

# Against Atheism - Postliterate - Medium

By Postliterate

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Inspired by Nikoli O’Dwyer’s excellent article [“Atheism is Overrated.”](https://medium.com/@nikoli.odwyer/atheism-is-overrated-fca9c3f54dec) → <https://medium.com/@nikoli.odwyer/atheism-is-overrated-fca9c3f54dec>

Possibly since Feuerbach’s theses on Christianity, it has gradually up to now become a sort of fad to take potshots against religion and plunge into atheism. Many of the arguments penned by the German Atheists (Feuerbach and Marx included) have become stereotypical anti-theist arguments. Marx’s atheism may have been radical in his time, but who are the radical atheists of today? Most prominently, they are Dawkinists, satanists, and most importantly, liberals. None of these groups hold any possibility for radical material change — so what happened?

Part of the issue may be simply that our material conditions are different than they were in Marx’s time — religion has been proclaimed “obsolete” by huge swaths of people for multiple centuries following him, and while it is not yet dead, it is on decline, with atheism most certainly becoming integrated into capitalism (really, business ontology is inherently atheist.) The result is that the predominant form of atheism is precisely *not* Marxist — it is fully liberal.

This is bad not because of a necessity to resist liberalism for its own sake, but because of a necessity to prevent an erasure of revolutionary possibility. In other words, the answer lies in the same analysis that allowed Marxism to uncover liberalism’s inability to resist fascism: almost metaphorically, we see liberalism again unable to resist a trend towards simulacra and the subsequent death of metaphysics.

In his work, *Simulacra and Simulation*, Baudrillard defines a post-modern state of society whose entrance we have already unwittingly passed through:

“Today abstraction is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror, or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it...

This imaginary of representation [...] disappears in the simulation whose operation is nuclear and genetic, no longer at all specular or discursive. It is all of metaphysics that is lost. No more mirror of being and appearances, of the real and its concept.”

New generations are beginning to be atheists by default (like it used to be with theists), and this is incredibly unhelpful. For a growing population which is losing anything to believe in, anything to desire, anything to hope for, and even anything that is *real* to them, what good is atheism to them? Liberal atheism is then merely a weak-willed flimsy philosophy which is both unable to combat dangerous ideology and unable to help a person who is losing any sense of real which they can latch onto. In short, if we let metaphysics be completely lost, we will have lost all foundation for revolutionary action.

Marx famously wrote in the introduction to his *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*:

“[T]he criticism of religion is the prerequisite of all criticism.”

But what does this quote really mean? For Marx it may have merely meant that radical critique like his had to begin by denouncing mysticism and asserting reason. But today, that alone is not nearly enough — today's nihilism cannot be countered with nihilism, neither of Marx's habit of negating more than he embraced nor of the nihilism of liberal atheism —

instead, there must be a brutal *assertion* of that which is able to both destroy mysticism and simulacra: in a word, dogmatism (to use Fisher's term.) → <http://k-punk.abstractdynamics.org/archives/005025.html>

Dogmatism is the replacement of heavenly bodies for rational bodies, in short, the replacement of God by truth. In this sense, it is absolutely crucial that an absolute, objective truth both exist and be reachable by reason. Furthermore, this truth must be the foundation on which the world rests, the cause and effect of all, and the basis for reality — in short, a sort of Spinozism, whereby “truth” is synonymous with “God.”

It also crucial that brutal adherence to this impersonal machine of truth — what Nietzsche called “will-to-truth” — be understood as the “*only effective alternative to authoritarianism,*” as Fisher wrote. If we can no longer parse truth from untruth, if we can no longer parse real from fake, then we have lost.