



## Six Impossible Things Before Breakfast

Peter S. Williams

Lewis Wolpert's Presumption of Atheism and the 'Insufficient Evidence' Objection to Belief in God

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Cell biologist Lewis Wolpert has recently attained a measure of notoriety with the British public, primarily through the publication of his book *Six Impossible Things Before Breakfast: The Evolutionary Origins of Belief* (Faber, 2006). He also participated in a recent public debate on the existence of God with Christian philosopher William Lane Craig. The debate was hosted by the well-known journalist John Humphrys, and reported by him in a major article for the *Daily Telegraph*.<sup>1</sup> Professor Wolpert, who is a vice president of the British Humanist Association, admits, 'I stopped believing in God when I was fifteen or sixteen because he didn't give me what I asked for'<sup>2</sup> but he has subsequently and repeatedly justified his atheism by asserting that, 'There is absolutely no evidence for the existence

of God.'<sup>3</sup>

### Problems with the Presumption of Atheism

Relying on the 'Insufficient Evidence' objection is a risky gambit for the atheist. As philosopher William Rowe observes, 'To fail to provide any arguments for the non-existence of God is ... to virtually concede the debate to the person who at least gives some arguments, however weak, in behalf of the position that God exists.'<sup>4</sup> Arguing for atheism on the basis that there is insufficient evidence for belief in God (and that, in the absence of such evidence, the benefit of the doubt should be given to atheism rather than theism or agnosticism) is always vulnerable to the possibility that new evidence – or a better formulation and appreciation of old evidence – might turn up. Such atheism cannot afford to be dogmatic, for 'even if the theist could not muster good arguments for God's existence, atheism still would not be shown to be true.'<sup>5</sup> As atheist philosopher Kai Nielsen admits: 'To show that an argument is invalid or unsound is not to show that the conclusion of the argument is false.... All the proofs of God's existence may fail, but it still may be the case that God exists.'<sup>6</sup>

According to Robert A. Harris, 'a common sense look at the world, with all its beauty, apparent design, meaning, and vibrancy, would seem to predispose a neutral observer to presume that God exists unless good evidence for his non-existence could be brought to bear ... The fact that materialists often struggle with this issue, working to explain away the design of the creation, for example, would seem to back up this claim.'<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, British humanist Richard Norman asserts that, 'the onus is on those who believe in a god to provide reasons for that belief. If they cannot come up with good reasons, then we should reject the belief.'<sup>8</sup> It was another British philosopher, Antony Flew (who recently became a theist<sup>9</sup>), who most famously urged that the 'onus of proof must lie upon the theist',<sup>10</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 with Richard

Norman explicitly and Lewis Wolpert implicitly) it really is the presumption of *atheism* rather than the presumption of agnosticism. However, the former is far harder to defend than the latter. Paul Copan writes:

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>11</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>12</sup> Steven Lovell similarly points out that, to avoid a double standard, the atheist cannot use the 'Insufficient Evidence' argument alone, but must combine it with one or more of the other objections to belief:

Time and again I've heard people say that they don't believe in God because they think there is insufficient evidence for His existence. If the person saying this is an atheist (one who thinks that God doesn't exist, that 'God exists' is a false statement), then they imply that they *do* have enough evidence for their atheism. Clearly, if we reject belief in God due to (alleged) insufficient evidence, then we would be irrational to accept atheism if the evidence for God's non-existence were similarly insufficient. It would be a radical inconsistency. If theistic belief requires evidence,

so must atheistic belief. If we have no evidence either way, then the logical conclusion would be agnosticism.<sup>13</sup>

There are, then, a number of serious problems with Wolpert's use of the 'Insufficient Evidence' claim to justify a default 'presumption of atheism'.

## A Popular Objection to Theism

Despite these problems, the 'Insufficient Evidence' objection to theism is widely used by contemporary atheists. A 1998 survey of 1,700 American skeptics conducted by Skeptics Society director Michael Shermer and MIT social scientist Frank Sulloway showed that 37.9% of non-theistic skeptics said they didn't believe in God *because there is no proof*. The 2005 *Dare to Engage Questionnaire*, which surveyed nearly five hundred fifteen-to-eighteen-year-old students, found that among self-designated atheists (20% of respondents) who took the opportunity to give an explanation of their disbelief, the third most popular response (given by 13% of those giving a reason for their atheism) was that *there is a pervasive lack of evidence for God*.

The 'Insufficient Evidence' objection can be traced back to Bertrand Russell. Asked what he would say if he found himself standing before God on the judgement day being asked, 'Why didn't you believe in me?,' Russell replied: 'I'd say, "Not enough evidence, God! Not enough evidence!"' Richard Dawkins says that in the same situation: 'I'd quote Bertrand Russell'.<sup>14</sup> (There is an interesting difference in *attitude* on this point between Russell *et al* on the one hand, and H.L. Mencken on the other hand, who answered essentially the same question by saying: 'If I do fetch up with the twelve apostles, I shall say, "Gentlemen, I was wrong."<sup>15</sup> In this context we should not shy away from the fact that atheists may – and note that I say *may* rather than *will* – fail to appreciate genuine evidence for theism due to non-rational factors. As Piers Benn acknowledges, 'since some theistic religions teach that sin can impair our thinking, we risk begging the question against those religions if we assume that *if* we can see no good reason for believing them, then they are almost certainly false.'<sup>16</sup>)

According to Richard Dawkins' latest book, *The*

*God Delusion*,<sup>17</sup> if one examines natural theology, 'the arguments turn out to be spectacularly weak.'<sup>18</sup> He actually goes so far as to say that: 'there is no evidence in favour of the God Hypothesis.'<sup>19</sup> This is an astonishing claim for Dawkins to make, since he once defined biology as 'the study of complicated things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose.'<sup>20</sup> So, according to Dawkins himself, there is, at the very least, *prima facie* evidence for the God hypothesis. The *Humanist Manifesto II*, drafted by Paul Kurtz and Edwin H. Wilson, declares with more caution than Dawkins or Wolpert that: 'We find *insufficient evidence* for belief in the existence of a supernatural ... theism ... is an unproven and outmoded faith.'<sup>21</sup> (The term 'outmoded' here is a fine example of what C.S. Lewis called 'chronological snobbery'.<sup>22</sup>) Taking a historical view on the same objection, Kai Nielsen states that:

Starting with the early Enlightenment figures, finding acute and more fully developed critiques in Hume and Kant, and carried through by their contemporary rational reconstructers (e.g., Mackie, and Martin), the various arguments for the existence of God have been so thoroughly refuted that few would try to defend them today and even those few who do, do so in increasingly attenuated forms.<sup>23</sup>

Professor Wolpert likewise praises David Hume's scepticism, stating: 'Hume is the only philosopher I take seriously.'<sup>24</sup> However, such claims are surprisingly out of touch with the reality of contemporary practice in the philosophy of religion. What William Lane Craig calls 'the obsolete, eighteenth century objections of Hume and Kant'<sup>25</sup> have received substantial replies from contemporary philosophers.<sup>26</sup> David Hume, in particular, is widely regarded as an over-rated thinker who inspires much unnecessary kow-towing.<sup>27</sup> According to James F. Sennett and Douglas Groothuis: 'Natural theology is alive and well in contemporary philosophy; the supposed Humean refutation of the enterprise is a myth whose exposure is long overdue.'<sup>28</sup>

Many contemporary philosophers give their endorsement to the project of natural theology, and while individual arguments for God may often be defended in more rigorously cautious terms than was the norm in medieval scholasticism,

today's natural theology can hardly be called 'attenuated' when philosophers like Robert C. Koons are prepared to say that, 'the evidence for theism has never been so clear and so strong as it is now.'<sup>29</sup>

## Questioning the Demand for Evidence

However, questioning the claim that there is insufficient evidence for God's existence is not the only way of responding to Wolpert's objection. Many philosophers question the assumption that it is necessarily irrational to believe in God in the absence of evidential justification. After all, there are plenty of other beliefs about reality that appear to be rational despite the complete absence of evidential justification (e.g. the belief that the world is not a computer simulation as in the film *The Matrix*). In addition, the demand for evidence can neither be fulfilled *ad infinitum* (i.e. it is impossible to justify *all* our beliefs) nor can it be consistently applied to itself (what evidential justification is there for the belief that all beliefs must have evidential justification in order to be rational?).

Sam Harris is another prominent atheist who, like Wolpert, condemns theists for adhering to a belief without any evidential basis: 'While believing strongly, without evidence, is considered a mark of madness or stupidity in any other area of our lives, faith in God still holds immense prestige in our society.'<sup>30</sup> Harris makes two mistakes in the space of this sentence. On the one hand, few theists would concede Harris's assumption that their belief in God is predicated upon an absence of evidence. On the other hand, evidence is *not* always necessary for rational belief. Contrary to Harris's statement, believing strongly without evidence is, in fact, considered a mark of rationality and common sense in many areas of life. For example, seriously doubting that the universe is older than five minutes old would rightly be considered a mark of madness or stupidity by most people. But the belief that the universe *is* older than this, rather than having been created five minutes ago complete with every empirical appearance of greater age (a belief held by Harris), must by the very nature of the case be accepted *without evidential support*. Hence, 'being rational' and 'having evidential

support' cannot be one and the same thing. It is all well and good to demand that people hold all their beliefs *rationally* (for example, we shouldn't pick our beliefs at random and we shouldn't hold them in the face of overwhelming counter-evidence), but there is little sense in demanding that people hold all their beliefs *on the basis of evidence*.

Harris writes that, 'An atheist is simply a person who believes that [theists] should be obliged to present evidence for [God's] existence.'<sup>31</sup> But the demand for every belief to be justified with evidence is self-defeating (on the one hand, what is the evidence for *this* claim? On the other hand, how would one ever satisfy this demand?). This means that the basic 'not enough evidence' argument deployed by Dawkins, Harris, Wolpert and other atheists is unsound because it is built upon a false premise. As philosopher John O'Leary-Hawthorne points out, 'The basic argument from no evidence relies on the idea that in order to rationally believe something we need evidence for it. But from the perspective of many philosophers, the latter claim represents a gross oversimplification.'<sup>32</sup>

For example, we often find ourselves with perceptual beliefs (e.g. 'I see a tree') not because we have *argued* our way to the belief in question, but simply because our cognitive faculties lead us to hold that belief. Then again, I simply *remember* drinking coffee with friends yesterday; I don't argue my way to the conclusion that I had coffee with friends yesterday based upon the available evidence. Despite the fact that my memory has proven unreliable on some occasions (something I only know through memory), there is no need for me to obtain independent evidence as to whether or not I drank coffee with friends yesterday in order for my belief in this matter to be rational. The truthful nature of my memory in this matter is one of my 'basic' beliefs. Fundamental moral beliefs are likewise basic beliefs: 'Somewhere in one's moral reasoning one reaches a set of beliefs that are bearers of intrinsic value; they are not valued as a means to some other end or for some extrinsic reason. At this level one reaches one's basic moral beliefs.'<sup>33</sup> 'A whole host of other kinds of beliefs are also typically basic. There are, for example, elementary *truths of logic*... There are certain *mathematical beliefs*. And there are certain framework or fundamental beliefs such

as *belief in an external world, belief in the self, etc.* These are foundational beliefs that we typically reason from and not to'.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, the existence of *some* basic beliefs in our web of beliefs is an epistemic necessity, for as Roy Clouser points out:

it is *impossible* that the only beliefs we have the right to be certain about are the ones that we have proven ... First, if everything needed to be proven, then the premises of every proof would also need to be proven. But if you need to prove the premises of every proof, you would then need a proof for your proof, and a proof for the proof of your proof, and so on – forever. Thus it makes no sense to demand that everything be proven because an infinite regress of proofs is impossible. So when the premises of an argument are themselves in need of proof, the series of arguments needed to prove its premises must eventually end with an argument whose premises are all 'basic', that is, not in need of proof ... not all beliefs need proof, and proving anything depends on having beliefs that don't need it ... A second reason why not every belief needs proof is that the rules for drawing inferences correctly, the truths of logic and mathematics, cannot themselves have proofs because they are the very rules we must use in order to prove anything. If we were to use them to construct proofs of themselves, the proofs would already be assuming the truth of the very rules we were trying to prove! So proofs need belief in unproven *rules* as well as *premises* that we can know without proof.<sup>35</sup>

Without rejecting the claim that there are good *arguments* for belief in God, it can be cogently argued that belief in God can be rational without being based upon arguments for his existence. As Alan G. Padgett writes, 'belief in God can be and often is perfectly legitimate and proper without any philosophical arguments. In other words, Christian faith does not depend upon the practice of philosophy (specifically natural theology) but rather upon more direct, immediate, and spiritual sources of the knowledge of God.'<sup>36</sup> Such 'properly basic' belief in God is not a matter of 'blind faith', since it is not the result of simply picking a belief out of the air and since it remains sensitive to the need to defend belief against evidential challenges.

William Lane Craig attempted to point out this defect in the 'Insufficient Evidence' argument to Professor Wolpert before their recent debate on the existence of God in London, but without success.

## **Craig versus Wolpert – a mini-debate from Radio 4**

In a mini debate between William Lane Craig and Lewis Wolpert held on BBC Radio 4 prior to their lengthier public encounter on the subject of God's existence, Wolpert simply failed to understand Craig's philosophical points about the 'Insufficient Evidence' objection. Having said that he thinks there *is* evidence for God (Craig mentions the *Kalam* cosmological argument, the moral argument and the fine tuning design argument), Craig challenged Wolpert's assumption that one must have evidence for God in order to rationally believe in God. Craig points to the existence of these 'properly basic beliefs' which are rational to hold but which are not justified on the basis of other beliefs. Despite Craig explaining, with the use of several analogies, that without properly basic beliefs humans could not rationally believe anything (because we would have to have an infinite regress of evidence for all our beliefs), Wolpert revealed that he just didn't get the point by simply repeating the same 'Insufficient Evidence' objection.

Far from incidentally, the same point about infinite regress and explanation came into play when Craig answered Wolpert's use of the 'Who designed the designer?' objection to the design argument (an objection beloved by Richard Dawkins in *The God Delusion*). Craig pointed out that for an explanation of some set of data to be rational, one need not have an explanation of the explanation. If one did need one, explanation would be impossible because to explain anything would invoke an infinite regress, in which case science would be impossible. Hence Wolpert's use of the 'explain that explanation' demand is rather ironic!

Philosopher Tom Price has provided a concise summary of the public debate between Craig and Wolpert following their Radio 4 encounter, a debate which showed Wolpert failing to learn the lesson of his mini-debate with Craig:

**Craig:** God exists, here is the evidence.

**Wolpert:** God doesn't exist, there is no evidence.

**Craig:** God exists, here is the evidence.

**Wolpert:** God doesn't exist, who made God?

**Craig:** God does exist, he is an uncaused eternal being. Here is the evidence.

**Wolpert:** God doesn't exist. He hasn't done anything in the last 2,000 years.

**Craig:** That's chronological snobbery. You don't tell the time with an argument; you don't tell if an argument is true or false, or if evidence is good or bad with a watch.

**Wolpert:** God doesn't exist. We believe because we have a notion of cause and effect. This leads to toolmaking, and also to belief in God.

**Craig:** That's the genetic fallacy. To confuse the origin of a belief with its truth or falsity. You need to deal with the arguments and evidence that I have presented.

**Wolpert:** God doesn't exist. There is no evidence. Who made God?

**Craig:** Here is the evidence. God is an uncaused being. God does exist.

**Wolpert:** God doesn't exist. There is no evidence.

**Craig:** God does exist. Here is the evidence.<sup>37</sup>

Or, as John Humphrys, who chaired the debate, reports:

You might assume that a debate between someone like Craig and someone like Wolpert – a Jew who lost his faith when he was 15 – would produce a riveting intellectual knockabout at least, and a profound discussion of whether God is delusion or reality at best. Sadly it didn't work out like that. They might as well have been talking in different languages.

Here's the essence of Craig's case:

§ God created the universe. The proof lies in the premise that whatever begins to exist has a cause. The universe began to exist; therefore it has a cause. It was brought into existence by

something which is greater than (and beyond) it. And that something was a 'personal being'.

§ God 'fine tunes' the universe ... There is no other logical explanation for the way things operate.

§ Without God there can be no set of [objective] moral values.

§ The 'historical facts' of the life of Jesus prove the basis for Christianity.

§ God can be known and experienced [in a properly basic manner].

And here's the essence of Wolpert's rebuttal: its all bunkum. Every bit of it.<sup>38</sup>

Wolpert's defence of atheism consisted of a few irrelevant, invalid arguments against the rationality of belief in God's existence on the one hand (instances of chronological snobbery and the genetic fallacy respectively) and a *total failure to interact with the purported evidence for God* on the other hand – apparently on the grounds 'that there is no evidence' with which to interact! Given Craig's use of the *Kalam* cosmological argument, it is interesting to note that Wolpert candidly admits he has no alternative explanation for the Big Bang: 'And then, of course, there's the whole problem of where the universe itself came from. And that is a great mystery. Big bang, big schmang! How did that all happen? I haven't got a clue.'<sup>39</sup> How can someone who makes such repeated use of the 'Insufficient Evidence' objection fail so totally to even 'deal with the argument and evidence' presented by Craig? The answer to this question recently became clear in an interview between Wolpert and another Christian philosopher.

### Wolpert's Question-Begging Obscurantism

In the hands of Lewis Wolpert, the 'Insufficient Evidence' objection is not at all what it seems. Wolpert says that atheism is justified because: 'There is absolutely no evidence for the existence of God.'<sup>40</sup> However, this assertion amounts to a magician-worthy piece of misdirection, a philosophical sleight-of-hand. Professor Keith Ward of Oxford University had the following revealing exchange with Wolpert concerning his 'Insufficient Evidence' justification in the course of an interview for the March 2007 edition of *Third Way* magazine:

**Ward:** What sort of evidence would count for

you? Would it have to be scientific evidence of some sort?

**Wolpert:** Well, no... I think I read somewhere: If he turned the pond on Hamstead Heath into good champagne, it would be quite impressive.

**Ward:** A miracle would be sufficient?

**Wolpert:** But then you have to remember what David Hume said, that you wouldn't believe in a reported miracle unless 'the falsehood of [the] testimony would be more miraculous than the event which [it] relates.'

**Ward:** It's one of his worst arguments, in my view.

**Wolpert:** Hume is the only philosopher I take seriously. I'm big against philosophy.<sup>41</sup>

Wolpert justifies his atheism by complaining that there is no evidence for the existence of God. So what sort of evidence would he accept? Would he accept scientific evidence? On Humean grounds (grounds that are widely accepted by contemporary philosophers to be defunct), he would not. Later in the same interview Ward asked Wolpert whether (in principle) there could be evidence of providence in history? Wolpert replied that there 'absolutely [could] not'<sup>42</sup> be any such evidence. Wolpert seems to include the evidence of religious experience among purported scientific evidence for God, because having provided a standard explanation of such experience in terms of evolutionary psychology (and despite admitting 'I don't have a good explanation, to be quite honest'<sup>43</sup> for why he himself has escaped the evolutionary pressure to believe), Wolpert feels that he can dismiss all such experiences as delusional (an unsurprising move for someone who is a self-confessed 'reductionist and a materialist'<sup>44</sup>). If Wolpert rules out scientific evidence for theism, will he accept philosophical evidence? He will not, because he is 'big against philosophy' (although he will embrace a double standard in order to allow Hume into the fold, to shore it up against scientific evidence for deity).

Having excluded *a priori* the very possibility of there being any evidence for God, it is perhaps unsurprising that Wolpert can find none. Nor is it surprising that he would fail to engage with

purported evidence for God offered to him by Professor Craig. What *is* surprising is that having excluded *a priori* the possibility of there being any evidence for God, Wolpert should shirk the task of *showing* why Craig's evidence is insufficient (where exactly do Craig's arguments for God go wrong? Do they have false premises? Do they have invalid logic? Wolpert does not say) whilst continuing to justify his atheism primarily by repeating that 'the evidence for God is not very good from my point of view.'<sup>45</sup>

Wolpert's complaint is ultimately *not* that there is insufficient evidence for theism. Rather it is that since the possibility of there being sound evidence for theism would require materialism to be false, and since materialism is true, there can't possibly be any sound evidence for theism. In other words Wolpert doesn't merely think that there *isn't* any evidence for God, he thinks that there *can't be* any evidence for God. These are significantly different claims, and so it is not a trivial matter when Wolpert substitutes one for the other. There would be nothing wrong with taking this approach if Wolpert provided arguments purporting to show that materialism is true (or at least that theism is false), if he was prepared to enter into philosophical debate concerning the soundness of those arguments, and if he was prepared to extend the same courtesy to the theistic arguments of academics like Craig or Ward. Unfortunately Wolpert does not appear to be interested in fulfilling any of these conditions. He simply repeats the mantra that there is no evidence for God. Like doubting Thomas, Lewis Wolpert says 'I will not believe unless I see' – but unlike Thomas he keeps his eyes resolutely shut.

## Wolpert and the Origin of Life

For example, during his interview with Keith Ward, Wolpert commented that:

How the cell came about is just... Wow! It's absolutely mind-blowing. It's truly miraculous – almost in a religious sense. I think we understand quite a lot about evolution – although even in later evolution there are problems for which we don't have good explanations – but the origin of life itself, the origin of the cell itself, that's not solved at all.<sup>46</sup>

Having heard such an interesting admission of

scientific ignorance, Ward asked Wolpert whether he was happy to be described as a neo-Darwinian, and the following revealing exchange followed:

**Wolpert:** I'm afraid I would have to say that, yes.

**Ward:** So, even though you find it 'miraculous', you think we must account for the emergence of life purely in terms of random mutation and natural selection?

**Wolpert:** That's the line we must pursue, yes.

**Ward:** Why 'must'?

**Wolpert:** Because there really is no other way. Otherwise, you can only invoke God.<sup>47</sup>

In other words, Wolpert believes that the inherent capacities of the natural world (putting aside the cosmological question of why there is a natural world in the first place) *must* account for – and therefore must be capable of accounting for – both the origin and diverse nature of life on Earth. And this conclusion is philosophically deduced (*not* scientifically inferred) from the assumption that God *could* not possibly feature in the true account of these matters – presumably because Wolpert believes that there *is* no God. Once again Wolpert closes his eyes to the possibility of evidence pointing towards God's existence by simply assuming that God does not exist! Once again, Wolpert's use of the 'Insufficient Evidence' objection to belief in God is exposed as a rhetorical facade hiding a circular argument.

## Conclusion

'I am going to confront you with evidence before the Lord' (1 Samuel 12:7).

Atheists, agnostics and theists alike should avoid Lewis Wolpert's narrow-minded approach to the question of God's existence, an approach that amounts to saying, 'My mind is made up, don't confuse me with the evidence.' We all have our own personal default position on the subject of God's existence, but we owe it to each other and to ourselves (and perhaps we even owe it to God) to take the alternatives seriously enough to decry blind faith.

## Recommended Resources

Paul Copan, 'The Presumptuousness of Atheism'

William Lane Craig, 'The Existence of God and the Beginning of the Universe'

William Lane Craig, 'The Teleological Argument and the Anthropic Principle'

William Lane Craig, 'Review: The Design Inference'

William Lane Craig, 'The Indispensability of Theological Meta-Ethical Foundations for Morality'

William Lane Craig, 'Contemporary Scholarship and the Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ'

John Gray, 'Myths of Meaning: Breaking the Spell and Six Impossible Things Before Breakfast', *New Statesman*, 20 March 2006

John Humphrys, 'The Return of God?'. Here is another eye-witness report of the Craig-Wolpert debate (The Peter Williams who has a comment on this page is not Peter S. Williams, the author of this article!)

Duncan McMillan, 'Origins of Belief [a review of *Six Impossible Things Before Breakfast*]

Keith Ward and Lewis Wolpert, 'The Hard Cell', *Third Way*, March 2007

Peter S. Williams, 'What do you believe is true even though you cannot prove it? - Comparing Dawkins' faith with Flew's evidence

Peter S. Williams, 'A Change of Mind for Antony Flew'

Peter S. Williams, 'Design and the Humean Touchstone'

Peter S. Williams, 'An Introduction to Intelligent Design Theory'

R. Douglas Geivett and Gary R. Habermas (eds.), *In Defence of Miracles*, (Apollos, 1997)

James F. Sennett and Douglas Groothuis (eds.), *In Defence of Natural Theology: A Post-Humean Assessment*, (IVP, 2005)

[1] John Humphrys, 'The Return of God?'

, March 2007, p. 16.

[3] Wolpert, 'The Hard Cell', p. 17.

, (London: Ashgate, 2003) pp. 70–71.

[5] Paul Copan, 'The Presumptuousness of Atheism'.

, (New York: Harper and Row, 1971) pp. 143–44.

, (Eugene: Cascade, 2004) p. 83.

, (Routledge, 2004) p. 16.

[9] cf. Peter S. Williams, 'A Change of Mind for Antony Flew'.

, (London: Pemberton, 1976) p. 14.

[11] Copan, 'The Presumptuousness of Atheism'.

, (Oxford, 1992) p. 63.

[13] Steven Lovell, 'Evidence and Atheism' (apparently no longer online).

, 5 December 2006.

[15] H.L. Mencken, quoted by Alistair Cooke.

, 13, summer 2006, p. 27.

22 October 2006;

Alister E. McGrath, 'The Dawkins Delusion' and 'Is God a Delusion? Atheism and the Meaning of Life';

Thomas Nagel, 'The Fear of Religion', *New Republic*, 23 October 2006; H. Allen Orr, 'A Mission to Convert', *New York Review of Books*; Alvin Plantinga, 'The Dawkins Confusion'; Richard Swinburne, 'Response to Richard Dawkins's Criticisms in *The God Delusion*'; Peter S. Williams, 'The Big Bad Wolf, Theism and the Foundations of Intelligent Design: A Review of Richard Dawkins' *The God Delusion*'; 'Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf? Dawkins' Failed

Rebuttal of Natural Theology'; 'Peter S. Williams Discusses *The God Delusion*'; '*The God Delusion* Deconstructed - Southampton University'.

, (London: Bantam Press, 2006) p. 2.

, p. 59.

, (Penguin, 1990) Preface, p. x.

(1973) (my italics).

[22] cf. Art Lindsley, 'C.S. Lewis on Chronological Snobbery'.

, p. 403.

[24] Nielsen, 'Naturalistic explanations of theistic belief'.

[25] William Lane Craig, 'The Evidence for Christianity'.

, (Baker, 1976).

, Volume 4, Number 2, 2002; Peter S. Williams, 'Design and the Humean Touchstone'.

, (IVP, 2005) p. 15.

, (London: Routledge, 2003) p. 73.

, (Bantam, 2007) p. 67.

, p. 51.

, (Eerdmans, 1999) p. 124.

, (Eerdmans, 1998) p. 130.

, p. 129.

, (IVP, 1999) pp. 68–71.

[36] Alan G. Padgett, 'The Relationship Between Theology and Philosophy', James K. Beilby (ed.), *For Faith and Clarity*, (Baker, 2006) p. 39.

[37] Tom Price, 'Craig vs. Wolpert'.

[38] John Humphrys, 'The Return of God?'.

[39] Wolpert, 'The Hard Cell', p. 18.

[40] Wolpert, 'The Hard Cell', p. 17.

[41] Wolpert, 'The Hard Cell', p. 17.

[42] Wolpert, 'The Hard Cell', p. 17.

[43] Wolpert, 'The Hard Cell', p. 18.

[44] Wolpert, 'The Hard Cell', p. 17.

[45] Wolpert, 'The Hard Cell', p. 16.

[46] Wolpert, 'The Hard Cell', p. 18.

[47] Wolpert, 'The Hard Cell', p. 18.

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