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Godless!

Apio Ludd

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Among the various "-ism"s that some (occasionally even I) may use to name the ways that I encounter my worlds, there is one I chose to treat by itself, and that is atheism. The label "atheist" most certainly applies to me, since I don't believe in any god and, beyond this, have no desire for any such being in the worlds I experience. But as Stirner pointed out more than 170 years ago, so many atheists are such utterly pious people, and it can be embarrassing to be associated with such dogmatic true believers.

It's not hard to distinguish pious atheists; the signs are obvious: an obsessive need to evangelize; endless attempts to show they are as moral as...the instigators of crusades and inquisitions, the perpetrators of jihads and witch-hunts; their references to Reason, or Science, or Humanity, or (in the case of marxist pietists) History, the abstract deities that they consider absolute and universal, that is, sacred. They are, in fact, no more atheist than the christian who does not believe in Allah, the moslem has no faith in Brahma, the hindu who rejects Ahura Mazda, the zoroastrian who has no use for Yahweh, or the jew who denies the Trinity. These pious atheists merely re-

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ject the gods of every religion except their own: rationalism, positivism, humanism, marxism...

So if "atheist" is broad enough a term to include those who continue to cling to some abstraction as universal or absolute, as provider of "the answer" or "the truth", then perhaps I need a stronger term to express my unbelief. If, like the righteous rationalist, I can rattle off the brilliant reasons why there is no god, if, like like the pious positivist, I can show no god is need to explain the worlds around me, I also know be vies of bilious and bigoted believers will continue to cling to their easy, empty, anesthetizing answer: faith. A thing I happily no longer have at all.

Neither reason nor science led me to my unbelief. I'm glad that's the case, since each too easily lead to another faith. I grew up with a god ("the god of my fathers" as the faithful say), and that god nearly killed me. But in that very moment, I realized I had a choice. I could choose to kill my god. I could choose to live my life, create myself and my worlds without a god. And so I did and have continued to do for the last forty years. And I've found a beauty and wonder in my life and in the wild worlds I encounter that easy answers, benumbing belief, the festering folly of faith could only suffocate. Having made this choice, I can say I am proudly and joyfully godless. Not merely an atheist, like those whose disbelief in God is merely a cover for their belief in some other, abstract, impersonal Universal Absolute—some other deity to give them their easy answers—, but a genuinely GODLESS, genuinely faithful atheist.