

The Dawkins Delusion

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Abstract: The main condition for thinking in our post-truth era is to delight in debating and challenging everything written, said and thought, regardless of the authority and power of those who wrote it, said it, or thought it. Richard Dawkins is one of the most respected thinkers of our time, but he is neither above nor beyond the psychopathy of One. Under the science/religion distinction, he has binarised all his arguments against religion. His self-righteous rationalisation of a future that can only 'oppose religion' is a big 'NO' founded on a big 'YES' to science and dependent on it. His science-based atheism is narrow-minded, limited and crass. I briefly explain how, without psychotic binarisation, there is no conflict between religion and science; a more subtle notion of atheism can be developed. I also give a couple of examples of atheistic positions that are not dependent on 'science' as the binary opposite of 'religion'. My contention is that most cutting-edge philosophers and scientists, those whose pioneering work brings them face to face with the limits of human understanding, are God-dependent or, at least, God-curious.

Keywords: Stephen Hawking, Richard Dawkins, Theory of Everything, Big Bang, Brad Stone, Jeff Bezos, democracy, Huntington, religion, sacraments, ritual, science, atheism, multiformity, multi-interpretability, Giacomo Leopardi, Llewelyn Powys, Usuk, Catholic Church, democratization, Cato, Cicero, Caesar, Catiline, psychosis, the psychotic, mental patterning, binarisation, binary oppositions.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is the responsibility of the super-curious to ask how his/her world fits into the forgotten puzzle. How is it that we were so convinced that we were the centre of the universe when we didn't know we were not the centre of the universe? Once the geocentric view of the universe was questioned, the homocentric view of the universe began to take hold of people's minds as if they had been locked in a moral quandary. The Renaissance was born when the centrality of man as creator of art and science displaced the previous centrality of God. Five hundred years later, we know that we are an infinitesimal speck in a possibly infinite universe. Knowing what we know now about our position in the universe, how can we still believe we are the most important creatures in all creation? How can we still feel so valuable, so central, so unique and rare? You can imagine a space-liner taking people from earth to the Martian colonies in a few years, with all the technical advances which this implies, and people on board still being uneducated about the psychotic mental engine that made it all possible.

The possibility of prolonging our existence into the indefinite future is also the chance of propagating a psychotic civilisation throughout space. Today, as we are writing our little chapter in the human story, we should take that irresponsibility seriously. The story of our desire to conquer outer space, might have a sting in its tail. When a supposedly clever chap like Stephen Hawking makes the idiotic mistake of concocting a 'Theory of Everything', you have to start worrying. For 'everything' doesn't really exist in the universe, what exist is 'the bias towards everything' which is caused by mental patterning in our minds under $a(=)a^1$. Time may even be considered as a dubious category since its binarisation with space proves that it is a psychotic event 'felt' only by the mind. The binary before/after doesn't exist either. It is the bias towards Two that informs such popular scientific theories such as the 'Big Bang Theory'. It is now generally accepted by scientists that the universe (the One and only) began with a Big Bang around 20 billion years ago. The point at which this bang took place is the point from which space and time originate. It is as though the universe is contained

¹ $a(=)a$ is the relationship '(=)' between 'a' and 'a', where 'a' can be either 'a' or the delusional 'a' which is more like a 'b' and where '(=)' being variable can be anything from 'wanting to be' / 'more or less equal to' / 'not completely being' to anything that can be similarly and randomly thought.

within an expanding bubble. The weakness of this theory is not only the problem of the observer positioning his/her gaze outside One universe to see an-Other emerging from naught/nought, but it is also the power of One (big-bang event) setting itself as a cause-and-effect/before-and-after point in space. *The Everything Store* (2013), a great book by Brad Stone, tells the story of how Jeff Bezos and Amazon transformed the face of modern retailing. Before Amazon's everything, there was nothing. Our universe had a day without a yesterday. For a disciplined mind, the jump from One to Two seems extraordinarily difficult, even unnatural; and yet, going from Two to One is as natural as having a child. To put it less simply, scientists are labouring under a Two-One related delusion (an insane compression) centred on One (big-bang event).²

Another popular scientist of similar-sounding surname to Hawking, Richard Dawkins, falls under the power of One when he blames religion for all the evils in the world. Dawkins appears to suggest that religion and science are rivals in providing explanations for the existence of the universe. First, what's this crass intellectualism about religion? The people who think that the point of religion is to have doctrines that are true about the structure and origin of the universe may be obliterating the possibility of seeing the point of religion as having a certain attitude towards the universe – perhaps a tender attitude of solemnity lacking in pertinence/impertinence which leads to a sense of the unimportance of self. The idea that there is some important thing called 'God' is another way of expressing that your own selfhood is not important; or another way of saying 'I don't take myself terribly seriously'. Second, Dawkins' unconscious binarisation of science and religion leads him to believe that, because we live in an age of science, there is no need for religion anymore. He is falling under a similar mental trap as the UK government when it's foreign policy is a psychotic product of binarising 'democracy' as One from the stack of binary oppositions headed by democracy/tyranny, good/evil, West/East, rich/poor, civilised/barbarian, male/female, order/chaos, and so on. People's choices are going in two different and opposite directions; that is to say, populist parties of xenophobic right and the new eco-anarchist movements on the left. The self-appointed illuminati who run the global media have already pinpointed this double phenomenon. Yet they have missed the presence or formation of a massive middle that condemns these polarities to the periphery. What is missing from reports by journalists is an awareness of the 20/80 dis-symmetry between those who vote for mainstream political parties and those who vote for extreme alternatives, respectively. Most importantly, polarisation plus dis-symmetry indicates the presence of a morally coded framework behind the 'voting' scenes. If 'voting' is framed by the psychopathy of 'binarisation'³, it is no longer 'free' but sclerotic, fossilised, crunched, and limited. It follows the same rules that apply to gendered politics or strings of binary oppositions headed by good/bad, male/female, us/them, sun/moon, reason/passion, day/night, West/East, and so forth. Most importantly, it happens from the I/eye⁴, which is a mental black hole or a huge middle, depending on how you want to see it, from which the moral code of a society is read. So the third-party position of this imaginary reader is directing/limiting results to the periphery.

² As Karl Rahner used to say, one should not overestimate the role of a single event in the great order of things. And centuries before him, Marcus Aurelius, the Roman Emperor, said pretty much the same thing: 'We are too much accustomed to attribute to a single cause that which is the product of several, and the majority of our controversies come from that.'

³ 'binarisation' is the process by which the human mind can imagine only one side of a binary opposition; that is, the process of gradation, repression, consistency and value that gives mass to the moral code of a society. A vital component in the process of binarisation is the reader I/eye. This is an imaginary point from which the moral code made of binary oppositions is read. For example, in a simple code made of binary oppositions headed by good/bad, sun/moon, reason/passion, and white/black, the reader I/eye returns 'good, sun, reason, white' completely ignoring the existence of the other side; so 'bad, good, passion, black' is masked, repressed, downgraded, under-valued, and ignored. This is called 'binarisation', although it should be called one-isation, because 'binarisation' is the mono-masking or repression of one side (the wrong, nasty, or hideous side) of the binary oppositions that make up the moral code of a psychotic society under the gravity of One – there can only be one in a binary.

⁴ The I/eye is key to psychotic thinking. It relates to the invention of a thing which is not 'really' there, nor does it belong to reality, but which nevertheless claims an existence that is neat, certain, and felt/lived as even more 'real' and 'physical' than any other living thing or object around. The I/eye partakes of a double delusion. The 'I' delusion is group-identity-based and group-consciousness-based, while the eye delusion relates to optics. The I-identity of the person is the product of the accumulation of instances of the same and similar processed by a common and shared imaginary eye that sits above the world of things and which is capable of selecting things in pairs and then pretends that the two distinct things is seeing are exactly the same. It is an optic machine that makes identical twins of all siblings. a(=)a tries to represent what the I/eye does best, to binarise; that is, to select two things, One thing as given and the Other so similar to the given One that the I/eye sees only One in a binary. Interestingly, the imaginary I/eye is an invention that allows One to accommodate the views of all Others, a way of cognitively sharing certain values that has a timeless quality, and that sort of eternal sense of the human psyche inevitably has a kind of religious feel, but it also seems very inclusive, very democratic.

In a binarised world of limited/unlimited choices, all naive praise of the desire to vote/not_to_vote becomes a praise of servitude. There is no slave of democracy who does not also get a certain power out of it, the power of choosing, and the power of judgement, of taste, of opinion, of morality: the moral power that comes from praising the ballot box but poo-hooing the voting slips that were put into it; the moral power of the self-appointed expert who chooses performative words and categories to explain everything in a totalitarian manner which subtly devalues their claim to be democratic; the moral power of saying 'populist' instead of 'popular'; the moral power to call those who seize an opportunity to win popularity 'opportunist'; the moral power to stand aloof, to be anti-establishment, to imagine oneself outside the system and, vice versa, to use the word 'extreme' and the language of insurgency to designate those who are 'voting' with their fists for a violent change of direction; the moral power to call 'nationalist' all those who love their country; the moral power to call 'religious extremists' those who love their god more than their president; the moral power that comes from splitting people between Protestant and Catholic, Sunni and Shia, Muslim and Jew, and the labelling of religious groupings ('we' disapprove of) as 'sectarian'; the moral power to generalise, to aggrandise, to dramatise, to exaggerate, to magnify and amplify the 'mob' as the 'majority'; and vice versa, to minimise, to crunch, to squeeze the 'majority' as the 'mob'.

Who says that the Church is threatened by this secular democratic world? One of the consequences of the mental disintegration of Usuk⁵ is that the Catholic Church survives as the only truly international institution – apart from Disney Land, MacDonald's and Coca-Cola. The Pope has become the most important man in the Western world. Something similar happened in the Middle Ages when the Roman Empire collapsed and the Church survived; and with it endured Roman Law and written administration; the monasteries became the only centres of organised education, heralds of today's universities whose reversed teleology informs the curricula of schools. Without technicians and academics to help, even the simplest tasks of government – writing computer programs/laws/speeches, managing commands and analysing data – cannot be carried out. Thus learning has lost any independent role; it is the handmaid of science and technology. Such is the technological analphabetism of our political leaders. In an age which has so many technical capabilities but so few mental/spiritual resources of its own, the Church offers comfort and protection and leadership. The rise of Islam, Judaism, Buddhism and other old religions responds to a similar craving for cohesion while Europe and America crumble under the weight of the Usuk government's delusional warmongering exertions in Africa and the Middle East.

Our post-truth world is marked by proxy wars, increasing rates of domestic violence, terrorism, online crime, mental illness, dementia, hate crime, racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, religious fundamentalism, and breakdown in family structure. But it is also a period of love, self-sacrifice, mutual aid, and increased altruistic behaviour; a time which sets out the ideological foundations for a new era of relentless charity formation, internet social networking, free software and information sharing. During these years of economic crises and humanitarian catastrophes, during this age of extreme inequalities and transnational corporate bullying, we have witnessed the rise of yoga and meditation groups, the global expansion of new religions like Scientology and the revitalisation of old ones such as Roman Catholic, Russian Christian Orthodox, Pentecostal, Evangelical and charismatic Christians, Muslim brotherhoods, and Jewish Orthodox revivals.

Contrary to what Western politicians and the global media are saying, the world is becoming a religious laboratory for testing whether it is possible to hold together in the midst of an explosion of multiple identities. And some societies are reacting to globalisation and the new capitalist/democratic hegemony by retreating to ever narrower definitions of identity, while at the same time, invoking such universal concepts as tolerance and respect. But, in the middle of all these changes, strivings and struggles, 'we' long for some kind of accomplishment that would take our minds to the places where we always wanted to go. 'Mind travelling', whether drug-induced or unassisted, is what 'we' really want to do. Who doesn't long to be a mind-faring person? But before 'we' start our mental trips, 'we' must learn to separate the essential from the merely incidental, making sure that what 'we' are presupposing in our way of thinking is not getting in the way of making the world a better place.

Our belief in 'democracy' across Western countries is close to a religious fundamentalist experience. Most people believe in democracy for no reasons worthy of the name. They don't go into the nitty-gritty of democracy, nor do they try to understand or analyse its meaning. Indeed, Western democracies can carry on functioning in this vacuum of meaning

⁵ In my poems, essays and stories, the US and the UK are two countries incarnated in one biblical Usuk. A descendant of Goliath, Usuk stands alone and against the concept of civilisation and the rest of the countries of the world.

protected by the electoral roof. Why? Because Western powers need terrorism as much as liberalism needs democracy to survive, which points to the question of whether democracy and liberalism are fundamentally two distinct and opposing things. Democracy is old and inconsistent while liberalism is surprisingly consistent and relatively new. Those who think that democracy is just One thing are deluding themselves. Yet Western powers count on that fundamental delusion (the psychopathy of One) to advance their political views under the friend/enemy distinction. Democracy is a pluriverse, not a universe. After the rise and fall of the Athenian and Roman versions of democracy, the idea of citizen rule was shelved and revived in subsequent waves of democratisation. Consequently, multiformity and multi-interpretability are inevitable characteristics of democratic life.

Democracy comes in many shapes and forms, in many definitions, categorisations, characterisations, and interpretations. In 1991, S. P. Huntington published an interesting book called *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Here a series of waves of democratisation are distinguished/proposed: 1. The first wave (1828–1926) and the first counter-movement (1922–1942); 2. The second wave (1943–1962) and the second counter-movement (1958–1974); 3. The third wave (1975–2001) and the third backlash (2001-to the present). The tendency is towards shorter and shorter periods of democracy followed by longer and longer periods of anti-democratic backlash. The current counter-movement is characterised by wars of aggression abroad (mainly in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East) and by judges' insurrections at home. The Middle Eastern crisis coincides with the loss by the US/UK of their 'good name' since the Iraq war. These two countries' reputation abroad has been sullied by their special relationship and extremely close collaboration during the ill-conceived military adventures of the George Bush years.

Under the psychopathy of One, divine democracy has been added to the innumerable other superstitious ways of divination; and made people believe they should find their safety and comfort in the ambiguous and senseless answers of the President or Prime Minister of Usuk as if they were the priests at Delphi, Delos, Ammon, or other famous oracle. Sometimes, in the insignificant speech of a Member of Parliament, the public would find their fortune; the fragments of such verbal theomancy supposed to be possessed with a divine spirit would be published in a multitude of media and be used in the prediction of future events, and esteemed a part of judiciary astrology. You cannot think and expect to be moral at the same time. Thinking implies the discernment of what is true and false (*selem* and *emet* rather than *toar* and *cheker*) but not what is morally just and unjust (*tob* and *ra*). Note how the famous discovery that Adam and Eve were 'naked' resulted from their newly acquired faculty of 'vision' (given by God as punishment). Their minds were now feeding on light and its linear mode of transportation in time and in space. They had fallen from the grace of images, metaphors, and allegories to the curse of imagining linearity with the promise of a language and its evil progeny: WORDS. They had gained the capacity to be moved and entertained by wonderful stories but lost that intellectually perceptive form (*selem*) which God gave Adam on the moment of creation: 'Let us make man in our image (*selem*), in our likeness (*demut*), and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' (Gen. 1:26) They had also positioned themselves in a hierarchy of progress, deceived by their newly acquired circumstance of understanding that certain things are bad, unjust, and wrong, whereas others are good, just, and right; a faculty of discernment which animals apparently don't have.

Now, how can God be the cause of Adam's will to eat the forbidden fruit? 'Eating the fruit will cause your death,' this is as far as God is willing to go in his explanation of 'evil' to Adam. Here God falls short of a prohibition, which reminds us of Prime Minister's Questions, when the all-powerful busy buddy replies to one MP's question with one short/fast answer that leaves (in the imaginary measuring tape of linear thinking) an absent gap, longer/larger than the answer, to position the question, which is expected to run longer in prolixity and argumentation than the answer, as it acquires value by extension in a hierarchy of morals (an inferiority in relation to the superiority of the answer) which is fundamentally delusional, or, as Spinoza would put it, a narcotic. For Oracle/God is replying to Adam's long-winded and absent question: 'There is a gorgeous-looking tree in the middle of the garden. It looks healthy, important and imposing. I wonder if its fruit tastes as good as it looks. But it seems too good to be true. God, would it be safe to eat from this tree?'

Let us develop Spinoza's thesis. The forbidden fruit (what is bad) should be considered as an intoxication; a poison taken in excess can kill you, but taken in controlled and balanced doses may cure you. Morality is relational decomposition, poisoning, intoxication, and, ultimately, delusion/psychosis. Everyday life might be poisoned by the stacks of binary oppositions that are tied up to the conditions of the three illusions of the 'I' (One/Latent-consciousness/Id, Two/Self-consciousness/Ego, and Three/Other-consciousness/Super Ego). These three illusions/delusions of being can be One/existential/a feeling of being, Two/predicative/what am I?, and Three/positional/where am I? All ideological

questions are positional. And yet, when opposing values such as good/evil are supplanted by relational qualitative differences like good/bad, the illusion of moral values (shared knowledge and group empathy from the third I/eye) is indistinguishable from the illusion of consciousness – we may have reached a psychotic cure.

The driving force behind this argument lies in its claim that politics cannot be made safe while it is in the hands of witches and wizards. Under the psychopathy of One, democracy is superstition. War might be decided according to the disposition of the entrails of a sacrificed beast or by the croaking of ravens or by the lineaments of a leader's face. That must have been the cause of Usuk's combined behaviour in the run-up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq that exposed their democracies to the kind of superstitious irrationality that will bring their ultimate demise. Thinking that their words stand for the things the politicians say they represent, the more ignorant sort of people (that is to say, those who know absolutely everything) would believe in their idols, and fear their necromancy, their conjuring and witchcraft. In democracies where individual rights and freedoms are violated in the name of terrorism, it is necessary to promote on a much more grandiose style the illusion that the masses actually rule. A state-funded education would make sure that, at the age of 16, every school boy and girl know that democracy is the best system, that it has something to do with freedom – with being tolerant and loving. But this is as far as ideological discussion usually could go.

It is not insight, but the prestige of the general opinion on democracy that 'makes the spark shoot from them and light up our sleeping magazines of faith'.⁶ According to the enlightened West, you have to be sad, mad, or bad to believe in God or practise a religious faith. But you must also have a complete carelessness about cosmic and moral matters. According to Dawkins, religion is immature, something that belongs to a bygone age, to women, minorities or primitive peoples. Had he done extra-curricular homework in the humanities, he would have come across less narrow views of atheism. Dawkins thinks that science should be basis of our beliefs and tries to convert others to this view of things. It is not a coincidence that he is a scientist himself, and a very 'good' one.

If the Dawkins type of atheism is making the most noise today it is because it is a binarised form of morality characteristic of a psychotic society whose collective consciousness/unconsciousness (if there is such a thing) is ruled by the Law of One [One/One_One/Many psychoticised as a(=)a_exception/rule]. Here religion is an intellectual error without human value one would be better without. But this is not the only kind of atheism. From the wonderfully deistic atheism of Spinoza to the Super-human non-deistic atheism of Nietzsche, history shows that atheism can have a complexity that reaches well beyond 'our' current psychotic version of it. If God as the suprasensory ground and goal of all reality is dead, then nothing remains to which 'man' can cling except the moral code of 'his' society, which has become (compensatory) reinforced and strengthened by this fundamental lack. Under the gravity of One, Dawkins seems unaware of the fact that by no means all the atheists in the past had wanted to convert others to unbelief. Some pre-psychotic minds not only had not been binarised under the friend/enemy distinction but had actually been friendly to and tolerant of religion. Atheists in the past not always had turned to science for inspiration. Atheism has been as rich in its different variants as religion. Under the light of psycho-logic, this shouldn't be surprising: the atheist/religious binarised position can be equated to negative/positive binarised position. An atheist (I speak as one myself) is anyone who doesn't rely on an idea of God to live the 'good' life.

Of course, there are and there have been different ideas of God, from monotheistic to pluralistic to pantheistic, but in the Western psychotic culture of today the one and totally essentialised God is understood as one divine mind that is all powerful, all present, all knowing, and all-loving. In contrast to 'our' total world of hegemony, a wide diversity of world views and values has informed atheism in the past. Among the multitude of atheists who differ from the present psychoticised configuration, let me proposed two who (to me) stand out for their entertaining/non-boring value. For example, two little known atheists from the nineteenth century, the Italian poet Giacomo Leopardi and the Somerset essayist Llewelyn Powys, show how atheism can be far richer and subtler than the compressed, monotheistic, reductive, binarised, missionary, dogmatic version of a Dawkins, which is no other than the predominant strand of contemporary belief/unbelief aimed at converting the world to an hegemonic scientific view things. If living without the idea of God were the only way of living in a highly developed Western democratic society, then living without an idea of God wouldn't be One way of living among many others – and this proposition is clearly false.

⁶ William James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (London, Bombay, & Calcutta: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1912), p. 9.

In his *Zibaldone di pensiero*, Leopardi produced a penetrating analysis of what was going on around him in his time. Brought up to be a 'good' Catholic but turning to poetry and atheism in his teens, he thought that the universe was made of matter and obeyed physical laws; humans were animals that had come into the world and acquired self-awareness by chance. Leopardi didn't acquire this view of things from science, but from reading the classics and from observing the life around him. While he never renounced his uncompromising atheism/materialism, he defended religion which he regarded as an 'illusion' that was necessary for human happiness. For Leopardi, if the modern world rejected old faiths it was only to take on others that were more damaging. He was very suspicious of Catholic priests and not particularly fond of Christianity, which he considered a rough/populist/philistine religion whose claim to be a revelation for all human kind stank of intolerance.

The 'barbarism of reason'⁷ was the one alternative to Christianity that aimed to remake the world by force. Napoleon's legacy is the nineteenth-century world of imperialist reasoning predicated by his predecessors the Jacobins of the French Revolution. This secular religion of reason would be even more intolerant than Christianity, Leopardi believed. And, considering the history of the twentieth century, its world wars, its politics of totalitarianism (Communism, Fascism, Nazism, Democracy), he was surely right. Catholicism was for him the best available illusion. But he never returned to Catholicism himself. He dedicated his relatively short life to autodidactic leaning; to reading and writing – though not necessarily publishing. He didn't share the illusions he believed were necessary to happiness, and he was consistent with his belief that religion gives comfort to many people. His poetry has melancholy undertones – he must have been a miserable sod. His final hours were spent dictating sickly poems to a friend which, nevertheless, are suffocated by beauty.

A different kind of atheism is that of the novelist Llewelyn Powys. Born in 1884, son of a Somerset parson, Llewelyn rejected the Christianity of his father with raging passion. Like Leopardi, he was a staunch materialist. Unlike Leopardi, he believed that the world would be better off if humans renounced religion. But he didn't deny that religion contained something of value. 'Sometimes, of an early Sunday morning,' he wrote, 'I would enter the old grey church to take the sacrament . . . And as I knelt with bowed head to partake of the beautiful antique ritual, I would try to conceive what inner secret the wild rumour held . . . I would feel half-inclined to believe also. Why not?' Suffering from tuberculosis before antibiotic treatment was available, Llewelyn had one 'good' reason to be reckless and to make the most of a life that could be cut short at any time. Religion could be a kind of poetry that fortified the human spirit in the face of death. In 1914, Llewelyn discovered Africa, not as a conquistador, Empire builder or missionary, but as a ship farmer. The harsh realities of life in the bush invigorated his atheism: 'What was suspected in Europe is made plain here . . . the surface is everything, underneath is nothing.' If human life has no intrinsic meaning or purpose, the least one can do in/with it is to savour the sensation of being alive. Powys and Leopardi were very different from one another: the former embraced a life without God with exuberance and passion while the latter embraced death with the tranquil resignation of one who knows there are no surprises on the other side – can there be more than One in a binary? Each of these atheists, however, was miles apart from today's evangelical religion turned-upside-down which is the version 'we' are familiar with via Dawkins' media circus. On TV and radio and books and newspaper articles, he adopts an implacably atheistic stance with the same religious zeal as the British missionaries who went to conquer Africa, China, India, and America – though they adopted a purely theistic one. His atheism is an evangelical creed not unlike Christianity. Let us enlighten these savages with the latest scientific evidence that permit us to support without 'doubt' the hypothesis that there is no God. For saying there is no God is as good a hypothesis as saying that there is a God.

To Dawkins, religion is a sick social product aimed at people from undeveloped countries who can easily succumb to cultural persuasion (due to their lack of education). So people can be divided into those who still believe in myth and magic (these are no better than half-naked cartoon-like 'savages' who play drums in jungle) and those who have been convinced by scientists to abandon their superstitious ways. However, the labelling of religious people as 'uneducated' and, therefore, highly susceptible to benevolent influence (requiring low levels of coercion), is problematic because it is entrenched in the idea of European civilisation as a history of moral progress, of rational control over instinct, the higher nature over the lower nature and, above all, a delusion of an ethics of benevolence. The experiences of World War One and World War Two tell us that education and aesthetic cultivation have done nothing to the instincts. Moreover, the notion that, because somehow they did have an Empire, the British have got some inherited knowledge of it, is as

⁷ A 'capricho' by Goya shows a man asleep at his desk with his head on his folded arms, while he is loomed over by monsters. An inscription on one side of the desk reads: 'El sueño de la razón produce monstruos.' ('The sleep of reason produces monsters'). See Francisco Goya, *Los Caprichos*, Hofer Plates (New York: Dover Publications, 1969).

delusional under One as the binary oppositional idea that there are only Two forms of government in the world, democracy and tyranny, and Two forms of understanding the world, science and religion – One is ‘good’, the Other is ‘bad’. Under this stringent moral code, the peoples from the English-speaking countries might be losing their grip on that imperial reality they had so costly tamed by means of models, theories, and generalisations – which are the tools of modern science. When these barbarians from the North conquered the old civilisations, they destroyed their local cultures, expanded capitalism through financial/legal techniques, credit and warfare (a work/war ethics), deposed tyrants and built new cities, railways and schools for the ‘good’ of the natives, heralding ‘progress’ as an ethics of benevolence.

Many regard science as the supreme embodiment of human intellect. But science is ‘just’ another cultural product subjected to Freud’s law of sublimation, or the transformation of sexual energy into cultural products. Perhaps Richard Dawkins has forgotten that the relation between ‘science & religion’ works ‘just’ like any other binary of the same stack, such as ‘man & woman’ or ‘mind & heart’; so when a(=)a kicks in, the result is ‘science_man_mind/religion_woman_heart’. But what can you expect from a busy man who writes a book per year and does not have time to stop and think; a hurried intellect whose highest achievement has been to invent the best metaphor in the world (‘the selfish gene’) and who has also given us the ‘meme’, a rough but genial conception.⁸ Today, with what poor judgement he has been visiting UK schools, stuffing children’s minds with his atheistic certainties. An anti-religion evangelist, he needs his faith in reason to sort out children’s future irrationality. It is the only thing that keeps him going in a world tainted by religion and Islamic terrorism; this hope in the future – children being the future. Counter-religious activity focuses only on the end product: the adult.

An unthinking society would commit a lot of resources (*where* very little can be done) to the ‘very’ religious; that is, to the people on their watch list. What Dawkins is saying is that we owe to be thinking about all these children, who may become religious fanatics, before they are recruited into this or that cause. For there is a point beyond which there is no return. If a public-health approach to prevention is applied to violence in general, drug abuse, smoking, and suicide, why not apply it to religion and its rotten products? If we understand what the risk factors are at an early stage, we can tackle the problem. And yet to believe that science (not God) can change the world, is as naive as thinking that we can cure all illnesses by swallowing one pill. It is an expression of magical grandiose thinking of the kind that assails psychotics on bad days; it is a manifestation of the belief in the omnipotence of the human will, which is the fundamental infantile fantasy.

Dawkins is as uneducated in his insistence that God doesn’t exist as those who totally believe in God’s existence – of course, this polarised argument defending religion was put forward by our new Pope Francis. By now, a great scientist like Dawkins would have grown so accustomed to this kind of ‘evidence’ that his reasoning powers would not be expected to stretch one step further. Let me try to put forward a three-step argument against atheism: in a democratic society, people may have, in matters of religion, what opinion they please, without being the sovereign’s business to take cognition of it, whether as a right or as a prohibition; for, as the sovereign has no authority in the other world, whatever dealings people may have with the representatives of the life to come, and whatever personal feelings they may publicly express about the next world, that is not its business, provided they don’t exceed the limits of public expediency. Legislating about the other world while at the same time professing to be indifferent to it is a fallacy no different structurally from Dawkins’ interest in declaring the other word ‘non-existent’ and God a ‘delusion’. Unwittingly, he has been anti-social and anti-democratic. Had he done his homework, he would have come across Sallust’s *Conspiracy of Catiline and the Jugurthine War*, where Cato and Cicero, in refutation of Caesar, pleading for Catiline that the soul is mortal, did not waste time in philosophising. They argued convincingly that Caesar spoke like a bad citizen by advancing a doctrine that would have a bad effect on the state. Dawkins’ problem is in fact a ‘civil’ one and not a question of theology; nor can it be a scientific problem, for it is not certain that religion is true, nor can it be asserted that it is certainly possible that it is not. Still, I must be disappointed: getting Dawkins for ‘incivility’ is like putting Al Capone in prison for tax evasion when he should have gone down for murder. My consolation is that most cutting-edge philosophers and scientists, those whose pioneering work brings them face to face with the limits of human understanding, are God-dependent or, at least, God-curious. Without binarisation, there is no conflict between religion and science – apart from replacing religion, has science replaced myth and magic?

⁸ The ‘meme’ is a unit of cultural transmission. Tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, slogans, and clothes fashions are examples of memes. ‘Just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperm or eggs, so memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation’. Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 192.

But there is another, more tantalising possibility. Contemporary writings don't primarily talk about Dawkins' fundamentalism or evangelical struggles, they mostly tell the tale of the miracles that science performs. Illnesses which until recently were un-curable are now perfectly curable. Planets which until now were reachable only with the imagination are being detected with powerful telescopes. If the saints and mystics of the past were said to have spoken to the birds, the saints and mystics of today who dress in white laboratory gowns have persuaded birds not to eat the seeds they had sown. These humble and generous spirits have sacrificed so much to the cause of 'truth', which they all take as something 'real' and 'given', and place it beyond questioning. One can't help but admire the honest craftsmanship of their intellectual labours. They've held a microscope/telescope to the soul and, in the process, pioneered the search for a new God: immoral, un-Christian, foul, bitter, ugly, plain! The foul smell of experimental science attracts a pair of crows that bow down in front of them and offer them food as compensation. This modern version of Cuthbert's miracle, where the birds are the people and the crows are the state, turns scientists into saints. Scientific miracles serve a purpose. Almost all great scientists display their power over the natural world. Stories about their discoveries are written to convert a people steeped in animist/pagan/secular religion, so scientists/saints need to prove the superiority of their God by possessing the power to control everyday life. Yet the greatest miracle attributed to Cuthbert occurred nine years after his death. When his coffin was opened to extract bones as relics, it was discovered that his corpse had not decomposed. Cuthbert's victory over the ravages of death resulted in the explosion of his cult. Similarly, modern science's greatest miracle has been the preservation of life after death, the study of the origins of the universe, of extinct animals/fossils, of long-dead planets and galaxies, the study of slowing down or reversing the processes of ageing to extend both the maximum and average lifespan, the discovery of the Higgs boson, cancer immunotherapy, and the first quantum machine. These achievements (among many others) have served as useful propaganda, an emblem of how a modern society should accept science as the new religion.

Many people and indeed scientists themselves believe that forensic evidence, for example, is based on sound science. But one must ask the question, 'Is that confidence misplaced?' The perception of the public is that, if there is a DNA profile in a criminal case, this is very damning evidence. Even though DNA has to be considered within 'all' of the evidence, it is often overweight-ed: 'Along come the men in white overalls and off goes the defendant to prison.' This is a revealing symptom of psychotic patterning in the human brain/mind working its wonders under the new hegemony, where 'we' cannot longer measure things in terms of One's relationship to an-Other, but in terms of the psycho creation to a third imaginary entity which subsumes both into One. This is the TOTAL that would, for instance, allow for a low copy number or low template profiling (recovering a DNA profile from a handful of cells) to represent a non-identifiable body fluid. Any object may have been held by several imaginary people as much as the I/eye might no longer represent the individual self but the views and selves of several people. So the self is, at most, incomplete and, at least, partial. Some of the bars on anyone's barcode are going to be missing. If methods have neither validation nor experimental evidence but a lot of mini black holes filled with subjective assumptions such as one single 'precedent', then it is paramount to review all cases where psychotic patterning in the human brain/mind has made the 'evidence' gravitate towards One.

Real scientific understanding of the world (if there is such a thing in this empire of proxies and simulation) is still the route to divinity for many scientists. Einstein's statement, for instance, in his letter to Max Born, that God does not play dice: perhaps it masquerades it. Remember Augustine of Hippo appearing to suggest the existence of the unconscious and the possibility of evolution; perhaps, too, the aspiration of the void to become filled, and for humans the desire to extend their domain over the entire universe. If this is not a delusion of grandeur, I don't know what it is. And I wonder why scientists have chosen to nickname the Higgs boson 'God particle'. It seems that the more scientists discover about the world, the closer they get to God and the closer they get to psychosis. The Dawkins/Hawking's unwillingness to examine what we sometimes presuppose in our way of thinking gets in the way of making their world more liveable.⁹

Most Reverend High Priests of Atheism, please wake up and smell the coffee: it might not be enough in today's world just to be curious and to keep on asking questions; it is imperative that we begin to be curious about curiosity, start to ask questions about questions, and perhaps attempt to give some political answers. Religion is about asking questions that science cannot answer – or not asking any questions at all. It is not 'just' about the existence of God but also about how to live (yes, it is an 'ethics'), what kind of world we want to create, and how we relate to the ultimately unknowable. Religious beliefs offer succour to many by placing the individual in a universal context and thereby giving his/her life a position and a meaning. Indeed, many idiots would kill or blow themselves up to go to heaven: under the binary

⁹ I hope my critique doesn't gain traction by becoming a re-enactment of that familiar clash in English cultural history between Romantics and Utilitarians: Coleridge versus Bentham, Arnold versus Huxley, and Leavis versus Snow.

One/Many_exception/rule, our short and miserable lives are almost an accident of eternity; our few days on earth, our existing life can at best be characterised as a case of extreme peril, a danger to the eternity of our souls, or the like. The religious decision on the exceptionality of life on earth is ‘the decision’ in the true sense of the world. Because a general norm of conduct, as represented by a typical legal prescription by the state or by the church, can never encompass this total exception which is our own life; the religious decision that ‘a life worth living in a certain way exists’ cannot therefore be entirely derived from the norms prescribed by church or state. Similarly, a moral code positions one within a society. Being seen regularly in places of worship gives one the appearance of self-worth and respectability. Descartes’ ‘thinking things’ should think out/in_side the box (outside the universe as ‘individuals’ but inside the universe as ‘persons’), think before they speak, and doubt before they think. To attack religious ideas – which have survived thousands of years – with the science/religion distinction is like shooting blanks at King Kong.

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