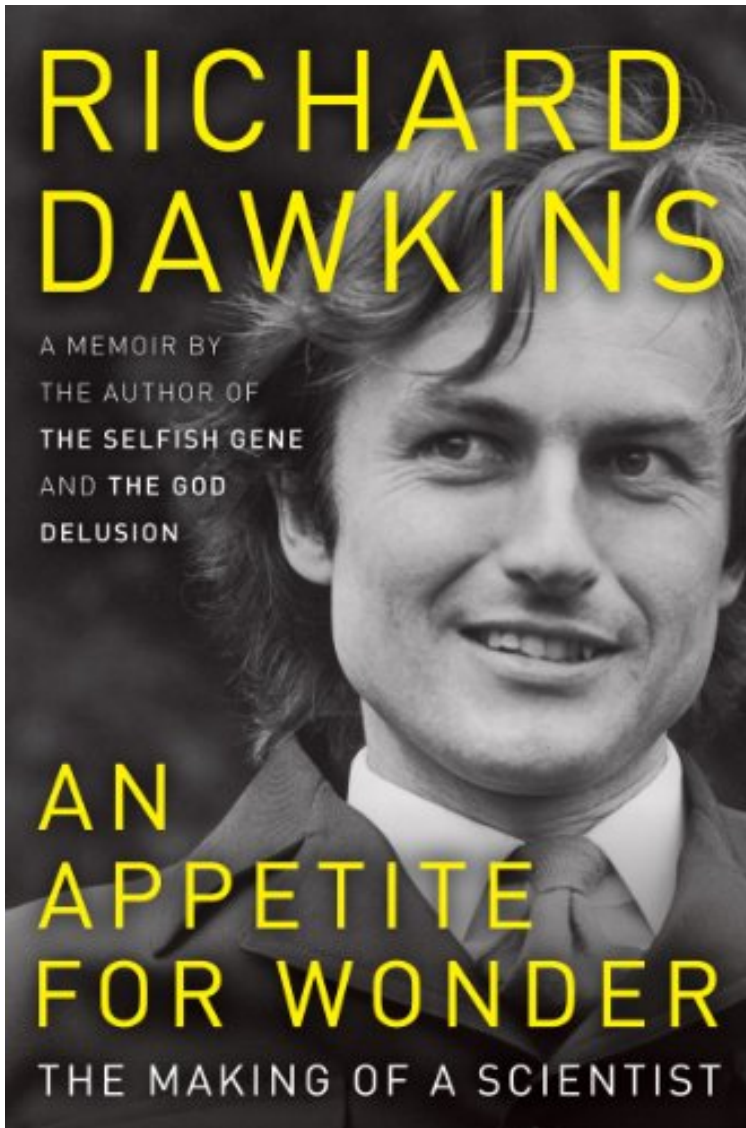


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# An Appetite for Wonder: The Making of a Scientist



*Par Richard Dawkins*  
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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurWith the 2006 publication of The God Delusion, the name Richard Dawkins became a byword for ruthless skepticism and "brilliant, impassioned, articulate, impolite" debate (San Francisco Chronicle). his first memoir offers a more personal view.His first book, The Selfish Gene, caused a seismic shift in the study of biology by proffering the gene-centered view of evolution. It was also in this book that

Dawkins coined the term meme, a unit of cultural evolution, which has itself become a mainstay in contemporary culture.In An Appetite for Wonder, Richard Dawkins shares a rare view into his early life, his intellectual awakening at Oxford, and his path to writing The Selfish Gene. He paints a vivid picture of his

idyllic childhood in colonial Africa, peppered with sketches of his colorful ancestors, charming parents, and the peculiarities of colonial life right after World War II. At boarding school, despite a near-religious encounter with an Elvis record, he began his career as a skeptic by refusing to kneel for prayer in chapel. Despite some inspired teaching throughout primary and secondary school, it was only when he got to Oxford that his intellectual curiosity took full flight. Arriving at Oxford in 1959, when undergraduates "left Elvis behind" for Bach or the Modern Jazz Quartet, Dawkins began to study zoology and was introduced to some of the university's legendary mentors as well as its tutorial system. It's to this unique educational system that Dawkins credits his awakening, as it invited young people to become scholars by encouraging them to pose rigorous questions and scour the library for the latest research rather than textbook "teaching to" any kind of test. His career as a fellow and lecturer at Oxford took an unexpected turn when, in 1973, a serious strike in Britain caused prolonged electricity cuts, and he was forced to pause his computer-based research. Provoked by the then widespread misunderstanding of natural selection known as "group selection" and inspired by the work of William Hamilton, Robert Trivers, and John Maynard Smith, he began to write a book he called, jokingly, "my bestseller." It was, of course, *The Selfish Gene*. Here, for the first time, is an intimate memoir of the childhood and intellectual development of the evolutionary biologist and world-famous atheist, and the story of how he came to write what is widely held to be one of the most important books of the twentieth century.

Revue de presse  
Fantastic. [Offers] a fascinating glimpse of how one of today's most influential scientific minds blossomed into himself. (Maria Popova, Brainpickings.org)  
Surprisingly intimate and moving. He is here to find out what makes us tick: to cut through the nonsense to the real stuff. (The Guardian)  
Dawkins style [is] clear and elegant as usual a personal introduction to an important thinker and populariser of science. provide[s] a superb background to the academic and social climate of postwar British research. (Financial Times)  
The Richard Dawkins that emerges here is a far cry from the strident, abrasive caricature beloved of lazy journalists. There is no score-settling, but a generous appreciation and admiration of the qualities of others, as well as a transparent love of life, literature - and science. (The Independent)  
[Here] we have the kindling of Mr. Dawkins's curiosity, the basis for his unconventionality. (New York Times)  
this isn't Dawkins's version of *My Family and Other Animals*. It's the beauty of ideas that arouses his appetite for wonder: and, more especially, his relentless drive towards the answer. (The Times (UK))  
[An Appetite for Wonder is] a memoir that is funny and modest, absorbing and playful. Dawkins has written a marvelous love letter to science and for this, the book will touch scientists and science-loving persons. an enchanting memoir to read, one that I recommend highly. (NPR)  
charming, boring, brilliant, contradictory, conventional, revolutionary. We leave it perhaps not full of facts or conclusions, but with a feeling of knowing the man. (New York Daily News)  
Richard Dawkins is a hero of mine, so being able to read about how he became the man and the thinker he is, was a particular delight for me. ... Some people get their kicks from Superman's origin story, or Batman's origin story ... But for me, it was Richard Dawkins. (Bill Maher)  
In *An Appetite for Wonder* Dawkins turns his critical analysis inward to reveal how his mind works and what personal events and cultural forces most shaped his thinking. Destined to become a classic in the annals of science autobiography. (Michael Shermer, publisher of *Skeptic* magazine, monthly columnist for *Scientific American*, and author of *The Believing Brain* and *Why Darwin Matters*)  
Skepticism and atheism do not arrive from revelation or authority. In our culture it's a slow thoughtful process... For the modern skeptical/atheist movement, in the beginning -- there was Dawkins and he was wicked good. *An Appetite for Wonder* shows us this beginning. (Penn Jillette, author of *God No!* and *Every Day is an Atheist Holiday*)  
Told with frankness and eloquence, warmth and humor, this is ... a truly entertaining and enlightening read and I recommend it to anyone who wants a better understanding of Dawkins the man and the rightful place of science in our modern world. (Lawrence Krauss, Foundation Professor in the School of Earth and Space Exploration, and Director of the Origins Project at Arizona State University, author of *A Universe from Nothing* and *Physics of Star Trek*)  
Enjoyable from start to finish, this exceptionally accessible book will appeal to science lovers, lovers of autobiographies--and, of course, all of Dawkins's fans, atheists and theists alike. (Library Journal, starred review)  
Well-written, captivating, and filled with fascinating anecdotes. (Publishers Weekly)  
This memoir is destined to be a historical document that will be ceaselessly quoted. (The Daily Beast)  
This first volume of Dawkins's autobiography comes to life when describing the competitive collaboration and excitement among the outstanding ethologists and zoologists at Oxford in the Seventies--which stimulated his most famous book, *The Selfish Gene*. (London Evening Standard)  
Dawkins proves that today he is still an extraordinary thinker, and one who has made an enormous contribution to understanding human nature. This memoir is a fascinating account of one man's attempt to find answers to

some of the most difficult questions posed to mankind. (NPR Books) Presentation de l'auteur With the 2006 publication of *The God Delusion*, the name Richard Dawkins became a byword for ruthless skepticism and "brilliant, impassioned, articulate, impolite" debate (San Francisco Chronicle). His first memoir offers a more personal view. His first book, *The Selfish Gene*, caused a seismic shift in the study of biology by proffering the gene-centered view of evolution. It was also in this book that Dawkins coined the term meme, a unit of cultural evolution, which has itself become a mainstay in contemporary culture. In *An Appetite for Wonder*, Richard Dawkins shares a rare view into his early life, his intellectual awakening at Oxford, and his path to writing *The Selfish Gene*. He paints a vivid picture of his idyllic childhood in colonial Africa, peppered with sketches of his colorful ancestors, charming parents, and the peculiarities of colonial life right after World War II. At boarding school, despite a near-religious encounter with an Elvis record, he began his career as a skeptic by refusing to kneel for prayer in chapel. Despite some inspired teaching throughout primary and secondary school, it was only when he got to Oxford that his intellectual curiosity took full flight. Arriving at Oxford in 1959, when undergraduates "left Elvis behind" for Bach or the Modern Jazz Quartet, Dawkins began to study zoology and was introduced to some of the university's legendary mentors as well as its tutorial system. It's to this unique educational system that Dawkins credits his awakening, as it invited young people to become scholars by encouraging them to pose rigorous questions and scour the library for the latest research rather than textbook "teaching to" any kind of test. His career as a fellow and lecturer at Oxford took an unexpected turn when, in 1973, a serious strike in Britain caused prolonged electricity cuts, and he was forced to pause his computer-based research. Provoked by the then widespread misunderstanding of natural selection known as "group selection" and inspired by the work of William Hamilton, Robert Trivers, and John Maynard Smith, he began to write a book he called, jokingly, "my bestseller." It was, of course, *The Selfish Gene*. Here, for the first time, is an intimate memoir of the childhood and intellectual development of the evolutionary biologist and world-famous atheist, and the story of how he came to write what is widely held to be one of the most important books of the twentieth century.