

# Antitheism — Existentialism/Nihilism

"The existentialist, on the contrary, finds it extremely embarrassing that God does not exist, for there disappears with Him all possibility of finding values in an intelligible heaven. There can no longer be any good a priori, since there is no infinite and perfect consciousness to think it. It is nowhere written that "the good" exists, that one must be honest or must not lie, since we are now upon the plane where there are only men. Dostoevsky once wrote: "If God did not exist, everything would be permitted"; and that, for existentialism, is the starting point. Everything is indeed permitted if God does not exist, and man is in consequence forlorn, for he cannot find anything to depend upon either within or outside himself. He discovers forthwith, that he is without excuse."

— Jean-Paul Sartre, Existentialism Is a Humanism, 1946.

"Where has God gone?" he cried. "I shall tell you. We have killed him - you and I. We are his murderers. But how have we done this? How were we able to drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What did we do when we unchained the earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving now? Away from all suns? Are we not perpetually falling? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there any up or down left? Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is it not more and more night coming on all the time? Must not lanterns be lit in the morning? Do we not hear anything yet of the noise of the gravediggers who are burying God? Do we not smell anything yet of God's decomposition? Gods too decompose. God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we, murderers of all murderers, console ourselves? That which was the holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet possessed has bled to death under our knives. Who will wipe this blood off us? With what water could we purify ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we need to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we not ourselves become gods simply to be worthy of it? There has never been a greater deed; and whosoever shall be born after us - for the sake of this deed he shall be part of a higher history than all history hitherto."

— Friedrich Nietzsche, Parable of the Madman.

"The long and the short of it is that I became convinced that atheism implies amorality; and since I am an atheist, I must therefore embrace amorality. I call the premise of this argument 'hard atheism' because it is analogous to a thesis in philosophy known as 'hard determinism.' The latter holds that if metaphysical determinism is true, then there is no such thing as free will. Thus, a 'soft determinist' believes that, even if your reading of this column right now has followed by causal necessity from the Big Bang fourteen billion years ago, you can still meaningfully be said to have freely chosen to read it. Analogously, a 'soft atheist' would hold that one could be an atheist and still believe in morality. And indeed, the whole crop of 'New Atheists' (see Issue 78) are softies of this kind. So was I, until I experienced my shocking epiphany that the religious fundamentalists are correct: without God, there is no morality. But they are incorrect, I still believe, about there being a God. Hence, I believe, there is no morality."

— Joel Marks, An Amoral Manifesto (Part I).

"The literal meaning of life is whatever you're doing that prevents you from killing yourself."

— Albert Camus, Myth of Sisyphus.

"If we believe in nothing, if nothing has any meaning and if we can affirm no values whatsoever, then everything is possible and nothing has any importance."

— Albert Camus, The Rebel.