

THE DAWKINS DELUSION

Acknowledgements

- *David Anderson*, for his article, “Does Richard Dawkins Exist”, which inspired the idea for this radio play. (<http://david.dw-perspective.org.uk/does-richard-dawkins-exist.html>)
 - *The Ryan Tubridy Show*; some of the arguments here are Dawkinianised versions of ones Richard Dawkins advanced against theism (<http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/news/1727564/posts#comment>)
 - And *Richard Dawkins*, of course.
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Richard: We’re privileged to have with us today Doctor Terry Tommyrot who’s going to be talking to us about his latest book, “The Dawkins Delusion”. Thank you for joining us, Dr. Tommyrot, it’s a pleasure to speak to you again.

Tommyrot: Thank you, Richard, it’s good to be here.

Richard: Now, Doctor Tommyrot, you’re famous for declaring in no uncertain terms that you are *not* a believer in Richard Dawkins; you *don’t* think he really exists. Now why is that?

Tommyrot: Well, nothing so simple Richard. You shouldn’t ask sensible people to *believe* in something unless you’ve got *evidence* for it. If there is a Dawkins, *why* hasn’t he *shown* himself to me?

Richard: In your opinion, then, are people who believe in Richard Dawkins just a little bit dim?

Tommyrot: Well, in a way I can understand the mistake: simple people pick up a handful of books claiming to be written by Dawkins, and since a Dawkins seems to be a sufficient account for how they got to be there, for the similarities in all the texts, and so on – they stick with commonsense and fallaciously conclude that this Dawkins (which they have never seen with their own eyes) *actually* exists.

Richard: Of course, some people do claim to have seen Richard Dawkins, and even shaken his hand.

Tommyrot: Yes, if you can believe them.

Richard: You think they’re all lying?

Tommyrot: I didn’t say that. Of course, there’s no shortage of liars in the world, and undoubtedly some people who claim to have had these ‘Richard Dawkins experiences’ are deliberately telling fairy stories, but, you know, the human brain is a *very, very* complicated thing... and conjuring up an imaginary Dawkins would be child’s play for it. Christopher Robin had Binker. I had the slimy custard man. I suspect that something very similar is happening with people who claim to have seen a Richard Dawkins, or heard his voice, or felt his touch.

Richard: But the books aren't evidence for the existence of Richard Dawkins either?

Tommyrot: No, of course not! As a scientist, it is *no* answer to the problem of 'where did this inane rubbish come from?' to stick a label on it that says, "Richard Dawkins".

Each book is a simple re-arrangement of only 26 letters. Even a child should be able to see that, with a little random shuffling of vowels and consonants on a computer, one can arrive at all sorts of patterns like that. Working out how each letter got into the place that it did is the business of science. Claiming that Dawkins-did-it puts an end to an inquiry that promises to give us a full and satisfying explanation of how these books came to be, without the need for invoking a discredited *Dawkins-of-the-gaps-type* hypothesis.

Richard: But some people *might* point to the fact that the letters are arranged in definite patterns, spelling out sophisticated chains of arguments, and that this is a clear mark of *intelligence*, not random accident.

Tommyrot: If there *were* some kind of intelligence behind these books, then, judging by their contents, it is obviously a pretty poor one; we would hardly have lost much worth having by *not* believing in Richard Dawkins or in what his books have to say.

The scientific view of the matter is beautifully simple and invigorating: the works of Richard Dawkins are nothing but a collection of fortuitously ordered a's, b's and c's, recombined from previous patterns. There is the Latin alphabet, there are the nonsense poems of Edward Lear, and there are the works of Richard Dawkins, and the one developed from the other, through a series of random typing errors... though admittedly we haven't got all of the details just now.

Richard: You admit that science hasn't got the answers to where they came from, then?

Tommyrot: I haven't got all the answers, *science* is working on it.

Richard: But can you be sure that science *will* get all the answers?

Tommyrot: If science doesn't have the answers to where they came from, then, *sure as hell*, Richard Dawkins Religion doesn't! If a Dawkins designed the books, then who designed the Dawkins? Just tell me that.

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Richard: Moving on now, Dr. Tommyrot. In your book, you have described the Dawkins revealed in the literature as a "an ostentatious, acrimonious, supercilious, pusillanimous, calumnious, censorious, vituperative, querulous, embittered, obsessive and bombastic bully".

Tommyrot: Yes. That seems fair enough to me.

Richard: Now some people might say that's going a bit over the top.

Tommyrot: Read your Richard Dawkins, if you think that. Just read it. Read 'A Devil's Advocate'. Apart from finding *no* evidence whatsoever for an intelligence hiding somewhere beneath the

paragraphs in the mystical realm of blind faith, you will discover, on the other hand, plenty of intolerance and bigotry in every chapter; all of these very good reasons to have *nothing* whatsoever to do with this Richard Dawkins' religion.

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Richard: Doctor Tommyrot, you have described this wide-spread belief in Richard Dawkins as a *dangerous* delusion – but what's especially dangerous about people believing in the existence of Richard Dawkins, if it makes them happy?

Tommyrot: Well, for one fairly obvious reason: these people believe *any* book which has Dawkins' name on the cover, and these books say a lot of *very silly* things. Belief in Dawkins has been responsible for filling the internet with non-sequiturs, caricatures, strawmen and vitriol.

Dawkins' disciples are militant, they are organised, and they're out to convert you and me. Yes, I would certainly call this a dangerous delusion. If there is a Richard Dawkins, he has a *lot* to answer for.

Richard: In summary then, Dr. Tommyrot, what would you say is your main objection to the Richard Dawkins belief?

Tommyrot: My main objection is simply this: people are following a delusional Dawkins who is telling them what to think and believe, when they should be following *me*.

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Richard: Well, our time's up. Thank you very much, Dr. Tommyrot, for joining us this morning to talk about your latest book, 'The Dawkins-Delusion', published by Banter & Twaddle and available from our website for £19.99.

Ok. Our next item for today is...