

## ***Contra Grayling***

**A Christian Response to *Against All Gods* (Oberon Books, 2007)**

**By Peter S. Williams (MA, MPhil)**

A.C. Grayling, Professor of Philosophy at Birkbeck College, University of London, begins his self-described polemic against religion with a question and an answer: ‘Does Religion deserve respect? I argue that it deserves no more respect than any other viewpoint, and not as much as most.’<sup>1</sup> Thereafter Grayling’s critique of ‘all gods’ is primarily a double-barrelled assault upon a) the intellectual respectability of faith and b) the ethical respectability of religious believers and institutions as such.

Concerning the intellectual respectability of faith, Grayling thinks that: ‘some on my own side of the argument here make the mistake of thinking that the dispute about supernaturalistic beliefs is whether they are true or false. Epistemology teaches us that the key point is about rationality.’<sup>2</sup> While ‘epistemology’ does indeed teach the distinction between the truth and the rationality of a belief (consider Alvin Plantinga’s work on the difference between *de facto* and *de jure* objections to Christian theism and how Christians should respond to these different types of objection<sup>3</sup>), this distinction does not justify the claim that the question of truth takes the hindmost. God might exist even if it is irrational to believe in God (just as a certain defendant might be guilty even if the jury would be irrational to convict him on the basis of the data available to them) – an observation that makes the charge of irrationality less interesting and therefore less fundamental than the charge of falsehood. Moreover, if one has a warranted belief that theism is true, one would thereby surely be warranted in thinking that one’s theistic belief was rational (just as if one had good reason to convict a certain defendant one would thereby have good reason to consider one’s belief in his guilt to be rational).

Grayling nevertheless recasts even so traditional a *de facto* objection to theism as the logical problem of evil as a *de jure* objection to its rational respectability: ‘To believe in the existence of (say) a benevolent and omnipotent deity in the face of childhood cancers and mass deaths in tsunamis and earthquakes [is an example of] serious irrationality.’<sup>4</sup> Grayling does nothing to elaborate an actual *argument* to this effect, and he appears to be ignorant of the fact that: ‘philosophers of religion have cast serious doubt on whether there even is any inconsistency involving the appropriate propositions regarding evil and God’s alleged properties.’<sup>5</sup> As William L. Rowe explains:

‘Some philosophers have contended that the existence of evil is *logically inconsistent* with the existence of the theistic God. No one, I think, has succeeded in establishing such an extravagant claim. Indeed, granted incompatibilism, there is a fairly compelling argument for the view that the existence of evil is logically consistent with the existence of the theistic God.’<sup>6</sup>

### **Religion is...**

What, more precisely, is Grayling’s target? Grayling asserts (and as we will see, Grayling is *very good* at simply asserting things) that:

‘by definition a religion is something centred upon belief in the existence of supernatural agencies or entities in the universe; and not merely in their existence, but in their interest in human beings on this planet; and not merely their interest, but their particularly detailed interest in what humans wear, what they eat, when they eat it [etc.]’<sup>7</sup>

This increasingly specific list of characteristics is presumably meant to constitute some sort of too-obvious-to-be-worth-spelling-out argument about the absurdities of thinking that God would be interested in his creation (if he goes to the trouble of existing). However, it also has the effect of suggesting that Grayling has never heard of non-theistic Buddhists, or Deists, or Aristotelians, or Pantheists, or people who are naturalists save for the belief that their mind is more than their brain (for the human spirit or soul of a vegan certainly counts as a supernatural entity interested in human beings and what they eat). In point of fact, it is notoriously difficult to define religion. As Eric S. Waterhouse observed: ‘No definition of religion has ever been framed which touches it’s every aspect in life, and none has found even a considerable measure of general acceptance.’<sup>8</sup>

### **Religious Apologists and Ordinary Believers**

Grayling complains that:

‘Apologists for faith are an evasive community, who seek to avoid or deflect criticism by slipping behind the abstractions of higher theology, a mist-shrouded domain of long words, superfine distinctions and vague subtleties, in some of which God is nothing... and does not even exist... But religion is not theology; it is the practice and outlook of ordinary people into most of whom supernaturalistic beliefs and superstitions were inculcated as children when they could not assess the value of what they were being sold as a world view; and it is the falsity of this, and its consequences for a suffering world, that critics attack.’<sup>9</sup>

This complaint requires some untangling. Certain apologists are criticised for defending beliefs (such as the non-existence of God) that by no stretch of the imagination represent the beliefs of the ordinary believer. I have no problem with criticising such beliefs, or such apologists. Apologists *in general* are criticised for defending the faith by using: a) abstractions, b) long-words that non-experts don’t understand, c) super-fine distinctions and d) vague subtleties. However, abstractions, technical language, fine distinctions and even vague subtleties are the natural stock in trade of philosophers, scientists and indeed all scholars who defend contested viewpoints upon the world. Grayling himself is not above using abstractions (‘religion’, as well as the behaviour of its adherents, is an ‘abstraction’ in Grayling’s polemic); long-words that non-experts don’t understand (try out ‘inspissated gloaming’<sup>10</sup> for size); super-fine distinctions (like that between atheism and naturalism); or vague subtleties (into which category one might very well put every hint of an argument in Grayling’s book). Apologists should of course do their best to ground their abstractions in sufficient data with convincing logic, to explain their terminology for the un-initiated, to avoid distinctions that are *so fine* that they become ‘distinctions without a difference’ (distinctions that are precisely fine enough are a

mark of philosophical excellence) and to retain vague subtleties for subjects upon which they are vague and/or which truly require subtle understanding. From Grayling's tone one imagines that he would accuse all religious apologists of failing to live up to these intellectual responsibilities. Unfortunately, he provides no evidence to back up what I would consider a hasty generalization at best and a straw man at worst.

Personal experience leads me to think that Grayling would be surprised at just how much theology and apologetics is part-and-parcel of even the 'ordinary' religious believer's life and faith. Once again, it is interesting to observe how Grayling concentrates his attention upon the purportedly negative consequences of all religion for a suffering world but says very little about the supposed falsity of all beliefs concerning the supernatural. Finally, I doubt that Grayling's assumption about supernatural beliefs being inculcated into children who cannot assess the value of what they are being sold as a world view is born out by the evidence. For example, as the 2005 *Dare to Engage* questionnaire revealed, a large proportion of A-level students who have spent their entire lives being brought up in religious households and communities profess to being undecided about buying into that faith tradition.

### **The Evils of Religion**

Grayling defends his book's polemical tone: 'if the tone of the polemics here seems combative, it is because the contest between religious and non-religious outlooks is such an important one, a matter literally of life and death, and there can be no temporising.'<sup>11</sup> I would have thought that the more important the issue, the more important it would be not to alienate those with whom you disagree by calling them names. And as Grayling observes: 'The debate has become an acerbic one...'<sup>12</sup> One would think that an acerbic debate is likely to involve more heat than light. Indeed, Grayling acknowledges that: 'We might enhance the respect others accord us if we are kind, considerate... truthful... aspirants of knowledge... seekers after the good of humankind, and the like' and he admits (pace the likes of Richard Dawkins) that: 'Neither set of characteristics has any essential connection with the presence or absence of specific belief systems, given that there are nice and nasty Christians, nice and nasty Muslims, nice and nasty atheists.'<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, Grayling is keen to: 'criticise religions both as belief systems and as institutional phenomena which, as the dismal record of history and the present both testify, have done and continue to do much harm in the world, whatever good can be claimed for them besides.'<sup>14</sup> This is an odd criticism which amounts to saying that even if religion does overwhelmingly more good than evil, it is reasonable to critique religion on the basis of the harm that it does cause. That's rather like conducting a debate about the merits of public transport by pointing out that trains sometimes crash, whilst being prepared to acknowledge that trains are much safer than cars.

Grayling points out that: 'no wars have been fought, pogroms carried out, or burnings conducted at the stake, over rival theories in biology or astrophysics.'<sup>15</sup> This may be, strictly speaking, true; however, what one makes of this observation rather depends upon one's view of sundry acts that have been inspired and/or justified by various scientific theories (anyone for scientific racism, eugenics, or abortion?). To respond that there is a difference between a science being used or twisted to justify something and science *actually* justifying it is to open the door for religious believers to make a parallel defence of religion.

On the specific issue of with-burning, mentioned by Grayling (an issue that should of course be understood within its historical context), social scientist Philip J. Sampson observes that: ‘the number of witchcraft prosecutions has often been greatly exaggerated, and we now know that the Inquisition tended to moderate rather than incite them.’<sup>16</sup> Historian William Monter writes that: ‘the mildness of Inquisitorial judgments on witchcraft contrasts strikingly with the severity of secular judges throughout northern Europe.’<sup>17</sup> Indeed, according to historian Hugh Trevor-Roper: ‘in general the established church was opposed to the persecution [of witches].’<sup>18</sup>

With Keith Ward, I think it clear that: ‘religion does some harm and some good, but most people, faced with the evidence, will probably agree that it does a great deal more good than harm, and that we would be much worse off as a species without any religion.’<sup>19</sup> This is not to deny that Christians (even ‘born-again’ Christians of intrinsic rather than extrinsic religious belief) have done many terrible things throughout history (we are, after all, sinners), but as Ward argues: ‘There are some unequivocally evil religious beliefs [and] there are also some unequivocally evil non-religious beliefs. What makes beliefs evil is not religion, but hatred, ignorance, the will to power, and indifference to others.’<sup>20</sup> Religion should no more be tarred with the brush of its worst examples than should politics or science. As William Wilberforce said: ‘Just as we would not discard liberty because people abuse it, nor patriotism, nor courage, nor reason, speech, and memory – though all abused – no more should we eliminate true religion because self-seekers have perverted it.’<sup>21</sup>

In fact, some forms of religion at least do a great deal of good. As secular humanist Richard Norman cautions:

‘I recognize that religion has inspired not only some of the worst but also some for the best human achievements. It has inspired social and political movements to improve the lot of human beings, such as in the abolition of the slave trade, the civil rights movement, campaigns for peace and against world poverty and famine. It has inspired many of the greatest cultural and artistic achievements... To present religion and its works in a wholly negative light would in my view be hopelessly unbalanced.’<sup>22</sup>

All of this aside, as Tom Price observes:

‘it seems to me that the entire argument commits what we might call “The Guilty by association fallacy.” Which is that religion is assumed to be incorrect and unbelievable because some people become radicalised. That is just bad logical structure. Whether or not religion leads to violence, doesn't effect whether or not it is true. The resurrection of Jesus as an event, the evidence which you are presented with and asked to base Christian belief upon, is completely independent from the behaviour of his followers. Alister McGrath gave the example of doctors, “Just because we saw what Harold Shipman did, doesn't mean that we say that all doctors are bad.”’<sup>23</sup>

### **Should Faith Command Respect?**

According to Grayling:

‘It is time to refuse to tiptoe around people who claim respect... on the grounds that they have a religious faith... as if it were noble to believe in unsupported claims and ancient superstitions. It is neither. Faith is a commitment to belief contrary to evidence and reason... to believe something in the face of evidence and against reason – to believe something by faith – is ignoble, irresponsible and ignorant, and merits the opposite of respect.’<sup>24</sup>

I wholeheartedly agree that a commitment to belief *contrary* to evidence and reason is ignoble. I wholeheartedly disagree that this is an accurate description of my Christian faith. Grayling’s description of faith commits the straw man fallacy. The straw man fallacy is committed ‘when an arguer distorts an opponent’s position for the purpose of making it [easier] to destroy, refutes the distorted position, and concludes that his opponent’s actual view is thereby demolished.’<sup>25</sup> Grayling’s definition of faith is a *straw man* because while irrational beliefs are easy to critique, few Christians would accept Grayling’s easy to critique definition of ‘faith’ as one that applies to them. It is certainly not how the Bible portrays faith. Consider what the Bible says about evidence and reason:

- The cosmos is the creation of a rational God who made humans in his own ‘image’ (Genesis 1:27).
- God says to humans: ‘let us *reason* together’ (Isaiah 1:18).
- The Prophet Samuel stood before Israel and said: ‘I am going to confront you with *evidence* before the Lord’ (1 Samuel 12:7).
- According to Jesus, the greatest commandment includes the requirement to ‘love the Lord your God... *with all your mind*’ (Matthew 22:37).
- Jesus said: ‘Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least *believe on the evidence* of the miracles themselves’ (John 14:11).
- Paul wrote of ‘*defending* and *confirming* the gospel’ (Philippians 1:7) and he ‘*reasoned*... from the scriptures, *explaining* and *proving*’ (Acts 17:2-3).
- Christians are commanded: ‘always be prepared to *give an answer* to everyone who asks you to give the *reason* for the hope that you have... with gentleness and respect’ (1 Peter 3:15).

The Greek translated as ‘reason’ is ‘*apologia*’ - from which we get the word ‘apologetics’ – which means ‘reasoned defence’. Apologetics is the art of giving a reasoned defence for Christianity. The New Testament portrays apologetics as a part of ‘spiritual warfare’ wherein Christians ‘*demolish arguments* and every pretension that sets itself up against the *knowledge* of God...’ (2 Corinthians 10:5) Apologetics uses scholarship of many kinds, which all involve a commitment to the ‘laws of reason’ at the heart of philosophy. As C.S. Lewis wrote: ‘Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered.’<sup>26</sup> Tom Price observes that: ‘when the New Testament talks about faith positively it *only* uses words derived from the Greek root [*pistis*] which means “to be persuaded.”’<sup>27</sup> While it is true that Colossians 2:8 warns Christians against being taken ‘captive by philosophy and empty deceit according to human tradition... and not according to Christ’, this warning ‘is not a prohibition against philosophy as such, but against false philosophy... In fact, Paul is warning against a specific false philosophy, a kind of

incipient Gnosticism... the definite article “this” in [the] Greek indicates a particular philosophy.’<sup>28</sup>

Astonishingly, Grayling references the New Testament story of doubting Thomas (John 20:24-31) - who refused to accept the eye-witness testimony of ten friends as to the reality of Jesus’ resurrection (but who accepted this reality following his own resurrection encounter) - as supporting his straw-man re-definition of faith. However, in this story Jesus commends people who believe *without having to see for themselves*, not those who believe *without evidence*, let alone *against the evidence*. Before Jesus offered himself to Thomas for a personal examination, Thomas was hardly being asked to believe without evidence! Moreover, the reason John gives for recounting these events is that they are *evidence* for the truth of the gospel (John 20:30-31).

Grayling asserts that: ‘it is the business of all religious doctrines to keep their votaries in a state of intellectual infancy (how else do they keep absurdities seeming credible?).’<sup>29</sup> Unable to imagine an intellectually mature person who does not think all religion absurd, Grayling deduces that all religious believers must be intellectually immature. He is apparently untroubled by the observation that at least some religious believers are intellectually mature thinkers. For example, secular philosopher John Gray pays contemporary religious scholars the following compliment:

‘One cannot engage in dialogue with religious thinkers in Britain today without quickly discovering that they are, on the whole, more intelligent, better educated and strikingly more freethinking than unbelievers (as evangelical atheists still incongruously describe themselves).’<sup>30</sup>

According to Gray, accusations like Grayling’s say more about the accuser than the accused:

‘Karl Marx and John Stuart Mill were adamant that religion would die out with the advance of science. That has not come about, and there is not the remotest prospect of it happening in the foreseeable future. Yet the idea that religion can be eradicated from human life remains an article of faith among humanists. As secular ideology is dumped throughout the world, they are left disorientated and gawping. It is this painful cognitive dissonance, I believe, that accounts for the particular rancour and intolerance of many secular thinkers. Unable to account for the irrepressible vitality of religion, they can react only with puritanical horror and stigmatize it as irrational.’<sup>31</sup>

A.J. Ayer was reportedly ‘puzzled by the fact that philosophers whom he respected intellectually, such as Michael Dummett, had religious beliefs’, but at least he ‘had to admit that this was the case.’<sup>32</sup> James Lazarus has publicly reconsidered his prior belief that it is impossible to be reasonable and be a believer:

‘the claim that a reasonable person cannot believe in God can be seriously questioned... I have personally met many believers that I would call very rational, reasonable, and intelligent people. I would not merely call them rational, reasonable, and intelligent in general, but I would go on to say that they are rational, reasonable, and intelligent with respect to their belief in God.’<sup>33</sup>

## Mere Assertion

‘Merely asserting something, no matter how loudly, doesn’t make it true. Confident assertion is no substitute for argument...’ - Nigel Warburton<sup>34</sup>

One of the principle faults of *Against All God’s* is Grayling’s repeated indulgence in demonstrably false, or at least unsubstantiated, assertion-making. For example, Grayling simply asserts that ‘Religion is a man-made device, not least of oppression and control.’<sup>35</sup> No evidence or arguments are given in support of this sweeping generalization. Then again, Grayling asserts that the story of Jesus’ birth is on a par with other Middle Eastern tales, such as ‘Hercules and his labours.’<sup>36</sup> There is no engagement with the relevant historical scholarship here. There is, moreover, no engagement with the many obvious *dis-analogies* between the *historical* witness concerning Jesus on the one hand<sup>37</sup>, and Grayling’s generic *mythological* ‘ancient story of a deity impregnating a mortal woman who then gives birth to a heroic figure whose deeds earn him a place in heaven’<sup>38</sup> on the other. For example, Jesus is not presented by the New Testament as having earned his place in heaven by his deeds. If anything, he is presented as ‘earning’ *our* place in heaven. Tales of gods making mortal women pregnant with heroic demi-gods (and Jesus is no *demi*-god in the gospels) may have been common in the Middle East, but they were not at all common in the *Jewish* context which gave birth to Christianity. Grayling’s attack on belief in Mary’s virginal conception is pure bluster:

‘ask a Christian why the ancient story of a deity impregnating a mortal woman... is false as applied to Zeus and his many paramours... but true as applied to God, Mary and Jesus... Do not expect a rational reply; an appeal to faith will be enough, because with faith anything goes.’<sup>39</sup>

Unfortunately for Grayling, this sweeping generalization is demonstrably false. For example, whilst Professor of the History and Philosophy of Religion at King’s College, London University, Christian philosopher Keith Ward wrote a paper on ‘Evidence for the Virgin Birth’, in which he justified belief in the nativity story *with evidence*:

‘The strongest argument for the veracity of these accounts is that it is very hard to see why they should have been invented, when they would have been so shocking to Jewish ears... there are two independent sources of the virgin birth stories; and that increases the probability that they were founded on historical recollections.’<sup>40</sup>

Whether or not Ward’s historical arguments are sound (I think they are), the point is that Grayling’s is plainly wrong about Christian belief in the virgin birth having nothing to do with evidence. Some Christians may believe in the virgin birth without *direct* evidence (some might even believe without *indirect* evidence). But some Christians at least hold this belief because they think the evidence directly merits their doing so.

Of course, Grayling dismisses the idea that ‘it is reasonable for people to believe that the gods suspend the laws of nature occasionally.’<sup>41</sup> If the plural is replaced with the singular, this is a belief that I hold and which I believe to be reasonable. Grayling offers me no reason to think that I am wrong; he simply

(indirectly) *asserts* that I am. Likewise, in *The Meaning of Things* Grayling ironically asserts that: ‘The happy fact about miracles is that they require no support in the way of evidence or rational evaluation.’<sup>42</sup> As a generalization this claim is simply false. Jesus and the New Testament writers alike appealed to Jesus’ miracles as evidence for the truth of his personal claims precisely because there was eye-witness testimony for their occurrence. From then until the present day Christian apologists have presented *evidence based arguments* for miracle claims, most especially for the miracle claim that Jesus rose from the dead. Whether or not these arguments are *sound* is besides the point at hand. The mere fact that arguments are *offered* is enough to sink Grayling’s claim. Philosophically speaking, it seems to me that if belief in God is reasonable, then a belief in miracles is reasonable, at least in principle. As Ward argued in his paper on the Virgin Birth:

‘If there is a God... all the laws of physics and chemistry and so on must be held in being by him. We may well hope that he will continue to allow such laws to operate; otherwise we would never quite know what was going to happen next. But there is no reason at all why he might not sometimes do things which are not predictable from the laws of physics or biology alone. God can do what he wants with his own universe.’<sup>43</sup>

Since it seems to me that belief in God is reasonable, it therefore seems to me that belief in miracles is (in principle) reasonable. One of the reasons it seems to me that belief in God is reasonable is that it offers the best explanation for the existence of the natural world. Indeed, Grayling suggests that perhaps religious people:

‘need to believe in [supernatural] agencies because they cannot otherwise understand how there can be a natural world – as if invoking ‘Chaos and old night’ (in one Middle Eastern mythology the progenitors of all things) explained anything, let alone the universe’s existence. Doing so might satisfy a pathological metaphysical need for what Paul Davies calls “the self-levitating super-turtle,” but is obviously enough not worth discussing.’<sup>44</sup>

I admit that I cannot, besides a belief in some sort of a god, understand how there can be a natural world. However, I do not admit that this is due to some peculiar failure of imagination on my part. Grayling’s comments exhibit a frankly astonishing refusal to engage with the complex philosophical issues surrounding various versions of the cosmological argument defended by leading contemporary philosophers of religion (e.g. W. David Beck, William Lane Craig, Alexander R. Pruss, Robert C. Koons, the list goes on); an evasion which substitutes armchair psycho-analysis and straw-man references to mythology for rational dialogue. The question is whether *anyone* (not just ‘religious people’) can understand how there can be a natural world without a supernatural cause. Cosmological arguments, as the name suggests, *argue* that they cannot, because the most plausible understanding of the existence of the natural world is in fact that there is more to reality than the natural world. Against these arguments, Grayling marshals an unsophisticated chronological snobbery (which C.S. Lewis defined as: ‘the uncritical acceptance of the intellectual climate of our own age and the assumption that whatever has gone out of date is on that count discredited’<sup>45</sup>) and an offhanded intimation that all theists suffer from some sort of mental block that prevents them sharing in the naturalist’s superior insight into the whys and wherefores of reality. What understanding of how there can be a natural world does Grayling



offer? None. He simply asserts that naturalism is true: ‘no atheist should call himself or herself one... A more appropriate term is “naturalist”, denoting one who takes it that the universe is a natural realm, governed by nature’s laws. This properly implies that there is nothing supernatural in the universe...’<sup>46</sup> It certainly *implies* this conclusion; it does not *justify* it. Grayling does write that: ‘people with theistic beliefs should be called supernaturalists, and it can be left to them to attempt to refute the findings of physics, chemistry and the biological sciences in an effort to justify their alternative claim that the universe was created, and is run, by supernatural beings.’<sup>47</sup> However, this amounts to yet another assertion because, *at best*, Grayling is simply *assuming* that theism shoulders a burden of proof the atheist does not.

It was another British philosopher, Antony Flew (who recently became a theist<sup>48</sup>), who most famously urged that the ‘onus of proof must lie upon the theist’,<sup>49</sup> and that unless compelling reasons for God’s existence could be given there should be a ‘presumption of atheism.’ However, by ‘atheism’ Flew meant merely ‘non-theism’, a non-standard definition of ‘atheism’ that includes agnosticism but excludes atheism as commonly understood. The presumption of atheism is therefore not particularly interesting unless (as appears to be Grayling’s assumption) it really is the presumption of *atheism* rather than the presumption of agnosticism. However, the former is far harder to defend than the latter:

‘the “presumption of atheism” demonstrates a rigging of the rules of philosophical debate in order to play into the hands of the atheist, who himself makes a truth claim. Alvin Plantinga correctly argues that the atheist does not treat the statements ‘God exists’ and ‘God does not exist’ in the same manner. The atheist assumes that if one has no evidence for God’s existence, then one is obligated to believe that God does not exist - whether or not one has evidence *against* God’s existence. What the atheist fails to see is that atheism is just as much a claim to know something (“God does not exist”) as theism (“God exists”). Therefore, the atheist’s denial of God’s existence needs just as much substantiation as does the theist’s claim; the atheist must give plausible reasons for rejecting God’s existence... in the absence of evidence for God’s existence, agnosticism, not atheism, is the logical presumption. Even if arguments for God’s existence do not persuade, atheism should not be presumed because atheism is not neutral; pure agnosticism is. Atheism is justified only if there is sufficient evidence against God’s existence.’<sup>50</sup>

As Scott Shalkowski writes: ‘suffice it to say that if there were no evidence at all for belief in God, this would [at best] legitimize merely agnosticism unless there is evidence *against* the existence of God.’<sup>51</sup>

Then again, why would the theist *need* to refute any of the findings of modern science? On the one hand Grayling does not really say *what* he takes the findings of modern science to be; on the other hand he does not explain *why* he thinks those supposed findings are in tension with any particular religious belief. He does explain that he does not take Intelligent Design theory to be among the findings of modern science (as some, including myself, would); but Grayling’s definition of ID is a straw man (he confuses it with Creationism<sup>52</sup> and inaccurately labels it an argument from ignorance<sup>53</sup>), and his engagement with Michael Behe’s argument from bio-molecular irreducible complexity is slight, to say the least.<sup>54</sup>

Grayling writes that: ‘In contrast to the utter certainties of faith, a humanist has a humbler conception of the nature and current extent of knowledge. All the

enquiries that human intelligence conducts into enlarging knowledge makes progress always at the expense of generating new questions.<sup>55</sup> I find myself in sympathy with Grayling's 'humble' approach to knowledge; but I wonder if Grayling is even open to the *possibility* that some of those questions thrown up by the progress of knowledge (especially scientific knowledge) might have 'God' as their true answer? If Grayling is not open to this possibility, his protestations of epistemological humbleness are apt to ring false. If he is open to this possibility, then one wonders what to make of his assertions about the supposed 'slow but bloody retreat of religion'<sup>56</sup> in the face of scientific progress? At best, these assertions would have to indicate a tentative, falsifiable inference from available evidence rather than a dogmatic assumption that science and religion are necessarily at odds with religion on the losing side.

In point of fact, Grayling's portrayal of the 'slow but bloody retreat of religion'<sup>57</sup> is an academic anachronism. As Alister McGrath reports: 'The idea that science and religion are in perpetual conflict is no longer taken seriously by any major historian of science'<sup>58</sup> Indeed, according to atheist Michael Ruse:

'Most people think that science and religion are, and necessarily must be, in conflict. In fact, this 'warfare' metaphor, so beloved of nineteenth-century rationalists, has only a tenuous application to reality. For most of the history of Christianity, it was the Church that was the home of science... it was not until the seventeenth century, at the time of the Counter-Reformation, that the Catholic Church showed true hostility to science, when it condemned Galileo for his promulgation of Copernican heliocentrism. (Copernicus himself had been not merely a good Catholic, but a priest.) By the nineteenth century, the Catholic Church had reverted to its traditional role... it is true that the arrival of evolution, particularly in the form of Charles Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, put this tolerance to severe test. But without denying that there were strong opinions on both sides, the truth seems to be that much of the supposed controversy was a function of the imagination of non-believers (especially Thomas Henry Huxley and his friends), who were determined to slay theological dragons whether they existed or not.'<sup>59</sup>

Grayling notes that 'Supernaturalists are fond of claiming that some irreligious people turn to prayer when in mortal danger, but naturalists can reply that supernaturalists typically repose great faith in science when they find themselves in (say) a hospital or an aeroplane – and with far greater frequency.'<sup>60</sup> In other words, naturalists may be inconsistent, but theists are more inconsistent. Unfortunately for Grayling, the naturalist who prays in extremis and the supernaturalist who trusts in science in their day to day lives are simply not at all analogous. The naturalist who prays is someone whose action coheres with beliefs that are in contradiction to their everyday beliefs. The supernaturalist who goes into hospital sees no inconsistency between trusting a surgeon and trusting in God, and why should they? Grayling admits that: 'supernaturalists can claim that science itself is a gift of god, and thus justify doing so.'<sup>61</sup> As Alvin Plantinga writes: 'Modern science arose within the bosom of Christian theism; it is a shining example of the powers of reason with which God haws created us; it is a spectacular display of the image of God in us human beings. So Christians are committed to taking science and the deliverances of contemporary science with the utmost seriousness.'<sup>62</sup> However, Grayling wants to remind believers that Karl Popper said that: 'a theory that explains everything explains nothing.'<sup>63</sup> This remark is supposed to reveal the folly of the supernaturalist

position. Grayling apparently (it is impossible to be certain) has something like the following argument in mind:

- 1) A supernaturalist who trusts anything (or perhaps everything) that science tells us is either contradicting their worldview or not
- 2) If they are contradicting their worldview, their worldview cannot be held consistently and should be shelved
- 3) If they are not contradicting their worldview, this can only be because their worldview is compatible with whatever the findings of science are or might be
- 4) But a worldview that is compatible with whatever the findings of science are or might be explains everything and therefore explains nothing
- 5) A worldview that explains nothing should be shelved
- 6) Therefore, either way, supernaturalism should be shelved

There are several problems with this argument. First, if a person cannot consistently live out their worldview on occasion does this *necessarily* mean that their worldview should be shelved (or that it is false)? Should an atheist shelve their atheism the moment they find themselves praying? Consistently un-liveable worldviews are suspect, but un-liveability is a matter of degree, and is at best only indirectly related to the rationality or truth of a worldview. Second, if a supernaturalist is not inconsistent in visiting hospital they are not thereby contradicting anything that they believe science truly has to say about the world; but this does not mean that their worldview is necessarily consistent with *anything* that science might truthfully say about reality. Religious beliefs can and do involve truth-claims that have the potential to conflict with scientific knowledge. For example, the truth-claim that Jesus was resurrected would be in conflict with science if archaeologists ever demonstrably discovered Jesus' bones. There was even a recent, if academically derided and much debunked, claim to this effect.<sup>64</sup> Finally, Grayling applies Poppers remarks out of context - the context being scientific theorising. Metaphysical theories cannot simply be assumed to be subject to the same criteria as scientific theories. Indeed, Popper's remark has to be understood within the context of his falsificationist philosophy of science, a philosophy now largely abandoned by philosophers of science. Hence, even doing our best to construct the sort of argument Grayling seems to be advancing when he quotes Popper, we find nothing of any substance. Of course, Grayling might be able to construct a more substantial argument to fill out his Popperian place holder; but the very fact that we are forced to do the job for him reveals just how dependent upon assertion his polemic is.

### **Religion and the Public Sphere**

‘Tolerance is a rare and important virtue. It has its limits, but they are usually drawn too tightly and in the wrong places.’ – A.C. Grayling<sup>65</sup>

Grayling writes: ‘It is time to reverse the prevailing notion that religious commitment is intrinsically deserving of respect, and that it should be handled with kid gloves and protected by custom and in some cases law against criticism and ridicule.’<sup>66</sup> I would agree that it is not religious commitment *per se* that deserves respect; but rather *the person* with a religious commitment who deserves respect, and whose commitment (all things being equal) should therefore be respected, that is, at least *tolerated* in a free society. As Grayling writes: ‘The point to make in opposition to the predictable

response of religious believers is that *human individuals merit respect first and foremost as human individuals.*<sup>67</sup> Christianity agrees with Grayling on this point; there is no basis in Christian theology for valuing one person more highly than another, certainly not on the basis of what they believe:

‘Shared humanity [and the Christian would add ‘being made in the image of God’] is the ultimate basis of all person-to person and group-to-group relationships, and views which premise differences between human beings as the basis of moral consideration, most especially those that involve claims to possession by one group of greater truth, holiness, or the like, start in absolutely the wrong place.’<sup>68</sup>

As a Christian I say, ‘Amen’. Grayling’s point may have bite against some religions, but is in fundamental agreement with Christianity. Indeed, Grayling’s position is an expression of Humanism that derives from the Christian roots of Humanism in the Renaissance (and ultimately, of course, within the Bible), with scholars such as the Dutch humanist and theologian Desiderius Erasmus. Grayling writes:

‘It is time to demand of believers that they take their personal choices and preferences in these non-rational and too often dangerous matters into the private sphere, like their sexual proclivities. Everyone is free to believe what they want, providing they do not bother (or coerce, or kill) others... it is time to demand and apply a right for the rest of us to non-interference by religious persons and organizations – a right to be free of proselytisation and the efforts of self-selected minority groups to impose their own choice of morality and practice on those who do not share their outlook.’<sup>69</sup>

I can certainly agree with Grayling that our democratic system could be better constructed to the end of representing the views of the population and to deciding issues on the merit of relevant arguments. However, we do live in a democracy, and there is hardly a question of religious minorities *imposing* their own choice of morality and practice on those who do not share their outlook. (Indeed, quite the opposite is often the case, as the recent debate about Catholic adoption agencies demonstrates.<sup>70</sup>) Grayling may well complain about: ‘people of religious faith, who take themselves to have an unquestionable right to respect for the faith they adhere to, and a right to advance, if not indeed impose (because they claim to know the truth, remember) their views on others.’<sup>71</sup> However, as a Christian, it is not so much *my faith* that I think has a right to be respected, as *my person* as a human being who has a right to respect. This is not a right that excludes dissent or robust intellectual questioning from non-believers. Nor does it exclude artistic polemics by comedians, cartoonists, script-writers and others. However, it does extend to the right to expect detractors not to engage in personal *ad hominem* attacks, or to attack straw man caricatures of my position. This right is in fact no more than the expectation that those who want to criticise my beliefs should be held to the same standards of civil academic discourse as should apply when the boot is, so to speak, on the other foot.

Moreover, Grayling clearly takes himself to have a right to advance (and even, as we will see, to impose) *his* views on others precisely because *he* claims to know the truth (at least to know the truth better than any religious believer knows it). Complaining about religious believers engaging in precisely the same type of activity, for precisely the same reason, mires Grayling in a double standard (this mire depends

the more one reads of Grayling's polemic). Ironically (and leaving aside Grayling's assertion that all religious beliefs are non-rational preferences), in his advocacy of the belief that 'Everyone is free to believe what they want, providing they do not bother (or coerce, or kill) others...' <sup>72</sup>, Grayling is both a) *bothering* religious people by writing a polemic against their beliefs (something I am happy for him to do), and b) advocating *coercing* religious believers. His position seems to be that people should be free to hold whatever religious beliefs they like without fear of coercion etc., *just as long as they don't believe that their beliefs should accompany them into public sphere*, in which case they should be coerced not to do so. Since Grayling's beliefs entail the coercion of others, *according to his own criteria* he should not be free to believe as he does! Grayling has clearly drawn the limits of tolerance too tightly, and has thereby fallen within his own definition of intolerance: 'an intolerant person... wishes others to live as he thinks they ought and... seeks to impose his practices and beliefs upon them.'<sup>73</sup> Grayling's suggestion goes far beyond his previous affirmation, in *The Meaning of Things*, that: 'The only coercion should be that of argument...'<sup>74</sup>

If Grayling wants to believe that people should be coerced not to bring their religious beliefs into the public sphere, he should accept that people are free to believe that people should be free to bring their religious beliefs with them into the public sphere. Grayling can't have it both ways without falling foul of a self-contradictory, self-excepting double standard. Indeed, Grayling adopts another self-excepting rule when he pleads for 'a right to be free of proselytisation' – for what is *Against All God's* but an act of proselytisation for secular humanism? Surely everyone should have the right to invite public debate concerning their own worldview; and equally everyone should have a right not to read, listen to, watch or engage in conversation concerning such issues when it is offered. For example, Jehovah Witnesses and Secular Humanists alike should, I believe, have the right to knock at my door offering literature and discussion (not that the latter ever do). And I should have the right to invite them in for a chat, or to politely send them away, as I see fit. Grayling says nothing about the rights of the religious not to be proselytised by the non-religious (his proposed rights therefore discriminate against the religious). Let me be clear, I don't want any such right - I want secular humanists to be free to write public books like *Against All God's*; but in return it seems only fair to expect the right of public reply.

Grayling affirms the need to 'return religious commitment to the private sphere...'<sup>75</sup> Unfortunately there are at least some forms of religious belief which are *essentially* public-minded. For example, Christianity is by its very nature both a missionary religion and a religion that takes serving others seriously. Such beliefs simply *cannot* be relegated to the private sphere whilst remaining themselves. One cannot simply ban the public proclamation of the 'gospel' message, or public acts of Christian charity, without thereby effectively banning Christianity itself. If Grayling is really committed to excluding all religion from the public sphere, both demanding and applying a right of the non-religious to 'non-interference', he is therefore necessarily committed to banning Christianity.

[Addendum: In a recent radio discussion with Grayling I was pleased to find him in a rather more liberal sounding frame of mind, but I was bemused to discover he thought that 'proselytisation' was synonymous with 'brainwashing', which is certainly not the dictionary definition of the term! cf. A.C. Grayling & Peter S. Williams, 'The God Argument' <http://www.bethinking.org/who-are-you-god/advanced/unbelievable-a-c-graylings-the-god-argument.htm> / <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/proselytize>]

## I Don't Like the Cut of Your Jib

Grayling offers an evidence free psycho-analysis of religious believers who: 'enter the public domain wearing or sporting immediately obvious visual statements of their religious affiliation...' <sup>76</sup> According to Grayling:

'one at least of their reasons for doing so is to be accorded the overriding identity of a votary of that religion, with the associated implied demand that they are therefore to be given some form of special treatment including respect... although eccentricities of dress and belief were one of little account in our society, when personal religious commitment was more reserved to the private sphere – where it properly belongs – than its politicisation of late has made it.' <sup>77</sup>

However, it is not hard to imagine other motives besides the one Grayling attributes, and one wonders whether Grayling would say the same things about wearing the colours of one's home football team, or nation. If wearing an immediately obvious visual statement of one's religious association is a political act, is it to be frowned upon *on that account alone*? In which case wouldn't wearing union-jack swimming trunks on the beach – especially abroad – be equally suspect? And if the latter suggestion is a *reduction absurdum* of the former, is the suspect nature of the political act in question a matter of its religious content alone? In which case is Grayling advocating that we repudiate any and all religious expression, however minor? Or is the purported problem here a matter of degree? For there is an obvious difference between wearing a small cross on a chain on the one hand and carrying a full-sized cross through the streets at Easter on the other. Does Grayling want to enforce a ban against both forms of expression, or only the latter? Grayling is rather vague about just how illiberal he is here.

Nevertheless, Grayling's sweepingly illiberal attitude to religion verges upon paranoia. He asserts that: 'When any of these imprisoning ideologies are on the back foot and/or in the minority, they present sweet faces to those they wish to seduce: the kiss of friendship in the parish church, the summer camp for young communists in the 1930's. But give them the levers of power and they are the Taliban, the Inquisition, the Stasi.' <sup>78</sup> No wonder Grayling thinks we should be tough on religion and tough on the causes of religion. A zero tolerance approach is apparently the only way to save Western civilization from a Church of England Inquisition! Comedian Eddie Izzard once performed a hilarious act which involved just such an inquisition, featuring 'Church of England cake or death', in which the religious authorities forced people to choose between a nice slice of cake or death. In other words, it's hard to take Grayling's sweeping paranoia seriously. Against this, Grayling would no doubt reply that: 'in its concessive, modest, palliative modern form Christianity is a recent and highly modified version of what, for most of its history, has been an often violent and always oppressive ideology... a medieval monk who woke today... would not be able to recognise the faith that bears the same name as his own.' <sup>79</sup> While it is certainly a pity we have no medieval monks to whom to pose this question, it could be considered to be something of a red herring. Perhaps pre-reformation (and counter-reformation) medieval Christianity was aberrant *by the standards of authentic New Testament Christianity*, which is after all the only standard that truly counts. But if Grayling is right about contemporary Christianity having at least one form that is an

aberration in its concessive and modest nature, then he is wrong about all religion being on a par with the Stasi. Grayling can't have it both ways.

### **Can an Atheist be a Fundamentalist?**

Grayling thinks not, but I beg to differ. Grayling is annoyed by:

‘Religious apologists [who] charge the non-religious with being “fundamentalists” if they attack religion too robustly, without seeming to notice the irony of employing, as a term of abuse, a word which principally applies to the too-common tendencies of their own outlook. Can a view which is not a belief but a rejection of a certain kind of belief really be “fundamentalist”? Of course not...’<sup>80</sup>

However, Grayling himself points out that being non-religious, or more specifically being an ‘atheist’, is at best a partial description of a broader non-religious worldview: ‘As it happens, no atheist should call himself or herself one... A more appropriate term is “naturalist”, denoting one who takes it that the universe is a natural realm...’<sup>81</sup> In popular usage ‘atheist’ is used as a synonym for ‘metaphysical naturalist’, and while *strictly speaking* atheism may or may not be incapable of the fundamentalist qualification, metaphysical naturalism (‘atheism’ *in its popular sense*) certainly *is* capable of the feat, as the existence of Richard Dawkins amply demonstrates. Grayling seeks to ward off the fundamentalist label as applied to his own position by playing on an equivocation concerning the meaning of ‘atheism’.

Grayling asserts: ‘It is also time to put to rest... a phrase used by some religious people when talking of those who are plain-spoken about their disbelief in any religious claims: the phrase “fundamentalist atheist.”’<sup>82</sup> The mere fact that ‘fundamentalist’ is used to qualify ‘atheist’ in this phrase should tip Grayling off to the fact that it is *not* intended to describe those who are merely ‘plain-spoken about their disbelief in any religious claims’. However, Grayling seems to think that ‘fundamentalist’ is necessarily a redundant qualifier when linked to atheism, and he poses the following rhetorical question: ‘What would a non-fundamentalist atheist be? Would he be someone who believed only somewhat that there are no supernatural entities in the universe..?’<sup>83</sup> While the concept of an atheist with doubts is apparently incomprehensible to Grayling, it seems to make just as much sense as a ‘Sunday Christian’ to me. Nevertheless, I suggest that a better answer to Grayling’s question is that ‘fundamentalist atheist’ signifies *an atheist who thinks that belief in God is a pernicious intellectual and ethical fault that should be actively opposed by right thinking non-believers*. In other words, a fundamentalist atheist is a member of the movement *Wired Magazine* dubbed ‘The New Atheism’ in a November 2006 cover story by contributing editor and agnostic Gary Wolf:

‘The New Atheists will not let us off the hook simply because we are not doctrinaire believers. They condemn not just belief in God but *respect* for belief in God. Religion is not only wrong; its evil. Now that the battle has been joined, there’s no excuse for shirking. Three writers have sounded this call to arms. They are Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, and Daniel Dennett.’<sup>84</sup>

Grayling’s *Against All God’s* is clearly another salvo from the ‘New (or ‘fundamentalist’) Atheist’ camp.

In 2006 Darwinist Michael Ruse had a notoriously ill-tempered exchange of e-mails with Daniel Dennett in which the former labelled the latter's book *Breaking the Spell* 'really bad and not worthy of you'<sup>85</sup>:

'I think that you and Richard [Dawkins] are absolute disasters in the fight against intelligent design – we are losing this battle... what we need is not knee-jerk atheism but serious grappling with the issues – neither of you are willing to study Christianity seriously and to engage with the ideas – it is just plain silly and grotesquely immoral to claim that Christianity is simply a force for evil, as Richard claims – more than this, we are in a fight, and we need to make allies in the fight, not simply alienate everyone of good will.'<sup>86</sup>

Astonishingly, Ruse then took the opportunity to criticise Dawkins on the front cover of Alister and Joanna McGrath's joint response to *The God Delusion* (entitled *The Dawkins Delusion*), where Ruse stated:

'*The God Delusion* makes me embarrassed to be an atheist, and the McGraths show why.'

Ruse continued his debate over tactics with fundamentalist atheists in an article for *Skeptical Inquirer* that lamented the fractured state of atheism in the face of 'creationism' (which for Ruse is a term that encompasses Intelligent Design theory):

'at the moment, those of us against creationism live in a house divided. One group is made up of the ardent, complete atheists. They want no truck with the enemy, which they are inclined to define as any person of religious inclination – from literalist (like a Southern Baptist) to deist (like a Unitarian) – and they think that anyone who thinks otherwise is foolish, wrong, and immoral. Prominent members of this group include Richard Dawkins... Daniel Dennett... and Jerry Coyne... The second group... contains those who have no religious belief but who think that one should collaborate with liberal Christians [by which Ruse means theistic evolutionists] against a shared enemy, and who are inclined to think that science and religion are compatible.'<sup>87</sup>

Ruse acknowledged that in this in-house debate:

'The rhetoric is strong and nasty. I have accused Dennett of being a bully and someone who is pig ignorant of the issues. He has told me that I stand in danger (perhaps over the point of danger) of losing the respect of those whose respect I should crave... Dawkins has gone even further; in his new, best-selling book, *The God Delusion*, Dawkins likens me to Neville Chamberlin, the British Prime Minister who tried to appease Adolf Hitler.'<sup>88</sup>

Ruse pragmatically replied to Dawkins that: 'When Hitler [i.e. 'creationism'] attacked Russia [i.e. theistic evolution], England and America gave aid to Stalin [i.e. 'liberal' Christians]. It was not that they particularly liked Stalin, but they worked on the principle that the enemy of my enemy is my friend.'<sup>89</sup> Ruse ended his article with a plea for unity: 'Fundamentalism, creationism, intelligent design theory – these are the real threats. Please God – or non-God – let us quit fighting ourselves and get on with



the real job that faces us.’<sup>90</sup> However, it seems unlikely that this plea will be headed by the likes of Professor Grayling, for as Ruse points out: ‘The Dawkins-Dennett school allows for no compromise. Religion is false. Religion is dangerous. Religion must be fought in every way. There can be no working with the enemy [even “liberal” theistic evolutionists]. Those like me who work with religious people are like the appeasers before the Nazi’s.’<sup>91</sup> Hence, one answer to Grayling’s rhetorical question about what a non-fundamentalist atheist would be is that they would be like Michael Ruse!

‘Might it be,’ asks Grayling with tongue firmly in cheek, ‘that a non-fundamentalist atheist is one who does not mind that other people hold profoundly false and primitive beliefs about the universe, on the basis of which they [sweeping generalization alert] have spent centuries mass-murdering other people who do not hold exactly the same false and primitive beliefs as themselves – and still do?’<sup>92</sup> Of course not; but then Grayling poses a false dilemma. It’s not that atheists like Michael Ruse don’t *mind* that other people hold what they consider to be false beliefs; it’s just that they would prefer to engage believers in an intelligent and respectful debate whenever possible, as opposed to issuing the atheistic equivalent of an Islamic fatwa upon anyone with the temerity to disagree with them. (I am tempted to write ‘disagree with their primitive beliefs’ to make a point about Grayling’s chronological snobbery<sup>93</sup>; after-all, naturalism goes back to the pre-Socratic philosophers of ancient Greece.)

### **Can Humanism be Religious?**

According to Grayling: ‘Humanism in the modern sense of the term is the view that whatever your ethical system, it derives from your best understanding of human nature and the human condition in the real world.’<sup>94</sup> It seems to me that a Christian could make this humanistic claim. However, Grayling asserts that humanistic ethics ‘means that it does not, in its thinking about the good and about our responsibilities to ourselves and one another, premise putative data from astrology, fairy tales, supernaturalistic beliefs, animism, polytheism, or any other inheritances from the ages of human kind’s remote and more ignorant past.’ Aside from another glaring example of chronological snobbery, Grayling does nothing to justify his assertion on this score. For example, if one thinks that the best understanding of human nature and the human condition was that humans are the fallen creation of the biblical God, then one is naturally *bound* to premise putative data from supernaturalistic beliefs in ones thinking about the good. Grayling admits: ‘It is possible for religious people to be humanists too’<sup>95</sup>; but he immediately qualifies this admission by stating that religious people cannot be humanists ‘without inconsistency’<sup>96</sup>; although he immediately withdraws this accusation and instead asserts that religious people cannot be humanists without ‘oddity, for there is no role to be played in a humanistic ethic by their (definingly religious) belief in the existence of supernatural agencies.’<sup>97</sup> Having already pulled up Grayling concerning his definition of religion, we need not do so again. However, we can observe that Grayling does nothing to justify his assertion that religious beliefs have no role to play in an ethic which derives from one’s best understanding of human nature and the human condition in the real world. Instead, Grayling simply seems to be *assuming* that naturalism is true and hence deducing that humanism must be naturalistic.

Grayling suggests that we: ‘Consider what humanists aspire to be as ethical agents.’<sup>98</sup> Given the worldview of the naturalistic secular humanist, one might well

wonder *why* they aspire to be ethical agents (it doesn't sound as if Nietzsche would approve), or (more importantly) how they can justify belief in such concepts as good and evil, right and wrong.<sup>99</sup> Grayling doesn't even mention these issues. According to Grayling, non-religious humanists: 'wish always to respect their fellow human beings, to like them, to honour their strivings and to sympathise with their feelings.'<sup>100</sup> O brave new word that has such people in it! Grayling doesn't say why Nietzsche doesn't count as a humanist.) It seems to me that one might be forgiven for deriving a different impression from the rest of Grayling's book, replete as it is with accusations of intellectual retardation and the desire to coerce religious believers to contradict their consciences if these should lead them to stick their noses into the public sphere. And then Grayling drops a metaphysical clanger, asserting that: 'in all cases the humanist's approach rests on the idea that what shapes people is the complex of facts about the interaction between human nature's biological underpinnings and each individual's social and historical circumstances.'<sup>101</sup> This is a metaphysical clanger because it amounts to a denial of libertarian free will, which is a pre-requisite for personal responsibility, which is a pre-requisite for ethics. Since I am not Professor Grayling, I will at least indicate an argument for this claim. What is the difference between a rock hitting you on the head and me hitting you on the head that leads you to consider holding the rock morally responsible irrational but holding me morally responsible rational? If 'I' am an entity the behaviour of which is shaped by nothing but interactions between the biological underpinnings of my human nature and my social and historical situation, then I am surely ontologically analogous to the rock (which is likewise an entity the behaviour of which is shaped by nothing but interactions between *its* physical nature and *its* physical environment). Hence one might well conclude that not only *may* humanism be religious, but that humanism had better be religious on pain of self-contradiction.

## Conclusion

I agree with Grayling that: 'all who have secure grounds for their views should not be afraid of robust challenge and criticism.'<sup>102</sup> Unfortunately, Grayling offers next to nothing by way of serious engagement with the purported grounds either of religion or of his own 'non-religious outlook'. Indeed, *Against All Gods* must rank as one of the weakest critiques of religion ever published. It is frankly disappointing to find a professional philosopher, and one who demands 'that standards of intellectual rigour be upheld at all educational levels'<sup>103</sup>, failing so singularly to handle the important subject of religion with anything approaching intellectual rigour. Grayling substitutes straw men, red herrings and false dilemmas for the careful accuracy his subject demands; he substitutes sweeping, hasty generalizations for evidence based inferences; and he repeatedly substitutes assertion for argument. Most disappointing of all, Grayling advocates the self-excepting, intolerant double-standard that society should demand and apply (i.e. enforce): 'a right for the [non-religious] to be free of proselytisation',<sup>104</sup> a demand which logically entails that Christianity should be made illegal. Far from it being time to 'return religious commitment to the private sphere'<sup>105</sup> – an act of oppression that can only fuel the fires of religious fundamentalism – I suggest that now, more than ever, is the time to encourage respectful debate between people with different worldviews on the common ground of their shared humanity. If a Christian and a secular humanist cannot agree on that, then the future looks bleak indeed. I don't disagree with everything Grayling has to say. In particular, I applaud

his recommendation that: ‘The idea of good defeats – those in which you learn, or give, or allow the better to flourish – is an important one.’<sup>106</sup>

Original article 2007. Revised 2013.

### Recommended Resources

- A.C. Grayling, *Against All God's*, (Oberon Books, 2007)
- A.C. Grayling, *The Meaning of Things*, (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001)
- Wikipedia, ‘A.C. Grayling’ @ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A.\\_C.\\_Grayling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A._C._Grayling)
- A.C. Grayling & Peter S. Williams, *The God Argument: [www.bethinking.org/who-are-you-god/advanced/unbelievable-a-c-graylings-the-god-argument.htm](http://www.bethinking.org/who-are-you-god/advanced/unbelievable-a-c-graylings-the-god-argument.htm)*
- John F. Ankerberg (ed.), Gary R. Habermas & Antony G.N. Flew, *Resurrected? An Atheist & Theist Dialogue*, (Rowman & Littlefield, 2005)
- Michael J. Behe, *Darwin's Black Box*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (Free Press, 2006)
- Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*, (Eerdmans, 2006)
- R. Douglas Geivett & Gary R. Habermas, *In Defence of Miracles: A Comprehensive Case for God's Action in History*, (Apollos, 1997)
- Paul Copan & Paul K. Moser (ed.'s), *The Rationality of Theism*, (Routledge, 2003)
- J.P. Moreland, *Scaling the Secular City*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987)
- J.P. Moreland, *Love Your God With All Your Mind: The role of reason in the life of the soul*, (Navpress, 1997)
- Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, (Oxford, 2003)
- Richard Swinburne, *The Resurrection of God Incarnate*, (Clarendon Press, 2003)
- W. David Beck, ‘The Cosmological Argument’ @ [www.4truth.net/fourtruthpbgod.aspx?pageid=8589952710](http://www.4truth.net/fourtruthpbgod.aspx?pageid=8589952710)
- Michael Behe, ‘The Lamest Attempt Yet to Answer the Challenge Irreducible Complexity Poses for Darwinian Evolution’ @ [www.idthefuture.com/2006/04/the\\_lamest\\_attempt\\_yet\\_to\\_answ.html](http://www.idthefuture.com/2006/04/the_lamest_attempt_yet_to_answ.html)
- Michael Behe, ‘Philosophical Objections to Intelligent Design’ @ [www.arn.org/docs/behe/mb\\_philosophicalobjectionsresponse.htm](http://www.arn.org/docs/behe/mb_philosophicalobjectionsresponse.htm)
- Paul Copan, ‘The Moral Argument for God's Existence’ @ [www.4truth.net/fourtruthpbgod.aspx?pageid=8589952712](http://www.4truth.net/fourtruthpbgod.aspx?pageid=8589952712)
- William Lane Craig, ‘The existence of God and the Beginning of the Universe’ @ [www.leaderu.com/truth/3truth11.html](http://www.leaderu.com/truth/3truth11.html)
- William Lane Craig, ‘Contemporary Scholarship and the Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus’ @ [www.leaderu.com/truth/1truth22.html](http://www.leaderu.com/truth/1truth22.html)
- William Lane Craig, ‘The Problem of Miracles: A Historical and Philosophical Perspective’ @ [www.leaderu.com/offices/billcraig/docs/miracles.html](http://www.leaderu.com/offices/billcraig/docs/miracles.html)

William Lane Craig, 'The Indispensability of Theological Meta-Ethical Foundations for Morality', @ [www.leaderu.com/offices/billcraig/docs/meta-eth.html](http://www.leaderu.com/offices/billcraig/docs/meta-eth.html)

Gary R. Habermas, 'Why I Believe the New Testament is Historically Reliable' @ [http://www.apologetics.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=165:why-i-believe-](http://www.apologetics.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=165:why-i-believe-)

Gary R. Habermas, 'The Lost Tomb of Jesus: A Response' @ [www.garyhabermas.com/articles/The\\_Lost\\_Tomb\\_of\\_Jesus/losttombofjesus\\_response.htm](http://www.garyhabermas.com/articles/The_Lost_Tomb_of_Jesus/losttombofjesus_response.htm)

Video: Robert C. Koons, 'Science and Belief in God: Concord not Conflict' @ [http://webcast.ucsd.edu:8080/ramgen/UCSD\\_TV/7828.rm](http://webcast.ucsd.edu:8080/ramgen/UCSD_TV/7828.rm)

Robert C. Koons, 'A New Look at the Cosmological Argument' @ [www.utexas.edu/cola/depts/philosophy/faculty/koons/cosmo.pdf](http://www.utexas.edu/cola/depts/philosophy/faculty/koons/cosmo.pdf)

Art Lindsley, 'C.S. Lewis on Chronological Snobbery' @ [www.cslewisinstitute.org/webfm\\_send/596](http://www.cslewisinstitute.org/webfm_send/596)

J.P. Moreland, 'The Historicity of the New Testament' @ [www.bethinking.org/resource.php?ID=207&TopicID=1&CategoryID=2](http://www.bethinking.org/resource.php?ID=207&TopicID=1&CategoryID=2)

Video: J.P. Moreland, 'Right and Wrong as a Key to the Meaning of the Universe' @ <http://youtu.be/p7OKfQajrxs>

Stephen C. Meyer, 'Intelligent Design is not Creationism' @ [www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/index.php?command=view&id=3191](http://www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/index.php?command=view&id=3191)

Tom Price, 'Faith is just about "trusting God" isn't it?' @ [www.bethinking.org/resource.php?ID=132&TopicID=9&CategoryID=8](http://www.bethinking.org/resource.php?ID=132&TopicID=9&CategoryID=8)

Alexander R. Pruss, 'A Restricted Principle of Sufficient Reason and the Cosmological Argument' @ [www.georgetown.edu/faculty/ap85/papers/RPSR.html](http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/ap85/papers/RPSR.html)

John G. West, 'Intelligent Design and Creationism are Just not the Same' @ [www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/index.php?command=view&id=1329](http://www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/index.php?command=view&id=1329)

Audio: Peter S. Williams, 'The Moral Argument' @ [www.damaris.org/cw/audio/williams\\_on\\_dawkins\\_moral\\_argument.mp3](http://www.damaris.org/cw/audio/williams_on_dawkins_moral_argument.mp3)

- 
- <sup>1</sup> A.C. Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 7.
- <sup>2</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 37.
- <sup>3</sup> cf. Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, (Oxford, 2003)
- <sup>4</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 37.
- <sup>5</sup> Scott A. Shalkowski, 'Atheological Apologetics' in R. Douglas Geivett & Brendan Sweetman (ed.'s), *Contemporary Perspectives on Religious Epistemology*, (Oxford, 1992), p. 66.
- <sup>6</sup> William L. Rowe, 'The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism', *American Philosophical Quarterly* 16 (1979).
- <sup>7</sup> A.C. Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 29.
- <sup>8</sup> Eric S. Waterhouse, *The Philosophical Approach to Religion*, (Epworth Press, 1933), p 20.
- <sup>9</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 9-10.
- <sup>10</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 31.
- <sup>11</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 13.
- <sup>12</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 9.
- <sup>13</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 18.
- <sup>14</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 9.
- <sup>15</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 30.
- <sup>16</sup> Philip J. Sampson, *Six Modern Myths Challenging Christian Faith*, (IVP, 2000), p. 133.
- <sup>17</sup> William Monter, *Ritual, Myth and Magic in Early Modern Europe*, (Brighton: Harvester, 1983), p. 67.
- <sup>18</sup> Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, (Penguin, 1969), p. 37.
- <sup>19</sup> Keith Ward, *Is Religion Dangerous?*, (Lion, 2006), p. 7.
- <sup>20</sup> *ibid*, p. 35.
- <sup>21</sup> William Wilberforce, quoted by Louis Palau, *Is God Relevant?*, (Hodder & Stoughton, 1997), p. 185.
- <sup>22</sup> Richard Norman, *On Humanism*, p. 17.
- <sup>23</sup> Tom Price, 'Can you teach an old dog new tricks?' @ <http://abetterhope.blogspot.com/2007/03/can-you-teach-old-dog-new-tricks.html>
- <sup>24</sup> A.C. Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 15-16.
- <sup>25</sup> J.P. Moreland, *Love Your God With All Your Mind*, (NavPress, 1997), p. 122.
- <sup>26</sup> C.S. Lewis, quoted by Norman L. Geisler in the foreword to J.P. Moreland's *Scaling the Secular City* (Baker, 1987).
- <sup>27</sup> Tom Price, 'Faith is just about "trusting God" isn't it?' @ [www.bethinking.org/resource.php?ID=132&TopicID=9&CategoryID=8](http://www.bethinking.org/resource.php?ID=132&TopicID=9&CategoryID=8)
- <sup>28</sup> Norman L. Geisler & Paul D. Feinberg, *Introduction to Philosophy - A Christian Perspective* (Baker, 1997), p. 73.
- <sup>29</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 26.
- <sup>30</sup> John Gray, 'Sex, Atheism and Piano Legs' in *Heresies: Against Progress and Other Illusions*, (Granta, 2004), p. 45.
- <sup>31</sup> *ibid*, p. 46.
- <sup>32</sup> Piers Benn, 'Is Atheism a Faith Position?', *Think*, issue thirteen, summer 2006, p. 29.
- <sup>33</sup> James Lazarus, 'A reconsideration of some atheistic arguments' @ [www.iidb.org/vbb/showthread.php?t=181970](http://www.iidb.org/vbb/showthread.php?t=181970)
- <sup>34</sup> Nigel Warburton, *Thinking: From A to Z*, second edition, (Routledge, 1998), p. 19.
- <sup>35</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 46.
- <sup>36</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 36.
- <sup>37</sup> cf. Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*, (Eerdmans, 2006); Richard Bauckham, 'The Eyewitnesses and the Gospel Traditions' @ [www.apollo.ws/nt-historical-reliability/BauckhamRichardJHRG1.pdf](http://www.apollo.ws/nt-historical-reliability/BauckhamRichardJHRG1.pdf)
- <sup>38</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 43.
- <sup>39</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 45.
- <sup>40</sup> Keith Ward, 'Evidence for the Virgin Birth' in Gilliam Ryeland (ed.), *Beyond Reasonable Doubt*, (The Canterbury Press, 1991), p. 56-57.
- <sup>41</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 28.
- <sup>42</sup> A.C. Grayling, *The Meaning of Things*, (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001), p. 125.
- <sup>43</sup> Ward, 'Evidence for the Virgin Birth' in Gilliam Ryeland (ed.), *Beyond Reasonable Doubt*, (The Canterbury Press, 1991), p. 60.
- <sup>44</sup> A.C. Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 34.

- <sup>45</sup> Art Lindsley, 'C.S. Lewis on Chronological Snobbery' @ [www.cslewisinstitute.org/pages/resources/publications/knowningDoing/2003/LewisChronologicalSnobbery.pdf](http://www.cslewisinstitute.org/pages/resources/publications/knowningDoing/2003/LewisChronologicalSnobbery.pdf)
- <sup>46</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 28.
- <sup>47</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 28-29.
- <sup>48</sup> cf. Peter S. Williams, 'A Change of Mind for Antony Flew' @ [www.arn.org/docs/williams/pw\\_antonyflew.htm](http://www.arn.org/docs/williams/pw_antonyflew.htm)
- <sup>49</sup> Antony Flew, *The Presumption of Atheism*, (London: Pemberton, 1976), p. 14.
- <sup>50</sup> Copan, 'The Presumptuousness of Atheism' @ [www.rzim.org/publications/essay\\_arttext.php?id=3](http://www.rzim.org/publications/essay_arttext.php?id=3)
- <sup>51</sup> Scott A. Shalkowski, 'Atheological Apologetics' in R. Douglas Geivett & Brendan Sweetman (ed.'s), *Contemporary Perspectives on Religious Epistemology*, (Oxford, 1992), p. 63.
- <sup>52</sup> cf. Stephen C. Meyer, 'Intelligent Design is not Creationism' @ [www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/index.php?command=view&id=3191](http://www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/index.php?command=view&id=3191);  
John G. West, 'Intelligent Design and Creationism are Just not the Same' @ [www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/index.php?command=view&id=1329](http://www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/index.php?command=view&id=1329)
- <sup>53</sup> cf. Michael Behe, 'Philosophical Objections to Intelligent Design' @ [www.arn.org/docs/behe/mb\\_philosophicalobjectionsresponse.htm](http://www.arn.org/docs/behe/mb_philosophicalobjectionsresponse.htm); 'Is Intelligent Design merely and argument form ignorance?' @ [www.ideacenter.org/contentmgr/showdetails.php/id/1186](http://www.ideacenter.org/contentmgr/showdetails.php/id/1186)
- <sup>54</sup> On the *Science* paper referenced by Grayling (p. 49, 51&52), cf. Michael Behe, 'The Latest Attempt Yet to Answer the Challenge Irreducible Complexity Poses for Darwinian Evolution' @ [www.idthefuture.com/2006/04/the\\_latest\\_attempt\\_yet\\_to\\_answ.html](http://www.idthefuture.com/2006/04/the_latest_attempt_yet_to_answ.html)
- <sup>55</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 63.
- <sup>56</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 59.
- <sup>57</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 59.
- <sup>58</sup> Alister McGrath, *The Twilight of Atheism*, *op cit*, p. 87.
- <sup>59</sup> Michael Ruse in David L. Hull & Michael Ruse (ed.'s), *The Philosophy of Biology*, (Oxford, 1998), p. 671.
- <sup>60</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 29.
- <sup>61</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 29.
- <sup>62</sup> Alvin Plantinga, 'Evolution and Design', James K. Beilby (ed.), *For Faith and Clarity*, (Baker, 2006), p. 212.
- <sup>63</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 29.
- <sup>64</sup> cf. Kirby Anderson, 'Tales From the Crypt: Do We Have the Bones of Jesus?' @ [www.probe.org/commentaries/tales-from-the-crypt-do-we-have-the-bones-of-jesus.html](http://www.probe.org/commentaries/tales-from-the-crypt-do-we-have-the-bones-of-jesus.html);  
John Ankerberg and Dillon Burroughs, 'Nine Facts That Disprove the Discovery Channel's *The Lost Tomb of Jesus*' @ [www.ankerberg.com/Articles/historical-Jesus/the-Jesus-family-tomb/the-Jesus-family-tomb-9-facts-that-disprove-discovery-channel-lost-tomb-of-jesus.htm](http://www.ankerberg.com/Articles/historical-Jesus/the-Jesus-family-tomb/the-Jesus-family-tomb-9-facts-that-disprove-discovery-channel-lost-tomb-of-jesus.htm);  
Richard Bauckham, 'The alleged Jesus Family Tomb' @ [www.leaderu.com/jesus/alleged\\_tomb.html](http://www.leaderu.com/jesus/alleged_tomb.html);  
Biola Professors Respond to 'The Lost Tomb of Jesus' @ [www.biola.edu/news/articles/070305\\_tombresponse.cfm](http://www.biola.edu/news/articles/070305_tombresponse.cfm);  
Darell Bock, 'Hollywood Hype: The Oscars and Jesus' Family Tomb - What do they share?' @ <http://dev.bible.org/bock/node/106>;  
Rich Deem, 'The Lost Tomb of Jesus: Have the Bones of Jesus Christ Been Found in Jerusalem?' @ [www.godandscience.org/apologetics/bones\\_of\\_jesus.html](http://www.godandscience.org/apologetics/bones_of_jesus.html);  
Craig Evans, 'The Tomb of Jesus and Family?' @ [www.craigaejans.com/tombofjesus.htm](http://www.craigaejans.com/tombofjesus.htm);  
Matt Gutman, 'Bones of Contention' (*ABC News*) @ <http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/Entertainment/story?id=2905662&page=1>;  
Gary R. Habermas, 'The Lost Tomb of Jesus: A Response' @ [www.garyhabermas.com/articles/The\\_Lost\\_Tomb\\_of\\_Jesus/losttombofjesus\\_response.htm](http://www.garyhabermas.com/articles/The_Lost_Tomb_of_Jesus/losttombofjesus_response.htm);  
Ben Witherington, 'The Jesus Tomb: "Titanic" Talpiot Theory Sunk From The Start' @ [www.leaderu.com/jesus/jesustomb\\_benw.html](http://www.leaderu.com/jesus/jesustomb_benw.html); Ben Witherington, 'Problems Multiply For Jesus Tomb Theory' @ [www.leaderu.com/jesus/tombtheory\\_benw.html](http://www.leaderu.com/jesus/tombtheory_benw.html);  
*Christianity Today*, 'Remains of the Day' @ [www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/februaryweb-only/109-33.0.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/februaryweb-only/109-33.0.html);  
*New York Times*: 'Leaning on Theory, Colliding With Faith' @ [www.nytimes.com/2007/03/03/arts/television/03stan.html?ex=1330578000&en=8def379f0b45b716&ei=5088&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/03/arts/television/03stan.html?ex=1330578000&en=8def379f0b45b716&ei=5088&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss); Audio: 'Unbelievable: A Response to "The Lost Tomb of Jesus"' - with Ben Witherington @ [www.premier.org.uk/images/radio/on\\_demand/button.gif](http://www.premier.org.uk/images/radio/on_demand/button.gif)
- <sup>65</sup> A.C. Grayling, *The Meaning of Things*, (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001), p. 7.

- <sup>66</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 15.
- <sup>67</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 17, my italics.
- <sup>68</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 17.
- <sup>69</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 16.
- <sup>70</sup> cf. Rees Mogg, 'Adopt change after 2000 years? Never!' @ [www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/william\\_rees\\_mogg/article1329412.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/william_rees_mogg/article1329412.ece)
- <sup>71</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 17.
- <sup>72</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 16.
- <sup>73</sup> Grayling, *The Meaning of Things*, (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001), p. 7.
- <sup>74</sup> Grayling, *The Meaning of Things*, (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001), p. 8.
- <sup>75</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 47.
- <sup>76</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 19.
- <sup>77</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 19.
- <sup>78</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 46.
- <sup>79</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 24.
- <sup>80</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 7.
- <sup>81</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 28.
- <sup>82</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 23.
- <sup>83</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 23.
- <sup>84</sup> Gary Wolf, 'The Church of the Non-Believers', *Wired Magazine*, November 2006, p. 184 & @ [www.wired.com/news/wiredmag/0,71985-0.html?tw=wn\\_index\\_1](http://www.wired.com/news/wiredmag/0,71985-0.html?tw=wn_index_1)
- <sup>85</sup> Michael Ruse @ [www.uncommondescent.com/archives/844](http://www.uncommondescent.com/archives/844)
- <sup>86</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>87</sup> Michael Ruse, 'Fighting the Fundamentalists: Chamberlin or Churchill?', *Skeptical Inquirer* Volume 31, No. 2, march/April 2007, p. 39-40.
- <sup>88</sup> *ibid.*, p. 40.
- <sup>89</sup> *ibid.*, p. 41.
- <sup>90</sup> *ibid.*, p. 41.
- <sup>91</sup> *ibid.*, p. 40.
- <sup>92</sup> A.C. Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 23.
- <sup>93</sup> Art Lindsley, 'C.S. Lewis on Chronological Snobbery' @ [www.cslewisinstitute.org/pages/resources/publications/knowningDoing/2003/LewisChronologicalSnobbery.pdf](http://www.cslewisinstitute.org/pages/resources/publications/knowningDoing/2003/LewisChronologicalSnobbery.pdf)
- <sup>94</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 33.
- <sup>95</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 33.
- <sup>96</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 33.
- <sup>97</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 33.
- <sup>98</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 60.
- <sup>99</sup> Paul Copan, 'The Moral Argument for God's Existence' @ [www.4truth.net/site/apps/nl/content3.asp?c=hiKXLbPNLrF&b=778665&ct=1264233](http://www.4truth.net/site/apps/nl/content3.asp?c=hiKXLbPNLrF&b=778665&ct=1264233);  
William Lane Craig, 'The Indispensability of Theological Meta-Ethical Foundations for Morality', @ [www.leaderu.com/offices/billcraig/docs/meta-eth.html](http://www.leaderu.com/offices/billcraig/docs/meta-eth.html);  
Luke Pollard, 'Does Morality Point to God?' @ [www.bethinking.org/resource.php?ID=305&TopicID=10&CategoryID=9](http://www.bethinking.org/resource.php?ID=305&TopicID=10&CategoryID=9);  
Peter S. Williams, 'The Moral Argument' @ [www.damaris.org/cw/audio/williams\\_on\\_dawkins\\_moral\\_argument.mp3](http://www.damaris.org/cw/audio/williams_on_dawkins_moral_argument.mp3);  
J.P. Moreland, 'Right and Wrong as a Key to the Meaning of the Universe' @ [http://webcast.ucsd.edu:8080/ramgen/UCSD\\_TV/8008.rm](http://webcast.ucsd.edu:8080/ramgen/UCSD_TV/8008.rm)
- <sup>100</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 60.
- <sup>101</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 60.
- <sup>102</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 9.
- <sup>103</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 47.
- <sup>104</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 16.
- <sup>105</sup> Grayling, *Against All Gods*, (Oberon Books, 2007), p. 47.
- <sup>106</sup> Grayling, *The Meaning of Things*, (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001), p. 25.