part of your brain that weeps every time you kneel down and pray to a glorified petting zoo". This, in a typical fantasy setting where the gods are *real* and bestow genuine power on those who take Divine classes... like *Paladins*.

### Web Original

- *The Spider Cliff Mysteries*: Eliza, and to a lesser extent Barlow.
- Roger, the main character of *Go Fish*, is a great example of this trope. Despite being recruited to be a god's contact on Earth, meeting various gods and angels, and actually *visiting the realm where the gods live*, he still identifies himself as an atheist in a recent [comic](#).
- *Tales of MU*
  - There is also a god, Arkhanos, who encourages their followers to not be 100% sure of said deity's (or any other deity's) godhood. Or gender, for that matter. Arkhanites like to point out that while divine magic works and gods have made well-documented appearances, it's possible that they're simply [much better at magic than "mortals"](#).
  - The best example of this is Steff, who is a follower of both Mechanism and and Arkhanism despite being in a relationship with both a half-demon *and* a semi-divine harvest spirit who regularly converses with her creator deity.

- The MUniverse contains multiple religions, each with its own distinct (and in some cases conflicting) mythology/theology, all of which are apparently real. So it's fairly easy to see how people might get confused. To quote the author:

In most fantasy worlds, because "the gods are real", there's one set of myths which are only myths in that they're mythic in scope... they're essentially true and everybody knows them and agrees on them, and if there's any dissent it's a big story point because either the dissenters are eeeeeevillll or they're secretly the good guys. Even if the elves have one set of myths and the dwarves have another, it's only because they have different gods and their myths only deal with their corner of the world. With everything else they fight about, you rarely see the dwarves and elves falling out because one believes the world was made from the bones of Fireaxe Grimbeer and the other thinks it was fashioned in seven days by Emostar Vaguelygay, because those gods are real in the story and therefore not subject to this kind of disagreement. I don't really buy the logic there. Our world is made of real and we can't often agree on any two things inside it. Ignoring the possibility of any actual divine/supernatural stuff existing in our world, all of our conflicting myths and legends came about because of real, (at one time) verifiable events: wars, people, seasons, animals, whatever. Adding another class or two of things to those lists wouldn't change the essential nature of the beast, which is that 1) we like to make stuff up when we don't know something and 2) we frequently don't know shit.

- In *Metamor Keep* Metamor's High Priestess, Raven hin'Elric believes the "gods" she regularly converses with and draws power from are really just entities with a lot of magic that they are willing to lend to others .
  - By the time of *Metamor City*, written by Raven's creator, she seems to have been proven right as her former student Mirai has pulled the gods of light and dark down to earth and taken most of their power. And then started a new religion that worships the same monotheistic god as the setting's version of Christianity.
- *SCP Foundation*:
  - The Foundation has a [Physical God](#) known as [SCP-343](#)<sup>▣</sup>. [Apparently](#)<sup>▣</sup>, Dr. Bright has tried to disprove its omnipotence... to SCP-343 itself. The result was a paperweight so heavy not even SCP-343 could lift it.
  - There is an entire Group of Interest ([originating from the French branch](#) of the SCP Foundation website) known as [SAPPHIRE](#)<sup>▣</sup> (Society of Atheists for the Protection from the Perilous and Hindering Institutionalized Religions Everywhere), fully comprised of flat-earth atheists (in the case of [SCP-281-FR](#)<sup>▣</sup>, literally so). Despite living in a world where there are dozens of competing cosmologies at any point in time, members of SAPPHIRE (usually people involved in academia and in science) do not believe that anomalies (or "Singularities", as they call them) actually exist, but that they are merely errors of human perception (like religion or other "irrational beliefs") whose presence can modify probability. They are a dangerous joke to every other group involved with the anomalous, and are very hypocritical, as they will use anomalies to spread their ideas, despite not believing in their existence. Their ideal of human rationality does, however, mean that they will absolutely refuse to utilize any mind-altering anomalies (like amnestics or memetic agents) to achieve their goals.

- In *Welcome to Night Vale*, angels are not to be considered real due to local laws, which characters uphold even when holding a conversation with them.
- **Played for Laughs** in *TFS at the Table*, Team Four Star's *Dungeons & Dragons* campaign. During one session, Lanipator rolled a **Natural 1** when making a Knowledge check about the undead. Rather than simply saying he didn't know anything, Lani decided to play it as his character Wake not believing in the existence of the undead, believing that they're nothing more than puppets controlled by magic. The mental gymnastics Wake performs in order to justify his beliefs become quite hilarious, especially considering the group is allied with a (non-evil) Lich and one session involves them exploring a "ghost" ship full of zombies.
- In *Farce of the Three Kingdoms*, Cao Cao insists that he doesn't believe in the supernatural, despite encountering it several times, most notably in Chapter 68. **He refuses to acknowledge Chapter 68.**

## Western Animation

- *Avatar: The Last Airbender*:
  - Sokka plays this trope straight a lot, with one of the best examples being "The Swamp." By this point, despite knowing that spiritual locations do exist and witnessing first hand the mystical powers of the titular swamp (including a giant tornado appearing out of nowhere and smacking them out of the sky when they refused to land) Sokka refuses to believe that the place is anything other than perfectly mundane marshland.
  - When confronted with how much of what Aang does defies explanation he **Hand Waves** that "Avatar stuff doesn't count."
  - Sokka initially scoffs as the concept of "past lives", despite it being a fact that the Avatar reincarnates.
- In *ReBoot*, **Fax Modem** denies the existence of "the User". He accounts for the various catastrophes attributed to it as a **mass hallucination engineered by the authorities** to keep the population in line.
 

**Bob:** So, lemme get this straight. The Guardians are control freaks willing to sacrifice the very people they are sworn to protect by dropping games on them?

**Modem:** That's correct.

**Bob:** For what purpose?

**Modem:** I haven't worked that out yet.

**Bob:** Okay. Tell me, did Phong interview you personally for this job? Didn't think so.
- Rick Sanchez from *Rick and Morty*. Despite the fact that he's personally met **Satan** and a few demons, Rick is still a **Hollywood Atheist**. Although "Rickle in Time" gives us the "No atheists in a

foxhole" gag, where [Prayer Is a Last Resort](#) is immediately laughed off when things start going the right way. He even says "In your face, God!" after saying there is no God.

- In [Justice League](#):

- Hawkgirl, who does not believe in anything supernatural despite winning a fantastical battle against Doctor Fate and personally knowing a zombie, not in gods despite meeting and [killing Icthultu](#), and not in souls despite being taken over by the literal soul/s of ancient [Snake People](#) who put their souls into a gem, and [knowing Wonder Woman](#).
- [Wonder Woman](#) and [Aquaman](#) are used by the [Writers on Board](#) to dump the idea that faith is a hollow thing that brings happiness when in actuality [Wonder Woman](#) is based in the blessings of [Classical Mythology](#) with a real Hera and bracelets made of [Zeus's Aegis](#) on her wrists, while Aquaman stated that his Atlantis was based in the use and misuse of magic, resulting in his trident and in a temporary age of peace for the Earth from monsters like [Icthultu](#).
- [The Flash](#) points out the absurdity of such skepticism in one episode when [Green Lantern](#) doubts his word that a gorilla talked:

"Hey, we've both got a [Martian's](#) number on our speed dial. I think I deserve the benefit of the doubt."

- In [The Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes!](#) episode "459", [The Wasp](#) flat-out calls the idea of aliens "crazy". This would be the same Wasp who is teammates with [an immortal Norse god who can control the weather](#).

- In the [Adventure Time](#) episode 'Wizards Only, Fools', it is revealed that Princess Bubblegum doesn't believe in magic. Despite having used magic talismans in the past. And regularly being targeted for kidnapping by a wizard whose power originated from the magic jewels in his crown which were stolen from a magical creature. She accepts that the things typically considered "magic" such as wizardry do exist, but is of the belief that all "magic" is just natural phenomenon with scientific explanations that nobody has been able to figure out yet. Considering that she is friends with later dating a half-vampire/half-demon girl who has brought skeletons to life and is the daughter of a demon lord who likes to steal souls, a ghost princess and other ghosts exists, Death being an actual character in the show, numerous afterlives known as "Dead Worlds" are confirmed to exist, Bubblegum herself being the reincarnation of a Candy Elemental, making herself as magical being, she's definitely wrong about the nature of magic. On the matter of Jake's power to shapeshift and shrink and grow, she says this is due to a mutation rather than magic, and seeing how the Ooo was created from a nuclear fallout to begin with... It's later revealed to be a trait he inherited from an extraterrestrial/extra-dimensional being who implanted an egg in his father's head.

- [South Park](#)

- In the episode "[Cartmanland](#)", Kyle loses faith in God. This is despite the fact that the boys have met Jesus and [Satan](#) in the past. In one episode, they even meet God itself. Although, it could be that he just believes that God doesn't care, as opposed to God doesn't exist. Never mind that he is Jewish, while knowing that Jesus exists and has holy powers. Also, it *is* [South Park](#). There

are actually a minority of Jews who believe in Jesus in [Real Life](#),<sup>note</sup> though their actual [Jewness](#) is controversial to say the least.

- Additionally, Mohammed, Buddha and Joseph Smith also exist and have superpowers in "Super Best Friends". [They Fight Crime!!](#) Despite this, in "All About Mormons", Stan found the entire story of Joseph Smith and Mormonism impossible to swallow.
  - The real God is, for lack of a better description, a bunyip. And he's also a Buddhist. Who only lets Mormons into Heaven. *South Park* is odd like that...
  - In "Hell on Earth 2006" Satan hosts a huge Halloween party on Earth (marking *at least* his third public appearance on the surface). The episodes immediately following? A 2-part story arc all about how Richard Dawkins and Mrs. Garrison turned the entire planet into straw atheists.
  - Also applicable is "Red Hot Catholic Love", where most of the boys' parents became atheists and celebrate over the fact that the Vatican was destroyed, despite the fact that it was destroyed through supernatural means and a giant Queen Spider is clearly present- plus, you know, again the fact that they all knew God, Satan and Jesus were all real and had seen them in person.
  - Most recently, in the game "[South Park: The Fractured but Whole](#)", the player character is allowed to choose their religion in a conversation with Jesus. All religions ([with the exception of a Lawful Scientologist](#)), and atheists, are accepted, and Jesus will offer to take a selfie with him no matter your pick.
  - This actually may be a bit of [Author Appeal](#). Matt Stone has said often he personally doesn't believe in any religion and Trey Parker says his idea of faith is difficult to explain, but he finds both religion and atheist viewpoints equally absurd to comprehend. In any case, most of their comedy is about upsetting people, so messing with everyone's perceptions of the world and faith is just part of it.
  - In an interview, they mentioned they are fascinated by religion and while they call all the religions wonderfully ridiculous, they then add that the most ridiculous explanation was that they were all existing, just because (as in the Big Bang and so on was a result of natural forces.)
  - One analysis video actually comes up to the explanation that the two were conveying religion (and non-religion) as being ridiculous because humanity itself is ridiculous. Given the nature of the show, this is probably what the two were going for. It **is** *South Park*.
- [Mandy](#) is rendered immune to the Tooth Fairy's powers by revealing, to his face, that she doesn't believe in him.
  - In an episode of *Ed, Edd n Eddy*, after Eddy is cursed by a phone and suffers one misfortune after another, [Double D](#) stubbornly insists that it's all a coincidence despite statistically impossible things happening to Eddy such as having a tree topple on top of him, getting crushed by a sandbox falling from the sky and a stampede of wild hippos (in the middle of the United States), getting struck by lightning, and having a house fall on him all in the span of about 30 seconds.
  - [Family Guy](#)

- Brian is a professed atheist despite the fact that [God](#) and Jesus are frequently seen in Quahog and the former once smited the family with Exodus-like plagues. However, it *is* [Family Guy](#). And he *is* an [Author Avatar](#).
- What's interesting is in the episode "If I'm Dyin', I'm Lyin'" Brian is the one who points out the plagues to Peter and then slaps him declaring that the reason things are happening is "God...is...pissed!"
- In the episode "[I Dream of Jesus](#)", Jesus had dinner at the Griffin household, among other interactions. Granted, Brian's atheist showing was merely asking if the guy who Peter invited was really Jesus before asking if he could perform miracles. Cue Jesus transforming their dinners into sundaes (and then growing Lois' breasts, leading to a [Jaw Drop](#) from Brian).
- This reached its height of ridiculousness in "[Family Guy](#)" when Jesus showed up at the Griffin house again just to tell them that all religions are crap. Brian then gloated that he'd been proven right... [because Jesus said so](#).
- Lampshaded in "[Jesus, Mary and Joseph!](#)": when Brian calls the Nativity story fictional, Stewie remarks: "Jesus lived with us, like, for a week! What more do you want?"
- Also, *Family Guy* is absurd from the first until the final frame, with appearances of fictional characters and creatures appearing alongside the cast.
- Doc Saturday from [The Secret Saturdays](#) actively disbelieves in magic despite being married to someone who uses magic (and wields a magical fire sword), having a son with supernatural powers, and continually doing battle against things like evil alternate reality doppelgangers, killer salt monsters, and an evil [Large Ham](#) out to conquer the world by unleashing a mythical god of evil.
- In an episode of [SpongeBob SquarePants](#), Squidward says he doesn't believe in ghosts (or more specifically the Flying Dutchman), which is odd considering the Flying Dutchman appeared to the entire town in the [Halloween Episode](#) and Squidward was zapped over and over and tortured by the Flying Dutchman in another episode.
- In the [Batman Beyond](#) episode "Revenant", an invisible force is terrorizing the school, which Terry's friends think is a ghost.
  - Bruce:** These people believe anything they can't explain is magic.
  - Terry:** Naturally, you don't believe in that kind of thing.
  - Bruce:** Of course I do: I've [Seen It All](#). [Demons](#), [witch boys](#), [immortals](#), [zombies](#). But this thing... I don't know. It just feels so...high school.
- Turns out that as usual, Bruce is right. It's actually Willie Watt, who gained psychic powers and was using them from juvie.
- [Chip 'n Dale: Rescue Rangers](#): Despite having met genies, leprechauns, ghosts, witches, and so forth, Gadget Hackwrench insists there's no such thing as magic. This usually only happens in episodes where [there isn't any supernatural phenomenon but you're meant to think there is](#). When magic really *is* going on, she usually keeps her opinions on the matter to herself.



- Kid Flash in [Young Justice](#). He's perfectly okay with pocket dimensions and [Mind Control](#) existing, he just thinks everything has to have a scientific explanation behind it. Partly justified in that one of the Flash's enemies, (Abracadabra for those curious) was a Time Traveller posing as an [Evil Sorcerer](#) (and actually served as [The Dragon](#) in the episode in question) and because this skepticism seemed to only last a single episode - on every other occasion magic shows up, Kid Flash is (to all appearances, at least) a lot more accepting of the reality of it all. Also, by the end of that first episode where he denies the existence of magic, it's pretty clear that Wally knows better and just doesn't want to admit being wrong.
- [Daria](#) claims not to believe in God and the supernatural in the fourth season episode "Groped by an Angel". This despite the fact that in the previous season she met the [Anthropomorphic Personifications](#) of various holidays (though they did at least have the excuse of coming from a [Pocket Dimension](#) a la [The Mighty Thor](#)). There's also the fact that according to the [Beavis and Butt-Head](#) episode "[It's a Miserable Life](#)" God and guardian angels really *do* exist, but Daria herself wouldn't have any way of knowing this. That's assuming that the holiday episode was even canon. Every other episode (well, aside from the [musical one](#)) takes place in a normal world, so the holiday one is very out of place and it's presumably non-canon, similar to the [Treehouse of Horror](#) episodes of [The Simpsons](#).
- In the [Phineas and Ferb](#) episode "Sci-Fi Pie Fly", [Buford](#).
 

**Buford:** I don't believe in space ships!

**Isabella:** But Buford, you've been *in* a space ship. Several, actually.

**Buford:** I'm a skeptic.
- In [W.I.T.C.H.](#), when everyone is told about their powers Cornelia is skeptical and assumes it's a magic trick. This despite, as lampshaded, the fact she saw magical pictures appear out of thin air and the fact her friends *have powers*.
- In a recent episode of [American Dad!](#) Steve, [who in previous seasons was shown to be fairly religious](#), refuses to believe in Biblical stories that he finds irrational, like Noah's Ark. This despite the fact that a) he once met God and temporarily gained enlightenment, b) his mother's repressed sexuality once manifested as a ghost and attacked the house, c) his family has a long-running feud with [Santa](#), d) his grandfather is [The Krampus](#), and e) his sister once adopted the baby [Antichrist](#), who proceeded to [Mind Control](#) Steve for most of the episode. Given all that, his VERY SUDDEN lack of belief is rather odd. (An argument *could* be made that the [Christmas Episodes](#) are [Loose Canon](#), but that doesn't explain the first two.)
- In [Milo Murphy's Law](#), [Zack's](#) father is the only person who has ever doubted the existence of [Murphy's Law](#); every other character, no matter how rational, pretty much accepts it instantly. Though admittedly, even Mr. Underwood's skepticism couldn't survive a whole afternoon of being around [Milo and Martin](#).
- [Kaeloo](#): The episode "Let's Play Magicians" revealed that Kaeloo and Mr. Cat don't believe in magic... [despite the fact that they live on a planet that runs on magic](#).

- Mr. Cat is skeptical of everything, from aliens to ghosts, despite having encountered aliens, spirits, [Alternate Universe](#) counterparts of himself and his friends, and even [The Grim Reaper](#).
- Happens literally in "Let's Play Golf":

**Mr. Cat:** *Who said our planet had to be round?*<sup>note</sup>

- Naturally used for a joke in [Futurama](#), when the gang is under attack by a killer Santa Claus.
 

**Bender:** Well, guess what? I don't believe in Santa Claus! C'mon, everybody! If you don't believe in him he can't hurt you!

**Santa:** *(Smacks his bag under Bender's head)*

**Bender:** AGH! OH, GOD, THE PAIN!
- Velma from [Scooby-Doo](#) is usually adamant that magic and ghosts don't exist, though some installments make this a more defining trait than others. Television series such as [The New Scooby-Doo Movies](#) or [Scooby-Doo! Mystery Incorporated](#) will either have her actually lament about real monsters not existing or slowly come to accept them existing once she has evidence of it. Meanwhile, movies such as [Scooby-Doo! and the Curse of the 13th Ghost](#) will have her continue to deny the existence of the supernatural despite having irrefutable proof in front of her.
- In the [Pinky and the Brain Christmas Episode](#), Brain presents an interesting case. He flat-out tells Pinky that writing a letter to Santa Claus is "silly" and "stupid" and says that he keeps his Christmas spirit "right next to my Bigfoot photos." This despite the fact that he *knows for a fact* that Santa exists, because his whole plan to [Take Over the World](#) depends on infiltrating the North Pole and tricking Santa into building and distributing his [Mind-Control Device](#) toys. Though he may actually be referring to the notion rather than the logic; he simply finds writing Santa a letter incredibly pointless due to the impracticality rather than futility. To be fair, it's not likely that Pinky and the Brain are on Santa's "Good" list.
- The [Rankin-Bass holiday cartoon 'Twas the Night Before Christmas](#) brings this mind-twister to light: the closest thing to an antagonist in the movie, an atheist mouse, lives in a world in which Santa is very real... not a belief in him, but Santa himself. There is no question on this; it's a matter of demonstrable fact... he can be seen, talked to, he has a **secretary** who *answers the phone* when you call the North Pole, he can make announcements to the press. Santa is as real and as important in their society as, say, the Pope is in ours. The mouse kid says he's a myth. His reason? [It's scientifically impossible to do what he does](#). Put into context, imagine living in Metropolis and meeting someone who refuses to believe in Superman because he does things that defy physics... or someone who refuses to believe in Mutants in the Marvel 'verse because they can do things that are "impossible". It's like that. To be fair though, the thrust of the special is that he's a nerd and [generally insufferable douche](#) who [thinks he's got more brains than he really does](#), which is to say, none at all.

Other

- Pick *any* Christmas movie or [Christmas Special](#) in which [Santa Claus](#) is real and actively delivers presents to a large fraction of the world's children, yet the vast majority of adults do not believe in him. Review the situation: mysterious packages show up under Christmas trees that Mom and Dad certainly don't remember buying. Little Sally in the hovel next door ends up with an expensive doll in her stocking despite her parents barely being able to afford necessities and keeping the doors locked for fear of burglars. Yet despite these otherwise inexplicable occurrences, people dismiss Santa as a fairy tale or "stuff for babies."
  - Worse, in the Christmas movies/specials where Santa Claus not only exists, but *doesn't even actually hide his existence* — to the point where you'd easily be able to see the man just by waiting outside on Christmas Eve, or even by *telephoning the North Pole*.
  - Taken to hilarious extremes, for the sake of a joke, in one Rankin-Bass movie in which a young atheist mouse says he doesn't believe in Santa...despite Santa having *a phone number* and *a staff of people to answer any calls*. When he says this, the athe-mouse's dad gives him a look that is the 70's animated special equivalent of "Wow, you're spectacularly dumb". This is a world where Santa is **so clearly and explicitly real** that when he *tells* the town's mayor **he won't come here this year due to the athe-mouse insulting him in a newspaper** (yes...) the mayor attempts to build a huge beacon to tell Santa how much they're really, really sorry. In other words, Santa is at least as real as any other businessman the town is trying to curry favor with. And the athe-mouse kid still didn't believe it till his father showed him **everyone else in town did**. The irony? **Athe-mouse is the SMART one in his family (by his reckoning)**. Yikes.
    - But when trying to convince the mouse, his dad tries to make his son have faith using an argument that doesn't factor in empirical proof (the song "Give Your Heart a Try"), despite the fact that there **is** empirical proof of Santa in this universe. It's even more stupid in [The Year Without a Santa Claus](#) when a bunch of children announce that the newspapers have reported that Santa Claus is taking a day off and **ten seconds later** say that they don't believe in Santa. Santa himself sings a song to convince one of the children of his existence: "I believe in Santa Claus / Like I believe in love..." *not* "I believe in Santa Claus / Because I saw his picture in *The New York Times*..."
  - The same would apply to the Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy, where they also actively deliver presents to children.
  - Invoked in [The Nostalgia Critic](#) review of "Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer" in which the villains try to sue Santa Claus for kidnapping, which makes the headline in the paper.
 

**Nostalgia Critic:** No... the headline should be "HOLY SHIT SANTA CLAUS IS REAL!!!"
- An old Soviet joke runs something like this: a communist (and thus staunch atheist) died. However, he had been a good man in life, and God was willing to forget his unbelief, provided that he spent an equal period of time in Hell and Heaven. He served his first year in Hell, and Satan said to God: "Take this man quickly - he has turned all my demons into Young Pioneers! I must restore order!" After spending a year in Heaven, God took him back to Hell, where he had this conversation with Satan:

**Satan:** Lord God, it is my turn now.

**God:** First of all let's keep this quick, I have a party meeting. Second, call me "*Comrade* God". Third, there is no God.

- In the Spanish version of the joke, it's Karl Marx himself who dies and is sent straight to Hell, where he promptly starts getting rank-and-file demons to make common cause with the damned. Satan tries to get rid of him by shipping him into Heaven, half-expecting the guys Above to reject him. When he goes up to Heaven to check after a few days, it's Peter who greets him and informs him that "there is no God."
- In one Spanish comic strip, an atheist climbs into a tree to escape a bear. An angel flies down to meet him, and the man insists he's not going to convert just because an angel saved him (although this example overlaps with the [Nay-Theist](#) trope). The angel then reveals he came to help *the bear*, who is a Christian and is thanking God for this meal.