Dawkins’ *The God Delusion*

Preface (23-28: don’t worry about all the acknowledgements at the end of the preface)

Dawkins says he has four “consciousness raising” messages in his book. What are they? Do you agree that the problems he hopes to raise our consciousness about are really problems?

I. Ch. 1, “A Deeply Religious Non-Believer.” (31-50)

A. “Deserved Respect” (31-41) - Defining God, Defining Atheism

1. Dawkins suggests on p. 11 that the same basic emotional response to our experience of nature lies at the basis of many religious people’s belief in God and many scientists passion for a scientific-naturalistic understanding of the world. Do you think he’s right? (31)

2. What does Dawkins mean by “Einsteinian religion”? What does Dawkins mean by “atheism”? Why does Dawkins believe Einsteinian religion is best understood as a form of atheism and that using the word “religion” in connection with it is more confusing than it is helpful? How does he use the example of Einstein himself to help make his point that this sense of being religious is best understood as a form of atheism and that ordinary religious people understand this very well? (32-39)

3. What does Dawkins mean by “Deism”? What does Dawkins mean by “Pantheism”? Why does he believe that “Pantheism is sexed-up atheism. Deism is watered-down theism.”? (39-41)

B. “Undeserved Respect” (41-50)

1. What does Dawkins mean when he claims: “A widespread assumption . . . is that religious faith is especially vulnerable to offense and should be protected by an abnormally thick wall of respect.” (42) How does he illustrate this “abnormally thick wall of respect” with the various examples of filing for conscientious objector status, reluctance to use religious labels for “ethnic” conflicts, public discussions of ethics, hallucinogenic drug use, and the example the 12 year old student’s t-shirt? Dawkins, of course, believes we should not have a privileged respect for religious beliefs in these cases. What do you think? (41-46)

2. Dawkins concludes this chapter with a close look at the Muslim response
to the Danish cartoons depicting Mohammed. What point is he trying to make with this example? Do you think we learn anything about religious belief itself in this example or only something about ‘religious extremism’? (46-50)

3. Dawkins warns his reader in the last sentence of this chapter that “I shall not go out of my way to offend, but nor shall I don kid gloves to handle religion any more gently than I would handle anything else.” (50) What do you think of this desire not to offend for the sake of offending but also not wanting to, as we might say, ‘pull any punches’ in discussing religious beliefs? Also, of relevance to our reading of the rest of Dawkins’ book: many people think this book is offensive to religious people in a way that a civil society should not tolerate (any more than we should tolerate offensive speech about race, for instance). Do you think Dawkins is offensive in this way in the rest of his book?

II. Ch. 2, “The God Hypothesis” (51-59)

A. What does Dawkins mean by “the God hypothesis” and what is his alternative view? (51-52)

B. Polytheism and Monotheism (52-59)

1. By the end of the section on “Polytheism,” it’s crystal clear that Dawkins isn’t interested in the fine distinctions between polytheism and monotheism, but is opposed to the God hypothesis in all its forms. Is he right, do you think, to be so casual in his dismissal of the details of the varieties of religious faith?

2. In the last paragraph of the “Polytheism” section (57) Dawkins dismisses an objection he believes is inevitable to his book, “‘The God that Dawkins doesn’t believe in is a God that I don’t believe in either. I don’t believe in an old man in the sky with a long white beard.’” Is Dawkins right to dismiss this objection as a “distraction”?

C. Secularism and Religion in America (60-68)

How does Dawkins support his claim that the founders of our country would probably be atheists in our time and most certainly were “secularists” (a term which, annoyingly, Dawkins doesn’t define but which in this context means something like ‘someone who believes in a non-religious foundation for government’)?
D. “The Poverty of Agnosticism” (69-77)
1. How does Dawkins draw his distinction between Temporary Agnosticism in Practice (TAP) and Permanent Agnosticism in Principle (PAP)? What sorts of questions is TAP appropriate for? What sorts of questions is PAP appropriate for? (69-70)

2. People who believe that PAP is the appropriate attitude toward the question of God’s existence believe that science is incapable of answering that question. How does Dawkins attempt to respond with the story of Comte’s observation about our inability to study the chemical composition of stars? (70-71)

3. While admitting that we will never be able to absolutely prove or disprove God’s existence, how does Dawkins argue that the issue between theists, agnostics, and atheists is better thought of in terms of probability? (71-74)

4. How does Russell’s “parable of the celestial teapot” further enable Dawkins to make his point that though we may not be able to disprove the existence of a thing, we may still be warranted in believing it does not exist? (74-77)

E. “NOMA” (77-85)
1. What does Gould mean when he says that science and religion are two “non-overlapping magisteria”? What sorts of questions does the magisterium of religion concern itself with? What sorts of questions does the magisterium of science concern itself with? (78-79)

2. Why does Dawkins believe that even if there are a range of questions science cannot help us to answer, we have no reason to think that theologians have any particular expertise to help us answer them either? (79-82)

3. How does Dawkins argue that the truth or falsehood of the miracle stories in the Bible are, in principle, open to scientific scrutiny? How does he go on to suggest that the religious community favors NOMA only because they know there is no evidence to favor the God hypothesis but would reject it in a heartbeat if scientific evidence were to be found supporting the truth of some of the miracle stories? (82-83)

4. How does Dawkins argue that a religion that genuinely followed Gould’s NOMA principle and made no claims about the natural world (such as claims about miracles) that would intrude on the magisterium of science
would not be a religion that could be recognized as such by “most practicing theists in the pew or on the prayer mat”? (84-85)

F. “The Great Prayer Experiment” (85-90)

What is the “great prayer experiment”? What did it show? How did Theologians such as Swinburne react to the results? How does Dawkins think it also shows, in contrast to NOMA inspired conceptions of the relation between religion and science that “the alleged power of intercessory prayer is at least in principle within the reach of science”?

G. “The Neville Chamberlain School of Evolutionists” (90-94)

Why does Dawkins think the creation-evolution controversy in our country may be the reason why many American scientists and philosophers (such as Michael Ruse) are inclined toward a NOMA view of science and religion? Why does Dawkins believe that their views are a form of appeasement on one front in the American culture wars to the neglect of what Dawkins believes is a more important battle (summed up aptly on p. 67 by Jerry Coyne)?

H. “Little Green Men” (94-99)

I really don’t think Dawkins raises any new points in this section of ch. 2 that we need to discuss. It mainly offers a segue to the theme of the next chapter so you should read it if only to get ready for the next chapter. But unless you find something here you’d like to discuss, we’ll skip it in our class discussions of the book.

III. Ch. 3, “Arguments for God’s Existence” (100-136)

A. “Thomas Aquinas’ ‘Proofs’” (100-102)

1. What common point does Dawkins believe the first three of Aquinas’ arguments attempt to make and why does he believe this point is not well made in any of them? (100-102)

2. What is the argument from degree and why does Dawkins think it’s not convincing? (102)

3. What is the argument from design and why does Dawkins think it’s not convincing? (103)

B. “The Ontological Argument” (103-110)

What is the ontological argument? What does it mean to say that it is an a priori
argument? What problems does Dawkins see with it? In particular, what problem did Immanuel Kant find with it?

C. “The Argument from Beauty” (110-112)

What is the argument from beauty? What does Dawkins not find it convincing?

D. “The Argument from Personal Experience” (112-117)

1. What is the argument from personal experience?

2. Why does Dawkins believe his discussion of what he calls the brain’s “first class simulation software” is helpful in seeing why the argument from personal experience should not be convincing? (113-116)

3. What is “David Hume’s pithy test to establish a miracle” and how does Dawkins appeal to it to dissuade us from being convinced by even the personal experience of multitudes, such as the mass experience of the miracle at Fatima in 1917? (116-117)

E. “The Argument from Scripture” (117-123)

1. What is Lewis’s scriptural argument for Jesus’ divinity and how does Dawkins object to it? (117)

2. What sort of point is Dawkins trying to make when he writes, “The fact that something is written down is persuasive to people not used to asking questions like: ‘Who wrote it, and when?’” How does Dawkins’ discussion of various textual problems and contradictions in the Bible (in particular, the Gospels of the New Testament) help him to make the point that scripture cannot provide good evidence for religious beliefs? (118-123)

F. “The Argument from Admired Religious Scientists” (123-130)

1. What does Dawkins mean by “the argument from admired religious scientists”?

2. How does Dawkins attempt to answer the “argument” by noting the way in which most contemporary scientists (especially the most accomplished) tend not to be religious and the way in which religion is negatively correlated with education? What do you think of his point? Does it make a point that should be relevant in our assessment of the rationality of
G. “Pascal’s Wager” (130-132)

1. What is Pascal’s wager and how does it justify believing in God? (130)

2. Why does Dawkins think that the most Pascal’s wager could justify is not believing in God but feigning belief in God? Do you think Dawkins is right? Can you believe in the existence of something simply by choosing to believe? (130-132)

3. Why does Dawkins believe that if God did exist, believing in him would probably not be that important to him? Do you agree with Dawkins when he suggests that God likely would respect Russell’s “courageous scepticism”? Do you think he’s right to characterize Pascal’s “bet-hedging” as “cowardly”? (130)

4. How does Dawkins believe that Pascal’s wager doesn’t take into account the multiplicity of religions that offer themselves to our belief? (131-132)

H. “Bayesian Arguments” (132-136)

1. What sort of argument does Unwin have for the existence of God? (132-134)

2. Why does Dawkins believe Unwin’s argument suffers from the old problem: “Garbage In, Garbage Out”? (134-136)

IV. Ch. 4, “Why There Almost Certainly Is No God” (136-189)

A. “The Ultimate Boeing 747” (136-139)

1. What is Hoyle’s argument for the improbability of life originating on earth by chance?

2. How do creationists/intelligent design advocates extend Hoyle’s sort of argument to living organisms and their complex organs?

3. What does Dawkins mean when he suggests that “God is the Ultimate Boeing 747”?

4. What does Dawkins think is wrong with the creationist version of the argument from improbability and how does Darwinian natural selection
help us to see this problem with the argument?

B. “Natural Selection as a Consciousness-Raiser” (139-144)

How does the Darwinian idea of natural selection “raise our consciousness” to be suspicious of intelligent design as an explanation for organized complexity in the living world, but also beyond that to the natural world as a whole? How does it counter what Dennett refers to as the “trickle-down theory of creation”: “the idea that it takes a big fancy smart thing to make a lesser thing”?

C. “Irreducible Complexity” (144-151)

1. How do the creationist arguments Dawkins references assume that design is the only alternative to chance in explaining living things? Why does Dawkins believe both chance and design fail as explanations? (144-147)

2. How does natural selection “break the problem of improbability up into small pieces”? How does Dawkins illustrate this “power of accumulation” with his metaphor of “climbing Mount Improbable”? How does he make much the same point with his “badly designed combination lock that gave out little hints progressively”? (147-148)

3. What does the phrase “irreducible complexity” mean? Why does Dawkins believe it basically resolves into the idea that “biological adaptation is a question of the jackpot or nothing”? How does Dawkins counter this idea with his example of the eye and wing and, in particular, with answering the question “What is the use of half an eye/wing”? (148-151)

D. “The Worship of Gaps” (151-161)

1. What is the “God of the Gaps” strategy? (151-152)

2. Why does Dawkins believe that “There is . . . an unfortunate hook-up between science’s methodological need to seek out areas of ignorance in order to target research, and ID’s need to seek out areas of ignorance in order to claim victory by default”? (152-153)

3. How does the creationist attraction to “gaps” in the fossil record illustrate the “God of the Gaps” strategy? How does Dawkins counter the creationist fossil record gaps argument? (153-154)

4. Why does Dawkins believe the appeal to “irreducible complexity” “represents a failure of the imagination” and is best described as an
“argument from personal incredulity”? How does he illustrate the inadequacies of this sort of argument with his reference to a Penn and Teller magic trick? Do you think this is a fair comparison? (154-155)

5. Behe and Irreducible Complexity (156-161)

a. What is the bacterial flagellar motor and why does Behe believe it is an example of irreducible complexity? (156-158)

b. How does Miller’s examination of the TTSS show that “TTSS components were commandeered for a new, but not wholly unrelated, function when the flagellar motor evolved”? (58-159)

c. Why does Dawkins believe the take home message of intelligent design is “If you don’t understand how something works, never mind: just give up and say God did it”? How does he illustrate this point with Behe’s testimony concerning the evolution of the immune system and Rothschild’s response to that testimony? (159-160)

d. Why does Dawkins believe invoking God in the way Behe does is not an explanation of anything? (160-161)


1. How does Dawkins stress that the origin of life itself presents us with a very different sort of event needing explanation than the evolution of life itself (once life is already there)? (162)

2. What is the “Goldilocks’ Zone”? How does the Design explanation for our being in the “Goldilocks’ Zone” differ from that provided by the “anthropic” principle? (163-164)

3. How does the “anthropic alternative to the design hypothesis” invoke “the magic of large numbers” in providing a statistical explanation for the origin of life on our planet? (165-166)

4. Why does Dawkins believe such an anthropic, statistical explanation for the evolution of life is not reasonable? (167-169)


1. What is the Goldilocks Zone for the “six fundamental constants” of
universe that Rees documents? Why is it just a tad bit curious that we just happen to be living in a universe with just these values for these fundamental physical constants? (169-171)

2. What is the “theist’s answer” to this question about why we just happen to live in a universe with this Goldilocks Zone of values for its fundamental constants (what we could call the cosmic Goldilocks zone)? Why does Dawkins reject this answer? (171-172)

3. What is the first non-theistic, scientific explanation Dawkins considers for our cosmic Goldilocks zone? How does John Leslie’s analogy give expression to a reasonable dissatisfaction we might have with this explanation? (172-173)

4. What is a “multiverse” and how does it, in conjunction with the anthropic principle, provide a different non-theistic explanation for our cosmic Goldilocks zone? How does Smolin’s idea about the genesis of universes add a Darwinian element to this explanation? (173-175)

5. Given the “extravagant” nature of the hypothesis of a multiverse, how does Dawkins argue that the multiverse hypothesis is still less extravagant than the God hypothesis? (175-176)

6. How does Dawkins’ examination of Swinburne’s view of the explanatory power of the God hypothesis help him to make his key point that the God hypothesis cannot be a simple hypothesis? (176-180)

G. “An Interlude at Cambridge” (180-189)

1. What was the response Dawkins received from theologians to his objection that “a God capable of designing a universe, or anything else, would have to be complex and statistically improbable”? What is the main problem Dawkins sees with this response? (183-184)

2. What is Dawkins response to the questions theologians put to him that “there had to be a reason why there is something rather than nothing”? What, for Dawkins, is the difference between what he calls (borrowing from Dennett) a “crane” (natural selection, for example) and a “skyhook” (his appraisal of the God hypothesis)? (184-185)

V. Ch. 5 “The Roots of Religion” (190-240) Skip, if you like. We won’t be discussing it.

VI. Ch. 6, “The Roots of Morality” (241-267)
A. “Does Our Moral Sense Have a Darwinian Origin?” (245-254)

1. Why does Darwinism appear ill suited to explain something like morality? What does Dawkins mean by a “selfish gene”? Even though the most obvious ways for a gene to insure its survival is by helping to build an organism which is selfish, why does Dawkins think there are circumstances in which it is actually beneficial for them to dispose us to altruistic behavior, in particular, in relation to kin? (245-247)

2. What is “reciprocal altruism” and how does natural selection favor the evolution of this unselfish form of behavior under certain circumstances? (247-249)

3. How is reputation also important in understanding the evolution of altruism? (249-252)

4. Why does Dawkins believe it is important to recognize that “Selection does not favour the evolution of a cognitive awareness of what is good for our genes . . . (only) rules of thumb, which work in practice to promote the genes that build them.” (252-254)

5. Why does Dawkins characterize our moral dispositions toward others as “Darwinian mistakes: blessed, precious mistakes”? (253)

B. “A Case Study in the Roots of Morality” (254-258)

How do Hauser’s studies of responses to moral dilemmas help to show that the there are some universal moral principles shared broadly within our species regardless of culture and regardless of religious or non-religious beliefs? How do the thought experiments involving the man trapped on the railway line illustrate the way in which we instinctively/intuitively uphold Kant’s principle that we should never use others as merely means to accomplish our ends/goals?

C. “If There is No God, Why be Good?” (259-267)

1. Do you agree with Dawkins when he writes: “‘Do you really mean to tell me the only reason you try to be good is to gain God’s approval and reward, or to avoid his disapproval and punishment? That’s not morality, that’s just sucking up . . .’” (259)

2. What is Dostoevsky’s point in the passage Dawkins quotes on p. 259 (-260)? What is Dawkins response to Dostoevsky’s point? Do you think
he’s being a “Pollyanna” for believing what he does about human nature? What, if anything, does the story Pinker accounts about the Montreal police strike? What does this tell us about human nature? What, if anything, does it tell us about the importance of religion for morality? (259-263)

3. What point is Dawkins’ imaginary religious apologist making on p. 264 about religion and “absolute morality”? How does Dawkins respond? (263-267)

VII. “The ‘Good’ Book and the Changing Moral Zeitgeist” (268-316)

A. “The Old Testament” (269-283)

1. Dawkins appears to have two closely connected points to make with the numerous stories he recounts from the Old Testament: A) that the Old Testament encourages “a system of morals which any civilized moral person . . . would find . . . obnoxious.” (268) B) “that we do not, as a matter of fact, derive our morals from scripture. Or, if we do, we pick and choose among the scriptures for the nice bits and reject the nasty. But then we must have some independent criterion for deciding which are the moral bits: a criterion which . . . cannot come from scripture itself . . .” (275) What do you think? Has Dawkins succeeded in justifying these two claims in this section?

2. At several points in this section, Dawkins considers the possible objection that we are not meant to take these Old Testament stories literally. How does Dawkins respond to this objection? How, in particular in connection with the story of Abraham being called to sacrifice his son Isaac (274-275), does his response reiterate point B above about needing an independent criterion for morality in order to pick the nice bits and leave aside the nasty ones?


After noting that “Jesus is a huge improvement over the cruel ogre of the Old Testament” (283), Dawkins focuses on the doctrine of original sin and the story of Jesus dying to atone for humanity’s sins. Why does Dawkins consider this major theme of New Testament Christianity both “viciously unpleasant” and “barking mad”?

C. “Love Thy Neighbor” (288-297)

1. Dawkins draws on John Hartung in this section to make the point that
“Jesus limited his in-group of the saved strictly to Jews.” How does he attempt to make this point? Do you think he succeeds?

2. The main point of this section is that religion encourages divisiveness by fostering “in-group loyalties and out-group hostilities.” How does he attempt to make this point? What do you think, in particular, of the study of Israeli schoolchildren to the story of Joshua (and “General Lin”)? Do you think he succeeds in making his point?

3. How does he address the objection that much religious conflict in the world are not really about “theological disagreements”? (294-297)

D. “The Moral Zeitgeist” (298-308)

What sort of broad consensus about morality (our “moral zeitgeist”) does Dawkins believe exists today? How does he illustrate how far we have come even from our recent ancestors (like Lincoln, Huxley, or Wells) in the development of our moral zeitgeist? Why does Dawkins believe these changes in our moral zeitgeist have not come from religion? How does this last point help him to make his major point: “to undermine the claim that we need God in order to be good” (308)?

E. “What about Hitler and Stalin? Weren’t They Atheists?” (308-316)

In this section Dawkins notes an oft-raised objection to atheist concerns with the violence and divisiveness that has derived from religious belief: that atheists can cause just as much suffering as any religious zealot - take Hitler and Stalin for example! How does Dawkins attempt to answer this objection by arguing that even if they were atheists (a point he questions in the case of Hitler) it is not true that “they did their terrible deeds because they were atheists” (272)? Basically, Dawkins claim is that though both atheists and religious believers can be evil, there is no connection between atheism and such evil whereas there is a connection between religious beliefs and evil. Do you think he is successful in justifying this claim?

VIII. Ch. 8, “What’s Wrong With Religion? Why Be So Hostile?” (317-348)

A. “Fundamentalism and the Subversion of Science” (319-323)

1. How does Dawkins distinguish the passion he has for the scientific search for truth from the sort of passion a fundamentalist has for her/his religious beliefs? How does he illustrate this difference with his story of the “respected elder statesman of the Zoology Department at Oxford when (he) was an undergraduate”? (319-321)
2. Why does Dawkins believes fundamentalist religion “actively debauches the scientific enterprise”? How does he illustrate his point with the story of Kurt Wise? (321-323)

3. Why does Dawkins believe that non-fundamentalist forms of religion make “the world safe for fundamentalism”? Do you agree? (323)

B. Various Forms of Religious Absolutism (323-340)

Dawkins makes discusses many examples of religious absolutism in these pages from fundamentalist Muslim punishments for blasphemy to fundamentalist Christian attitudes toward homosexuality. But he comes closest to getting to what I think is the real heart of his disagreement with religious absolutism in his discussion of abortion, euthanasia, and stem-cell research: what he characterizes as the consequentialist or utilitarian stress on suffering, specifically the desire to minimize suffering. Do you believe Dawkins is right in supposing that this concern with minimizing suffering refers us to the most important issue in these moral questions? Or is there something to be said for the perspective of religious absolutism which would insist that suffering is not the bottom line in any of these disputed moral questions? (Read the entire section, but this discussion is found on pp. 326-336)

C. “How ‘Moderation’ in Faith Fosters Fanaticism” (341-348)

1. Why does Dawkins believe it is important to realize that Muslim suicide bombers and “Christian murderers of abortion doctors” “are not motivated by evil. However misguided we may think them, they are motivated . . . by what they perceive to be righteousness . . . They perceive their acts to be good . . . because they have been brought up, from the cradle, to have total and unquestioning faith”? (341-345)

2. Why does Dawkins insist that “we should blame religion itself, not religious extremism” for the misguided actions of fundamentalist extremists? Do you think he’s right when he claims: “If children were taught to question and think through their beliefs, instead of being taught the superior virtue of faith without question, it is a good bet that there would be no suicide bombers”? (345-348)

IX. Ch. 9 “Childhood, Abuse, and the Escape from Religion” (349-387)

Dawkins opens with the remarkable story of the kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara. Read it as a sort of preface to his concerns about religious attitudes toward children.
A. “Physical and Mental Abuse” (354-366)

Dawkins believes that the sort of fear of hell described by the Catholic woman on pp. 359-360 and deliberately cultivated by Pastor Roberts in his “Hell House” productions are a form of mental child abuse. Do you agree? Why or why not?

B. “In Defense of Children” (366-372)

1. What sort of “censorship” does Humphrey advocate when it comes to children and what they are taught by religious families? (366-367)

2. Why does Humphrey believe that “truly moral guardianship (of children) shows itself in an honest attempt to second-guess what they would choose for themselves if they were old enough to do so”? How does he illustrate the importance of such a principle with the case of the documentary of the Inca girl? Finally, what do you think of Humphrey’s and Dawkins’ proposals? (367-372)

C. “An Educational Scandal” (372-379)

Most of Dawkins’ discussion of “Emmanuel College” concerns uniquely British political realities. But the final point he makes is not: After recounting the story of two students of Emmanuel College, Shaquille and Clare, he concludes: “Clare and Shaquille and their fellows were not being educated. They were being let down by their school, and their school principal was abusing, not their bodies, but their minds.” (379) Do you agree with Dawkins? Why or why not?

D. “Consciousness Raising Again” (379-383)

1. Dawkins thinks it would ‘raise our consciousness’ about the relation between religion and children if we no longer spoke of a Christian child or a Muslim child, but a children of Christian or Muslim parents? Do you think he’s right? (379-383)

2. Dawkins concludes his reflections on religion and childhood with a very modest sounding recommendation for teaching children comparative religion: “Let children learn about different faiths . . . and let them draw their own conclusions . . .” This conclusion dovetails with another rather modest point Dawkins made on p. 367 “that children should be taught not so much what to think as how to think.” Do these modest points demand the sort of censorship Humphrey recommends? Would they license putting age limits on children’s entry to shows like “Hell House”? If not, just what do they require that we do with regard to children and religion?
E. “Religious Education as a Part of Literary Education” (383-387)

Note Dawkins’ respect for the Bible as an important part of our literary heritage, but I’m not sure there’s that much to discuss in this section.

X. Ch. 10, “A Much Needed Gap” (388-420)

A. “Binker” and “Consolation” (389-404)

1. I think we can ignore Dawkins’ very speculative discussion of how Binkers may have evolved from a general belief in gods. The take home message of “Binker” is that imaginary beings can be as comforting and consoling as real beings. (389-394)

2. While acknowledging that false beliefs can be comforting, how does Dawkins call into question the ability of religion to console the dying? (394-404)

B. “Inspiration” and “The Mother of All Burkas” (404-420)

1. How does Dawkins suggest that a scientific, non-theistic understanding of life can inspire us to appreciate that our life is “precious”? (404-405)

2. In “The Mother of All Burkas” Dawkins attempts in several different ways to illustrate how science is enabling us to broaden - in ways unimaginable without science - our understanding of the world and our place within it. Do you agree with him that this is “inspiring”? Can it provide the same sort of inspiration provided by religion? (405-420)