

Angelina Jolie Butts Heads With Atheist Richard Dawkins Over Santa Claus

Evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins and Oscar-winning actress Angelina Jolie are in a verbal spar over whether or not children should be taught about Santa Claus and fairy tales.

Jolie—who stars in the new film *Maleficent*, a spin on the Sleeping Beauty story—recently said fairy tales play an important role in how she raises her six children.

“There are morals in these stories, and you want a little magic—it’s important to have something that we’re a little bit in awe of,” she told *Psychologies* magazine.

The 39-year-old actress was responding to the 73-year-old scientist’s talk at the Cheltenham Science Festival last week.

“Is it a good thing to go along with the fantasies of childhood, magical as they are?” the father of one asked. “Or should we be fostering a spirit of skepticism? I think it’s rather pernicious to inculcate into a child a view of the world which includes supernaturalism—we get enough of that anyway.”

Dawkins faced a backlash for his comments; former Labour MP Tom Watson even called him a “soulless bore.”

Jolie added: “The other day, one of the kids lost a tooth and I talked about the tooth fairy. Half of them are old enough to think: ‘What are you talking about?’ yet they’re still not sure there isn’t something. And I’m not lying to them. I say, ‘I really can’t tell you. I don’t really know. Mothers are sworn to secrecy.’ “