

Nietzsche, The Death of God and The Emerging Church:

Lusting for Freedom in all the
Wrong Places.

The Death of God

- *Have you not heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the market-place, and cried incessantly: "I am looking for God! I am looking for God!"*
- *As many of those who did not believe in God were standing together there, he excited considerable laughter. Have you lost him, then? said one. Did he lose his way like a child? said another. Or is he hiding? Is he afraid of us? Has he gone on a voyage? or emigrated? Thus they shouted and laughed.*

The Death of God

- *The madman sprang into their midst and pierced them with his glances.*
- *"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?*

The Death of God

- *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.*

The Death of God

- *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?*

The Death of God

- *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."*

What then is Truth?

- A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms -- in short, a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people: truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that is what they are; metaphors which are worn out and without sensuous power; coins which have lost their pictures and now matter only as metal, no longer as coins. We still do not know where the urge for truth comes from; for as yet we have heard only of the obligation imposed by society that it should exist: to be truthful means using the customary metaphors - in moral terms, the obligation to lie according to fixed convention, to lie herd-like in a style obligatory for all...

Perspectivalism

- There are no facts, only interpretations.
- Convictions are more dangerous enemies of truth than lies.
- Every word is a prejudice.

Where did “God” come from?

- *Nevertheless.* -- however credit and debit balances may stand: at its present state as a specific individual science the awakening of moral observation has become necessary, and mankind can no longer be spared the cruel sight of the moral dissecting table and its knives and forceps... the older philosophy... has, with paltry evasions, always avoided investigation of the origin and history of the moral sensations. With what consequences is now very clearly apparent, since it has been demonstrated in many instances how the errors of the greatest philosophers usually have their point of departure in a false explanation of certain human actions and sensations; ...a false ethics is erected, religion and mythological monsters are then in turn called to buttress it, and the shadow of these dismal spirits in the end falls even across physics and the entire perception

We have killed him!

- Lightning and Thunder require time, the light of the stars requires time, deeds require time even after they are done, before they can be seen and heard. This deed is still more distant from them than the most distant stars - and yet they have done it themselves.

There is no Good or Evil

- Custom represents the experiences of men of earlier times as to what they supposed useful and harmful - but the *sense for custom* (morality) applies, not to these experiences as such, but to the age, the sanctity, the indiscussability of the custom. And so this feeling is a hindrance to the acquisition of new experiences and the correction of customs: that is to say, morality is a hindrance to the development of new and better customs: it makes stupid.

No Good or Evil

- Where the poor power of the eye can no longer see the evil impulse as such because it has become too subtle, man posits the realm of goodness; and the feeling that we have now entered the realm of goodness excites all those impulses which had been threatened and limited by the evil impulses, like the feeling of security, of comfort, of benevolence. Hence, the duller the eye, the more extensive the good. Hence the eternal cheerfulness of the common people and of children. Hence the gloominess and grief - akin to a bad conscience - of the great thinkers.

On Christianity

- If we never get rid of Christianity, the Germans will be to blame...
- With that I have done and pronounce my judgement. I condemn Christianity. I bring against the Christian Church the most terrible charge and prosecutor has ever uttered. To me it is the extremest thinkable form of corruption, it has had the will to the ultimate corruption conceivably possible. The Christian Church has left nothing untouched by its depravity, it has made of every value a disvalue, or every truth a lie, of every kind of integrity a vileness of soul...it has created states of distress in order to eternalize itself...The worm of sin for example: it was only the Church which enriched mankind with this state of distress...Parasitism as the sole practice of the Church, with its ideal of green-sickness, of holiness draining away all blood, all love, all hope for life; the Beyond as the will to deny reality of ever kind; the Cross as the badge of recognition for the most subterranean conspiracy there has ever been - a conspiracy against health, beauty, well-constitutedness, bravery, intellect, benevolence of soul, against life itself...

No Good or Evil

- **Christianity sprang from a soil so corrupt that on it everything natural, every natural value, every *reality* was opposed by the deepest instincts of the ruling class--it grew up as a sort of war to the death upon reality, and as such it has never been surpassed. The "holy people," who had adopted priestly values and priestly names for all things, and who, with a terrible logical consistency, had rejected everything of the earth as "unholy," "worldly," "sinful"--this people put its instinct into a final formula that was logical to the point of self-annihilation: as *Christianity* it actually denied even the last form of reality, the "holy people," the "chosen people," *Jewish* reality itself. The phenomenon is of the first order of importance: the small insurrectionary movement which took the name of Jesus of Nazareth is simply the Jewish instinct *redivivus*-- in other words, it is the priestly instinct come to such a pass that it can no longer endure the priest as a fact;**

No good and evil

- it is the discovery of a state of existence even more fantastic than any before it, of a vision of life even more *unreal* than that necessary to an ecclesiastical organization. Christianity actually *denies* the church...I am unable to determine what was the target of the insurrection said to have been led (whether rightly or *wrongly*) by Jesus, if it was not the Jewish church--"church" being here used in exactly the same sense that the word has today. It was an insurrection against the "good and just," against the "prophets of Israel," against the whole hierarchy of society--*not* against corruption, but against caste, privilege, order, formalism. It was *unbelief* in "superior men," a Nay flung at everything that priests and theologians stood for. But the hierarchy that was called into question, if only for an instant, by this movement was the structure of piles which, above everything, was necessary to the safety of the Jewish people in the midst of the "waters"--it represented their *last* possibility of survival; it was the final *residuum* of their independent political existence; an attack upon it was an attack upon the most profound national instinct, the most powerful national will to live, that has ever appeared on earth.

No good and evil

- **This saintly anarchist, who aroused the people of the abyss, the outcasts and "sinners," the Chandala of Judaism, to rise in revolt against the established order of things--and in language which, if the Gospels are to be credited, would get him sent to Siberia today--this man was certainly a political criminal, at least in so far as it was possible to be one in so *absurdly unpolitical* a community. This is what brought him to the cross: the proof thereof is to be found in the inscription that was put upon the cross. He died for his *own* sins--there is not the slightest ground for believing, no matter how often it is asserted, that he died for the sins of others.--**

The Death of the Author

Roland Barthes

“To give a text an Author and assign a single, corresponding interpretation to it is to impose a limit on that text.”

Barthes draws an analogy between text and textiles, declaring that a text is a tissue [or fabric] of quotations, drawn from innumerable centers of culture, rather than from one, individual experience. The essential meaning of a work depends on the impressions of the reader, rather than the passions or tastes of the writer; a text's unity lies not in its origins, or its creator, but in its destination, or its audience.

The Death of the Author

- Barthes's articulation of the death of the author is, however, the most radical and most drastic recognition of this severing of authority and authorship. Instead of discovering a single theological meaning (the message of the Author-God), readers of text discover that writing, in reality, constitutes a multi-dimensional space, which cannot be deciphered, only disentangled. Refusing to assign a secret, ultimate meaning to text liberates what may be called an anti-theological activity, an activity that is truly revolutionary since to refuse meaning is, in the end, to refuse God and his hypostases reason, science, law. The implications of Barthes's radical vision of critical reading are indicative of the inherently political nature of this vision, which reverses the balance of authority and power between author and reader. Like the dethroning of a monarchy, the death of the author clears political space for the multi-voiced populace at large, ushering in the long-awaited birth of the reader.

The Birth of the Reader

- Reader-response theory recognizes the reader as an active agent who imparts "real existence" to the work and completes its meaning through interpretation. Reader-response criticism argues that literature should be viewed as a performing art in which each reader creates his or her own, possibly unique, text-related performance.

Arbeit macht Frei!

- The Search for freedom, especially from God, inevitably leads to an Übermensch, the superman who rises out of the nihilistic vacuum, transcends all values, and makes his own values stand, through the sheer force of his own will to power. Hitler was only one of many to play this out.

Emerging/Emergent Problems

- - Save me from my disciples (Socrates) does not apply here. The first generation of teachers gets worse with every new book or seminar or blog.
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Emerging/Emergent Problems

- Missional is the hot word - Devoid of any inherent meaning (the postmodern game at its finest!)
- Rarely has anything to do with missions - the Gospel is not part of the missional approach.
- Seen often as being authentic Jesus followers living in the postmodern culture. Christ like behavior is good, but can we know that it is right?

Emerging/Emergent Problems

- If all text is an interpretation, open to multiple readings, as asserted by the pomos and emergent village types - then why take care of the poor? Isn't eating the poor just as justified an interpretation? Not that justification is needed in this game.

Emerging/Emergent Problems

- If some interpretations are “better” than others, then isn’t a canon being snuck in through the back door?
- Structuralism limited the number of possible variants - which is why the pomo/post-structuralists moved on. More variants, layers of multiple meanings to be deconstructed. In a word - Freedom. The Villagers are now free to depart from all oppressive doctrines/dogmas.

Emerging/Emergent Problems

- Carson's book is ridiculed as "breathtakingly bad" by Jones and crew. How on the basis of perspectivalism can one say that? Are there some interpretations which are "more" than just interpretations? Again the hidden canon within the alleged conversation. Also seen in the ridicule aimed at fundamentalists and the church growth crowd (plastic plants).

Emerging/Emergent Problems

- The irony of “epistemic humility” is that it profoundly asserts what it denies. I know that I know nothing with certainty, and I am quite certain that you know nothing as well. Just as arrogant as the straw men it attacks.

Emerging/Emergent Problems

- If “authentic” relationship is the desired good, then how can one know this? Since there can be no foundational principles which could describe what that means, then the relationship between slave master and slave can be seen as “authentic”, as well as that of molester/victim, murderer/murdered, etc.

Emerging/Emergent Problems

- If ethical or social/justice concerns are tied to the authenticity of the relationship; then why would one go to the “well” of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Foucault, etc to find what they all hated - Christ like behavior? Why take care of the other? Why not eat the other? Who is to say?

Emerging/Emergent Problems

- While claiming to be about social/justice and other causes, the prophetic voice “you shall not” is lost in the pomo consumerist “whatever”.
What should one say to those who steal from the widow and orphan - “Uh I am not sure about this, but maybe you shouldn’t, well I mean we wouldn’t, but I can’t really say that you shouldn’t, but I sort of don’t like what you are doing, but well whatever.”

Emerging/Emergent Problems

- Not just methodology (cf Kunkle) but theology is in flux, transition, liquid. While hiding behind the skirts of the Creeds, they have attacked the Trinity, Hell, Biblical norms concerning homosexuality, the substitutionary atonement, inerrancy, the Nature and personhood of God, etc.

Emerging/Emergent Problems

- Most Pomo readings come from a flawed analysis of the Enlightenment (modernity). Just as there is no “modernism”, but only a collection of thinkers who lived at a certain time, all of whom disagreed with each other passionately, so postmodernism is much the same. Different writers who live at a different time who also disagree with each other. On this basis it is hard to make sense out of the emerging analysis that modernism is the problem with the church and postmodernism the cure.

Emerging/Emergent Problems

- The lust for freedom/autonomy which was ratcheted up in the Enlightenment, is come to ultimate fruition in the Postmodern/poststructuralist age. The Emerging marriage of Christianity with Postmodernism is no better than than Schliermacher's marriage of Christianity with modernity. The latter produced the bastard child of "Liberal Christianity", while the former looks to be producing the exact same thing.

Emerging/Emergent Problems

- While allegedly averse to all things “Modernistic” the pomo crowd for some reason is in harmony with the writings of Darwin, Freud and especially Marx?
Who could be more modern than them?

Emerging/Emergent Problems

- The Emerging authors made their “bones” critiquing the program driven methodologies of the church growth crowd. Have we seen the circle drawn complete with the endorsement by Rick Warren and Bill Hybels now in place? Perhaps they see just another niche marketing effort...

Emerging/Emergent Problems

- Jeremiah 2 warns about drinking brackish water from broken wells - instead of the living waters from the Lord himself. Should there not be a concern in the wider church itself that a movement that is driven by the teachings of the Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida food chain, will be no better than the one influenced by Peter Drucker and Peter Berger or the one driven by Freud, Maslow and Jung, or the one driven by Aristotle, Plato and Plotinus, etc etc etc.

Emerging/Emergent Problems

- Finally, if some friend of the Conversation should hear this talk and be offended, then I must ask you in advance How? If it is only my interpretation - then why should you care? If it is “wrong”, then whose interpretation is the “correct” one and how do you assert that? Get back to me on that one sometime..... The extra periods are my gift to Maclaren.....