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(Taken from the web site of "Bad Catholic")

Why I’d Make a Bad Atheist

By Marc Barnes

*I don’t think I’d make a good atheist, for dwelling within me is a strange desire to be happy.*

Good point Marc. If the only way you can find happiness is by being part of a religion that ostracizes anyone who refuses to submit to your silly superstitions, a religion whose invisible ghost threatens to torture anyone who refuses to worship Him, and a religion with a 2,000 year history of violence, genocide, and pedophilia ... then you had better remain Catholic.

*This isn’t to say atheists aren’t happy, of course.*

Marc, as much as I hate to admit it, we aren't. For one thing, we don't get to eat crackers and pretend that we're actually cannibalizing an ancient carpenter. We miss out on so much.

*In fact, most of my atheist friends are a damn sight happier than myself.*

Marc, don't let them fool you. You will have the last laugh when you die and float off to Fairyland to live forever with the Cloud Commander.

*But the existence of this desire poses a problem. Which I'd like to resolve.*

Marc, I understand how difficult English is for Christians, but those two sentences should actually be one. Aren't there other people on your web site who can help you with basic grammar?

*The desire for happiness is naturally oriented towards eternal happiness.*

Marc, that is only true for Ghost Worshippers. Rational people don't require fairy tales to help them deal with the reality of mortality.

*When I am happy, I have no desire for that happiness to end.*

Marc, I believe your priests feel the same way. Sometimes those kids don't get home until the next morning.

*Such a thing would be inconceivable, directly contrary to the very nature of happiness. Thus we never see a man who, when happy with his wife, can’t wait for the next turn of marriage misery. If this seems obvious, then I am pleased. But it is also extraordinarily stupid.*

Well Marc, you wrote it; so that shouldn't come as a big surprise.

*For we live in a world that practically guarantees that we won’t always be happy. We die, others die, people hurt us, we hurt people, and some days we’re doomed to wake up to a suffocating haze of “You suck, self!” with apparently little cause.*

Marc, you are assuming that other people are as screwed up as you are. People who are not being terrorized by threats of eternal torture from the spirit world have a much happier existence than the life you just admitted to.

*And so we arrive at a disconnect. Our natural desire is not met within the universe we are a part of.*

Marc, if your beliefs were grounded in science instead of ancient fairy tales you might be better able to deal with the harsh realities of existence. Based on what you have admitted to so far, it's obvious that your invisible friend hasn't been much help.

*Or take the idea of satisfaction. We constantly set up images of ourselves, saying, “If only I could be x, then I would be satisfied.” If only I could get that job. If only I could publish a book. If only I could move to California and join a yoga commune. Then we get those things and wake up, ready to start our new, satisfied life, and what do we find?*

Marc, I'm on the edge of my seat.

*"We find what Cormac McCarthy talks about in No Country For Old Men:*

*You think when you wake up in the mornin, yesterday dont count. But yesterday is all that does count. What else is there. your life is made out of the day’s it’s made out of. What else is there? Nothin else. You might think you can run away and change your name and I dont know what all. Start over. And then one mornin you wake up and look at the ceiling and guess who’s layin there?"*

Marc, I'm not surprised that that made sense to you. Rational people would have spotted the flaw immediately: "yesterday" is only a concept - it doesn't actually exist; so your character couldn't have been more wrong.

*We think if only I could be successful, then I’d be happy. Then we’re successful, and who are we? The same “I”.*

No Marc, you're not the same "I." Now you are a successful "I." Before you were just a loser.

*That’s why so many folk’s satisfaction doesn’t involve being something, but rather constantly doing something. If you stake all your desires for satisfaction on being a doctor, you’re taking a mighty risk. For once you’re that doctor, what do you do if you’re not satisfied? You’re screwed!*

Marc, it obviously never occurred to you that there are many options for those who become dissatisfied. Your only answer is to throw up your hands, yell "I'm screwed," and complain to your invisible friend. Rational people find more practical ways to deal with their disappointments.

*Move on to the next image of your satisfied self.*

Marc, or you could work to change those things in your life that you don't like. Oh sorry, that wasn't very Christian of me, was it?

*Better instead to find satisfaction in travel, for you can always travel more.*

Marc, that all depends on where you go. For you, being a Cathoholic, I would recommend that you avoid going anywhere near ... a Muslim country.

*Better to find satisfaction is physical pleasure, because you can always try for more sex, more drugs, more alcohol.*

Marc, why do you assume that more drugs and alcohol bring satisfaction? For the majority of people ... they don't.

*Better to find satisfaction in something you do, not in who you are.*

Marc, in your case ... I would say that's true.

*Yet what do we say? We want to be satisfied with our selves.*

Marc, "ourselves" is one word. Maybe you should consider helping your web site out in ways other than writing. Perhaps you could take charge of finding all the cartoons you guys are so fond of.

*This desire for satisfaction is naturally oriented to the eternal.*

Marc, I thought we already discussed this one. Is this like Groundhog Day or something?

I did a search on the word "eternal" and discovered that you use it 7 more times before the end of this essay. You really are hung up on dealing with mortality aren't you?

Marc, Let me help you out. This quote is from Epicurus (341 B.C.E. - 270 B.C.E.):

"Why should I fear death?

If I am, death is not.

If death is, I am not.

Why should I fear that which can only exist when I do not?"

Dude, if you Ghost Worshippers could get over your irrational fear of death, you wouldn't believe how sweet life can be. Unfortunately, that is something that you will likely never know.

*No man wants to be satisfied with himself for a day or two. We want forever.*

Marc, I wanted a pony. But I had to learn to settle for what was realistic in life; a lesson you have obviously never learned.

*But once again, it seems that our desire to be satisfied with ourselves cannot be met within the universe we live.*

Marc, you are generalizing your own failings onto everyone else. Not everyone is as screwed up as you are. But then, being raised in the Catholic Church ... you've got a good excuse.

*We get glimpses of it, don’t get me wrong, but how much of our satisfaction is really in the things we do, and not in who we are?*

Marc, 78.5%. I believe that is a documented fact. At least, that's what Yahoo Answers told me.

*It’s a tough question.*

Marc, here's a tougher one: how many angels can dance on the head of a pin?

Answer: since your little fairy world only exists in the imagination, the answer is simple - as many as you can imagine.

*This seems to be the case with an unaccountable number of things. We want to love and be loved, and these desires are orientated towards “Forever”.*

Marc, every single night around 2am - millions of lucky Americans disagree with you.

*(If a man asks a woman to love him for a month, he doesn’t want her love at all.)*

Marc, like all Christians I notice that your writing centers on the man. For Christians and Muslims women are nothing more than sperm disposal units - and every word you write proves it.

*But we find it difficult to love, difficult to be loved, difficult to live up to the eternal call love cries.*

Marc, that's called "projection." You are assigning your own personal failings to everyone else.

Here's some advice: instead of using up all your love on invisible ghosts who aren't even there, try giving it to real live, flesh-and-blood human beings. You might be surprised at the improvement you see in your pathetic existence.

*Or take our natural desire to be “one” with things. We want to be one with nature, one with beauty, one with him, one with her, one in mind, one in heart.*

Marc, you are far more messed up than I even imagined ... and I imagined quite a lot.

*But the reality is we can never achieve this oneness we desire.*

Finally Marc, your spaceship is hovering around reality. Maybe there is hope.

*The universe dictates that two objects cannot occupy the same space. Bummers all around. Now here a complaint could be rightfully made: So what? And I suppose it depends.*

Marc, have you been hitting the communion grape juice again?

*The man who can be fine with this disconnect between what we desire and what we can actually get, well, I imagine he’d make a good, rational, happy atheist, agnostic, or post-Christian-what-have-you. I’d honestly, I’d commend him for it.*

Marc, set your spellchecker to enforce grammar rules. That way you won't embarrass yourself with sentences like that last one.

*But forgive me, for I have a certain weakness that cringes at meeting a seemingly insurpassable wall. If I have a desire that cannot be met by the natural universe, this seems to imply that there is something in me unnatural.*

Marc, maybe what it really implies is that the natural Universe can't conform to all your fantasies and wishes.

*We have a desire to be eternally satisfied, to be eternally happy, to be one with another, to be eternally loved and eternally love — these desires cannot be met. What then, are we to make of our desire for truth?*

Marc, what desire for truth? You accept the writings of ancient desert goat herders who claimed that an invisible ghost was telling them what to write down. You aren't interested in truth ... you are only interested in confirmation bias.

*When we go about the work of science, we go under the assumption that the desire for truth can be met, for why would we have within ourselves a desire that has no correlation to reality?*

Marc, that is the question that rational people have been posing to Ghost Worshippers ever since you guys started lighting them up with sticks and a stake.

*But if we claim that our desire for eternal happiness cannot be met, and that any thinking to the contrary is delusion, then we seriously call into question the idea that our desire for truth can be met, and that all satisfaction of that desire is any more than just delusion.*

Marc, your conclusion did not follow from your premise. The desire for truth is not related to a desire for eternal happiness.

*If our desires don’t necessarily have objects, than man is absurd creature, and his reasoning cannot be trusted.*

Marc, Atheists can claim to have desires that point to actual objects. My question is - how do you figure that applies to you?

So by your own reasoning, Ghost Worshippers are absurd creatures whose reasoning cannot be trusted.

*If his wants can be mere delusions and fantasies, then his attempt to fulfill those wants are suspect. All his work is suspect. His atheism is suspect, his theism, his books and his thoughts.*

Marc, everything is suspect. That's why critical thinking skills are so important: they help you rationally choose the most likely path to truth.

*If however, we look at these desires and believe that they do have objects, then our need to know can be satisfied, as can our need to be forever satisfied can be satisfied.*

Marc, what proof do you offer that you can be forever satisfied, which is in direct contradiction to all scientific evidence?

*This is the position I cannot help but take.*

Marc, instead of taking positions because you cannot help it, try educating yourself in reality and you might find that you will be able to take positions based on evidence.

*If I have a desire that cannot be met by the natural universe, this seems to imply that there is something in me that yearns something outside of the natural universe. And I do believe these desires can be met “there” — the desire to be one with Another, to be satisfied with myself as precisely who I am, to love and eternally be loved, to be forever happy and to spend my days in perfect peace — for if I don’t, I simply make no sense.*

Marc, billions of humans have made sense of their lives without the need to invent imaginary friends, or believe that all their desires can be met by the Universe.

Marc, you are describing the mind of a child ... and then admitting that it is yours.

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Marc, I noticed the following on your web site:

*"All death threats will be disregarded unless written in iambic pentameter."*

Marc, that's rich coming from people who, when all of their arguments for the existence of their God have failed, always resort to ... a death threat (burn in hell!).

Marc, the title of this essay was "Why I’d Make a Bad Atheist." After reading it, I believe I can answer why you would make a bad Atheist by first eliminating the reasons against it:

1) Poor grammatical and spelling skills? No, that can be fixed.

2) Ignorance? No, that can be fixed too.

3) Inability to write coherent thoughts? No. Though much

 harder to fix than the previous two, it is doable.

4) Belief that an invisible ghost lets millions of babies die of starvation, but actually takes a keen interest in every little thing you do? No, millions of gullible Ghost Worshippers have seen the obvious vacuity of that argument.

5) Arrogance? Well maybe. That one is a little harder to fix.

6) Lack of courage? Bingo. Until you find the courage to stand

 up against the threats of an invisible monster who has

 threatened to torture you forever if you should lose your

 faith, you will remain enslaved for your entire life to this evil

 monster.

Marc, a sewer snail has a better life.

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THE SCIENCE SEGMENT

Bonobo Genome Completed: The Final Great Ape to Be Sequenced

An international team of scientists has completed the sequencing and analysis of the genome of the last great ape, the bonobo. Bonobos, which together with chimpanzees are the closest living relatives of humans, are known for their peaceful, playful and sexual behaviour that contrasts with the more aggressive behaviour of chimpanzees. The genome sequence provides insights into the evolutionary relationships between the great apes and may help us to understand the genetic basis of these traits.

The genome was sequenced from Ulindi, a female bonobo who lives in the Leipzig Zoo. Genome sequences have also been generated from all other great apes -- chimpanzee, orangutan and gorilla -- making this the final genome of a great ape to be sequenced and providing insights into their relationships with one another and with humans.

The comparison of the genome sequences of bonobo, chimpanzee, and human show that humans differ by approximately 1.3% from both bonobo and chimpanzee. Chimpanzees and bonobos are more closely related, differing by only 0.4%.

Bonobo and chimpanzee territories in central Africa are close to one another and separated only by the Congo River. It has been hypothesized that the formation of the Congo River separated the ancestors of chimpanzees and bonobos, leading to these distinct apes. Examination of the relationship between bonobos and chimpanzees showed that there appears to have been a clean split and no subsequent interbreeding.

Despite the fact that on average the genomes of bonobos and chimpanzees are equally distant from human, analysis of the genome sequence of the bonobo revealed that for some particular parts of the genome, humans are closer to bonobos than to chimpanzees, while in other regions the human genome is closer to chimpanzees. Further research will determine whether these regions contribute in any way to the behavioural differences and similarities between humans, chimpanzees, and bonobos.

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FAMOUS QUOTES

ISAAC ASIMOV (1920 - 1992) 72 years. Bio previously given.

"If I were not an atheist,

I would believe in a God who would choose to save people

on the basis of the totality of their lives

and not the pattern of their words.

I think he would prefer an honest and righteous atheist

to a TV preacher whose every word is God, God, God,

and whose every deed is foul, foul, foul."