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If we're cracking down on Twitter abuse,

can we include Richard Dawkins and the atheist trolls?

by Timothy Stanley

*There's a lot of talk at the moment about civilising Twitter – and it's a conversation that we need to have. I'm not in favour of banning free speech,*

Tim, whenever anyone says that they are not in favor of banning free speech, they always follow it with a rationalization for why certain types of speech *should* be banned. And Tim, it always turns out to be speech that disagrees ... with what they believe.

*except when it's an obvious incitement to violence, but there's no denying that Twitter has become a bear pit. In the long run, that might not be an entirely bad thing. The invention of social media – an unregulated, semi-anonymous public space – has handed us a chance to explore what is and isn't acceptable discourse in the Internet age. We're in the process of building a new online etiquette, and it could teach us some self-discipline. We're slowly learning that sticks and stones might break our bones, but words can hurt, too.*

See Tim? That's exactly where I knew you were heading. You claim you are in favor of free speech, but now you start chipping away at all the instances of free speech ... that you don't like.

*So this gives me an opportunity to flag up a particular kind of abuse that's annoyed me for a long time: aggressive online atheism.*

Tim, what about aggressive online proselytizing? does that annoy you? Of course not. You are only annoyed by those, with whom you disagree.

*Don't get me wrong: this is in no way comparable to the terrible sexual abuse that has recently gained headlines.*

Tim, why would anyone assume that it was? Why would you even need to make such a stupid statement?

It's because you ARE trying to equate the two. The disclaimer at the beginning "Don't get me wrong" didn't fool anyone.

*But it's still amazing how people feel that they can casually mock the spiritual and emotional convictions of others*

Tim, you originally complained about aggressive online Atheism, now you are complaining about casual mocking. See Tim, you just exposed your true agenda: you are against ANY speech that threatens your religious beliefs.

*– including Tweeting directly at believers that God doesn't exist and they're either liars or idiots for saying so.*

Tim, Ghost Worshippers do far more than just mock nonbelievers. You people threaten them with eternal torture. Yet, in your twisted logic(?) ... that's okay.

*One man who does this with gay abandon is Richard Dawkins. Apparently Prof Dawkins is a genius who writes beautifully about chromosomes and cave men. Well, bully for him. But he's a bully, nonetheless.*

Tim, yet threatening eternal damnation by your invisible ghost ... is not bullying?

*A recent Tweet that caused a stir: "Don't ask God to cure cancer & world poverty. He's too busy finding you a parking space & fixing the weather for your barbecue."*

*Hilarious.*

Tim, it would be hilarious if it weren't tragically true. Christians do ask for those petty little things while your God apparently is content to ignore cancer and poverty. Maybe, instead of finding that hilarious, you should examine ... why that is true.

*Or on Islam: "Mehdi Hasan admits to believing Muhamed flew to heaven on a winged horse. And New Statesman sees fit to print him as a serious journalist."*

Tim, that's not all that different than Santa Claus, is it? Would you take a journalist seriously who believed in Santa Claus?

No ... you wouldn't.

*Of course, that's the same New Statesman that invited Dick Dawkins to edit it for a week – so, yeah, its taste is questionable.*

My Tim, we are getting are blood pressure up, aren't we?

*Prof Dawkins is only sending out Tweets rather than Tweeting directly at individuals – which makes him more of a passive aggressive bully than the full on shove-you-head-down-a-toilet variety."*

Tim, your writing is sinking to the level of a YouTube middle school student. You're obviously furious because rational people are ridiculing your imaginary friends. If it bothers you that much, try growing up and learning to think like an adult.

*But there are plenty of the alpha male atheists around and I've had many come knocking at my Twitter feed. I don't hate them, I don't want them banned, and they certainly don't make me want to boycott Twitter. But I would like them, and the Neanderthal Dawkins, to consider the following.*

*When you insult my faith you go right to the heart of what makes me me.*

Tim, thanks for demonstrating one of the many flaws associated with your horrid religion. Rational people place value on things that are real ... rather than on things that are imaginary. They find their sense of self worth in what they accomplish, not in which invisible ghosts they believe in.

*When you're trying to convince me in 140 characters of philosophical abuse that God doesn't exist, you're trying to take away the faith that gets me up in the morning, gets me through the day and helps me sleep at night.*

Tim, rational people don't need imaginary friends to help them get up, get through the day, and go to sleep. They have learned to accomplish those things all by themselves.

And what makes you think rational people care about what a Ghost Worshipper like you believes? When we comment on YouTube or Twitter to believers, we aren't trying to take away their faith because we already know that people like you are beyond help. We post because there are countless people reading those comments who are not beyond hope. They are there to hear both sides and form a belief.

The reason you are filling your diaper is because Atheists have been cleaning your clock all over the internet. The anonymity provided by the internet has given a degree of safety to nonbelievers never before available. They are destroying your pathetic arguments. Your religion is crashing worldwide as people lose their fear of the threats of your invisible ghost.

Tim, your desperation is evident in this essay.

*You're ridiculing a God without whom I suspect I might not even be alive, and a God that I prayed to when my mother was going through cancer therapy.*

Tim, if you were praying to God, and He promised in the Bible to answer your prayers ... what was the point of the therapy?

Oh Ye ... of little faith.

*You're knocking a Church that provides me with compassion and friendship without asking for anything in return*

Tim, how unusual. I've never seen a church that didn't pass the hat. I've never seen a Christian web site that didn't have a donate button located prominently on every page. Tim, we aren't being very honest, are we?

*"perhaps the greatest, most wonderful discovery of my adult life."*

Tim, you are a Ghost Worshipper: you've never had an adult life.

*"You see, people don't generally believe in God for reasons of convenience or intellectual laziness. It's usually fulfilling a deep need – filling a soul with love that might otherwise be quite empty and alone."*

Tim, good point. All religions prey upon the weakest, loneliest members of society; usually those with nothing to lose.

*"In short, when you try to destroy someone's faith you're not being a brilliant logician. You're being a jerk."*

Tim, as I stated. We already know that we don't have the power to destroy anyone's faith. But we are no longer going to stand by and allow 'you people' free access to victims. We will give them our opinions and let them decide. Worldwide polls prove that you are losing; and badly. That's why you desperately want to shut us up. But you've lost the blasphemy and heresy laws and now we have the internet. Islam is next. They still enforce death penalty blasphemy laws as Christians used to do. But their days are numbered ... as are yours.

*Don't get me wrong: I'm not calling for Dawkins or his ilk to be banned.*

Tim, then why do you keep repeating it?

(Audience: notice he used the same disclaimer as before: "don't get me wrong?" That's the giveaway that he is dishonesty calling for something, while simultaneously denying ... that he is calling for it).

I don't believe you, Tim. You wouldn't have written this whiny essay unless you wanted Atheists to stop draining Christianity of its lifeblood. If you could hold your own in a debate, you wouldn't have written an essay such as this, you would be debating and holding your own. But you aren't, because you can't; and you can't because everything you believe in, is based on the writings of ignorant, ancient desert tribesmen; men who thought the sun circled the Earth; men who found their wives by raiding the villages of their neighbors and raping their women.

Your Bible is the vilest collection of morals ever compiled any time in history, any place on Earth. It's only survived this long by using force and violence. Without force and violence, the internet shows just how weak and vulnerable your religion really is.

Modern day radical Islam is a window into the Christian past. It shows us what life was like in Christian dominated countries until modern society dragged Christians, kicking and screaming, out of the Dark Ages.

*I'm thick skinned and I can take the odd badly spelled Tweet telling me that I'm a simpleton.*

Tim, I have no idea whether or not you're a simpleton. But you are an admitted Ghost Worshipper; and the ghost you, don't just believe in, but actually worship, is the most evil, hideous monster ever described in any literature in history.

That makes you sick, Tim. You would have been better off had you only been ... a simpleton.

*But if we are having a grown up conversation about what is and isn't offensive, can we Christians, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists and All Of The Above be a part of it, too?*

Tim, what makes you think you can take part in a grown up conversation when your beliefs include unicorns, talking snakes, and invisible ghosts?

*Or is only liberal secularists who are allowed to take offence?*

Tim, I don't take offense at anything you wrote, any more than I would take offense to an angry email from a Harry Potter fan.

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THE SCIENCE SEGMENT

Cells in the early embryo battle each other to the death

to become part of the organism

Researchers have found that during the early stages of mammalian development, embryonic cells embark on a battle for survival. Through this battle, the less active of these cells are eliminated by their stronger sisters.

This phenomenon, termed cell competition, occurs in mouse development in a defined time window, between days 3 and 7. During this period all embryonic cells compete with each other.

Thanks to cell competition the developing organism optimizes itself by selecting the cells theoretically more capable of supporting vital functions throughout the life of the new individual. This would be particularly important in long-lived organisms, like humans, where the functionality of their tissues must be maintained throughout a long life.

When cell competition is prevented, cells that normally would have lost the battle now become able to contribute to the new organism. Researchers think, however, that this organism will probably be less capable than the one which would have been formed under normal circumstances. In what sense will it be less adequate is a matter of great interest that will be addressed in the coming years.

Indeed, the researchers are able to determine in advance which cells will win this battle: those with higher levels of the Myc protein, an important controller of cell metabolic capacity. Moreover, using a new technique that they have developed for the production of genetic mosaics, they are able to manipulate the levels of Myc protein in cells, thus changing the outcome of the fight.

The early embryo is a mosaic of cells with very different levels of Myc, in which cells with higher levels of Myc eliminate those with lower levels. However, it is important to understand that those who die are viable cells. Their removal occurs only because the embryo has more suitable cells able to replace them, and therefore this is an optimization mechanism, not a repair one.

A fascinating aspect of the work is the illustration that this battle does not waste cellular resources; dying loser cells are engulfed and digested by their winning neighbors, who then recycle and use all the nutrients for the benefit of the embryo.

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FAMOUS QUOTES

Robert Ingersoll

(no biography - previously quoted)

“Happiness is the only good.

The time to be happy is now.

The place to be happy is here.

The way to be happy is to make others so.”