

# Armageddon to Some

## Disarming Dead Gods

Andrei Codrescu

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The people eagerly awaiting Armageddon, from religious fundamentalists to paranoid Nazis, have no choice but to wish a fiery end. They've been such failures in this world, only the end of it can justify their miserable, creepy existence.

The fact is that their world has already ended, a long time ago, despite their protophilosophy's occasional spurts of life. The apparent strength of fanatics from Iran to Michigan is no more than the jerky motions of a corpse animated by electric shocks. The God buried by Nietzsche in the last century found scores of other gods in that grave: one of humanity's best tricks is the invention and disposal of gods.

But gods do not go quietly: ideally they would like to take every living thing with them. Their afterdeaths are stormy. The rush to divide God's legacy pits those who would take the virtues of kindness and righteous living against those who bible-thump for vengeance and the Apocalypse.

One whole century of science, but not progress, has gone by since the old bearded guy was pronounced kaput. Our tools have outstripped by far any psychological improvement. The insanity of Hitler's Germans half a century ago is a perfect example of what can be done by technically competent people steeped in murky Nordic fairy tales, twilight sentimentality, kitsch culture, and medieval Christianity.

If the baby Nazis in Michigan or the bearded baby mullahs were armed only with slingshots, they would be no more dangerous than mosquitoes. The trouble is, their pea shooters are atomic.

This wasn't the case with the followers of Baal or Jupiter or Vishnu who could cause only limited damage. Germany may have been militarily defeated in World War 2, but the hunger for simple explanations and the anger that drove national-socialism lives on.

Of course, it's easier to believe, like Pat Robertson or Colonel Norm Olson of the Michigan Militia, that a Masonic-Jewish conspiracy rules the world, than to try to figure out where the pictures on their TV really come from. It's easier to end the world than to learn it. If we want to stem the tide of violence swelling from such ignorance, we must engage in some vigorous battles to demystify the paranoid delusions on which the hateful feed.

The time has come to disarm the dead gods.

Andrei Codrescu was first published in the *Fifth Estate* in 1967, shortly after his arrival from Romania. His new book, *Zombification: Essays from National Public Radio*, where he is a commentator, is in the stores, as is his audio book, *Fax Your Prayers*.

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