

Wyoming Catholic College

The Dawkins Illusion

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Theology 301

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Christopher Dawkins is purported to be an atheistic author of a book called *The God Delusion*, which supposedly according to the authority of the paper prompt for Section 200 of Fall 2020's Theology 301 offers a unique and penetrating argument against the rationality of Christianity that necessitates careful refutation. As his objection quoted in the paper prompt states:

There are other teachings in the New Testament that no good person should support. I refer especially to the central doctrine of Christianity: that of 'atonement' for 'original sin'. Original sin itself comes straight from the Old Testament myth of Adam and Eve. Their sin - eating the fruit of a forbidden tree - seems mild enough to merit a mere reprimand. But the symbolic nature of the fruit (knowledge of good and evil, which in practice turned out to be the knowledge that they were naked) was enough to turn their escapade into the mother and father of all sins. They and all their descendants were banished forever from the Garden of Eden, deprived of the gift of eternal life, and condemned to generations of painful labor, in the field and in childbirth respectively. The sin of Adam and Eve is thought to have passed down the male line. What kind of ethical philosophy is it that condemns every child, even before it is born, to inherit the sin of a remote ancestor? But now, the sadomasochism. God incarnated himself as a man, Jesus, in order that he should be tortured and executed in atonement for the hereditary sin of Adam. Ever since Paul expounded this repellent doctrine, Jesus has been worshipped as the redeemer of all our sins. Not just the past sin of Adam: future sins as well, whether future people decided to commit them or not! I have described atonement, the central doctrine of Christianity, as vicious, sadomasochistic, and repellent. We should also dismiss it as barking mad, but for its ubiquitous familiarity which has dulled our objectivity. If God wanted to forgive our sins, why not just forgive them, without having himself tortured and executed in payment? Paul was steeped in the old Jewish theological principle that without blood there is no atonement. Indeed, in his Epistle to the Hebrews (9:22), he said as much. Progressive ethicists today find it hard to defend any kind of retributive theory of punishment, let alone the scapegoat theory - executing an innocent to pay for the sins of the guilty. In any case (one can't help wondering), who was God trying to impress? Presumably himself - judge and jury as well as execution victim.

This argument seems to be deep. It seems to touch the heart, to turn the very cosmos into an entire tragedy of purposelessness and wastefulness anyway it's interpreted with God as a King Lear like figure who has gone mad and is in no way wise. It's definitely the type of thing I'd be motivated to object to, and to object to by writing a paper of exactly the length required by the paper prompt for the sake of answering the objection and thereby defending God's glory and the order of the cosmos, as well, of course, as defending the orderliness of my grades. But the proper way to answer Dawkins' view that God is crazy and the story of Salvation "barking mad" is

actually far easier.

For the objection itself doesn't really exist because. Christopher Dawkins doesn't exist. No, he doesn't. You exist, you're reading this right now, but Christopher Dawkins doesn't. He's made up. I exist. That's why I'm writing this right now. I'm able to see and investigate for myself that Christopher Dawkins doesn't exist. I'm also able to understand that if Christopher Dawkins doesn't exist, neither then do the objections of Christopher Dawkins exist, since objections cannot be created out of nothing. Therefore since they don't exist, all the answering that is necessary to such objections is simply to show that Dawkins doesn't exist and then conclude simply that neither thus do his objections.

According to junior Olivia DeLaveaga, as quoted within the Google Hangouts chat *All Juniors*: "Funny note: there is no Christopher Dawkins! <https://www.google.com/search?q=Christopher+Dawkins&oq=Christopher+Dawkins&aqs=chrome..69i57.804j0j1&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>"<sup>1</sup> Olivia is one of the happiest students at the school due to her possession of some of the highest wisdom, proven by her position as a Math Tutor, and it thus seems like she should of necessity be believed. Therefore I will just assume this to be the case based on her ethos and proceed to answering likely, but obviously incorrect objections that might say that Christopher Dawkins' arguments do in fact exist.

Christopher Dawkins and his objections don't exist even though they might appear to exist in a certain manner. You see, someone like Professor Washut might object that Dawkins' objections, insofar as they are quoted in the prompt, have existence apart from a nonexistent creator. But that's tantamount to saying they created themselves right? That would be saying that his objections are God, wouldn't it be? That leads to a contradiction. For if a non-existent

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<sup>1</sup> Olivia DeLaveaga, *All Juniors* (formerly *All Sophomores*).

Christopher Dawkins creates something that is uncreated by him Christopher Dawkins has created God. Now if Christopher Dawkins were to create something, it would necessarily be something of which he has knowledge and believes in, insofar as his rational capacities were exercised in so making. Christopher Dawkins' rational capacities were exercised in making these objections because an objection is of itself an argument, an argument being a combination of premises strung together syllogistically. Creating a logical sequence of such premises requires intellectual effort, therefore Christopher Dawkins used his intellect in creating these arguments. Because he used his intellect he, therefore, knows them and in knowing them remembers them, and insofar as they thus continually exist in some way within his mind, he believes in them. Now if Christopher Dawkins believes in these his arguments, he believes in something uncreated and therefore an essential being existing of itself as a first cause<sup>2</sup>, since of course Christopher Dawkins is the creator of his arguments of objection and Christopher Dawkins does not exist. Christopher Dawkins thus believes in an uncreated essential being existing of itself as a first cause. Thus Christopher Dawkins, a self-proclaimed atheist by reason of the title of the book, *The God Delusion*, from which this argument is supposedly taken, thus believes in God.

That doesn't seem to work. Christopher Dawkins, in addition to not existing by simple proof, the authority of others, and such, would by existing also not exist for he would then be a contradiction in being an atheist and yet believing in God. He would then be a member of that set with zero members because its qualifying parameter is a self-contradictory statement. Now since this cannot be the case, we have proved by a sort of inductive reasoning applied in a conically curved argument that will downwardly curve my grade, that Christopher Dawkins does not exist.

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<sup>2</sup> Aquinas, St. Thomas. *Opuscula I Treatises*. (Green Bay: Aquinas Institute, 2018), Ch. 3

What makes Dawkins' not existing weird though is the appearance of there being rational arguments created by such a man. They are quoted in the paper prompt, seem to make claims, and seem to bear being thought about. This leads then to the obvious question of who created such arguments. Dawkins, of course, as stated, would, in a self-contradiction, believe his arguments were god, but since according to Aquinas, a "multiplicity of gods is impossible" (Ch. 15) three suppositions follow. Either his arguments are God, they were uncreated in some other way, or they truly do not exist even though they might appear to exist to us. To determine which of these is true, as it would be important and necessary to answer the arguments if they actually do exist, we will examine each of these in turn although the first can be thrown out pretty easily.

First of all, if the arguments are God, then they would in some way have a place within the Blessed Trinity. This obviously isn't the case, as Aquinas also proves (Ch. 56) that there can be no more than three persons in God. To the second possibility, that the arguments were created in some other way without a cause, would be to presuppose a sort of "bootstrap paradox", whereby someone, for example, time-traveled to the future, discovered these arguments written down and then brought them to the past to leave them there for himself in the future. This agent could be someone other than the non-existent Christopher Dawkins, and thus as such a person would have a rational intellect as well as motive power through his body it could be supposed that they built a time machine and so found the arguments in this manner. But is this argument self-consistent? For if there were such a time machine, it seems there is as yet no necessity that a time traveler would find Christopher Dawkins' arguments in the future. For the senses, the use of which would be necessary for the discovery of a materially substantiated set of arguments<sup>3</sup> rely

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<sup>3</sup> That is Christopher Dawkins' arguments existing in some way through the symbols of an alphabet on some sort of material surface, as on a piece of paper, papyrus, stone tablet, or table surface in Baldwin Classroom B.

upon what is external to us. To discover Christopher Dawkins' arguments, the eye, for example, would have to first see them. That is, the external accidental forms of color, shape, and extension present in the physical instantiation of such arguments would have to act upon the transparent medium<sup>4</sup> for our supposed time traveler to actually see them. Because the senses are infallible with regard to their proper objects,<sup>5</sup> what they perceive must necessarily be what is present in reality, while contrapositively, what is not perceived must not then be present in reality. Therefore if something does not exist, its accidental characteristics would not exist, and there would then be no form making its way through the senses into the imagination. In this situation, there would be nothing found because there was nothing to perceive and therefore it seems possible that the arguments could have been discovered through this form of temporal loop.

All that is left to consider is that Dawkins' arguments actually do not exist. Now what would this mean? That somehow our senses perceive something that isn't truly there, and that we in finding them and attempting to understand them are trying to understand a privation, are trying to understand non-being. Now it is obviously impossible to understand simple non-being as there is nothing in non-being to be described. A privation of being within a substance can in a way be indirectly understood or comprehended, but only, that is, with respect to the contrary perfections towards which each privation corresponds as a privation of, as a lack of something that should be there. This actually seems to be the most likely explanation for what is happening to us when we apparently see and perceive Christopher Dawkins' arguments. We see something that isn't there

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<sup>4</sup> Only of course when the potentially transparent medium becomes actually transparent through the actualizing power of light.

<sup>5</sup> Except perhaps in the case of hallucination. But it can be quickly and easily proven that our supposed time traveler could not have hallucinated such arguments as then he would be Christopher Dawkins. For if he did hallucinate the arguments he could only have brought them back to his other self if he wrote them down. The person who wrote down the arguments, however, is Christopher Dawkins. Therefore he would be Christopher Dawkins, and therefore, he would of necessity not exist because Christopher Dawkins does not exist.

and somehow render it as a set of things accidentally there when all we are really seeing is a privation on the page of what actually should be a blank page. In asking us to respond to Christopher Dawkins' arguments, Professor Washut is asking us to respond to something which is not there, to such privations and thus the answer to them is simple. *They don't exist* except incidentally as a privation in the instantiating material to which they are attached. Therefore no further explanatory argument is really necessary and we can truly say that while appearing to exist they do not, and there is no need to say anything further.

But unfortunately, it appears that I have talked enough about his arguments that they do now hold a further existence as I have talked enough about them that I have talked them into existence. Therefore, accidentally, because of my relationship to them by the act of reflecting upon them, has in fact in my mind, because I also am imaginary, led to a reaction such that they are as real as I am in relation to my level of partial non-being as an imaginary student. Therefore, since I do believe, however, that I exist, these arguments, however, must now exist, and they will need to be argued against and defeated by someone with actual existence. I turn your attention to my classmate and colleague James Green, who has answered this same paper prompt, but with the slight modification of assuming that there was simply a mistake in the prompt such that it referred to the objections being from Richard Dawkins rather than Christopher Dawkins. In this case his arguments would obviously have existence of themselves, since Richard Dawkins does exist. Since, however, the arguments of Richard Dawkins are identical to the arguments of the imaginary Christopher Dawkins, James' arguments should work just as well against the imaginary arguments of Christopher Dawkins which I have accidentally instantiated and I therefore refer you to his paper: [THL 301 - This Tenet That We Hold To Be Self-Existent - James Green](#)

References:

Aquinas, St. Thomas. *Opuscula I Treatises*. (Green Bay: Aquinas Institute, 2018)