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DICTIONARY ATHEISTS AND BIGFOOT SKEPTICS – A CRITIQUE

SIMPLE PEOPLE GO FOR SIMPLE TARGETS

Martin, insulting people, with whom you disagree, is fine; I do it myself. In fact, that's why I've chosen your essay to feature this week. When I call people 'simple' I back it up with evidence. I hope you plan on doing the same.

*If you can’t spell epistemology or evidence, but you know in your heart that Dowsing doesn’t work, or homeopathy, while you would at the same time never apply your skepticism to your or other people’s beliefs in the supernatural because it either doesn’t occur to you or because it is deemed politically incorrect by your skeptical peers, you are clearly well-suited to be a true skeptic™, and likely to pay good money to visit TAM or join a local Skeptics in the Pub at some point.*

Martin, I gather you are in Australia. But unless your grammatical rules are different from those here in the States, I would suggest that you learn to use a period. That way, you will no longer have to write a 7-line paragraph ... as a run-on sentence; not to mention it would make it a lot easier for us 'simple' folk to translate the whole thing into a coherent thought.

Or ... you could just try thinking before you type.

*Something similar applies to those who at a young age and without much effort have seen through the lies and tales of organised religion and its holy books and who have shaken off those superstitions to become proud members of a worldwide growing assembly of nonbelievers. These dictionary atheists may proudly proclaim their lack of belief in gods and regard this as a major intellectual achievement,*

Martin, 85% of the world is populated with Ghost Worshippers, many of whom make nonbelief dangerous. To break free of their indoctrination, especially in cases where you are being threatened with eternal torture, IS a major intellectual achievement.

*while remaining sheltered from any realisation of the obvious implications of such a worldview.*

Martin, Atheism is not a worldview. It is a rejection of religious claims. That is not the same thing.

Martin, if you are going to use Creationist arguments, why don't you just drop to your knees right now, and accept Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior? You sound like you're halfway there already; and the upside is ... you would get to live forever.

*Dowsing or Bigfoot skeptics and dictionary atheists have one thing in common, and that thing is that their intellectual achievements are shallow and trivial and their methods of reaching conclusions intuitive rather than scientific or rational.*

Martin, how do you know that the intellectual achievements of dictionary Atheists are shallow and trivial? Second, how do you know that about Dowsing and Bigfoot skeptics? And even if you could prove the first two, what evidence do you offer that these shallow achievements are the only thing they have in common?

Martin, while you are working on those 3 questions, could you also present evidence that their methods of reaching conclusions are intuitive rather than scientific or rational?

*There isn’t a more pathetic view than that of a self-proclaimed atheist or skeptic of this kind.*

*You can find them within the organised Skeptic movement, for example in JREF, or anywhere in the atheist movement, for example at recently created places like skepticinc, where those atheists found shelter who are afraid or incapable of actually thinking through the consequences of rejecting religious doctrine, for example with regards to the standing and rights of women, or homosexuals.*

Martin, you did it again: another semi-coherent rant. But I'll give you credit for one thing - you're improving. That run-on sentence only went 6 lines.

Martin, the consequences of Atheism have nothing to do with the standing and rights of women or homosexuals. What is really pathetic is that you weren't even smart enough to realize that by simply admitting that these Atheists don't conflate the rights of women or homosexuals with religious rejection, as you do, you have just proven yourself wrong.

You still don't get it, do ya?

premise 1) They are Atheists

premise 2) They don't conflate Atheism with women's or

 homosexual's rights

conclusion) Congratulations - you've just proven that Atheism doesn't necessarily include your pet peeves.

The fact that you want it to ... is *your* problem.

*It is amazing to realise how these self-proclaimed champions of reason can fail to meet the most basic standards of rational or reasoned thought when it comes to anything beyond their current scope of enlightenment.*

Martin, that's why we have you Master Yoda, to teach us how to achieve rational and reasoned thought; and enlightenment.

*Skepticism applied to Bigfoot or UFOs is fine, but let’s not apply it to religion or economics, because we might offend someone, or behold, have to question our own dear beliefs!*

Martin, Atheists do apply skepticism to religion ... that's why they are called Atheists. And what makes you think skeptics are afraid of offending anyone? You're a skeptic and you offend me. I'm a skeptic and I offend ... almost everyone. So who are you claiming is afraid to offend?

And if they are afraid to question their own beliefs, then they are not skeptics. That's the main point of skepticism.

Martin, I think I now see your problem: a dictionary is something you would open, only if, your only other option were a Bible.

*The same goes for the dictionary atheists.*

Martin, so which dictionary Atheists are afraid to offend? And which beliefs are you claiming we refuse to question?

There is only one 'belief' (if you want to call it that) that can be attributed to an Atheist and that is a rejection of gods. So how did you conclude that we are afraid to question our one disbelief? If that were true, we wouldn't be Atheists, we would still be Ghost Worshippers.

*Jahweh, Allah, Thor, Ra, Zeus? How utterly ridiculous! Man, I’m so clever to see through this! Just like 5-year olds realising that Santa isn’t real.*

*But clearly it is too much for those aces of reason to consider what the fact that holy texts are not true may mean for the society of today.*

Martin, have you noticed that your entire essay to this point has been a series of assertions completely devoid of any supporting evidence?

Well, I did.

*They don’t seem to be able to compute that if the Christian god doesn’t exist and the Christian holy book is not a verbatim missive from him, then those morals that Christians today cite to legitimise and justify discrimination of homosexuals or subjugation of women do not apply.*

Martin, you are killing your own argument. The fact that there are Atheists who discriminate against homosexuals and believe in the subjugation of women proves that Atheists only share a disbelief in God.

Thanks for burying yourself Martin.

*Atheism+ is the view that there are consequences to be derived from the fact that holy texts are not the word of any gods, that therefore moral and ethical tenets based on and derived from these texts are invalid,*

Martin, you tripped over your meat again. You committed the logical fallacy of composition. Just because the holy books are likely fictional, does not necessarily imply that all moral and ethical tenets in those texts are invalid.

 *and that hence social justice and equality questions should be a natural inclusion in atheism.*

Martin, social justice and equality questions have nothing to do with Atheism. Since you abhor dictionaries so much, get a friend to open one, and read the definition to you.

*Those who insist on the dictionary definition of atheism, while ignoring the obvious philosophical and moral consequences of such a position as pointed out above, just as the skeptics who will throw their skeptical faculties at Dowsing, homeopathy or moon landing truthers while ignoring the elephant in the room that is religion(or economics), are a truly pathetic bunch as far as I am concerned.*

Martin, while your friend has that dictionary open, ask them to look up the word 'snob'. But don't be surprised to find that the definition has been replaced ... by a picture of your butt.

*To be congratulating oneself proudly for an intellectual achievement any 5-year old can figure out is just sad.*

Martin, if any 5-year-old could figure it out, the world would not be 85% Ghost Worshippers; including many people with far greater grammatical skills than you possess.

*And actively ignoring, denying or negating the obvious conclusions that may and should be drawn from an atheist or skeptic worldview just because this could mean being faced with a requirement for introspection and analysis of one’s own beliefs or opinions, is even more pathetic.*

Martin, instead of backing up your assertions with supporting evidence, you have chosen to simply repeat yourself ad nauseam. So it's pretty clear your gun is empty, and in fact, has been from the beginning.

*I wouldn’t want any of these clowns to be part of Atheism+,*

My Martin, we are just full of snobbish little name-calling insults, aren't we? But when you offer no evidence to back up any claim you have made, what other options do you have?

*or a skeptic movement that doesn’t shy away from applying skepticism to whatever topic comes along, even if it may offend some people.*

Martin, now you're just getting tedious. What's going on? Do you have a word requirement that you have to meet?

Come on now, your essay is nearing the end, so let's see a big finish; at least bring up something new.

*Don’t get me wrong, debunking homeopathy or Dowsing is important, and not believing in gods is the right thing to do because gods are not true,*

Martin, bad mistake there dude. That was a claim which requires evidence. Any skeptic, even the ones you are insulting, would know better than to make a claim they cannot prove.

Come on Martin, last chance. Big finish now.

*but there is absolutely no reason to be wallowing in smug self-congratulation over these trivial achievements, while at the same time laughing arrogantly at religious believers or 9/11 truthers because their convictions are so very ridiculous.*

Martin, I sincerely hope, if the time ever comes when I find myself thinking like you, that they have legalized Euthanasia.

*Skeptics and atheists like those, who will stay within the sheltered confines of their established values and beliefs and never dare to venture outside of them, are an embarrassment.*

Martin, if this essay is representative of the crap on your web site, you might want to consider getting down off your high horse, stop lecturing people who are far more rational than you are, and ask your internet service provider for a refund for the remaining time left on your hosting contract.

I recognize where all your nonsense is coming from. I too, am a member of Pharyngula's horde. With over 100,000 members, there are bound to be losers and rejects among them. Even a small percentage, when multiplied by such a large number, produces a sizeable group of misfits. You Martin, are part of a subunit of sycophants. Sycophants are followers Martin, they are not freethinkers. This essay proves that you do not belong in the Skeptical Movement; at least not until you close your pie hole and apply yourself to studying the underlying principles of critical thinking.

You were critical in this essay of people who don't think for themselves, but what you failed to realize Martin, was that you were describing ... yourself.

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THE SCIENCE SEGMENT

Predatory Fungi Are Listening for Worms, Then Devouring Prey

Nematodes are found in nearly every corner of the world and are one of the most abundant animals on the planet. Unsurprisingly, they have natural enemies, including numerous types of carnivorous fungi that build traps to catch their prey. Curious to see how nematophagous fungi might sense that a meal is present without the sensory organs, researchers started with a familiar tool: ascarosides. These are the chemical cues that nematodes use to "talk" to one another.

From an evolutionary perspective, whatever the worms are making that can be sensed by the nematophagous fungi must be very important to the worm -- otherwise, it's not worth the risk.

Researchers first evaluated whether different ascarosides caused one of the most common nematode-trapping fungi species to start making a trap. Indeed, it responded by building sticky, web-like nets called adhesive networks, but only when it was nutrient-deprived. It takes a lot of energy for the fungi to build a trap, so they'll only do it if they are hungry and they sense that prey is nearby. Moreover, this ascaroside-induced response is conserved in three other closely related species. But, the researchers say, each of the four fungal species responded to different sets of ascarosides.

Researchers have shown the ability for a predator to eavesdrop on essential prey communication. The worms have to talk to each other using these chemicals, and the predator is listening in on it - that's how it knows the worms are there.

Researchers also tested a second type of fungus that uses a constricting ring to trap the worms, but it did not respond to the ascarosides. However, they say that because they only tested a handful of the chemical cues, it's possible that they simply did not test the right ones for that type of fungus.

Next, the focus is to really study the molecular mechanism in the fungi - how does a fungus sense the ascarosides, and what are the downstream pathways that induce the trap formation.

Researchers are also interested in the evolutionary question of why we see this ascaroside sensing in some types of fungi but not others.

In the long run, their findings may help improve methods for pest management. Some of these fungi are used for biocontrol to try and keep nematodes away from certain plant roots. Knowing more about what stimulates the organisms to make traps might allow for the development of better biocontrol preparations.

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FAMOUS QUOTES

Paul Kurtz (1925–2012) 86 years.

He was a prominent American skeptic and secular humanist. He has been called "the father of secular humanism." He was Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at the State University of New York at Buffalo, having previously also taught at Vassar, Trinity, and Union colleges.

Kurtz founded the publishing house Prometheus Books in 1969. He was the founder of the Council for Secular Humanism, the Center for Inquiry, and also the founder and past chairman of the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry (formerly known as the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP)). He was editor in chief of Free Inquiry magazine, a publication of the Council for Secular Humanism.

Kurtz published over 800 articles or reviews and authored and edited over 50 books. Many of his books have been translated into over 60 languages.

"Without skepticism,

we may remain mired in unexamined belief systems

that are accepted as sacrosanct

yet have no factual basis in reality."