

## BELIEF IN GOD

The most significant Postmodernist inversion is from belief in God to Atheism. Surveys of Americans over the years have consistently shown high rates of belief—always a large majority. Yet since the 1960s the secular liberal minority has been able to impose its Atheism in education, journalism, entertainment, and government—even in religious seminaries, as at Harvard.

All the major writers in American literature believed in God until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including Franklin (theist), Jefferson and Paine (deists), Poe and Melville, though the latter two defined God differently than most and did not have faith in individual immortality. Twain believed in God but in his late despair equated Him with Satan. Drieser and Norris began as Naturalists but ended as Christian mystics. Four of the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century originators of literary Modernism--Stein, Pound, Stevens, and W. C. Williams--believed in Art rather than in God. After writing all his poems, Stevens was converted to Christianity and baptized just before he died. O'Neill and Fitzgerald lost their faith.

All the other Modernists were religious, most explicitly T. S. Eliot and Flannery O'Connor. Frost and Welty were Platonists; e.e. cummings, Wilder, Cather, Moore, Porter, and Tennessee Williams were Christians; Sherwood Anderson and Hart Crane were pantheists; Hemingway, Faulkner and Steinbeck were both pantheistic *and* Christian. The religious dimension gives to much of Modernist literature a cosmic magnitude, intellectual diversity, moral strength, and eternal significance. On the whole, Atheist literature shrinks to triviality in contrast. "Religion and art spring from the same root and are close kin." (Cather) "It's only very recently that you couldn't see how the high arts are intimately connected to religion." (Marilynne Robinson)

## GOD

God is the most comprehensive idea. The secular liberal exclusion of God from schools and literature is anti-intellectual. Atheists fear the idea of God because they do not want to be held accountable for anything they do. They claim to be scientific and rational. On the contrary: (1) The scientific method is *inductive*, whereas the method of Atheists is *deductive*. Atheists leap to a conclusion based on the mere 4% of the universe known to science, using brains developed to only a small fraction of their capacity, far less than the brain development of dolphins. (2) The mind of a scientist is open, the mind of an Atheist is closed. (3) Many great scientists have been religious: Isaac Newton was a Christian, Albert Einstein was a mystic, and the astronomer who originated the Big Bang Theory prevailing in physics today was a Catholic priest. Wernher von Braun, the scientist who built the V-2 rocket and launched America to the moon, affirmed faith in an afterlife by citing the First Law of Thermodynamics: "Nature does not know extinction; all it knows is transformation. Everything science has taught me, and continues to teach me, strengthens my belief in the continuity of our spiritual existence after death."

(4) The "string theory" so influential in physics today posits 10 or more dimensions beyond our own, whereas the major religions posit only one. Atheists believe the more fantastic of possibilities. (5) Furthermore, paranormal researchers throughout the country have been amassing scientific evidence for years confirming Von Braun that there is an afterlife—a dimension of energy beyond this material world consistent with the First Law of Thermodynamics. "Is there a level of energy composed solely of the dead?" (DeLillo) Reason built the scientific instruments that are proving—repeatedly, abundantly, and obviously--the reality of an afterlife. It is irrational and unscientific of Atheists to ignore all the mounting evidence against their materialism. Ironically, they resemble the medieval Catholic clergy who refused to look through the telescope of Galileo. According to the philosopher Arthur Lovejoy there are over 30 different definitions of God, including the equation of God with Nature. Atheists are unable to conceive of God as anything more complex than the Easter Bunny.

(6) Since they cannot prove that God does not exist, Atheists are as much invested in faith as a Christian. In the absence of proof, the purely rational position is agnosticism, as exemplified by Ishmael in *Moby-Dick*, who evolves into a pantheist, illustrating that experience prevails over the limitations of reason. (7) Many scientific studies over the years have consistently proven that people who believe in God are happier than Atheists and that belief is healing to people with mental disorders. A current study concludes that cynics are 3 times more inclined to dementia. (8) Such evidence indicates that raising children to be

Atheists is harmful to them, whereas faith empowers them. This is a major theme in *The Road* (2006) by Cormac McCarthy. Atheists are demented to oppose improving happiness, mental health and the well being of children. "If God did not exist it would be necessary to invent Him." (Voltaire) (9) Belief in God is also more rational than Atheism because in the end believers have nothing to lose and everything to gain, whereas Atheists have everything to lose and nothing to gain.

"Rail as all atheists will, there is a mysterious, inscrutable divineness in the world—a God... He is now in this room..." (Melville) "The unparticled matter permeating and impelling all things is God." (Poe) "I stood in the laboratory of the Artist who made the world and me." (Thoreau) "I hear and behold God in every object, yet understand God not in the least." (Whitman) "More than once I have been humiliated by my resemblance to God the father...being made merely in the image of God, but not otherwise resembling Him enough to be mistaken by anybody but a very near-sighted person." (Twain) "God is a distant --stately lover." (Dickinson) "Surely there must be a Creative Divinity, and so a purpose." (Dreiser) "Hell is when no one believes." (DeLillo) "I can see how it might be possible to look down upon the earth and be an atheist, but I cannot conceive how a man could look up into the heavens and say there is no God." (Abraham Lincoln) "To me, a proof of God is in the firmament, the stars." (Faulkner) "I would just rather get a little more American Indian than Judeo-Christian in my attitudes toward the earth." (Stegner) "Our tepees were round like the nests of birds...where the Great Spirit meant for us to hatch our children. But the [whites] have put us in these square boxes. Our power is gone and we are dying, for the power is not in us any more." (Black Elk) An Atheist went on a vision quest and when he returned the elders of his tribe named him Boy Who Sees Nothing.

#### ATHEISM

Atheism (disbelief or absence of God) is characteristic of Postmodernist literature beginning with Henry Adams in his autobiography in 1907, *Martin Eden* by socialist Jack London in 1909, and H. L. Mencken the iconoclast. During the 1930s the international Communist movement converted some writers including Sinclair "Red" Lewis and many critics to Atheism, especially in universities, New York and Hollywood. Richard Wright and John Dos Passos embraced and then repudiated Communism. Atheists are satirized by the Modernists Wilbur Daniel Steele in "The Man Who Saw through Heaven" (1927), Faulkner in *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), Hemingway in "The Gambler, the Nun and the Radio" (1938), O'Connor in *Wise Blood* (1952), and later by DeLillo in *White Noise* (1985). In *The Road* (2006) by McCarthy, atheists are cannibals who enslave women.

Beginning in the 1940s Atheism infused elite American culture from disillusioned leftist intellectuals in postwar Europe through Existentialist philosophy and Theater of the Absurd, influencing professors, critics, and publishers: Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Genet, Beckett, Camus, Ionesco and others. European art films became very popular in the 1960s: Bergman, Antonioni, Fellini--especially his *La Dolce Vita*. Intending to dramatize that life is Godless and hence meaningless, the absurdists demonstrated that Atheism is absurd--characterized by alienation and angst—at best. "In every unbeliever's heart there is an uneasy feeling that, after all, he may awake and find himself immortal. This is the punishment for his unbelief. This is the agnostic's hell." (H. L. Mencken)

Existentialism begins on the premise of Atheism or agnosticism but American literature moves beyond pessimistic denial—beyond the squid to the white whale in *Moby-Dick*, beyond *nada* in "A Clean Well-Lighted Place" (1927) by Hemingway, *Invisible Man* (1952) by Ellison, and *Henderson the Rain King* (1959) by Bellow. Atheism in American literature is a phase in development to something better, until Postmodernism. As is most evident in the frequently adolescent tone of Pynchon, especially in *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973), Atheism is arrested psychological development.

During the 1950s, supporting the Socialist agenda of replacing faith in God with faith in the State, liberal elites in America began applying the doctrine "Separation of Church and State," which is not in the U.S. Constitution. Religious expression by individuals in public is not the same as the State establishing a religion. Relying on this illogic is irrational. Yet Atheists govern American culture. *A minority in effect established Atheism as the State religion of the United States*. Agnostics enabled the Atheists. In 2009 the U.S. Department of Justice declared Atheism a religion for tax purposes in reference to the Freedom from Religion Foundation. Belief in God is not a tenet of all religions--Buddhism and Taoism, for example. In

2013 the U.S. Internal Revenue Service was exposed as having for years discriminated against and harassed Christian religious groups but not Atheists.

In 2009 a U.S. Department of Homeland Security memorandum listed pro-life and Evangelical Christian groups as threats to national security. In 2013 members of the Atheist movement set up a monument attesting to their faith explicitly in rebuttal to a Christian monument and started demanding Atheist chaplains in the military. Christians in the military have been punished for expressing their faith: An Air Force combat veteran was relieved of duty and threatened with court martial because he did not agree with his lesbian commander on gay marriage. Other military officers warned troops they could face discipline and possible court martial if they expressed their faith or donated to a popular ministry. The Veterans Administration banned the words “God” and “God bless you” at military funerals at a national cemetery and the Air Force Academy removed “so help me God” from a sign that had offered inspiration to cadets. Recent Army briefings listed Catholicism, Evangelical Christianity, and pro-life organizations as extremist groups. The Air Force censored a video made by a chaplain because it included the word “God” and might offend Muslims and Atheists.

Today a single Atheist in a public gathering can by intimidation and litigation deny the majority their Constitutional rights to religious expression and free speech. Currently, under 10% of the population are depriving over 80% of their Constitutional rights. Our government does not accommodate different religions as it accommodates different races. Liberal elites are minorities who have increased their power since the 1960s by promoting minority rights over majority rights. Liberals inverted Democracy. “The minority of a country is never known to agree, except in its efforts to reduce and oppress the majority.” (James Fenimore Cooper)

The most popular countercultural novelist of the 1960s was the Atheist fantasy writer Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.: “Say what you will about the sweet miracle of unquestioning faith, I consider a capacity for it terrifying and absolutely vile.” Vile? Vonnegut is typical of Atheists who hate religious people. Greg Gutfield: “In the high school that is America, God is, like, such a nerd.... But that’s not what gets me. There are plenty of atheists who find better uses of their time than denigrating the religious. My targets are those who trash religion to elevate their coolness. For them, bragging that they’re a ‘lapsed Catholic’ in order to nervously score cool points in a public setting shows me how desperate they are for approval.... The only thing you’re ‘lapsed’ in is your ability to discern a level of interest in your stupid, predictable asides about how dumb your religious family is. You’re ‘lapsed’ in an ability to put your family before feeling cool.... Fact is, the cool, who are almost entirely liberal by default, are also anti-religious to a fault. You cannot be religious and cool. According to the purveyors of cool, God cannot be cool because He replaces badass, existential, beret-wearing, clove-smoking nihilism. And religion competes with the artificial charity of government, which exists to support you in your existentialism. And so liberals...have replaced God with government.” (*Not Cool*, 2014)

Atheism is now Politically Correct. Feminists enforce it. The liberal sophist professor Stanley Fish declared on television that he had set out to destroy T. S. Eliot. Elite secular critics have punished writers with religious faith—O’Connor for example: Irving Howe called her “smug,” Harold Bloom dismissed “her pious admirers” while declaring that O’Connor would have been a better writer if she had restrained her “spiritual tendentiousness,” and John Burt rejected the entire spiritual tradition of western literature as politically incorrect: “To claim transcendence is to leap outside of the [secular] rules which govern the conventional discourse of unbelievers and to speak a language which from without must be indistinguishable from nonsense [making] interpretation, or even appreciation...impossible” [This rejects Dante, Milton, Donne, Hawthorne, Dickinson, and most of American literature.] John Updike belittled O’Connor for her “pinpoint tunnel to Jesus at the end of all perspectives.” Liberals insist on a pinpoint tunnel to themselves at the end of all perspectives.

Since the 1960s writers have been subjected to a literary publishing culture monopolized by secular liberals who consider religious faith a conservative superstition—outside “the rules.” *The Language Police* (2003) by Diane Ravitch documents censorship by the Feminist editors who took control of literary publishing in the 1980s. The word *God* is among the hundreds of words they banned. In effect overall, religious faith has been censored. Writers know it. No one goes to church in a Postmodernist novel. In

Tim O'Brien's novel *Going After Cacciato* (1979) he gives the impression that no American soldiers in the Vietnam War were religious. "After the death of God, proclaimed by Nietzsche, the dissolution of society was inevitable. Only the Self remained. And the Void all around it.... This is the song [Postmodernist] American literature sings." (Ihab Hassan, *Radical Innocence*, 1961: 326)

Michael Hollister (2014)