

Sherlock Holmes and the case of the Mechanical Philosophy.

It's not often that my friend the genius Sherlock Holmes is forced to call upon the writings of Isaac Newton to solve a mystery but in the end it is all a question of probability.

"Watson," proclaimed Holmes one crisp winter morning. "I have received a letter from Richard Dawkins on behalf of a large religious order called The Atheists, who wish me to help them prove the divinity of that which they worship."

"What do atheists worship, Holmes?"

"Nihilism. They revel in the misconception that there is nothing stopping them doing anything they want, other than basic physical laws. Not even more complex ones, they won't even countenance that. Even that, to them, is some form of 'blind faith'. Atheists are a deeply deluded bunch my dear doctor, for their incantations and jargon run far more deeply into their personal belief systems than those of fading ancient religions."

"Who or what are they saying has been killed, Holmes?" I asked, knowing that if the anti-god squad had called upon Holmes they would be levelling the accusation of murder against someone or some group.

Holmes handed me the letter. It transpired that Dawkins and hundreds of millions of meme-loving atheists wanted Isaac Newton arrested for attempting to murder their god, The Mechanical Philosophy.

The atheists in question had decided to round on Isaac Newton for proving the existence of gravity, a proof Chomsky sums up as dispelling the machine and proving the ghost real, during what started out as an attempt to deify the mechanical philosophy and prove that there was no ghost and the universe was a machine. The universe is not a machine, we are not machines, the machine was exorcised, the ghost remains - a discovery Newton himself, Chomsky mentions, tried for a long time to surmount - having proved there was no machine only the ghost, Newton himself tried to disprove himself but failed, and left us with that truth.

And so it was necessary, Dawkins had written, for Holmes to shame humanity into letting go of its preposterous belief in the invisible magic force of gravity, discovered after all by Christian and Muslim scientists - lunatics - who believed in imaginary notions like morality.

"I don't want to waste any more time on this fanatic than I have to," Holmes said to me, throwing the letter onto the fire.

"Mrs Hudson! Take a telegram," he shouted. Mrs Hudson soon appeared and took a telegram. Within twenty nine minutes a single tweet, tweeted by just the right celebrity at just the right moment of emotional hysteria among the masses led all atheists in the world to insist that believing that Richard Dawkins exists is a preposterous notion. With the high priest of the religion discredited, the religion of atheism faded way and the world became full of objective, reasonable agnostics, not

presuming to know everything about the universe, nor scared of the path modern quantum physicists have led humanity down, not scared of the ghost any more and not desperate to find some machine, to make life easy, to save you the trouble of living your life in a way which is worth living, of making the effort.

“It puts me in mind of that lyric,” Holmes said to me, “from Johnny Mathis’ Brazil: where the songs are passionate and a smile has flash in it and a kiss has art in it, for you put your heart in it”.

I agreed with Holmes that love, above all, proved more than anything, far more than gravity ever has done, that there is no machine, only the ghost.



Matt Berry, as
Sherlock Holmes



Richard Ayoade,
as Doctor Watson



Helena Bonham
Carter, as Mrs Hudson



Dobbin from
Rentaghost,
as The Mechanical
Philosophy