

MPC MAJOR RESEARCH PAPER

Arguing with God:
A Rhetorical Analysis of 'The God Debates'

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Vin Heney presents:

Arguing with God

A rhetorical analysis of the 'God Debates'

(Theist)
The theist speakers studied (David Welpe, John Lennon, Dimesh Souza) highlighted both the compatibility and incompatibility of religion & science, critiqued and revealed atheism, associated atheism with violence and injustice, positioned religion as a force for good, appealed to rationality, and cited personal experiences of the divine.

(Altheist)
The atheist speakers studied (Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens) highlighted the incompatibility of religion and science, critiqued and ridiculed religion, associated religion with violence and injustice, positioned atheism as a force for good, appealed to rationality, identified uncertainty, and praised the scientific method.

(1) What kinds of rhetorical strategies are used in the recent wave of god debates?
Comparative or 'Attack' rhetoric / Scientific rhetoric
Religious rhetoric / Distinguishing rhetoric
Rational rhetoric / Hedging rhetoric
Emotional rhetoric / Credibility rhetoric

(2) What does the frequency of usage of the rhetorical strategies tell us about the ability of the opposing parties to engage in meaningful communication?
There is evidence of both incommensurability (resolute faith vs. admitted uncertainty, critiquing and vilifying opponents' positions, rejection of opponents' forms of evidence) and commensurability (shared means of persuasion: the secular and scientific language of rationality).
"Communication across the revolutionary divide is inevitably partial." - Thomas Kuhn

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ABSTRACT

Recently published pro-atheist books by Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, and Christopher Hitchens have reignited the age-old debate about the existence of God. Many pro-faith books have been written in response. The deliberations between theists and atheists have moved beyond the written word and onto the public debate platform. The present paper observes three such 'God debates' through the theoretical lens of rhetoric. Using a modified grounded theory approach, and borrowing from literature concerning public debates and religious rhetoric, a number of rhetorical strategies are identified. Thomas Kuhn's incommensurability theory (1962) is then applied to the results in an effort to locate evidence of compatibility and incompatibility between the speakers championing the opposing paradigms. Findings suggest that the speakers are able to achieve meaningful communication when appealing to a shared means of persuasion (secular, scientific language) and recognizing the diversity in their opponents' position. Conversely, the speakers are unable to achieve meaningful communication when engaging in one-side attack-based rhetoric and disagreeing on the constitution of evidence. Such findings are useful for communications professionals tasked with supporting meaningful communication between divergent perspectives.

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VOICES

Scene: *Taken from Does God Exist, a debate between Rabbi David Wolpe and bestselling author and neuroscientist Sam Harris, hosted at the American Jewish University in 2007.*

David Wolpe: Science, and the place of science – which is at the heart of, in particular, Dawkins’ and Dennett’s book – is part of what people debate about and I think don’t understand very well.

Moderator (directed to David Wople): What do you think they don’t get?

David Wolpe: They don’t get that science is powerful, but it’s narrow. And the idea that science explains human life is an idea that I think is promoted only by people who are under the misimpression that the place of science in human life is a scientific question, when in fact it’s a philosophical or religious question. And you can’t explain the place of science in human life in scientific terms, just like you can’t explain what an idea is in scientific terms – it’s intangible and philosophical and religious, and I think that a lot of people are, or at least a number of people who are educated scientifically, but not philosophically or religiously, think that now that science is as powerful and as potent as it is there is no place for religion or it has in some sense disproved religion (Wolpe, *Does God Exist*, 2007).

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Moderator (directed to Sam Harris): What do you think of that statement?

Sam Harris: That's a very good place to start. I think that one thing to notice is that the dialogue between science and religion has gone this way: it has been one of relentless and one-directional erosion of religious authority. I would challenge anyone here to think of a question upon which we once had a scientific answer – however inadequate – but which now the best answer is a religious one. Now you can think of a multiple number of questions that run the other way, where we once had a religious answer, and now the authority of religion has been battered and nullified by science and by moral progress and secular progress generally, and I think that's not an accident (Harris, *Does God Exist*, 2007).

INTRODUCTION

“Communication across the revolutionary divide is inevitably partial.”

(Kuhn, 1996, p. 149)

The excerpt in the above section, *Voices*, was taken from one of a growing number of public debates that are circulating online concerning the existence of god. This particular excerpt implies the range of issues involved in the debates, the divergent understandings of how positions can be substantiated, and the contrasting paradigms involved. The question of god, which has long divided camps the world over, has been experiencing a cultural renaissance in the western world throughout the past decade, resulting largely from a series of bestselling books championing the atheist position. The most popular of these books, *The End Of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason* (Harris, 2004), *The God Delusion* (Dawkins, 2006), and *god is not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (Hitchens, 2007), openly challenge religious belief and practice while relying on scientific logic as evidence for the non-divine origins of the universe. These three books alone have spent over 90 weeks on the *New York Times* Bestsellers List, have been translated into 59 languages, and have sold over 10 million copies. There are also many other recently published books that have championed the atheist position (Barker, 2008; Blackford & Schüklenk, 2009; Dennett, 2007; Mills, 2006; Ray, 2010; Stenger, 2008, 2009). Not surprisingly, this full frontal attack on religion was met with a great deal of opposition, as dozens of full-length books have been published in response (Berlinski, 2008; Collins, 2006, 2010; Craig, 2008, 2010; D’Souza, 2007, 2009, 2012;

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Flew, 2008; Hahn & Wilker, 2008; Lennox, 2007, 2011, 2011, 2011; Madrid & Hensley, 2010; McGrath, 2010, 2011, 2011; McGrath & McGrath, 2007; Meyer, 2009; Mittelberg, 2010; Newberg, D'Aquili, & Rause, 2002; Spitzer, 2010; Swinburne, 2004; Wilson, 2007; Wolpe, 2009; Zacharias, 2008) and blog-based counter arguments have proliferated online (Augen, 2012; Brown, 2012; Hemelarr, 2011; Penner & Hall, 2012). The deliberations have expanded beyond the written word and onto the platform that constitutes the central focus of the present research paper: the public debate.

With literally hundreds of god debates circulating online – collectively garnering millions of views – the recent wave of god debates is a valuable phenomenon to study from a communications perspective because of its links to the field of rhetoric and thus professional communication. The popularity of god debates speaks to a widespread interest in questions related to god, and underscores the importance of communicating across seemingly insurmountable discrepancies. With nonbelievers¹ representing between 19-30% of the population in Canada, and between 3-9% of the population in the US (Zukerman, 2007, p.48), an understanding of argumentative commonalities and fundamental differences between theism and atheism is of significant consequence to the field of professional communication – a discipline that specializes in developing nuanced communications approaches for diverse workplace environments (Meyer, 2010). The impulse to find evidence of commensurability – or, as the case may be, *incommensurability* – between divergent

¹ An umbrella term that often includes atheists, anti-theists, secularists, and agnostics alike.

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viewpoints is the driving force behind the present study, guiding the research questions, data collection, data analysis, and discussion.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Public deliberation as a communication platform encompasses many facets, each worthy of study and attention. Often scrutinized are the oratorical skills of speakers, or the ability of speakers to persuade audiences with effective delivery styles or charismatic demeanors (Tietge, 2008). Also worthy of study are the shifting dynamics of speaker-audience relationships in the age of vast, online audiences. Indeed, debates are increasingly less restricted by geographical limitations, and their online accessibility allows for immediate, ongoing, and widespread discussion (Howard, 2010; Ruiz, 2011). Though both of these factors play important roles in public debate, a meaningful engagement with them is beyond the scope of the present research paper.

Keeping in mind the broader context of the kinds of issues worth examining in public debates, I will focus my attention on what is actually being said by the debaters, the moderator and the audience. That is, I will analyze the substance of the arguments themselves through a rhetorical analysis of the debate transcripts. My study will incorporate both qualitative and quantitative elements. Specifically, the following two research questions will guide my analysis: (1) *What kinds of rhetorical strategies are used in the recent wave of god debates?* (2) *What does the frequency of usage of the rhetorical strategies tell us about the ability of the opposing parties to engage in meaningful communication?*

LITERATURE REVIEW

The most significant association between the study of god debates and the world of professional communication literature is that of rhetoric. Rhetoric provides the framework with which we can identify and understand the persuasive strategies used in the god debates. Though it is beyond the scope of this paper to assess the validity or strength of the arguments put forth, I will observe how rhetorical strategies are used to persuade audiences, and what these different strategies tell us about the potential for meaningful communication between opposing paradigms. As such, a rhetorical analysis will be conducted in order to determine the strategies employed and to identify evidence of in/commensurability in the recent wave of god debates.

The present research paper is supported by three groups of literature. The first group provides a brief introduction to the rhetorical tradition, as articulated by Aristotle, focusing on its conceptual links to the debate medium and audience persuasion. The second group provides an overview of studies that have used a rhetorical framework to examine public debates, particularly those pertaining to religious discourse. The third group offers a look at Thomas Kuhn's incommensurability theory (Kuhn, 1996), a body of work that examines reasons behind the incompatibility of opposing paradigms. These three groups of literature help to develop a comprehensive theoretical frame – from historical and broad to contemporary and specific – of the debates in question.

Group 1:

At its broadest point, the present research paper falls within the theoretical tradition of rhetoric. Rhetoric, as a tool for understanding debate, dates back to Aristotle's seminal work, *Rhetoric*, written in 350 B.C.E. In *Rhetoric*, Aristotle posits that "all men attempt to discuss statements and to maintain them, to defend themselves and to attack others," and that "[t]he arousing of prejudice, pity, anger, and similar emotions has nothing to do with the essential facts, but is merely a personal appeal to the man who is judging the case" (p. 1). In other words, Aristotle explains rhetoric as an art of persuasion; a debate tactic grounded not in factual validity or logical consistency, but rather in the strategic attacking of opponents, the compelling defense of oneself, and the persuasive appeal to what audiences already partially know, feel, believe or fear (Aristotle, *Rhetoric*).

At the heart of Aristotle's understanding of rhetoric is the notion of the enthymeme. While rhetoric concerns the various modes of persuasion used in creating arguments, enthymemes deal with how speakers *demonstrate* arguments (Craig & Muller, 2007). Based on the syllogistic logic that certain premises lead to certain conclusions, an orator who is skilled in producing syllogisms will also be best equipped to produce persuasive enthymemes (Craig & Muller, 2007): *All mammals are mortal (major premise), all humans are mammals (minor premise), therefore all humans will die (conclusion)*. Unlike logically coherent syllogisms, however, enthymemes consist of unstated assumptions that must hold true for the premises to lead to the conclusion: *All mammals are mortal (major premise), therefore all*

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humans will die (conclusion). In other words, a logically *incomplete* argument – if constructed strategically and delivered convincingly – can be as, or more, effective than a logically complete argument. As such, enthymemes play an important role in rhetorical persuasion and constitute a powerful appeal to an audience's sense of logical coherence: "The true and the approximately true are apprehended by the same faculty" (Craig & Muller, 122). Enthymemes act as a powerful observational lens for the analysis of the arguments used in the god debates and are particularly useful for identifying '*Emotional*' rhetoric.

Kenneth Burke, in *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1969), moves beyond the traditional persuasion-based conception of rhetoric to incorporate a discussion of *identification*:

[P]ersuasion ranges from the bluntest quest of advantage, as in sales promotion or propaganda, through courtship, social etiquette, education, and the sermon, to a 'pure' form that delights in the process of appeal for itself alone, without ulterior purpose. And identification ranges from the politician who, addressing an audience of farmers, says, 'I was a farm boy myself,' through the mysteries of social status, to the mystic's devout identification with the source of all being (Burke, p.132).

At the heart of Burke's understanding of identification is the notion of division (Burke, 1969). Because division exists between the speaker and his or her opponent (and his or her audience), there is a need for the speaker to identify with their surroundings and present their position accordingly. If the various parties involved in debates were not separated by some opinion or belief, there would be no need to find common ground with which to identify with one another, and, ultimately, attempt to persuade one another. Therefore, Burke's inclusion of identification

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when conceptualizing rhetoric acts as a useful basis when identifying ‘*Emotional*’ *rhetoric* and the shared means of persuasion amongst the speakers.

Group 2:

Numerous theorists have applied rhetoric to the study of religious discourse and public deliberation (Booth, 1985; Eisenhart, 2006; Gitay, 1983, 2001, 2005, 2009; Perelman, 1969, 1982; Smith, 2008; Williams & Alexander, 1994). Gitay examines the use of rhetoric in *Religious Rhetoric and Public Deliberation: Preliminary Thoughts* (2001) and makes an important distinction: religion can either serve as a means to support an argument – “means of persuasion,” (Gitay, 2001, p. 54) – or can be the issue about which one is arguing. Gitay demonstrates this distinction through two anti-racism speeches given in 2000 by then President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki. When addressing a religious crowd, Mbeki adopted religion and scriptural authority as a means to oppose racism. Conversely, when speaking to a more secular crowd at a national assembly, Mbeki opposed the same issue on the grounds of human rights violation; a means of persuasion more likely to resonate with the audience. Gitay concludes that delivering a message persuasively requires foreknowledge of the audience’s position, worldview, or bias, followed by the adaption of one’s argumentative premise accordingly. If the audience disagrees with the speaker’s means of persuasion – whether it be, as in the case above, religious or human rights – they are unlikely to be convinced, regardless of how logical the argument or how compelling the speaker. The distinction made by Gitay is directly applicable to the god debates as it provides a framework with which to detect the

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speakers' preferred means of persuasion, which – according to Gitay –should reflect the means of persuasion preferred by the audience. An understanding of Gitay's means of persuasion is useful when analyzing the categories of both '*Emotional*' rhetoric and '*Rational*' rhetoric.

Another argumentative device used in religious rhetoric, according to Gitay, is that of ridicule (Gitay, 2001). Gitay understands ridicule to be a tool used by speakers to avoid serious debate with opponents who do not share or accept their premise. When faced with such a situation, it is common for speakers to dismiss outright their opponent's argument, and in so doing indicate the superficiality of the position in question (Gitay, 2001). This rhetorical technique can also be found in the god debates, namely within the category of '*Comparative or Attack*' rhetoric.

Again exploring the relationship between religious discourse and rhetoric, Gitay, in *Biblical Rhetoric: The Art of Religious Dialogue* (2009), defines religious rhetoric as being “derived from the specific cases when there is no agreement or causal link between the claim and the conclusion” (Gitay, 2009, p. 4). He further outlined the difference between analytical reasoning, as based on undisputable and impersonal facts and data, and dialectical reasoning, as based on justifiable opinion. Gitay argued that dialectical reasoning derives its value from convincing others or acting on the minds of others. Furthermore, he suggested that dialectical reasoning can be understood as the “realm of rhetoric,” beginning with concepts or theses that are considered universally accepted, such as universal morals, and then attempting to

gain support and acceptance of other potentially competing or controversial theses. The concept of analytical reasoning is highly influential in identifying rhetorical appeals to rationality and factual knowledge (*'Rational' rhetoric*), and the concept of dialectical reasoning serves as a valuable contributor to the understanding and identification of *'Emotional' rhetoric*, specifically, enthymemes.

Robert Wuthnow (1988) also used rhetoric as a theoretical framework to view religious discourse. Operating primarily from an analysis of the bible, he identified a paradoxical quality of religious discourse, whereby on the one hand, it is self-referential and based on an internal logic ("centripetal"), while on the other hand, it conveys a broad, metaphorical meaning that is open to interpretation ("centrifugal") (Wuthnow, 1988, p.324). The end result is a discourse that "can never be reduced to single doctrinal statements, but requires re-creative action and thought to the point that it becomes too complex to understand" (Northrop Frye, as found in Wuthnow, 1988, p. 326). Wuthnow argued that when these opposing tendencies are held in tension, religious discourse becomes difficult to understand and even more difficult to challenge (Wuthnow, 1988). The rhetorical insights provided by Wuthnow prove useful when identifying the kinds of religious rhetoric used in the god debates, particularly regarding *'Religious' rhetoric* and personal experiences of the divine.

Crismore & Vande Kopple, in *Rhetorical Contexts and Hedges* (1990), explore an element of rhetoric that – while not necessarily linked to religious discourse – plays

an important role in public debate and argument delivery. Hedges are defined as “linguistic elements such as *perhaps, might, to a certain extent, and it is possible that,*” which can add a “judgment of truth or probability to referential information” and which can be either personal (“*I think it is possible that*”) or impersonal (“*It is possible that*”) (Crismore & Vande Kopple, 1990, p. 49). In their study, which looks at the effects of hedges on students who encounter them in textbooks, Crismore & Vande Kopple point out that although hedges have the potential to rob messages of their power and certainty – especially factual material – non-factual material might stand to benefit from hedges: “Hedges can help keep prose responsible because authors are then ‘up front’ about what they are less than certain” (Crismore & Vande Kopple, 1990, p. 49). This understanding provides the theoretical foundation for the ‘*Hedging*’ rhetoric category.

David J. Tietge, in *Rational Rhetoric: The Role of Science in Popular Discourse*, explores how and for what reasons science communicates to large and often non-scientific audiences (Tietge, 2008). Tietge situates rationality at the heart of scientific rhetoric, explaining that while the scientific process can never be completely objective, “[t]he positivistic strain of empiricism and analytical rationality that informs the scientific methodology is a large part of its mystical allure, because while the rest of us struggle with the irrational, emotional, and discriminatory (in the most anti-intellectual sense), science remains aloof, transcendent of the more primal impulses that taint other forms of discourse” (Tietge, 2008, p.189). This insight into scientific discourse – namely the eschewing

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of objectivity and the recognition of rationality – informs the definition and analysis of *'Rationality' rhetoric*.

Tietge also explores the connection between the Aristotlean appeal of ethos and the tradition of scientific rhetoric (Teitge, 2008). Understood as a key ingredient in audience persuasion, ethos is comprised of many components, including “the cumulative effect of a speaker’s (or writer’s or communicator’s) personality, dress, manner, status, authority, and presumed level of expertise,” (Teitge, 2008, p.173). Furthermore, scientific ethos is said to include appeals to other authorities: “The ethos of the scientist is enhanced by the collective ethos of the references offered as patrols to guard a particular claim. Here we see a symbolic accumulation of ‘friends’ in the form of many supporting texts, and these textual collaborators represent a well-established corpus of knowledge that is intimidating and well-defended,” (Teitge, 2008, p.173). Although the present analysis will not explore the speakers’ personality or dress, Teitge’s discussion of scientific ethos informs both the categories of *'Scientific' rhetoric* and *'Credibility' rhetoric*.

Group 3:

The ideological divide between theism and atheism positions incommensurability theory as an appropriate theoretical background with which to analyze the arguments used and the potential for compatibility in the god debates. As such, I turn first to the seminal work of Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1996), in which he argued that scientific revolutions have historically

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split scientists into two camps, those who embrace the breakthroughs and their implications, and those who refuse to accept the new hypotheses. Kuhn further argued that the proponents of opposing scientific paradigms are unable to completely appreciate each other's perspective due to incongruent priorities, vocabulary, and training: "incommensurability signifies the idea that there is no common measure among paradigms of inquiry, so that the inhabitants of paradigms 'live in different worlds,' hold 'mutually exclusive beliefs,' and/or employ 'differing language games' (Wight, 1996, p. 291). Although Kuhn used the metaphor of the 'gestalt switch' to convey the immediacy of a realized scientific revolution, he also posited that wholesale conversions among individuals or groups can happen gradually – and sometimes not at all. Nonetheless, meaningful communication is said to depend on the collective embrace of some substantial shift: "before they hope to communicate fully, one group or the other must experience the conversion that we have been calling a paradigm shift" (Kuhn, 1996, p. 150). When applied to the context of the god debates, Kuhn's theory of incommensurability offers a framework with which to detect evidence of commensurability or incommensurability among the opposing speakers.

Next in this group is Amani Albedah's *A Gadamerian Critique of Kuhn's Linguistic Turn: Incommensurability Revisited* (2006), a study that explores both Kuhn's and German philosopher Hans Georg Gadamer's approaches to incommensurability. Although Gadamer generally agreed with Kuhn's position, he believed that Kuhn's 'gestalt shift' metaphor failed to account for the ways in which commensurability

can be achieved “by jointly developing new understandings of areas where paradigms are most similar or overlap” (Delaney, 2011). Albedah also challenges the incommensurability thesis as put forth by Kuhn, claiming that it fails to “bridge the apparent gap between incommensurability and understanding” (Albedah, 324). Moreover, Albedah calls into question the alternative understanding of incommensurability as put forth by Kuhn’s “adversaries”, who assume a wholesale absence of understanding between two removed languages (Albedah, 324). Albedah instead favored the historical reflexivity and “dialogical openness” of Gadamer’s hermeneutics – necessary to avoid communication breakdown – though ultimately makes a case for the fundamental likeness of the two approaches. Albedah’s study provides a close reading of Kuhn’s work that aids in applying incommensurability to the analysis of the arguments used in the god debates.

METHODOLOGY

To analyze the debates, I conducted a modified grounded theory analysis.

Grounded theory is an effective model for analyzing qualitative data in which “[c]ategories develop through an ongoing process of comparing units of data with each other” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p.250). In this model, definitions of the categories and codes that emerge from the data continuously evolve as increasing amounts of data are analyzed (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p.250). This dynamic process allows room for some categories to “originate in concepts and issues from the research literature” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p.250), although the primary thrust of grounded theory emphasizes the identification of categories from direct contact with the data. The conceptual definitions in the present study are informed both by the literature review and the salient qualities and stylistic features of the emergent concepts. Once the coding was finalized, the data was transferred from the transcripts into three codebooks – one for each debate – comprised of (1) broad category, (2) specific concept, (3) definition, and (4) examples. The examples were color-coded to identify theist speakers (red) and atheist speakers (green); this color scheme is also used in the tables below.

DATA COLLECTION

My research paper will examine three god debates. In order to qualify as a 'god debate,' for the purposes of my study, the following inclusion criteria were met: (1) the debate must have been conducted in English, (2) the debate must have occurred after 2000, (3) the debate must be between a prominent theist supporter and a prominent atheist supporter, (4) the debate must be about the existence of god, (4) the debate must be conducted in front of a live audience, and (5) the debate must be freely available online in its entirety.

The primary site of my data collection was *YouTube*. Because the majority of god debates are filmed, they are often uploaded to free streaming sites such as *YouTube*. As only one of the debates I chose to analyze had a full transcript available, I transcribed the remaining two myself. In order to transcribe the debates, I first download them from *YouTube* with a free program called *GetTube*. *GetTube* captures video files and converts them into MP4 video files, which can then be viewed through a media player such as iTunes. Having the entire debates downloaded allowed for access at any time, regardless of the availability of an Internet connection. Although I did capture some obvious vocal tics and speaker pauses, the goal with my transcriptions was to meticulously capture every word used in the debates, including moderator comments and audience questions.

The debates have been selected to reflect the recent wave of god debates by

highlighting the three abovementioned authors whose bestselling books helped stimulate the issue: Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins, and Christopher Hitchens. As well, the debates were chosen to reflect three of the leading theist proponents actively speaking on this issue: David Wolpe, John Lennox, and Dinesh D'Souza. By no means a comprehensive study, the present research paper should be thought of as a pilot project that could be applied to a much larger study of god debates.

The first debate analyzed is "*Does God Exist*," which occurred on November 6, 2007, between David Wolpe and Sam Harris. Wolpe has defended faith in the written form (2009) and in multiple public debates, and was recently voted 'America's Top Rabbi for 2012' by *Newsweek* (Newsweek, 2012). Harris is a neuroscientist and bestselling author whose books (2004, 2006, 2010, 2012) and talks have positioned him as one of the leading atheist voices in the US. The debate, hosted at American Jewish University, Los Angeles, CA, can be found here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSBaAT6WPmk>

The second debate analyzed is "*The God Debate*," which occurred on April 7, 2010, between Dinesh D'Souza and Christopher Hitchens. President of King's College in New York City, D'Souza is a bestselling author (2007, 2009, 2012) and popular theist speaker known to argue for faith from a scientific perspective. A *Vanity Fair* contributor (2010, 2010, 2010) and best-selling author (2007, 2007), the late Hitchens was perhaps the most well-known and outspoken atheist proponent of the

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past decade. The debate, hosted at the University of Norte Dame, South Bend, IN, can be found here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9V85OykSDT8>

The final debate analyzed is *"The God Delusion Debate,"* which occurred on October 3, 2007 between John Lennox and Richard Dawkins. Lennox is a leading professor in mathematics at Oxford and an author of numerous books defending faith (2007, 2011, 2011, 2011). Dawkins is a leading professor in evolutionary biology at Oxford, a best-selling author (1997, 2000, 2006, 2006, 2010, 2011), and recognized as one of the world's leading scientific and atheistic voices. The debate, hosted in University of Alabama, Birmingham, AL, can be found here: <http://fixed-point.org/index.php/video/35-full-length/164-the-dawkins-lennox-debate>

RESULTS

My analysis of the god debates addresses two overarching issues. First, I identified the rhetorical strategies – or kinds of arguments – that were employed by both sides to persuade the audiences. Though some the strategies identified will likely come as no surprise (e.g. religion critiquing atheism and vice-versa), they are included so as to provide a comprehensive picture of how the opposing speakers support their positions. Second, I discussed the frequency of the arguments used, and what their usage revealed about the ability of the opposing speakers to “communicate fully” (Kuhn, 1996, p.150). In both stages of the analysis, I viewed the findings from the three debates as a single data set comprised of ‘theist speakers’ and ‘atheist speakers.’

The following section will address my first research question and provide the basis upon which to proceed to the deeper analysis of my second question. My first question is: *What kinds of rhetorical strategies are used in the recent wave of god debates?* My initial analysis identified eight broad categories that emerged from the debates (See Table 1 below). Each category contains a number of defined concepts with pertinent examples (See *Findings*).

Table 1

Broad Category	Concept
1. 'Comparative or Attack' rhetoric	a) Compatibility of religion and science
	b) Incompatibility of religion and science
	c) Critique of religion and/or faith
	d) Critique of atheism/secularism and/or science
	e) Associating religion with violence and injustice
	f) Associating atheism/secularism with violence and injustice
2. 'Scientific' rhetoric	a) Praising the scientific method
	b) Atheism/Secularism as a force for good
3. 'Religious' rhetoric	a) Experiences of the divine
	b) Religion as a force for good
	c) Appeal to scriptural authority
4. 'Distinguishing' rhetoric	a) Differences between religious viewpoints
	b) Differences between atheist/secular viewpoints
5. 'Rational' rhetoric	a) Appeal to rationality
	b) Appeal to factual knowledge
6. 'Hedging' rhetoric	a) Subjective argument
	b) Admission of uncertainty
7. 'Emotional' rhetoric	a) Appeal to audience
	b) Enthymeme
8. 'Credibility' rhetoric	a) Referencing other people

Findings:

1. 'Comparative or Attack' rhetoric

a) Compatibility of religion and science

The positioning of science and religion as compatible and complementary. Stylistic features of this strategy include the following: mentioning of both science and religion, use of scientific terms (ie. evidence, claim, skeptical inquiry, constitute), use of examples of historical parallelism, agreeing with points made by opponents, and the use of the following terms: 'agree', 'compatible', 'synergy', 'friendship,' 'co-exist,' and 'common.'

Examples:

- **Science and religion weren't classically in opposition**, except in certain specific instances, and even those instances are much more complicated than we suspect. You know, Galileo and the Pope, Pope Urban, were **friends**. And there is a **friendship** issue as well as a lot of political issues that were involved in Galileo's eventual recantation, it wasn't just that there was faith over here and there was Galileo over there, and in fact there were people in the church who **agreed** with Galileo, and Newton was a devout Christian as you may know, and **the relation between science and religion wasn't classically just oppositional**, was sometimes oppositional, but more often **synergistic**, but people *believed* that they **co-existed, as they should** (Wolpe, *Does God Exist*, 2007).
- **Science and religion** ought to be able to **co-exist** (Wolpe, *Does God Exist*, 2007).
- Please note that what divides us is not science, **we are both committed** to it (Lennox, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008).

b) Incompatibility of religion and science

The positioning of science and religions as incompatible. This rhetorical strategy tends to be used to demonstrate shortcomings of the opposition, ridicule the opposition, or demonstrate the incompatibility of the two positions. Stylistic features of this strategy include the use of scientific terms (e.g. antidote, falsifiable, good science, causes, claims, biology, evidence), and oppositional phrases such as: at odds; trespass; erosion; rival; naïve; anti-scientific; against; *not* scientific claims (Gitay, 2001).

Examples:

- We only need to use the word **faith** when there isn't any **evidence** (Dawkins, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008).
- The dialogue between **science** and **religion** has gone this way: it has been one of relentless and one-directional **erosion** of religious authority (Harris, *Does God Exist*, 2007).
- The existence of god is **not a scientific claim** (Wolpe, *Does God Exist*, 2007).
- In the world we're not in a position where there's only one explanation contending, there are **rival** explanations. There is a theist explanation – **the God explanation** – and there is a non-theist, or **atheist explanation**. We have to weigh the two **against** each other (D'Souza, *The God Debate*, 2010).

c) Critique of religion and/or faith

The positioning of religion and/or faith as illogical, inconsistent, limited or flawed. This rhetorical strategy tends to point out the unfalsifiability of religion and/or faith, the tendency of religion to reject or adopt science when convenient, and the tendency of religions to make supernatural claims on insufficient evidence. Stylistic features include the use of the

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following terms: falsifiable; superstition; dogmatism; false; claim; standards of rationality; incompatible; arrogance; naïve; immune to criticism; problem; appalling.

Examples:

- Now can you think of any religious spokesman you've ever heard who would tell you in advance what would disprove their hypothesis? Of course you can't, because it's **unfalsifiable** (Hitchens, *The God Debate*, 2010).
- Religion teaches us to be satisfied with **not understanding** (Dawkins, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008).
- The **problem** is there are many gods and books on offer. And they make **incompatible** claims on how we should live in this world (Harris, *Does God Exist*, 2007).
- It is not a brilliant document; it is an **appalling** guide to morality (Harris, *Does God Exist*, 2007).

d) Critique of atheism/secularism and/or science

The positioning of atheism/secularism and/or science as illogical, inconsistent, limited or flawed. This rhetorical strategy is evident in the repeated use of particular words and phrases that imply the inability of science to evaluate religious claims, the limitations of scientific knowledge, and the inability of science to contribute to a discussion of morality.

Examples:

- Science is powerful, but it's **narrow** (Wolpe, *Does God Exist*, 2007).
- Evolution **cannot** account for rationality because evolution says we are programmed in the world to survive and reproduce. Our minds are organs of survival. They are not organs of truth. So if we

believe in rationality **we require something outside of evolution** to account for that (D'Souza, *The God Debate*, 2010).

- **Atheism**, ladies and gentlemen, is not only **false**; it contains **no message** that deals with the central **problem** of human rebellion against god (Lennox, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008).
- **Atheism** actually **undercuts** the scientific endeavor very seriously (Lennox, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008).

e) Associating religion with violence and injustice

The positioning of religion and/or faith as a contributor to historical and current conflict, terrorism, corruption, and/or unjust traditions. Stylistic features of this rhetorical strategy include referring to scripture and the use of the following violence-based terms: human sacrifice; honour killing; human suffering; terrible; holocaust; murder; values vacuum, martyr; pedophile priests; threat; human sacrifice; virulent; suicide murder; war; jihad.

Examples:

- Our **religions** come to us out of a tradition in many cases of **human sacrifice**. In many cases **human sacrifice** was virtually a cultural universal. This is where we come from. These are the roots of **religion** (Harris, *Does God Exist*, 2007).
- I am saying that faith is a **terrible** weapon because it justifies the performance of **terrible** acts which do not have to be justified with reason or evidence (Dawkins, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008).
- Islamic **jihadists** are preparing a **war** without end, a **faith-based war** based on the repulsive tactic of **suicide murder** and all of these people that they have a divine warrant, a holy book, and the direct word of God on their side (Hitchens, *The God Debate*, 2010).
- We could spend all night talking about the **terrible** things that happened in the name of **religion** (Wolpe, *Does God Exist*, 2007).

f) Associating atheism/secularism with violence and injustice

The positioning of atheism/secularism and/or science as a contributor to historical and current conflict, genocidal regimes, and failed states/societies. Stylistic features of this rhetorical strategy include referencing non-religious dictatorships and flawed science and political philosophies, as well as the use of the following terms: bloodbath; blood; mass murder; Freudianism; Marxism; genocide; regimes (ie. Hitler, Mao, Stalin, Pol Pot); nihilistic scientists.

Examples:

- The twentieth century saw **secular regimes** which tried to get rid of traditional religion and morality and establish a new man and a new utopia, the secular paradise and look what it brought us: an ocean of **blood**, a mountain of bodies. So for this reason I'm concluding that it is this effort to enforce secular utopia, and not religion, that is responsible for the **mass murders** of history (D'Souza, *The God Debate*, 2010).
- I'd like you to imagine with John Lennox a world without **atheism**. With no **Stalin**, with no **Mao**, with no **Pol Pot**; to name the heads of the three officially **atheistic** states (Lennox, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008).
- And then, all of a sudden, when it became possible for there to be a regime **without a religion** – and you know when that became possible, right? That became possible in the **French revolution** – that was when it first became possible to not have a religion. Now is it just an extraordinary coincidence that **genocide** started to enter the modern world, first with the **bloodbath** that followed the **French Revolution**, then with the **Napoleonic** wars, that the worst war that ever happened in this country – **the civil war** – was **not a religious war**. That when you had regimes – whatever you want to call them – that explicitly **rejected religion**. You had **Stalin**, **Mao**, **Pol Pot** (Wolpe, *Does God Exist*, 2007).

2. 'Scientific' rhetoric

a) Praising the scientific method

The positioning of the scientific method as the best and only respectable means of determining empirical knowledge. Stylistic features of this rhetorical strategy include using scientific-based language and the use of the following terms: evidence; scientific standards; scientific methods; appropriate; rigor; peer review; doubt; skepticism; free and unfettered inquiry; intellectual; respectable; progress; straight; reasoning; modern tools (Tietge, 2008).

Examples:

- **Science** is the one language game we are playing where we get really **straight** and **rigorous** about what constitutes **evidence**, where there's a process of **peer review**, where you have a lot of smart people trying you wrong, and where you actually win points by proving yourself wrong (Harris, *Does God Exist*, 2007).
- **Scientific methods** are the **appropriate** methods – or at least the **scientific way of thinking** is an **appropriate** way of thinking for deciding whether we live in this kind of universe with a god or that kind of universe without a god (Dawkins, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008).
- The only **respectable intellectual** position is one of **doubt**, **skepticism**, reservation and free—and I'd stress **free and unfettered inquiry**, in that lies, as it has always lain, our only hope (Hitchens, *The God Debate*, 2010).
- **Science** makes **progress** (Dawkins, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008).

b) Atheism/Secularism as a force for good

The positioning of science and secularism as a contributor to social progress, moral enlightenment, goodwill, and the erosion of religious authority. Stylistic features of this rhetorical strategy include referencing a gradual societal shift away from religious morals, and the use of the following terms: erosion; moral progress; secular progress; under assault by science; morality; the good life; the golden rule; moral intuitions; reasonableness; generosity; standards of morality; love; friendship; solidarity; imagination.

Examples:

- Religious discourse has changed; we're not sacrificing people, happily, now, but it has changed by virtue of **progress from the outside** (Harris, *Does God Exist*, 2007).
- I cannot conceive of a logical path that would lead one to say 'because I am an **atheist**, therefore it is rational for me to kill, or murder, or be cruel (Dawkins, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008).
- It's so **nice** that – and how much we've **progressed** – no one now argues against the **evolution** of the eye (Hitchens, *The God Debate*, 2010).
- Where is the role in the **atheist** world, the unbelieving world, for the numinous or the ecstatic or the transcendent? Well, come on, those of us who can appreciate poetry and music and **love** and **friendship** and **solidarity** are not to be treated as if we have no **imagination**, as if we have no **moral** or emotional pulse, as if we don't feel things at nightfall when music plays and friends are around, as if we don't get great pleasure (Hitchens, *The God Debate*, 2010).

3. 'Religious' rhetoric

a) Experiences of the divine

A type of argument based on personal experiences of the divine, references to the metaphysical qualities of life, and broad, interpretive statements, usually not susceptible to scientific scrutiny or based on empirical evidence. Stylistic features include the use of the following terms: presence of god; eternal; not physical; not of the world; invisible order; transcendent; intangible creator; consciousness; spiritual evolution; soul; I see; I believe (Wuthnow, 1988).

Examples:

- We not only can understand the world, but we can understand more than the world. Because our origin is of the world and also **not of the world**. And the reason that our minds can do something more than just operate on instinct is because we operate all the time with things that are **not physical** (Wolpe, *Does God Exist*, 2007).
- The **god** who created the universe, ladies and gentlemen, was not created. He is **eternal** (Lennox, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008).
- **Religion** is based on the notion that there is this **invisible order** which human beings can participate in, that is ordained by something that is **transcendent** (Wolpe, *Does God Exist*, 2007).
- When I'm looking at you right now, you may assume that what **I see** is material. But that's not what **I see**. And it's not what **I believe** (Wolpe, *Does God Exist*, 2007).

b) Religion as a force for good

The positioning of religion as a contributor to social progress, moral enlightenment, and goodwill. Stylistic features of this rhetorical strategy include referencing the values that societies derive from religion, and the

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use of the following terms: decent world; creation; humility; lived; happier; values; not the problem; answer; love; forgiveness; family; lower anxiety; profounder understanding of life.

Examples:

- Religion is **not the problem**. God is **not the problem**. God is, in fact, the **answer** to the problem (D'Souza, *The God Debate*, 2010).
- Christ had come into the world to bring a message of god's **love** and **forgiveness** (Lennox, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008).
- Religious people are psychologically **happier**, have better **family** lives, feel **lower anxiety**, on and on, I mean I could give you a whole list of things in all the studies (Wolpe, *Does God Exist*, 2007).

c) Appeal to scriptural authority

An appeal to the value – and drawbacks – of holy texts. This rhetorical strategy refers to both the literal value and the interpretive value of scripture, often citing the ability of religious communities to continually reinterpret scriptural meaning. Stylistic features include directly referencing passages and authors, as well as the use of the following terms: explicit propositions; claims; literature; interpretive; nourishment; static; biblical claim; bible; holy book; religious text; story; Leviticus; Deuteronomy; Abraham.

Examples:

- The very fact that human beings all around the world show a common core of morality is evidence for the truth of the **biblical claim** that we are moral beings made in the image of god (Lennox, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008).

- Ask yourself, when you pick up the **bible**, or the Hebrew **Bible**, or any **holy book**, and find ethical wisdom in there, what is that process like? I mean you pick up **Leviticus** or **Deuteronomy** and you find that if a woman is not a virgin on her wedding night you're supposed to stone her to death on her father's doorstep (Harris, *Does God Exist*, 2007).
- **Abraham**, the point of the **Abraham story**, according to many commentators, which I take to be true, is precisely to say that although the gods of the world up to that time do demand human sacrifice, god doesn't (Wolpe, *Does God Exist*, 2007).
- Every **religious text** is a text that gets **interpreted** through a community (Wolpe, *Does God Exist*, 2007).

4. 'Distinguishing' rhetoric

a) Differences between religious viewpoints

The positioning of religion as a heterogeneous body of thought and practice, with beliefs ranging from the 'moderate' to the 'fundamental.' This rhetorical strategy is often used to differentiate between viewpoints within and between religions. Stylistic features include the use of the following terms: form of religion; particular brand; good religion; bad religion; kind of religion; moderates; only a minority; militant; blind faith.

Examples:

- I could never claim that I had **religion** thrust down my throat in the way it might have been had I been brought up in a more **militant faith** (Dawkins, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008).
- It is **healthy religion** that provides the only hope for **sick religion** to be well (Wolpe, *Does God Exist*, 2007).
- Not **all** faith is **blind faith** (Lennox, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008).

b) Differences between atheist/secular viewpoints

The positioning of atheism/secularism as a heterogeneous body of thought and practice. This rhetorical strategy is often used to differentiate between viewpoints within science and atheism, as well as to identify the diversity of views within atheist thought. Stylistic features include the use of the following terms: differentiate; part company.

Examples:

- You rightly expect me to **differentiate** between atheists (Lennox, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008).
- I **part company** with many atheists in that I am interested in spiritual experience (Harris, *Does God Exist*, 2007).

5. 'Rational' rhetoric

a) Appeal to rationality

The positioning of an argument as being based on rationality or reason. This rhetorical strategy tends to use the language of science and tends to be presented in a non-personal manner (Tietge, 2008). Stylistic features include the use of the following terms: process; reasoning; rigorous; fact; authenticate; reasonableness; argument; common sense; false analogy; true; understand; postulate; standard.

Examples:

- In order to **understand** the existence of complexity, we can't just **postulate** complexity (Dawkins, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008).
- Either one of them is completely **true** – as the Roman Church used to say, it was the one **true** church, some of its members still do – or

all of them are **false**; or all of them are **true**, which, of course, can't be **true** (Hitchens, *The God Debate*, 2010).

- In this debate at no time will I make any arguments that appeal to revelation, scripture, or authority. I'll make arguments based on **reason** alone (D'Souza, *The God Debate*, 2010).
- Let's supply the **reasonable standard**: If we see a fine-tuned universe, what's more likely, someone fine-tuned it, or it fine-tuned itself? (D'Souza, *The God Debate*, 2010)

b) Appeal to factual knowledge

The positioning of an argument as being based on facts or indisputable data. This rhetorical strategy tends to use impersonal language and numerical evidence. Stylistic features include the use of the following terms: objective facts; right and wrong; know; truth claims; basis in the brain; understand.

Examples:

- **98%** of all human beings who ever lived have had an intuitive sense that there is something (Wolpe, *Does God Exist*, 2007).
- We now **understand** essentially how life came into being. We **know** that we are all cousins of all animals and plants, we **know** that we're descendant from a common ancestor which might have been something like bacteria (Dawkins, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008).
- We **know** that almost everything you take yourself to be, as a matter of subjectivity, has its **basis in the brain** (Harris, *Does God Exist*, 2007).
- If you change that, not **10%** or **1%**, but **one part in a hundred thousandth millionth million**, we would have no universe, we would have no life (D'Souza, *The God Debate*, 2010).

6. 'Hedging' rhetoric

a) *Subjective argument*

The positioning of an argument in somewhat uncertain terms, terms based on probability, or with qualifiers (Crismore & Vande Kopple, 1990). Stylistic features of this rhetorical strategy include the use of personal pronouns and the use of the following terms: I think; I don't think; I believe; how I feel; my experience; my faith; my understanding; we; perhaps; to a certain extent; maybe.

Examples:

- **I believe**... (Hitchens, *The God Debate*, 2010).
- I said **my experience** of certain human beings (Wolpe, *Does God Exist*, 2007).
- **I think** that one thing to notice is... (Harris, *Does God Exist*, 2007).

b) *Admission of uncertainty*

The positioning of an argument as being based on partial knowledge. Often seen as a virtue in scientific discourse, this rhetorical strategy uses the following terms to express lack of knowledge: we don't fully understand; uncertainties remain; yet to fully characterize; with one exception; gaps; don't know (Crismore & Vande Kopple, 1990).

Examples:

- I'm certainly open to the possibility that we have **yet to fully characterize** the good life (Harris, *Does God Exist*, 2007).

- There are still **gaps** in our understanding (Dawkins, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008).
- What we **don't know**, we don't claim to know (Hitchens, *The God Debate*, 2010).

7. 'Emotional' rhetoric

a) Appeal to audience

A direct appeal to the audience. This rhetorical strategy draws the audience into the debate and challenges them to engage with the argument being presented (Gitay, 2001; Burke, 1969). Stylistic features include posing questions to the audience, and the use of the following terms: ladies and gentlemen; I want you to know; for you to notice; how many people in this room...; just think of how...; it should be obvious to all of you; anybody who has children...; raise your hand; we; you.

Examples:

- **We've** met tonight at an institution of higher learning, and the greatest obligation that **you** have is to keep an open mind (Hitchens, *The God Debate*, 2010).
- **Ladies and gentlemen...** (Lennox, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008).
- I'm just curious, how many of **you** eat meat? Just **raise your hand** (Wolpe, *Does God Exist*, 2007).
- This is something I want **you** to all know; before **we** talk on that level, I want kind of a big picture view for **you** all to notice (Harris, *Does God Exist*, 2007).

b) Enthymeme

An appeal to what the audience already partially believes to be true. This rhetorical strategy uses deductive arguments with unstated assumptions that must be true for the premises to lead to the conclusion (Gitay, 2009; Craig & Muller, 2007). It also relies on justifiable opinion rather than empirically sound claims. Stylistic features include posing questions to the audience and framing statements as though they are truths.

Examples:

- There are enormous numbers of competing religions, it's another reason that it's obvious to me that they're man-made (Hitchens, *The God Debate*, 2010).
- Why do we have a cell that shows the structure of complexity? Because the cell has been intelligently designed perhaps by an intelligent designer. Why does the universe show complexity and rationality? Well, those are the characteristics of the creator who made it that way (D'Souza, *The God Debate*, 2010).
- Created gods are by definition a delusion (Lennox, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008).
- Clearly 9/11 did something to our discourse (Harris, *Does God Exist*, 2007).

8. 'Credibility' rhetoric

a) Referencing other people

Evoking feelings of credibility within an argument by referencing other people; including scientific experts, religious figures, historical figures, scholars, and philosophers (Tietge, 2008). This rhetorical strategy sometimes includes a quotation from the author, or a paraphrased passage from their body of work.

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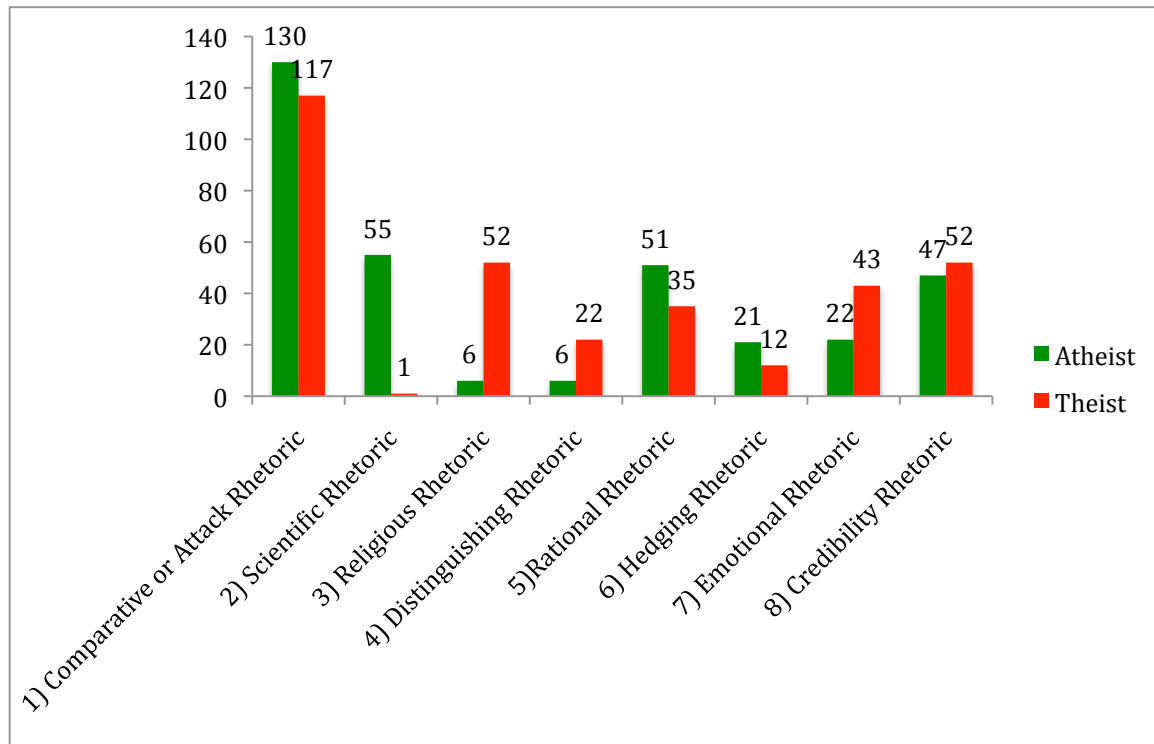
Examples:

- I brought a quote. This is from **Viktor Frankl**, who is a survivor and a therapist (Wolpe, *Does God Exist*, 2007).
- Some people say the great **Stephen Jay Gould** – who I admired very much, from whom we all learned a great deal about evolutionary biology – used to say... (Hitchens, *The God Debate*, 2010).
- One of the most famous statements that **Jesus** ever made was: I am the truth. An astonishing assertion that as **CS Lewis** pointed out long ago, is either megalomaniac, pathologically mistaken, or valid (Lennox, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008).

Throughout the three god debates, a total of 672 uses of rhetorical appeal were identified. Of these appeals, the theist speakers made 334, while the atheist speakers made 338 (See Table 2 below). While remarkably close in number, a breakdown of the results paints a very different picture. The tables below present the frequency of usage for each category (See Tables 3-10). This will be followed by an analysis of what the findings suggest about the communicative compatibility of the theist and atheist speakers.

TABLES

Table 2. Total Results of Broad Categories



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Individual Concepts:

Table 3. 'Comparative or Attack' rhetoric

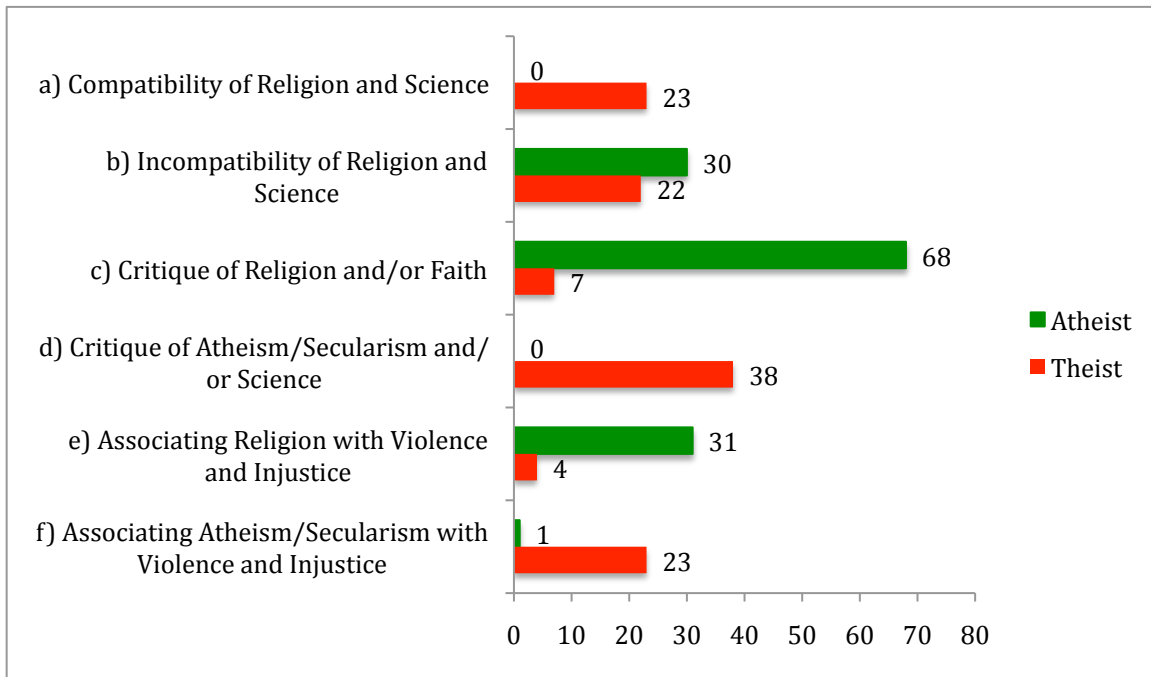
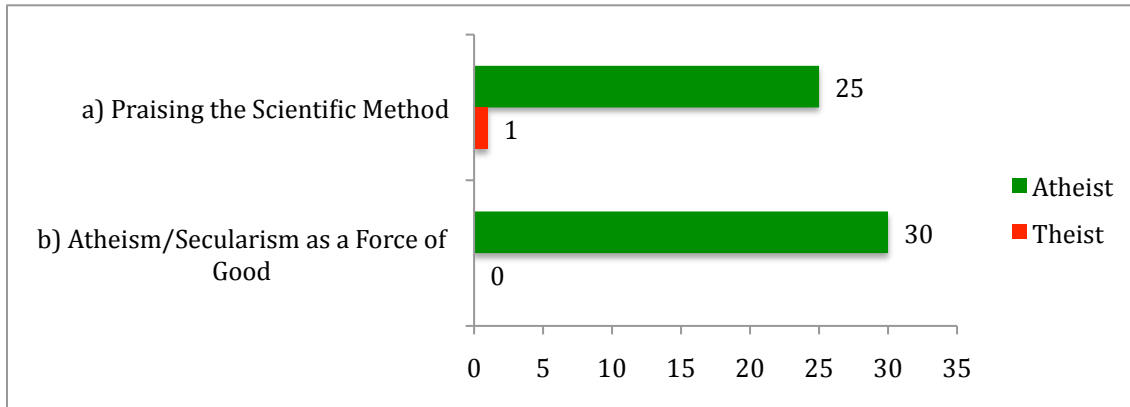


Table 4. 'Scientific' rhetoric



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Table 5. *'Religious' rhetoric*

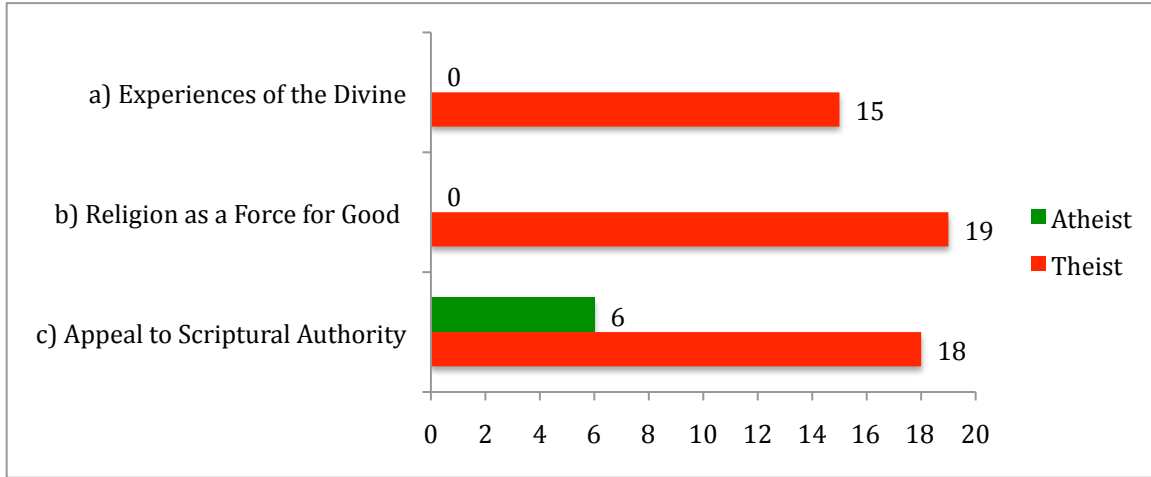


Table 6. *'Distinguishing' rhetoric*

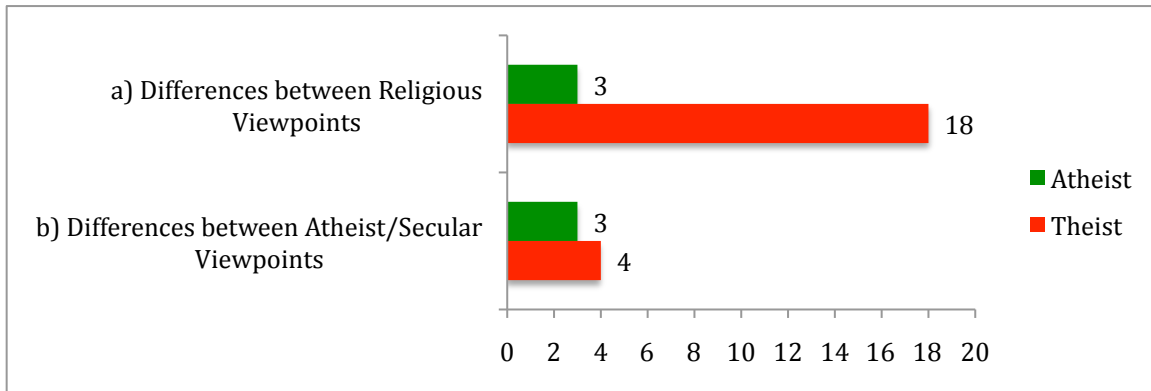
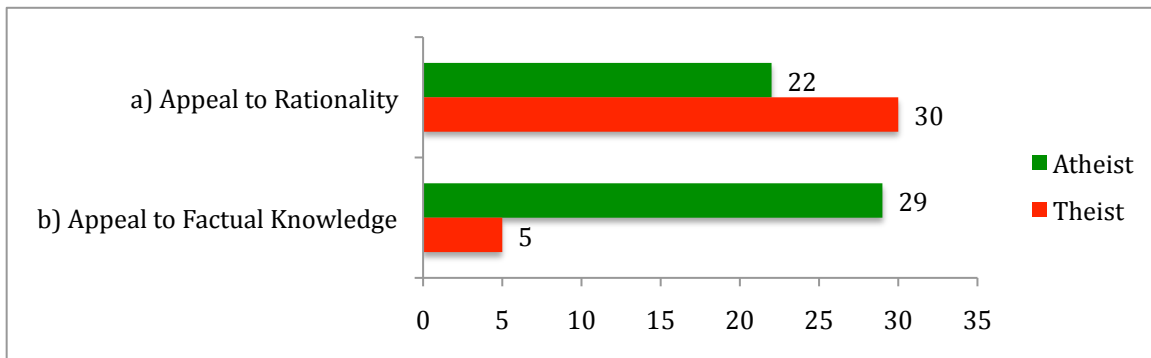


Table 7. *'Rational' rhetoric*



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Table 8. 'Hedging' rhetoric

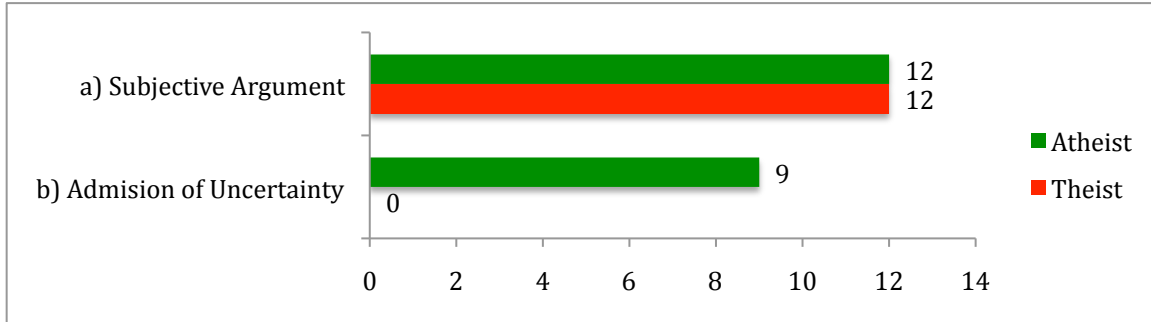


Table 9. 'Emotional' rhetoric

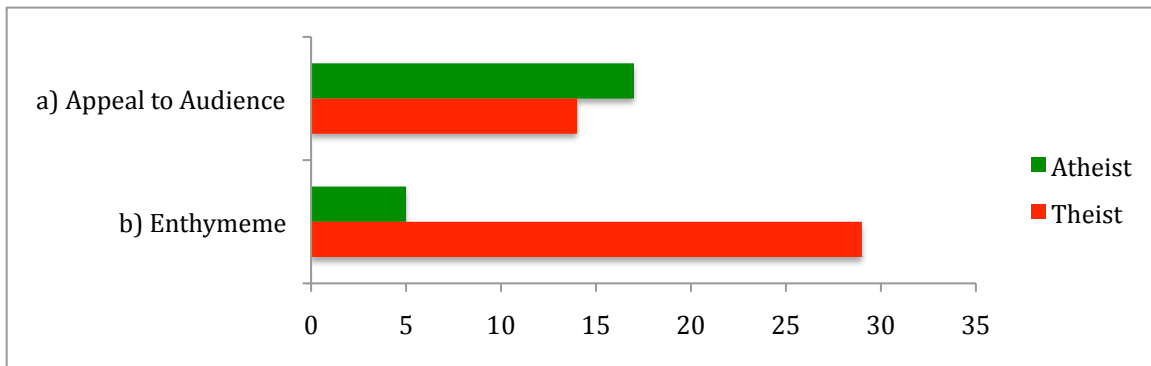
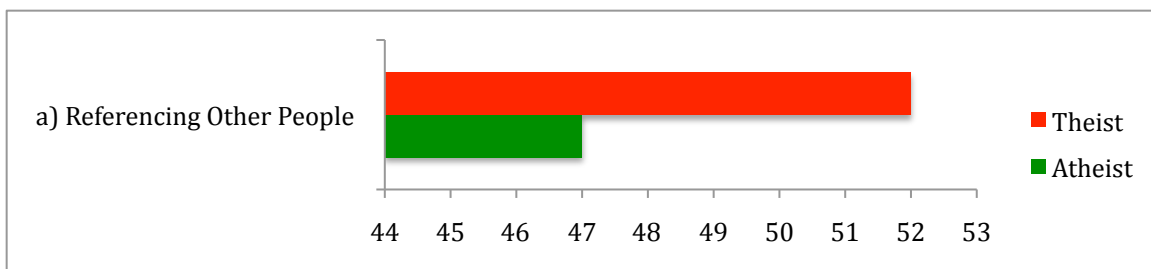


Table 10. 'Credibility' rhetoric



ANALYSIS

The following section will address the second research question: *What does the frequency of usage of the rhetorical strategies tell us about the ability of the opposing parties to engage in meaningful communication?*

The first category, '*Comparative or Attack*' rhetoric, was the most commonly used type of rhetoric in the god debates with 247 instances identified. Although the opposing speakers nearly split the total – theist with 117 instances, atheist with 130 instances – the usage of the concepts within the category is strikingly dissimilar. The first concept within the category, (1a) 'compatibility of religion and science' was put forth only by the theist speakers, with 23 instances (See Table 3). Not surprisingly, the second concept, (1b) 'incompatibility of religion and science,' was used both by the atheist speakers and theist speakers, 30 and 22 times respectively (See Table 3). Thus, while the theist speakers attempted to persuade the audiences by both aligning *and* distancing theism from science and/or atheism, the atheist speakers exclusively highlighted the differences between the opposing paradigms.

The third concept, (1c) 'critique of religion and/or faith,' was used primarily by the atheist speakers, at 68 uses. The theist speakers, on the other hand, were only critical of faith-based positions 7 times (See Table 3). Similarly, the fourth concept, (1d) 'critique of atheism/secularism and/or science,' was used exclusively by the theist speakers, at 38 uses (See Table 3). These results – while not particularly

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useful, and perhaps intuitive – indicate that the speakers on both sides of the debates employed critique-based rhetorical strategies (1c, 1d) as the most common forms of *‘Comparative or Attack’ rhetoric*, often using ridicule (Gitay, 2001) as a means of delegitimizing oppositional views: “The proposition is that if you damage a brain a little bit, you destroy English and the ability to recognize faces, but if you damage it totally at death, the soul – low and behold, still able to recognize Gramma – will rise off the brain, and go into a tunnel of light. These are scientific claims and they are profoundly naïve” (Harris, *Does God Exist*, 2007).

The fifth concept, (1e) ‘associating religion with violence and injustice,’ garnered 31 uses by the atheist speakers and only 4 uses by the theist speakers (See Table 3). Conversely, the sixth concept, (1f) ‘associating atheism/secularism with violence and injustice,’ yielded only one use by the atheist speakers though was used 23 times by the theist speakers (See Table 3). Much like the previous two concepts, these predictable results suggest that both the theist and atheist speakers used the same general strategy – *‘Comparative or Attack’ rhetoric* – to illustrate links between their opponents and injustice: “It seems to me that if you want to find intolerance, you look for atheistic regimes. Would you rather live in North Korea or South Korea?” (Wolpe, *Does God Exist*, 2007).

The fairly predictable results from the first broad category, *‘Comparative or Attack’ rhetoric*, seem to suggest at least some level of incommensurability between the opposing speakers. Understood as “[t]he impossibility of translating between

different points of view or measuring them by a common standard” (Craig & Muller, 2007, p.499), incommensurability is evidenced in four main ways: (1) the opposing speakers’ inability to agree on the compatibility of their positions (1a), (2) the opposing speakers’ agreement on the *incompatibility* of their positions (1b), (3) the almost completely one-sided critique of the opposing positions (1c, 1d), and (4) the nearly exclusive association of the opposing position with violence and injustice (1e, 1f). Kuhn’s (1996) argument of the necessity for a collective embrace of some new hypothesis – necessary for full and meaningful communication between competing paradigms – appears not realized in this first category. Although the opposing speakers both rely on the same rhetorical strategies (e.g., attack-based rhetoric), the results from ‘*Comparative or Attack*’ rhetoric seem to demonstrate conflicting positions that ‘hold mutually exclusive beliefs,’ and that ‘live in different worlds’ (Wight, 1996, p. 291).

Also unsurprising, the second category, ‘*Scientific*’ rhetoric, was used almost exclusively by the atheist speakers. The first concept within the category, (2a) ‘praising the scientific method,’ was used 25 times by the atheist speakers and only one time by the theist speakers (See Table 4). The second concept, (2b) ‘atheism/secularism as a force for good,’ was used exclusively by the atheist speakers, at 30 uses (See Table 4). These results speak to the fact that although the theist speakers highlighted the ‘compatibility of science and religion’ (See 1a), they did not go as far as to express support for atheism or to explicitly praise the scientific method upon which the atheist speakers base their beliefs and engender

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credibility (Tietge, 2008). This category also speaks to the incommensurable nature of the arguments presented by the opposing speakers in the god debates, as all but one of the 56 appeals to '*Scientific*' rhetoric were put forth by the atheist speakers: "Science uses evidence to discover the truth about the universe" (Dawkins, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008).

The third category, '*Religious*' rhetoric, yielded almost the exact opposite results from '*Scientific*' rhetoric, with 52 of the 58 instances belonging to the theist speakers (See Table 5). The first concept within the category, (3a) 'experiences of the divine' – influenced by Wuthnow's discussion of religious discourse (1988) – was used exclusively by the theist speakers, at 15 uses (See Table 5). The second concept, (3b) 'religion as a force for good,' was also used exclusively by the theist speakers, at 19 uses (See Table 5). Finally, the third concept, (3c) 'appeal to scriptural authority,' was used 18 times by the theist speakers (to make a case for the merits of religious texts), and 6 times by the atheist speakers (to illustrate the downsides of religious texts) (See Table 5). Thus, '*Religious*' rhetoric illustrates a wholesale divide between the opposing positions. As would be expected, the atheist speakers' appear unwilling to accept personal religious experiences, faith-based practices, and/or scripture as evidence for the existence of god, despite the theist speakers' appeal to these concepts as a means of supporting their beliefs: "It's not that someone says to me: 'OK, here is the evidence from column A and here is the evidence from column B; now which one do you decide on?' That's not how you decide whether you believe in God or not" (Wolpe, *Does God Exist*, 2007).

The previous two categories, *'Scientific' rhetoric* and *'Religious' rhetoric*, predictably speak to the incommensurability of theism and atheism. First, not once in all three debates does a theist speaker recognize atheism as a force for good, nor does an atheist speaker recognize theism as a force for good. Second, there are no instances of theist speakers explicitly praising the scientific method, and no instances of atheist speakers citing personal experiences of the divine or scriptural authority² as evidence for the existence of god. These categories illustrate the absence of a “common measure” with which to provide evidence for the existence or absence of god: “Proponents of two incommensurable paradigms inevitably use incompatible patterns of arrangements of the shared set of elements (be they observations, tools, measurements, terms, or theories)” (Albedah, 2006, p. 326).

The fourth category, *'Distinguishing' rhetoric*, consists of two concepts. The first concept within the category, (4a) ‘differences between religious viewpoints,’ was used 18 times by the theist speakers and 3 times by the atheist speakers (See Table 6). The second category, (4b) ‘differences between atheist/secular viewpoints,’ was used 4 times by the theist speakers and 3 times by the atheist speakers (See Table 6). Although the speakers recognize the diversity within atheism almost equally, the theist speakers distinguish the differences between religions far more frequently than do the atheist speakers. This differentiation is often used to distance the

² Although there are 6 instances where atheist speakers refer to religious texts, it is always in the context of using scripture as a tool to demonstrate the implausibility of god’s existence or the pitfalls of using holy books as moral guides.

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moderate religious views championed by the theist speakers from the fundamental religious views often associated with ignorance and injustice: “You suggest that religion builds a firewall in the mind against scientific truth. Well that might be tragically the case with some religions, but it’s not so with biblical Christianity” (Lennox, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008). The concepts in this category seem to suggest some evidence for argumentative compatibility, as the speakers on both sides recognize the diversity within their opponents’ positions and challenge their opponents with these distinctions in mind: “I would not for a moment say that all religion is bad, all religion is dangerous, all Christianity is dangerous, certainly, only a minority of religious people are bad or do bad things” (Dawkins, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008).

The speakers on both sides of the god debates rely significantly on the fifth category, ‘*Rational*’ rhetoric, a category characterized by non-personal appeals to analytical reasoning and empirical evidence (Tietge, 2008). The first concept within the category, (5a) ‘appeal to rationality,’ is used 30 times by the theist speakers and 22 times by the atheist speakers (See Table 7). The second concept, (5b) ‘appeal to factual knowledge,’ however, is used only 5 times by the theist speakers, but remains popular with the atheist speakers, at 29 uses (See Table 7). The overall split of 51 uses of ‘*Rational*’ rhetoric by the atheist speakers, compared to 35 uses by the theist speakers, speaks to the fact that the ‘language’ of rationality or reason represents something of a common language in the debates. As Gitay (2001) described, an understanding of what constitutes an effective means of persuasion is

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key when successfully positioning an argument, and – as this category seems to suggest – there is evidence of commensurability regarding the shared use of rationality as a means of persuasion. Although the theist speakers did not recognize the scientific method as the sole means for validating evidence and supporting their arguments (2a), their use of rationality as the common language within the debates does reflect a certain recognition that in order for an argument to be persuasive – even if that argument is *for* a divine creator – it must be posed in secular, scientific language: “What could be more appropriate than to address these arguments in the vocabulary of reason? We are at a state of culture in which we have to use rational arguments if we are trying to communicate in secular venues” (D’Souza, *The God Debate*, 2010).

The sixth category, *‘Hedging’ rhetoric* – informed by Crismore & Vande Kopple’s understanding of rhetorical hedges (1990) – also produced interesting results. The first concept with the category, (6a) ‘subjective argument,’ yielded equal number of uses between the opposing positions (See Table 8). This willingness to preempt one’s arguments with personal pronouns and a sense of probability was employed by both sides in the debate, often in the form of ‘I think...,’ or ‘In my experience....’ The usage of *‘Hedging’ rhetoric* by both parties seems to suggest some degree of commensurability regarding argument delivery and oratorical style. The second category, (6b) ‘admission of uncertainty,’ on the other hand, was used exclusively by the atheist speakers (See Table 8). This speaks to a fundamental difference between the participants in the god debates, whereby the theist speakers tend to express an

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unwavering certainty in their faith (“The god who created the universe, ladies and gentlemen, was not created; he is eternal” (Lennox, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008)), while the atheist speakers viewed admission of uncertainty as a virtue (“At the end of the 20th century – beginning of the 21st century – we still don’t know everything” (Dawkins, *The God Delusion Debate*, 2008)).

The seventh category, *‘Emotional’ rhetoric*, demonstrates evidence of both commensurability and incommensurability. The first concept within the category, (7a) ‘appeal to audience,’ is almost equally split, with 14 uses by the theist speakers and 17 uses by the atheist speakers (See Table 9). This collectively used concept demonstrates common rhetorical tendencies and a shared sense of persuasive strategy (Gitay, 2001; Burke, 1969). The second concept, (7b) ‘enthymeme,’ is used 29 times by the theist speakers, while only 5 times by the atheist speakers (See Table 9). This sizeable discrepancy suggests evidence of incommensurability, whereby the theist speakers – more so than the atheist speakers – presented arguments with unstated assumptions that must hold true for the premises to lead to the conclusion, or without causal links between the assertion and the conclusion (Gitay, 2009; Craig & Muller, 2007): “It is a claim about the idea that natural laws, which themselves – by the way – are an article of faith...” (Wolpe, *Does God Exist*, 2007).

In the eighth and final category, *‘Credibility’ rhetoric*, the sole concept of (8a) ‘referencing other people’ was frequently and evenly used by both sides of the

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debates – 52 times by the theist speakers and 47 times by the atheist speakers (See Table 10). In what appears to be one of the clearest example of argumentative similarity, speakers on both sides of the debates supported their arguments by evoking credibility through the mentioning of a wide range of historical, scientific, religious, cultural, and philosophical authorities (Tietge, 2008). In fact, the speakers often supported opposing arguments by referring to the same figures (ie. Charles Darwin, Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud, Adolf Hitler, Isaac Newton, Bertrand Russell). Although this category does represent a degree of commensurability regarding tactical similarity, it must be noted that this shared strategy was almost exclusively employed to *oppose* the other speaker.

DISCUSSION

This section highlights the main results and the major contributions of the present study. It concludes with some limitations and suggestions for future research.

As is discussed in the analysis of the categories that emerged from the debates, there is evidence suggestive of both argumentative commensurability and incommensurability. I will begin by discussing the main evidence for commensurability. First, speakers on both sides of the debates explicitly acknowledged the diversity within their opponents' positions and used the names of current or historical figures to evoke feelings of credibility when presenting an argument. This rhetorical tactic is related to Tietge's discussion of "intertextuality" as a form of scientific ethos that evokes feelings of expertise and authority (Tietge, 2008, p.178). Also, both the theist and atheist speakers presented their arguments by 'hedging their bets' with personal pronouns and linguistic qualifiers (Crismore & Vande Kopple, 1990), as well as through similar styles of direct appeal to the audience (Gitay, 2001). Finally, the most significant evidence for commensurability pertains to the means of persuasion (Gitay, 2001), evident in the secular and scientific language of rationality as employed by both sides.

The analysis of the god debates also points to evidence of incommensurability between the opposing viewpoints. To begin, *'Comparative or Attack' rhetoric* – routinely adopted as a technique by both sides – shows clearly (and predictably) the

fundamentally divergent nature of the opposing paradigms in question. Out of the 6 concepts within this category, the only demonstrable agreement is in the *incompatibility* of theism and atheism; elsewhere, the tools are used to critique, ridicule, and vilify the opponents' position (Gitay, 2001). Incommensurability is also evidenced in the relatively greater use of logically incomplete arguments – or enthymemes (Craig & Muller, 2007) – by the theist speakers, and in the admission of uncertainty, which reveals the incongruity between the resolute faith of the theist speakers and the admitted uncertainty of the atheist speakers. Finally, the most compelling case for incommensurability between the opposing speakers can be found in the analyses of *'Scientific' rhetoric* and *'Religious' rhetoric*. In the case of *'Scientific' rhetoric*, there are virtually no examples of the theist speakers explicitly acknowledging the merits of the scientific method or the goodwill of atheism, two concepts relied upon frequently by the atheist speakers (as would be expected). Conversely, in the case of *'Religious' rhetoric*, there are virtually no examples of atheist speakers accepting personal experiences of god, the utility of religion, or the authority of holy texts as evidence for the existence of god; evidence used often by the theist speakers (again, not surprising). Therefore, despite the aforementioned evidence of commensurability, the difficulty of engendering full and meaningful communication between the theist and atheist speakers in the god debates is palpable: “The proponents of competing paradigms are always at least slightly at cross purposes” (Kuhn, 1996, p. 148).

These results speak to a broader, discursive trend within the context of the god debates: the positioning of rationality-based arguments and scientific language as the primary means of persuasion. This trend plays out in two ways: first, through the complete rejection of *'Religious' rhetoric* as legitimate evidence on the part of the atheist speakers, and second, through the general adoption of *'Rational' rhetoric* on the part of the theist speakers. This trend can be understood as a sort of 'double movement'; that is, where atheist speakers use rationality-based arguments to delegitimize religious forms of evidence (e.g., personal experiences of the divine, scriptural authority), the theist speakers use rationality³ to defend their belief in existence of god. In other words, although both parties use rationality to support their arguments, the atheist speakers use it to distance themselves from religion, while the theist speakers use it to more closely align themselves with the scientific logic and discourse that constitutes the kinds of evidence accepted by the atheist speakers. The proposed 'double movement,' therefore, can be understood as a sort of rhetorical 'push and pull,' whereby the atheist speakers push away from theism, while the theist speakers pull closer to science. This suggests that both sides, at least to a certain degree, rely on the same rhetorical tactic to convince their audience: a rational, non-faith-based epistemology.

The present research paper contributes to our understanding of the god debates, the field of rhetoric, and the field of professional communication in a number of

³ Religious forms of evidence are also used by the theist speakers, but the 'double movement' refers to the kinds of evidence and arguments that are collectively recognized and used, but for different ends; in this case, rationality-based rhetoric.

ways. To begin, this is one of the first studies – along with Blair (2011) & Saxton (2009) – that has looked explicitly at the recent wave of god debates. Chief in the contribution to our understanding of this cultural phenomenon is the introduction of the concept of the ‘double movement’ in which rationality-based rhetoric is used to at once push theism away from science and pull theism closer to science. The next major contribution of this study relates to the field of rhetoric. As the rhetorical analysis conducted in the present study was one of modified grounded theory, a number of rhetorical categories emerged from the data itself. Of these, one category was explicitly identified and defined for the first time in the present study:

‘Distinguishing’ rhetoric. Other categories, though emergent in the present data, were informed and influenced from the literature review. Finally, the present research paper contributes to the field of professional communication by highlighting the importance of recognizing how a shared means of persuasion can be employed to enhance communication notwithstanding apparent conflict. Despite the existence of fundamentally inconsistent paradigms, a shared ‘language’ of discourse can help to ensure at least some degree of commensurability. Such a realization will almost certainly be useful for communications practitioners working in diverse professional environments in which meaningful communication must be achieved between contrasting viewpoints.

The present research paper also presents a series of limitations. Although an individual analysis of each debate was beyond the scope of this study, there were differences between the frequency of speakers’ use of the certain rhetorical tactics

on the same side of the issue (e.g. not every atheist speaker relied on the same kinds of arguments to the same degree). Hence, to speak of the 'theist speakers' and 'atheist speakers' as homogenous groups is somewhat misleading. Future analysis of god debates could look at the difference between the use of rhetorical tactics among the theist and atheist speakers. The second shortcoming deals with the number of debates analyzed. Although analyzing three debates provides a substantial introduction to the issue, the inclusion of more debates would allow for an ever more nuanced reading of the argumentative strategies used by the opposing speakers. Finally, because the present research paper was focused exclusively on the debate transcripts, an analysis of speaking styles and audience reaction is lacking. Future research is needed to examine the less tangible elements that may provide insight into the effectiveness of particular delivery styles and the persuasiveness of particular arguments. It should be noted, however, that looking strictly at the transcripts allows for a more pure engagement with the arguments presented, free of stylistic distraction.

CONCLUSION

Driven by the primary research questions, the rhetorical discourse analysis in the present research paper identified the tools that were used in the three god debates – viewed as a single data set – and discussed what the frequency of their usage revealed about the speakers’ ability to communicate effectively across the ideological divide of theism and atheism. Evidence of both commensurability and incommensurability was apparent; the former in recognition of diversity, stylistic similarities, and a shared means of persuasion, and the latter in one-sided attack-based rhetoric, admission of uncertainty, and a near total incongruity regarding the constitution of evidence. Based on these findings, a ‘double movement’ was identified in which the atheist speakers appealed exclusively to rationality-based rhetoric to argue *against* the existence of god, while the theist speakers embraced the compatibility of the opposing positions and appealed to rationality-based rhetoric to argue *for* the existence of god. Thomas Kuhn’s incommensurability theory provides a framework to understand the inability of opposing paradigms with “no common measure” (Swerdlow, 2004, p.84) to achieve meaningful communication. Therefore, based on the findings of the present study – in which similar means of persuasion are used to support dissimilar conclusions – it appears the opposing arguments in the god debates are at once commensurable *and* incommensurable.

APPENDICES

Codebooks:

Legend:

Theist Position

Atheist Position

1. Dawkins - Lennox

Broad Category	Concept	Definition	Examples
1. 'Comparative or Attack' rhetoric	a) Compatibility of religion and science	The positioning of science and religion as compatible and complementary. Stylistic features of this strategy include the following: mentioning of both science and religion, use of scientific terms (ie. evidence, claim, skeptical inquiry, constitute), use of examples of historical parallelism, agreeing with points made by opponents, and the use of the following terms: 'agree', 'compatible', 'synergy', 'friendship', 'co-exist', and 'common.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please note that what divides us is not science, we are both committed to it what is beyond science is not necessarily irrational human beings became scientific because they expected law in nature, and they expected law in nature because they believed in the law giver I would suggest that the sophistication of the mechanism, and science rejoices in finding such mechanisms, is evidence for the sheer wonder of the creative genius of god. Christianity is falsifiable in that technical sense the bible is frequently dismissed as being anti-scientific because it makes no predictions. Oh no, that's incorrect. It makes a brilliant prediction The anthropic principle, as you stated Richard, I think is a complete truism I agree with much of the criticism that Richard makes of religion
	b) Incompatibility of religion and science	The positioning of science and religions as incompatible. This rhetorical strategy tends to be used to demonstrate shortcomings of the opposition, ridicule the opposition, or demonstrate the incompatibility of the two positions. Stylistic features of this strategy include the use of scientific terms (e.g. antidote, falsifiable, good science, causes, claims, biology, evidence), and oppositional phrases such as: at odds; trespass; erosion; rival; naïve; anti-scientific; against; not scientific claims (Gitay, 2001).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's been getting better at it over the centuries in the teeth of opposition from religion when you say faith is rational and evidence-based, I mean, if that were true it wouldn't need to be <i>faith</i> would it? we only need to use the word faith when there isn't any evidence. It's perfectly good evidence, that's not faith. the turf wars – in a sense – in American education between creationism and evolution. some nut cases are trying to introduce creationism into American schools, which is obviously very bad for science and my scientific colleagues are deeply worried by this The late Stephen Gould argued that there was no real battle between science and religion because they were about non-overlapping majesteria, different things, ships that pass in the night. No contact between them. They're about totally different things. I don't think that for a

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			<p>moment. I think that religion really is in a sense about science. I think that religious claims about the universe are scientific claims</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claims about the universe <i>are</i> scientific claims • a universe with a god would be a very different kind of universe from a universe without a god • The anthropic principle, the principle that we have to be in a universe capable of giving rise to us, plus the principle of the multiverse, provides at least an interim satisfying explanation in a way that a creator couldn't possibly be a satisfying explanation • people who believe in god mostly do believe in god because they look around the living world and they see how impressive it is. So, that level of impressiveness is completely destroyed by Darwin • a creative designer <i>cannot</i> be a satisfying explanation • All that stuff about science and physics and complications of physics and things, it all really comes down to the resurrection of Jesus • There's a fundamental incompatibility between the sort of sophisticated scientist, which we hear part of the time from John Lennox, and it's impressive and we are interested in the argument about multiverses and things, and then having produced some sort of a case for kind of deistic god perhaps, some god, the great physicist who adjusted the laws and constants of the universe, that's all very grand and wonderful. And suddenly we come down to the resurrection of <i>Jesus</i>. • I believe that we can argue that the alternative is so unparsimonious and so counter to the laws of common sense, that reluctant as we might be because it might be unpleasant for us to admit it, although we can't <i>disprove</i> that there's a god, it is very, very unlikely indeed • What divides us is our worldviews, his atheistic, mine theistic and Christian. • one could very easily draw a parallel between the anti-religious agenda of the 'New Atheists' and the attempt of communism to obliterate religion • I believe there is a god behind this universe, you believe the universe is all there is • How can something mindless and impersonal like the universe impose a sense of morality upon us?
	c) Critique of religion and/or faith	The positioning of religion and/or faith as illogical, inconsistent, limited or flawed. This rhetorical strategy tends to point out the unfalsifiability of religion and/or faith, the tendency of religion to reject or adopt science when convenient, and the tendency of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This doubt was caused by the realization that there are lots of different religions in the world and I recognized that it was an accident of my birth that I happened to have been born into the Christian faith • I think that religious explanations, although they may have been satisfying, for many centuries, are now superseded

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		<p>religions to make supernatural claims on insufficient evidence. Stylistic features include the use of the following terms: falsifiable; superstition; dogmatism; false; claim; standards of rationality; incompatible; arrogance; naïve; immune to criticism; problem; appalling.</p>	<p>and outdated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's been getting better at it over the centuries in the teeth of opposition from religion • Religion teaches us to be satisfied with not understanding. • What science has now achieved is an emancipation from that impulse to attribute these things to a creator • religion teaches us to be satisfied with not really understanding. • religion says 'oh, god did it.' We don't need to work on it, god did it, • Religion startifies the impulse to understand because religion provides a facile, easy, apparent explanation • however much-sophisticated theologians may profess their non-belief in miracles, the plain fact is that the ordinary person in the pue, the ordinary unsophisticated churchgoer believes deeply in miracles, and it's largely miracles that persuade the person into the church in the first place • then you imagine any theologian saying, "Oh, no. Not relevant. Separate majesteria. Science has no bearing on this case." Of course they wouldn't. Science has every bearing on this case. • it seems to me to be manifestly obvious that is a futile kind of explanation because, as the quotation says, who designed the designer? You have explained precisely nothing because instead of just saying 'oh well the knobs were tuned to the right values anyway', you say 'oh there was a god who knew how to tune the knobs to the right values • a creative designer <i>cannot</i> be a satisfying explanation • And a god ... you can't just deduct the issue, you can't just evade the issue by saying 'god was always there.' You still need an explanation. • the evils of teaching children that certain things are true without evidence • The point about teaching children that faith is a virtue is that you're teaching them that you don't have to justify what you do, you can simply shelter behind the statement 'that's my faith' and you're not to question that • I am saying that faith is a terrible weapon because it justifies the performance of terrible acts which do not have to be justified reason or evidence • You may well for very rational reasons do terrible things because you are religious • You're an atheist with respect to Thor and Wotan and Zeus • All that stuff about science and physics and complications of physics and things, it all really comes down to the resurrection of Jesus • It's so petty, it's so trivial, it's so local, it's so Earth-bound, it's so unworthy of the
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			<p>universe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • blind faith can be very dangerous • I would like to emphasize, is true whether the blind faith is that of religious or secular people • you easily see the limits of science, • sometimes Christians, I admit, have been guilty of a lazy 'god of the gaps' kind of solution • An argument that purports to derive rationality from irrationality doesn't even rise, in my opinion, to the dignity of being an intelligible delusion, it is logically incoherent • the danger of fanatical religion that fans the flames of the violence • I agree with much of the criticism that Richard makes of religion
	d) Critique of atheism/secularism and/or science	The positioning of atheism/secularism and/or science as illogical, inconsistent, limited or flawed. This rhetorical strategy tends to point out the inability of science to evaluate religious claims, the limitations of scientific knowledge, and the inability of science to contribute to a discussion of morality. Stylistic features include the use of the following terms: narrow; can't evaluate; unprovable; cannot; undermine; undercut; mockery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would like to emphasize, is true whether the blind faith is that of religious or secular people • Science cannot tell us, for instance, whether a poem, a work of literature or a work of art of music is good or beautiful • But science cannot tell you whether it's morally right to do so • you easily see the limits of science, • there are gaps that science closes, and I call those the bad gaps, but there are also gaps that science opens, • that somewhere down in this you're making a category mistake. Because you're confusing mechanism with agency • I think atheism undermines science very seriously • Science doesn't give you that • atheism actually undercuts the scientific endeavor very seriously • Of course we have to be in such and such a kind of planet of the kind that we can appear on, that does not answer the question how we came to exist on it. • Darwinism does not explain life • that strikes me as a rather hideous world you're delivering us into, that has no morality at all • How can something mindless and impersonal like the universe impose a sense of morality upon us? • you just cannot get an ought from an is. You cannot derive morality and ethics from matter and energy • this kind of philosophy, that has no base for morals in a transcendent god, has got to find morality in raw nature or in a combination of nature and society, and often leads to a kind of utilitarianism. • I find that trying to get morality elsewhere is something that is doomed to destruction. • I'm arguing on the basis of it truth that you're removing those categories and therefore you're leaving yourself powerless to comment. • Atheism, ladies and gentlemen, is not only false, it contains no message that deals with the central problem of human rebellion against god.

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> that the world that Richard Dawkins wishes to bring us to is no paradise, except for the few. It denies the existence of good and evil, it even denies justice.
	e) Associating religion with violence and injustice	<p>The positioning of religion and/or faith as a contributor to historical and current conflict, terrorism, corruption and/or unjust traditions. Stylistic features of this rhetorical strategy include referring to scripture and the use of the following terms: human sacrifice; honour killing; human suffering; terrible; holocaust; murder; values vacuum; martyr; pedophile priests; threat; human sacrifice; virulent; suicide murder; war; jihad.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> terrible acts which are done in the name of religion I am saying that faith is a terrible weapon because it justifies the performance of terrible acts which do not have to be justified reason or evidence there is a logical path from religion to doing terrible things, those young men who bombed in the London subway and the buses, those 19 men who flew planes into various targets in the United States in September of 2001, they were not psychopaths, they were not down-trodden, ignorant people. They were well-educated, rational people who passionately believed they were right; they thought they were righteous, they thought they were good, their religion ... by the likes of their religion they were good You may well for very rational reasons do terrible things because you are religious I sincerely hope that nobody in this room bases their morals on the Christian bible or K'oran. 'Cause if they do, then their morals are likely to be hideous. I myself am totally opposed to any religion that seeks to impose itself by force, or that takes advantage of or abuses people in any way
	f) Associating atheism/secularism with violence and injustice	<p>The positioning of atheism/secularism and/or science as a contributor to historical and current conflict, genocidal regimes, and failed states/societies. Stylistic features of this rhetorical strategy include referencing non-religious dictatorships and flawed science and political philosophies, as well as the use of the following terms: bloodbath; blood; mass murder; Freudianism; Marxism; genocide; regimes (ie. Hitler, Mao, Stalin, Pol Pot); nihilistic scientists.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It may even be that atheism was an integral part of the Marxism which led them to do terrible, bad things After the fall of communism, I went very often to the academies of science in universities in Russia to discuss and reason about these things, and to see it firsthand, the effect of systematic expose to atheist indoctrination of the preceding 17 years I'd like you to imagine with John Lennox a world without atheism. With no Stalin, with no Mao, with no Pol Pot; to name the heads of the three officially atheistic states Atheism was not peripheral to Marxism; for Marx, the criticism of religion was the foundation of all criticism What kind of reasoning is this. We're not talking about shared characteristics in general, but the motivating ideology that drove these men to murder millions in their attempt to get rid of religion, the thousands of churches that were demolished in Stalin's Russia or the forced transformation of them into museums one could very easily draw a parallel between the anti-religious agenda of the 'New Atheists' and the attempt of communism to obliterate religion I would call that intellectual murder, and

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			<p>it was committed many times in the name of atheism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • this kind of philosophy, that has no base for morals in a transcendent god, has got to find morality in raw nature or in a combination of nature and society, and often leads to a kind of utilitarianism. • I find that trying to get morality elsewhere is something that is doomed to destruction.
2. 'Scientific' rhetoric	a) Praising the scientific method	<p>The positioning of the scientific method as the best and only respectable means of determining empirical knowledge. Stylistic features of this rhetorical strategy include using scientific-based language and the use of the following terms: evidence; scientific standards; scientific methods; appropriate; rigor; peer review; doubt; skepticism; free and unfettered inquiry; intellectual; respectable; progress; straight; reasoning; modern tools (Tietge, 2008).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a privilege to be a scientist, and therefore to be in a position to understand something of the mystery of existence • Science uses evidence to discover the truth about the universe • It was a supreme achievement of the human intellect to realize that there is a better explanation for these things. That these things can come about by purely natural causes • The scientific enterprise is an active seeking, an active seeking out of gaps in our knowledge, seeking out of ignorance, so that we can work to plot that ignorance • science says 'right, let's roll up our sleeves and work on it' • the evidence is all-important. Einstein's predictions fit in with observed fact and with a whole body of theory • It's perfectly good evidence, that's not faith. • Scientific methods are the appropriate methods – or at least the scientific way of thinking is an appropriate way of thinking for deciding whether we live in this kind of universe with a god or that kind of universe without a god • If there are miracles, they are to be judged by scientific means • then you imagine any theologian saying, "Oh, no. Not relevant. Separate majesteria. Science has no bearing on this case." Of course they wouldn't. Science has every bearing on this case. • The anthropic principle, the principle that we have to be in a universe capable of giving rise to us, plus the principle of the multiverse, provides at least an interim satisfying explanation in a way that a creator couldn't possibly be a satisfying explanation • science makes progress • The one gift I would wish to give to any child is skepticism • of <i>course</i> it's natural to think there must be a gardener, any fool is likely to think there must be a gardener. The huge achievement of Darwin was to show that that didn't have to be true. • What Darwin did was to show the staggeringly counter-intuitive fact that this not only can be explained by an undirected process – it's not chance, by the way, entirely wrong to say it's chance, it's not chance, natural selection is the very opposite of chance, and that's the very essence of it – that was what

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			<p>Darwin discovered, he showed not a garden, but everything in the living world and in principle not just on this Earth, but on any other planet, wherever you see the organized complexity that we understand and that we call life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there are gaps that science closes, and I call those the bad gaps, but there are also gaps that science opens,
	<p>b) Atheism/Secularism as a force for good</p>	<p>The positioning of science and secularism as a contributor to social progress, moral enlightenment, goodwill, and the erosion of religious authority. Stylistic features of this rhetorical strategy include referencing a gradual societal shift away from religious morals, and the use of the following terms: erosion; moral progress; secular progress; under assault by science; morality; the good life; the golden rule; moral intuitions; reasonableness; generosity; standards of morality; love; friendship; solidarity; imagination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That was because I discovered Darwinism. I discovered that there was no good reason to believe in any kind of supernatural creator • I think that religious explanations, although they may have been satisfying, for many centuries, are now superseded and outdated • the understanding that we can get from science, of <i>all</i> those deep questions that religion once aspired to explain, are now better or more grandly, in a more beautiful and elegant fashion, explained by science. • It was a supreme achievement of the human intellect to realize that there is a better explanation for these things. That these things can come about by purely natural causes • people who believe in god mostly do believe in god because they look around the living world and they see how impressive it is. So, that level of impressiveness is completely destroyed by Darwin • But you didn't need the bible in order to do that. You did the picking and choosing on the basis of something else; something which we all have in common, whether we are religious or not • Whether we're moral or not has nothing to do with whether or not we read the bible • there does seem to be a kind of universal human acceptance that certain things are right and other things are not • the golden rule, do as you would be done by, do unto others what you would expect them to do to you. This is a very, very wise principal, and it almost amounts to common sense, in a way. You certainly don't need a holy book in order to tell you to do that. • it clearly has nothing to do with religion, because it doesn't come from scripture; scripture doesn't change over the decades in a way that our attitudes to slavery, our attitudes to women • of <i>course</i> it's natural to think there must be a gardener, any fool is likely to think there must be a gardener. The huge achievement of Darwin was to show that that didn't have to be true. • I cannot conceive of a logical path that would lead one to say 'because I am an atheist, therefore it is rational for me to kill, or murder, or be cruel • you will not do terrible deeds because you are an atheist, not for rational

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			reasons
3. 'Religious' rhetoric	a) Experiences of the divine	A type of argument based on personal experiences of the divine, references to the metaphysical qualities of life, and broad, interpretive statements, usually not susceptible to scientific scrutiny or based on empirical evidence. Stylistic features include the use of the following terms: presence of god; eternal; not physical; not of the world; invisible order; transcendent; intangible creator; consciousness; spiritual evolution; soul; I see; I believe (Wuthnow, 1988).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the reason, ladies and gentlemen, that I'm passionate about truth is that god is the god of all truth The god who created the universe, ladies and gentlemen, was not <i>created</i>. He is eternal.
	b) Religion as a force for good	The positioning of religion as a contributor to social progress, moral enlightenment, and goodwill. Stylistic features of this rhetorical strategy include referencing the values that societies derive from religion, and the use of the following terms: decent world; creation; humility; lived; happier; values; not the problem; answer; love; forgiveness; family; lower anxiety; profounder understanding of life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They encouraged me to be intellectually inquisitive because they were like that themselves. Not in spite of their Christian faith, but <i>because</i> of it the perpetrators of that kind of an atrocity were not following Christ. Christ had come into the world to bring a message of god's love and forgiveness
	c) Appeal to scriptural authority	An appeal to the value – and drawbacks – of holy texts. This rhetorical strategy refers to both the literal value and the interpretive value of scripture, often citing the ability of religious communities to continually reinterpret scriptural meaning. Stylistic features include directly referencing passages and authors, as well as the use of the following terms: explicit propositions; claims; literature; interpretive; nourishment; static; biblical claim; bible; holy book; religious text; story; Leviticus; Deuteronomy; Abraham.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> blind faith in idols and figments of the human imagination, in other words, delusional gods, is roundly condemned in the bible the bible is frequently dismissed as being anti-scientific because it makes no predictions. Oh no, that's incorrect. It makes a brilliant prediction this is precisely the point the Christian apostle John makes at the beginning of his gospel. At the beginning was the word. The word already <i>was</i>. All things came to be by him. God is uncreated. The universe was created by him the perpetrators of that kind of an atrocity were not following Christ My kingdom is not of this world, he told them, he told pilot the very fact that human beings all around the world show a common core of morality is evidence for the truth of the biblical claim that we are moral beings made in the image of god in Leviticus, which quotes 'love your neighbour as yourself' just a bit further down, it says when a stranger (inaudible) with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong History is littered with attempts to build a godless utopia, each one of them based – as the book of Genesis suggests that they would be – on a denial that god has ever spoken, or even that he exists centuries ago, the apostle Paul spoke to the philosophers of Athens and pointed out that there would be a day in which god would judge the world by the man which he had appointed, Jesus Christ And the resurrection of Jesus Christ, a

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			<p>miracle, something supernatural, for me constitutes the central evidence upon which I base my faith –</p>
4. 'Distinguishing' rhetoric	a) Differences between religious viewpoints	<p>The positioning of religion as a heterogeneous body of thought and practice, with beliefs ranging from the 'moderate' to the 'fundamental.' This rhetorical strategy is often used to differentiate between viewpoints within and between religions. Stylistic features include the use of the following terms: form of religion; particular brand; good religion; bad religion; kind of religion; moderates; only a minority; militant; blind faith.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I could never claim that I had religion thrust down my throat in the way it might have been had I been brought up in a more militant faith • I would not for a moment say that all religion is bad, all religion is dangerous, all Christianity is dangerous, certainly, only a minority of religious people are bad or do bad things • whatever other religion this may apply to, it certainly did not apply to the Christianity my parents taught me • I myself am totally opposed to any religion that seeks to impose itself by force, or that takes advantage of or abuses people in any way • the danger of fanatical religion that fans the flames of the violence • You suggest that religion builds a firewall in the mind against scientific truth. Well that might be tragically the case with some religions, but it's not so with biblical Christianity • There are two issues here: faith is blind, science is evidence-based. I do not agree with the first one, but I very much agree with the second one. <i>Some</i> faith is blind not all faith is blind faith • you easily see the limits of science, • sometimes Christians, I admit, have been guilty of a lazy 'god of the gaps' kind of solution • I would like you to write another book in which you differentiate between religions because they are not all the same. Some support fanaticism, others don't
	b) Differences between atheist/secular viewpoints	<p>The positioning of atheism/secularism as a heterogeneous body of thought and practice. This rhetorical strategy is often used to differentiate between viewpoints within science and atheism, as well as to identify the diversity of views within atheist thought. Stylistic features include the use of the following terms: differentiate; part company.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't do the cause of science any good to unite evolution with atheism. That was the context of Jerry Coyne's remark • I think atheism undermines science very seriously • atheism actually undercuts the scientific endeavor very seriously • You rightly expect me to differentiate between atheists • But what about the moderate teaching of atheism?
5. 'Rational' rhetoric	a) Appeal to rationality	<p>The positioning of an argument as being based on rationality or reason. This rhetorical strategy tends to use the language of science and tends to be presented in an objective manner. Stylistic features include the use of the following terms: process; reasoning; rigorous; fact; authenticate; reasonableness; argument; common sense; false analogy; true; understand; postulate; standard (Tietge, 2008).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We're so used to explaining things in our own world like these television cameras, like the lights, like everything that we make, the clothes we wear, the chairs we sit on, everything we see around us is a manufactured object, and so it's so tempting to believe that that That living things or that the stars or mountains or rivers have all been made by something • design is dead, otherwise one must explain who designed the designer • In order to understand the existence of complexity, we can't just postulate complexity • if we're trying to explain complexity, we

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			<p>need some kind of an ultimate explanation for the existence of complex object</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you can talk til you're blue in the face about how it would be nice if such and such were true, it would be nice if the world were friendly to us, if would be nice if the world was not such a hideous one, but I see it as first it tells you nothing about whether it's true or not • I believe that we can argue that the alternative is so unparsimonious and so counter to the laws of common sense, that reluctant as we might be because it might be unpleasant for us to admit it, although we can't <i>disprove</i> that there's a god, it is very, very unlikely indeed • both of us, I think, hold that religion should be debated in a rational way, as anything else • we need to discuss it seriously and look at the evidence • which is the delusion? Atheism or Christianity? That is for each of us to decide on the basis of the evidence • faith itself carries with it the ideas of belief, trust, commitment, and is therefore only as robust as the evidence for it • My faith in god and Christ as the son of god is no delusion; it is rational and evidence-based • what is beyond science is not necessarily irrational • that somewhere down in this you're making a category mistake. Because you're confusing mechanism with agency • An argument that purports to derive rationality from irrationality doesn't even rise, in my opinion, to the dignity of being an intelligible delusion, it is logically incoherent • But theism tells us that the reason science is possible, the reason that I can access the universe, at least in part, through my human intelligence, is because the same god who created the universe is ultimately responsible for the human mind in here • Now that fascinates me as a mathematician. Because the reductionist is committed to deducing things that carry meaning, and I would include the DNA molecule among them, is committed to explaining those in terms of the basic materials • what I'm talking about is inference to the best explanation • intelligent designer, seems to me to be much more sensible than the inference to mindless processes • you just cannot get an ought from an is. You cannot derive morality and ethics from matter and energy • I'm arguing on the basis of it truth that you're removing those categories and therefore you're leaving yourself powerless to comment.
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> And the resurrection of Jesus Christ, a miracle, something supernatural, for me constitutes the central evidence upon which I base my faith –
	b) Appeal to factual knowledge	<p>The positioning of an argument as being based on facts or indisputable data. This rhetorical strategy tends to use impersonal language and numerical evidence. Stylistic features include the use of the following terms: objective facts; right and wrong; know; truth claims; basis in the brain; understand.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Science uses evidence to discover the truth about the universe We now understand essentially how life came into being. We know that we are all cousins of all animals and plants, we know that we're descendant from a common ancestor which might have been something like bacteria. when you say faith is rational and evidence-based, I mean, if that were true it wouldn't need to be <i>faith</i> would it? the evidence is all-important. Einstein's predictions fit in with observed fact and with a whole body of theory Claims about the universe <i>are</i> scientific claims our evolutionary past built into us a lust for sex, and at the same time built into us a lust to be good, a lust to be friendly, a lust to cooperate, a lust to sympathetic towards suffering We understand what put us here. We understand that were here as a result of a truly hideous process The empirical fact, however, is that we all largely much share what we regard as morality What Darwin did was to show the staggeringly counter-intuitive fact that this not only can be explained by an undirected process – it's not chance, by the way, entirely wrong to say it's chance, it's not chance, natural selection is the very opposite of chance, and that's the very essence of it – that was what Darwin discovered, he showed not a garden, but everything in the living world and in principle not just on this Earth, but on any other planet, wherever you see the organized complexity that we understand and that we call life.
6. 'Hedging' rhetoric	a) Subjective argument	<p>The positioning of an argument in somewhat uncertain terms, terms based on probability, or with qualifiers (Crismore & Vande Kopple, 1990). Stylistic features of this rhetorical strategy include the use of personal pronouns and the use of the following terms: I think; I don't think; I believe; how I feel; my experience; my faith; my understanding; we; perhaps; to a certain extent; maybe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I believe I would suggest I think I think I do not think
	b) Admission of uncertainty	<p>The positioning of an argument as being based on partial knowledge. Often seen as a virtue in scientific discourse, this rhetorical strategy uses the following terms to express lack of knowledge: we don't fully understand; uncertainties remain; yet to fully characterize; with one exception; gaps; don't know (Crismore & Vande Kopple, 1990).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> at the end of the 20th century, beginning of the 21st century, we still don't know everything We don't know the details There are still gaps in our understanding, we don't understand cosmology Darwin of course doesn't explain the origin of the universe
7.	a) Appeal to	A direct appeal to the audience. This	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ladies and gentlemen

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'Emotional' rhetoric	audience	rhetorical strategy draws the audience into the debate and challenges them to engage with the argument being presented. Stylistic features include posing questions to the audience, and the use of the following terms: ladies and gentlemen; I want you to know; for you to notice; how many people in this room...; just think of how... 'it should be obvious to all of you; anybody who has children...; raise your hand; we; you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ladies and gentlemen • ladies and gentlemen • ladies and gentlemen • ladies and gentlemen • ladies and gentlemen • ladies and gentlemen • ladies and gentlemen
	b) Enthymeme	An appeal to what the audience already partially believes to be true. This rhetorical strategy uses deductive arguments with unstated assumptions that must be true for the premises to lead to the conclusion (Gitay, 2009; Craig & Muller, 2007). It also relies on justifiable opinion rather than empirically sound claims. Stylistic features include posing questions to the audience and framing statements as though they are truths.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a universe with a god would be a very different kind of universe from a universe without a god • it's possible for an entirely logical, rational person to do hideous things • Ultimate reality is a personal, eternal, and supernatural god, who has revealed himself in the universe • human beings became scientific because they expected law in nature, and they expected law in nature because they believed in the law giver • But theism tells us that the reason science is possible, the reason that I can access the universe, at least in part, through my human intelligence, is because the same god who created the universe is ultimately responsible for the human mind in here • created gods are by definition a delusion • I do not think that miracles are violations of the laws of nature. Because the laws of nature describe what normally happens. God, who is the god of this universe and created it with its regularities is perfectly at liberty to feed a new event into the universe • what you're doing in your book I think is presenting us with an obviously false set of alternatives: either we take gardens on their own or the garden plus fairies. • God, far from being a delusion, is <i>real</i> • I would suggest that the sophistication of the mechanism, and science rejoices in finding such mechanisms, is evidence for the sheer wonder of the creative genius of god.
8. 'Credibility' rhetoric	a) Referencing other people	Evoking feelings of credibility within an argument by referencing other people; including scientific experts, religious figures, historical figures, scholars, and philosophers (Tietge, 2008). This rhetorical strategy sometimes includes a quotation from the author, or a paraphrased passage from their body of work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Einstein • Gerry Coin • Stephen Gould • John Lennon • Stalin • Hitler • Pol Pot • Marx • Christopher Hitchens • Zeus • Thor • Wotan • One of the most famous statements that Jesus ever made was, I am the truth. An astonishing assertion that as CS Lewis pointed out long ago, is either megalomaniac, pathologically mistaken, or valid.

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sir Peter Medawa• Newton• Eugene Victor• Albert Einstein• Sir Martin Reece• Arnold Pencius• Aristotle• Matox• Darwin• Roger Sparing• Stephen Hawking• John Lennon• Gulag• Hitler• Stalin• Sadam Hussein• Mao• Pol Pot• David Hume• Dasta Yeski• Neitzhe• Luke• Sherwin White• Douglas Adams
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2. Harris - Wolpe

Broad Category	Concept	Definition	Examples
1. 'Comparative or Attack' rhetoric	a) Compatibility of religion and science	The positioning of science and religion as compatible and complementary. Stylistic features of this strategy include the following: mentioning of both science and religion, use of scientific terms (ie. evidence, claim, skeptical inquiry, constitute), use of examples of historical parallelism, agreeing with points made by opponents, and the use of the following terms: 'agree', 'compatible', 'synergy', 'friendship,' 'co-exist,' and 'common.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> science and religion weren't classically in opposition, except in certain specific instances, and even those instances are much more complicated than we suspect. You know, Galileo and the Pope, Pope Urban, were friends. And there is a friendship issue as well as a lot of political issues that were involved in Galileo's eventual recantation, it wasn't just there was faith over here and there was Galileo over there, and in fact there were people in the church who agreed with Galileo, and Newton was a devout Christian as you may, and the relation between science and religion wasn't classically just oppositional, was sometimes oppositional, but more often synergistic, but people <i>believed</i> that they co-existed, as they should Which is not so different, by the way, from a religious person who would say It doesn't seem to me anti-scientific. You say about reincarnation, that there could even be evidence for it I wonder if you think it's possible for people to know things, or, if you don't want to use <i>know</i>, to believe true things and feel like they have evidence for true things that is not accessible through reason. So I agree and I don't think that most religious people would say that that comes to them through intuition I have lots of cosmologists and biologists who make the identical claims that I did, I'm happy to make common cause with you to say this kind of religion is bad religion explicitly that science and religion ought to be able to co-exist, The idea that spiritually one evolves, seems to me perfectly compatible with faiths, you wouldn't expect that god could give a message that could be absorbed equally in every society in every time
	b) Incompatibility of religion and science	The positioning of science and religions as incompatible. This rhetorical strategy tends to be used to demonstrate shortcomings of the opposition, ridicule the opposition, or demonstrate the incompatibility of the two positions. Stylistic features of this strategy include the use of scientific terms (e.g. antidote, falsifiable, good science, causes, claims, biology, evidence), and oppositional phrases such as: at odds; trespass; erosion; rival; naïve; anti-scientific; against; not scientific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the dialogue between science and religion has gone this way: it has been one of relentless and one-directional erosion of religious authority the point I was trying to make is that the antidote to bad science or failed science or scientific incompleteness is good science and more science. It's not religion. This entails a variety of claims which are on their face at odds with science Well it's anti-scientific if you ... um ... believe that you have good evidence for that. This is what's anti-scientific: when

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		claims (Gitay, 2001).	<p>your certainty, when your convictions, don't scale with your evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I mean there are all kinds of scientific things you could say about religion which religious people tend not to want to hear • We could talk about reason and science and evidence and common sense and bullshit and put astrologers in their place. So it could be with religion • I'm simply arguing that we need to cease to reward people for pretending to know things they do not know, and the only area of discourse where we do this is on the subject of god. • you see this all the time in religion, and this is precisely what you don't see in science. • but if you damage it totally at death, the soul – low and behold still able to recognize grammar – will rise off the brain, and go into a tunnel of light. These are scientific claims and they are profoundly naïve. • Many of those claims trespass on the territory of science <i>overtly</i> • that if a frozen waterfall can testify to the divinity of Jesus, anything can mean anything • Well it's the kind of evidence everyone on this room demands on every subject other than religion. • under the misimpression that the place of science in human life is a scientific question, when in fact it's a philosophical or religious question. • you can't explain what an idea is in scientific terms – it's intangible and philosophical and religious • you can't evaluate my life scientifically • the idea that you could scientifically demonstrate a good life is worse than empty, it's a mockery. • Because if you don't, then I would amend your statement to religion and everything else that is of central value in our lives we believe on evidence that is not susceptible to scientific proof. • It's not that I, someone says to me: "OK, here is the evidence from column A and here is the evidence from column B, now which one do you decide on?" That's not how you decide whether you believe in God or not. • "as long as somebody can <i>prove</i> to me that I don't believe life is worth living scientifically, I may as well give up." So you're, you're ... it's a disconnect • We don't evaluate our religious belief scientifically • the values that you take with skeptical inquiry are values that in fact were taken from the religious regimes • Yes, I think the rejection of transcendence and the idea that human beings are all heredity and environment and breeding and eugenics and social Darwinism was absolutely a much
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			<p>greater contributor than the ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, I think the rejection of transcendence and the idea that human beings are all heredity and environment and breeding and eugenics and social Darwinism was absolutely a much greater contributor than the • It could be that you were tossed up by an accident of ancient chemistry, in which case, it's remarkable to think that this product of evolution by blind forces could really understand the world around us • but they're actually <i>not</i> scientific claims, they're philosophical claims. • It's not a scientific claim • I mean religion is also the recognition that the world is filled with an order that is inaccessible to measurement and reason. • By the way, you could take that out of my monities, he said that • and all those things combine to provide the religious person not with proof, because you don't ask for the same kind of proof that you do in science. But with conviction that that's true. • The existence of god is not a scientific claim. • Yes, I couldn't agree with you more, it is a matter of common sense. And yet it's violated all the time when you say to me, 'why isn't there any proof for god, and the answer is <i>it's not a scientific claim</i> • I <i>don't</i> have evidence 'cause it's not a scientific claim • I don't have proof 'cause it's not a scientific claim • none of those are scientific... • Now if you want to make that a scientific claim you can, but I'm telling you it's a metaphysical claim and to confuse the two is a mistake. • it is not a scientific claim to say that I believe that have a soul or that god exists. If it were a scientific claim, you would be able to evaluate it the same you way: you could get a microscope and look for a teapot. But you can't. • I'm actually not concerned to make truth claims over other religions, because religion is not just a matter of propositions, it's also a lived life • When you apply to wrong category to the wrong experience it seems ludicrous • religion is not to be evaluated scientifically • The only time it sounds silly, is when you think you have to put god on a conceptual grid • the beginning of wisdom is the assumption and the belief that it could be possible that things exist in this world which human beings cannot measure, for which they do not have access, except by something that is transcendent inside of us. • It entails belief in certain propositions,
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			but belief in god isn't a propositional belief the way I believe that this table is hard.
	c) Critique of religion and/or faith	The positioning of religion and/or faith as illogical, inconsistent, limited or flawed. This rhetorical strategy tends to point out the unfalsifiability of religion and/or faith, the tendency of religion to reject or adopt science when convenient, and the tendency of religions to make supernatural claims on insufficient evidence. Stylistic features include the use of the following terms: falsifiable; superstition; dogmatism; false; claim; standards of rationality; incompatible; arrogance; naïve; immune to criticism; problem; appalling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I mean this is not what religions are up to, religions are not ... uh... falsifiable in the this way • we come from traditions, from generations of people who did not know a damn thing about the causes of events in the world that really concerned them, the spread of disease, the failure of crops, the weather. • the contemplative literature is something that I read and I take seriously. The problem is it is all so riddled with religious superstition and dogmatism that you really do have to be a selective consumer of this literature and every religious person takes his peak experiences as confirmation of the metaphysics in which he is seeking those experiences • your claim that religion is not a matter of believing propositions is just manifestly false when you're talking about what believing people believe • You'll notice nobody says this in an airplane at 30,000 feet. • It would appear to me it is a claim about physics and cosmology, • Now all I'm advocating is that we use the same standards of rationality that we use in every other area of our lives. When people start making claims about the divine origin of certain books, and the virgin birth of certain people, and the glorious end to history where we're the good people will be raptured into the sky, these are the kinds of things that we should apply pressure to, and it is taboo to apply pressure to these claims, and religious moderation, <i>unfortunately</i>, ramifies that taboo. • the communion host is thought to be once blessed, is thought to actually <i>physically</i> be the body of Jesus, and therefore, if its mistreated, you know you can literally, in torturing a cracker, you are torturing the body of Jesus. There are accounts of whole villages purged of Jews who were accused of having mistreated crackers. You know, so the question is, does the belief in the trans-substantiation – which is a belief that I would have thought could be rather harmless – have anything to do with the idea that someone can mistreat a cracker and that you should kill them for it. Yes, it does have something to do; it's impossible to believe in the torture of crackers unless you think trans-substantiation is a fact. • Ya, and the problem is there are many gods and books on offer. And they make incompatible claims on how we should live in this world. • I'm simply arguing that we need to cease to reward people for pretending to know

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			<p>things they do not know, and the only area of discourse where we do this is on the subject of god.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it was recommended that she view all of this as a sign that she was sharing Jesus' suffering on the cross. Now this is kind of a brilliant moment of hermetically sealing a worldview, and so when I wrote about this I said: "Ask yourself, when even the doubts of experts are used to confirm a doctrine, how could it possibly be disproved?" • you were essentially talking the talk of science, or attempting to talk the talk of science. • You're talking about the improbability of all of this emerging out of the early chemistry of the earth. I mean don't we need an intelligent designer of some kind. These are scientific claims, and it's ironic that religious people generally talk about humility, talk about the arrogance being on the side of science, and then at the drop of a hat, weigh in on scientific claims and make claims about the nature of the universe that no cosmologist can make, that no biologist can make; I mean this is quite astonishing. • but if you damage it totally at death, the soul – low and behold still able to recognize grammar – will rise off the brain, and go into a tunnel of light. These are scientific claims and they are profoundly naïve. • There's a values vacuum in an organization like that Catholic Church that preaches the sinfulness of condom use in sub-Saharan Africa • there are very few tools within Islam by which to say Osama bin Laden has completely misconstrued the faith • they are immune to criticism • It is not a brilliant document, it is an appalling guide to morality • or we can fixate our conversation in a prior century • Well it's the kind of evidence everyone on this room demands on every subject other than religion.
	d) Critique of atheism/secularism and/or science	<p>The positioning of atheism/secularism and/or science as illogical, inconsistent, limited or flawed. This rhetorical strategy tends to point out the inability of science to evaluate religious claims, the limitations of scientific knowledge, and the inability of science to contribute to a discussion of morality. Stylistic features include the use of the following terms: narrow; can't evaluate; unprovable; cannot; undermine; undercut; mockery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • science is powerful, but it's narrow • you can't evaluate my life scientifically • the idea that you could scientifically demonstrate a good life is worse than empty, it's a mockery. • a claim that's unprovable • Yes, I think the rejection of transcendence and the idea that human beings are all heredity and environment and breeding and eugenics and social Darwinism was absolutely a much greater contributor than the • that's a fairly formidable exception • Science doesn't emphasize the goodnesses in continual but failed struggle. • It may be a scientific claim to say that my ability to speak English can be disrupted by disrupting my brain, but the essence

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			<p>of what a human being is – which is the one thing you say that we don't have a scientific explanation for – is consciousness...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What it is a claim about is the idea that natural laws, which themselves, by the way, are an article of faith,
	e) Associating religion with violence and injustice	<p>The positioning of religion and/or faith as a contributor to historical and current conflict, terrorism, corruption, and/or and unjust traditions. Stylistic features of this rhetorical strategy include referring to scripture and the use of the following terms: human sacrifice; honour killing; human suffering; terrible; holocaust; murder; values vacuum, martyr; pedophile priests; threat; human sacrifice; virulent; suicide murder; war; jihad.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> because our religions come to us out of a tradition in many cases of human sacrifice. In many cases human sacrifice was virtually a cultural universal. This is where we come from. These are the roots of religion It's been but by no means rare for a child to be born into, only to find that he's being raised by a religious maniacs who think that the best way to keep the sun on its course, or to cure the King's venereal disease is to bury or butcher or burn him alive as an offering to an imaginary god. This is not just the Aztecs, this is the ancient Hebrews. Ah... human sacrifice is <i>in</i> the Hebrew bible at times tacitly supported honour killing is a bad strategy much mad work and needless human suffering is being perpetuated <i>because</i> of <i>explicit</i> propositions that these people believe. Ask yourself, when you pick up the bible, or the Hebrew Bible, or any holy book, and find ethical wisdom in there, what is that process like? I mean you pick up Leviticus or Duderonomy and you find that if a woman is not a virgin on her wedding night you're supposed to stone her to death on her father's doorstep Now religion does a lot of work on people, and you can get good people to believe some very terrible things in the name of god, and this is what worries me about religion Hitler never really repudiated Jesus, and he used Jesus in his speech and he's, you know, he was facilitated by a thousand years of religious fulminating against the Jews in the name of Christianity. I mean this is, religion is implicated – certainly in the holocaust Than the hatred of Jews? the history of the Jews in Europe is a history punctuated – rather ceaselessly by (inaudible) and murder that was explicitly religious. it matters if you die in the right circumstances, and nothing's more auspicious than dying a martyr. There's a values vacuum in that same institution that shelters its pedophile priests – literally an army child rapists, based on its own intent upon maintaining its integrity as a religious institution. There is a values vacuum in ... I could go on. It's not like religion is this perfect advertisement for the kinds of values you get once you believe that your book is written by... ... there are a few moments where he

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			<p>tacitly rewards it, in the sacrifice of Jeptah's daughter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There's a place where god claims to have gotten paegans – this is in Ezekiel – he's gotten the paegans to practice human sacrifice so as further defile them • it is needless horror imposed upon ignorant people by ignorant people • Islam is a religion of violence in certain circumstances • We have people really killing and dying based on propositions that they are granting credence to • Islamic Threat • a particular brand of Islam which is right now a virulent strain • we could spend all night talking about the terrible things that happened in the name of religion
	f) Associating atheism/secularism with violence and injustice	<p>The positioning of atheism/secularism and/or science as a contributor to historical and current conflict, genocidal regimes, and failed states/societies. Stylistic features of this rhetorical strategy include referencing non-religious dictatorships and flawed science and political philosophies, as well as the use of the following terms: bloodbath; blood; mass murder; Freudianism; Marxism; genocide; regimes (ie. Hitler, Mao, Stalin, Pol Pot); nihilistic scientists.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the not very good science that was Freudianism • I think that it's time maybe to address the historical record because I think that religion's record is nothing less than exemplary compared to irreligion • it seems to me that if you want to find intolerance, you look for atheistic regimes. Would you rather live in North Korea or South Korea? • And then, all of a sudden, when it became possible for there to be a regime without a religion – and you know when that became possible, right? That became possible in the French revolution – that was when it first became possible to not have a religion. Now is it just an extraordinary coincidence that genocide started to enter the modern world, first with the bloodbath that followed the French Revolution, then with the Napoleonic wars, that the worst war that ever happened in this country – the civil war – was not a religious war. That when you had regimes – whatever you want to call them – that explicitly rejected religion. You had Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, I mean I could go on and on and on. • the worst, from the point of view of any single country, which was Hitler, Mao, and Stalin • I'm sorry I brought a quote. This is from Victor Franco, who is a survivor and a therapist. This book, <i>The Doctor and the Soul</i>: "The gas chambers of Alschwitz were the ultimate consequence of a theory that man is nothing but the product of heredity and environment, or as the Nazis like to say, blood and soil. I'm absolutely convinced that the gas chambers of Auschwitz, Trablanka, and Madonic were ultimately prepared not in some ministry or other in Berlin, but rather at the desks and in lecture halls of nihilistic scientists and philosophers." • Marxism, which was the scientific study of societies and was thought of as a science • But yes, why was it focused on the Jews?

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			<p>In part because the explanation Hitler gave wasn't theological. The explanation that he gave was racial.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • why did it never explode into genocide in a Christian government? • That is precisely why it is important to look at the 20th century, and the 19th century, when it was possible to have societies that <i>didn't</i> believe in god and to see what happened • When I said Napoleon, the French Terror, the civil war, Stalin, Hitler, Mao, Pol Pot, all these ... as soon as it became possible to have non-religious regimes, look what happened to the world, • when you remove religion forcibly from a society, the question is ... and this is what I think the questioner was asking ... is ... I mean history shows, that you get, so far, a terrible result
2. 'Scientific' rhetoric	a) Praising the scientific method	<p>The positioning of the scientific method as the best and only respectable means of determining empirical knowledge. Stylistic features of this rhetorical strategy include using scientific-based language and the use of the following terms: evidence; scientific standards; scientific methods; appropriate; rigor; peer review; doubt; skepticism; free and unfettered inquiry; intellectual; respectable; progress; straight; reasoning; modern tools (Tietge, 2008).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the point I was trying to make is that the antidote to bad science or failed science or scientific incompleteness is good science and more science. It's not religion. • it takes a lot of work to rise to the standard of scientific evidence, but science is the one language game we are playing where we get really straight and rigorous about what constitutes evidence, where there's a process of peer review, where you have a lot of smart people trying you wrong, and where you actually win points by proving yourself wrong • Well it's anti-scientific if you ... um ... believe that you have good evidence for that. This is what's anti-scientific: when your certainty, when your convictions, don't scale with your evidence • I mean I could easily tell you what would constitute evidence • You don't get much more rigorous than arithmetic in terms of reasoning • Sure it does. (regarding science emphasizing goodness in continual but failed struggle, pg. 27 of transcript) • And the choice is to have a truly modern, 21st century conversation availing ourselves of all of the tools and all of the wealth of human effort that is our legacy
	b) Atheism/Secularism as a force for good	<p>The positioning of science and secularism as a contributor to social progress, moral enlightenment, goodwill, and the erosion of religious authority. Stylistic features of this rhetorical strategy include referencing a gradual societal shift away from religious morals, and the use of the following terms: erosion; moral progress; secular progress; under assault by science; morality; the good life; the golden rule; moral intuitions; reasonableness; generosity; standards of morality; love; friendship; solidarity; imagination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the dialogue between science and religion has gone this way: it has been one of relentless and one-directional erosion of religious authority • Now you can think of a multiple number of questions that run the other way, where we once had a religious answer, and now the authority of religion has been battered and nullified by science and by moral progress and secular progress generally ... uh... and I think that's not an accident. • And the one area where religion still seems to hold it's ground is now under assault by science, and it's very good that it is under assault by science, and this is the whole issue of morality and human

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			<p>happiness and what constitutes the good life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> religious discourse has changed; we're not sacrificing people, happily, now, but it has changed by virtue of progress from the outside Or the golden rule as preached in the new testament. And this resonates with you as a good, um, operating premise to generate further moral intuitions, if nothing else it's a good ideal to live toward. Now that that process...the guarantueur of your morality, in that case, is not the book – it's in your brain. And this kind of truth-testing is something that we bring to religion Well, it's not that you necessarily have a replacement for everything that religion does on every question. I mean, you don't replace the belief in Santa Claus with something that does something that does exactly what the belief in Santa Claus did: equally consoling, equally motivating on Christmas morning, it just does not happen. we have different standards of morality and reasonableness, and we – happily we do – and those came from outside of religion. Many secular people do <i>just</i> that sort of thing. the most atheistic society on the planet, which is Sweden, the level of generosity, really the Christian virtue of generosity, both within the society and to the developing world is much higher than it is in our culture
3. 'Religious' rhetoric	a) Experiences of the divine	<p>A type of argument based on personal experiences of the divine, references to the metaphysical qualities of life, and broad, interpretive statements, usually not susceptible to scientific scrutiny or based on empirical evidence. Stylistic features include the use of the following terms: presence of god; eternal; not physical; not of the world; invisible order; transcendent; intangible creator; consciousness; spiritual evolution; soul; I see; I believe (Wuthnow, 1988).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> religion is not belief in a proposition; it's an orientation towards life. I live in the presence of God What they assume is that there's something inside of you that is eternal. we not only can understand the world, but we can understand more than the world. Because our origin is of the world and also not of the world. And the reason that our minds can do something more than just operate on instinct is because we operate all the time with things that are not physical It may be a scientific claim to say that my ability to speak English can be disrupted by disrupting my brain, but the essence of what a human being is – which is the one thing you say that we don't have a scientific explanation for – is consciousness... The point is that if you believe in that of an identify as a human being it can even be diminished in this world, but it doesn't mean that it's diminished forever. In the same way that it didn't exist before it came into this world. Which to me doesn't mean that it didn't exist in some state that we don't understand. Right, before I was born I wasn't conscious of me. Does that mean that I really didn't exist at all? That to me

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			<p>is a religious claim, not a...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • religion is based on the notion that there is this invisible order which human beings can participate in, that is ordained by something that is transcendent, • God is... the intangible creator of the universe in who's presence a human being can live according to who's dictates or will a human being can live in this world. • Do you understand? It has to do with my experience of you. When I'm looking at you right now, you may assume that what I see is material. But that's not what I see. And it's not what I believe. • The way that I understand it is religion is an orientation and a system of patterns and behaviours that allow you to live in the presence of and with the consciousness of god • my understanding of religions is that they go through a spiritual evolution • I think that that is a measure of the largeness of the man's soul. • we use very elementary images to explain something that is infinitely greater than ourselves • the beginning of wisdom is the assumption and the belief that it could be possible that things exist in this world which human beings cannot measure, for which they do not have access, except by something that is transcendent inside of us.
	b) Religion as a force for good	<p>The positioning of religion as a contributor to social progress, moral enlightenment, and goodwill. Stylistic features of this rhetorical strategy include referencing the values that societies derive from religion, and the use of the following terms: decent world; creation; humility; lived; happier; values; not the problem; answer; love; forgiveness; family; lower anxiety; profounder understanding of life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So, I would say that if you're going to try in this world to make a decent world that historically speaking, although I won't speak for the future, you are much better off training people to <i>believe</i> that they are <i>not</i> the <i>most</i> powerful, <i>most</i> knowledgeable, <i>most</i> decisively able to come to conclusions about the world creation, but that in fact a certain amount of <i>humility</i> both about what they <i>know</i> and what they <i>do</i> is appropriate and that humility comes from – • South Korea is Christian. North Korea is communist. • but the values that you take with skeptical inquiry are values that in fact were taken from the religious regimes that you find unpalatable, and were rejected by all these regimes that were genocidal • Because, even though you can cherry pick lines that are both funny and destructive, the truth is that every tradition is not made just of propositions, it's something that's lived, and bred in you, and if it works well, produces magnificent human beings. • That's right. But that's not a bad thing. First of all, ask yourself this: "Even despite her doubts, if Mother Teresa weren't a devout Christian, do you think that she would've spent her life among the lepers of Calcutta?" • religious people are psychologically

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			<p>happier, have better family lives, feel lower anxiety, on and on, I mean I could give you a whole list of things in all the studies, and that also – it seems to me – makes some argument because everything in the world that human beings need, in order to survive and to thrive, exists in the world: other people, food, sleep, god</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it certainly does prove that there is a values vacuum in societies when you suck religion out of it or force it out that is, to my way of thinking terrifying. • Yeftah was the only one who actually sacrificed a child, and is condemned by it all through Jewish literature • Abraham, the point of the Abraham story, according to many commentators, which I take to be, is precisely to say that although the gods of the world up to that time do demand human sacrifice, god doesn't • that does suggest, clearly, that in the mind of Ezekiel, human sacrifice is a terrible thing. • it's very rare for religions to fight each other for no other reason than religion • the challenge to religion is to transcend the treatment of the other • it reflected often a profounder understanding of life
	c) Appeal to scriptural authority	<p>An appeal to the value – and drawbacks – of holy texts. This rhetorical strategy refers to both the literal value and the interpretive value of scripture, often citing the ability of religious communities to continually reinterpret scriptural meaning. Stylistic features include directly referencing passages and authors, as well as the use of the following terms: explicit propositions; claims; literature; interpretive; nourishment; static; biblical claim; bible; holy book; religious text; story; Leviticus; Deuteronomy; Abraham.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... human sacrifice is <i>in</i> the Hebrew bible • much mad work and needless human suffering is being perpetuated <i>because</i> of <i>explicit</i> propositions that these people believe. • Ask yourself, when you pick up the bible, or the Hebrew Bible, or any holy book, and find ethical wisdom in there, what is that process like? I mean you pick up Leviticus or Deuteronomy and you find that if a woman is not a virgin on her wedding night you're supposed to stone her to death on her father's doorstep • It's not like religion is this perfect advertisement for the kinds of values you get once you believe that your book is written by... • ... there are a few moments where he tacitly rewards it, in the sacrifice of Jeptah's daughter. • There's a place where god claims to have gotten pagans – this is in Ezekiel – he's gotten the pagans to practice human sacrifice so as further defile them • Yeftah was the only one who actually sacrificed a child, and is condemned by it all through Jewish literature • Abraham, the point of the Abraham story, according to many commentators, which I take to be, is precisely to say that although the gods of the world up to that time do demand human sacrifice, god doesn't • that does suggest, clearly, that in the mind of Ezekiel, human sacrifice is a terrible thing. • can you create a book which an

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			<p>interpretive community for thousands of years would find nourishment and meaning in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that's only if you see any document as a static document • every religious text is a text that gets interpreted through a community • The idea that spiritually one evolves, seems to me perfectly compatible with faiths, you wouldn't expect that god could give a message that could be absorbed equally in every society in every time
4. 'Distinguishing' rhetoric	a) Differences between religious viewpoints	<p>The positioning of religion as a heterogeneous body of thought and practice, with beliefs ranging from the 'moderate' to the 'fundamental.' This rhetorical strategy is often used to differentiate between viewpoints within and between religions. Stylistic features include the use of the following terms: form of religion; particular brand; good religion; bad religion; kind of religion; moderates; only a minority; militant; blind faith.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That is the kind of utterance one hears from religious moderates. I don't know how you would describe yourself, but you're not – • this form of religion is bad and this form of religion is good. • I didn't say religion, I said belief in god. • I'm actually not concerned to make truth claims over other religions, because religion is not just a matter of propositions, it's also a lived life • The idea that spiritually one evolves, seems to me perfectly compatible with faiths, you wouldn't expect that god could give a message that could be absorbed equally in every society in every time • Judiasm is a nation as well as a religion. So not purely a function of belief, it's also a function of community. • a particular brand of Islam which is right now a virulent strain, is something that has indicted all religion in some people's eyes • people think mistakenly that good religion is flying planes into buildings but it is <i>healthy</i> religion that provides the only hope for <i>sick</i> religion to be well • I'm happy to make common cause with you to say this kind of religion is bad religion
	b) Differences between atheist/secular viewpoints	<p>The positioning of atheism/secularism as a heterogeneous body of thought and practice. This rhetorical strategy is often used to differentiate between viewpoints within science and atheism, as well as to identify the diversity of views within atheist thought. Stylistic features include the use of the following terms: differentiate; part company.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I part company with many atheists in that I am interested in spiritual experience • Well the thing is this is a trick, and this is one of the reasons I'm not a fan of the term 'atheist.' Atheism is a term totally without content. It's like being a non-astrologer. We don't have a word for someone who's <i>not</i> an astrologer. And if astrologers suddenly became ascendant in our society, we wouldn't need to invent non-astrology as a discipline
5. 'Rational' rhetoric	a) Appeal to rationality	<p>The positioning of an argument as being based on rationality or reason. This rhetorical strategy tends to use the language of science and tends to be presented in an objective manner. Stylistic features include the use of the following terms: process; reasoning; rigorous;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let me just take a very simple example. If I asked you ... ah ... how if you folded a news paper 100 times how thick would it be, most people intuitively think: "well I can do that and it's gonna be, you know, as thick as the Sunday times or a brick or something," but it's actually 6 billion light years across. Now we get there with

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		<p>fact; authenticate; reasonableness; argument; common sense; false analogy; true; understand; postulate; standard (Tietge, 2008).</p>	<p>just the intuitions of arithmetic. You explain the process of exponentiation to somebody, how if you fold the piece of paper 100 times is to essentially multiply it's thickness by 2 rays to the power of 100, and then you see that the numbers get very big. Now this is not, this is reasoning. You don't get much more rigorous than arithmetic in terms of reasoning, but it is intuitive to the core that the fact that any of this is intelligible is a matter of intuition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • but no intuition you can have, when you sit down in prayer or in meditation is going to authenticate most of what religious people believe most of the time in the service of their religions like the virgin birth of Jesus. • And so this notion that Stalin and Hitler and Pul Pot were doing what they did because of atheism, but of non-belief in god; I mean ask yourself: "is too much skeptical inquiry really what's wrong with North Korea?" The North Koreans are a cargo cult armed with nuclear weapons right now. They think that the food aid we give them is a devotional offering to the genius of their dear leader. They are systematically impoverished, both physically and in terms of information. Too much knowledge ... any knowledge is too much knowledge .. uh.. in North Korea. This is not a paradise of reasonableness • I don't know how we're gonna get to a future where Muslims believing in martyrdom and Christians believing in the rapture, will be a good recipe for good neighbours • OK, you don't exist ... many people claim to find it impossible to believe, or to imagine, that they won't exist after death. Um, just try it for a second. Imagine that everyone in Paris right now is getting along fine without all of us. None of us are in Paris. We are really, really materially absent from whatever is going on in every other city on this planet right now. You are absent for all of human history before your birth. The idea that you simply can't imagine not existing after death is really kind of, for lack of trying • There are three ways to defend religion: One is the argument that religion is <i>true</i>, that one specific religion is true or that god exists or that the bible was really dictated by him. Another is to argue that religion is useful. OK, and this is the 'religion is useful' argument; that religion is the basis for morality. This is – please notice – that this is a very different track to run on, and it says nothing at all about whether or not god exists • Even if I conceded that religion is profoundly useful. So useful that it's indispensable; you know, people without religion would just rape and kill each
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			<p>other and we don't want that, so, by all means fill the churches and mosques and synagogues. That would not, for a moment, grant credence to the idea that one of our books was dictated by an omniscient being or that an omniscient being exists</p> <p>No scientist and no atheist has ever argued that every claim is scientific, or needs to be subjected to that kind of proof. This is really a matter of common sense...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just take, for example, the people who think Elvis is still alive. OK? What's wrong with this claim? I mean why is this claim not viciating our academic departments and corporations? I'll tell you why, and it's very simple: we have not passed laws against believing Elvis is still alive. The problem is that whenever somebody seriously represents the belief that Elvis is still alive on a first date, in a lecture, at a job interview, he immediately pays a price. He pays a price in ill-concealed laughter. That is a good thing. And then he can rattle on about 'this is not a scientific claim, this is a matter of faith, when I look at you I see you might be Elvis. He could do this. • Most people are doing this good work for religious reasons. While most people, most of the time, have been religious, throughout human history. There has been no one else to do the job. This is true. I mean, most people who have plucked chickens, have plucked them while believing in god. That does not mean that you need to believe in god to pluck a chicken. • Well, the thing is it's a false analogy because what was operative there was not too much skeptical inquiry on the nature of god, an unwillingness to believe in the divine origin of certain books, what was operative there were other ideas. • It's not like someone has proved that Pasydin doesn't exist. I mean that is Russel's teapot; you cannot prove that Pasydin doesn't exist, the question is there any good reason to believe he exists; the answer is no, it's the same for the god of Abraham. • I am operating as though life is worth living because I am seeking various states of happiness. I'm avoiding suffering. I'm <i>moved</i> by compassion. I have these states in me which presuppose the reasonableness of not killing myself at the end of the day. • Right, ideas, words, I can say something, and change the physiology of your brain. Now how is that, unless there's something more to your brain than physiology? • I practice my religion because it gives me the things it gives me and
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	b) Appeal to factual knowledge	The positioning of an argument as being based on facts or indisputable data. This rhetorical strategy tends to use impersonal language and numerical evidence. Stylistic features include the use of the following terms: objective facts; right and wrong; know; truth claims; basis in the brain; understand.	<p>because I believe it to be true</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Um...because surely there are objective facts to be learned about the basis of human happiness. The moment you recognize that morality and spirituality and value is a matter of happiness and suffering, and that we're moving suffering in the direction of happiness, then you realize that if there are objective facts to know about happiness, and surely there are, facts about the way that genes and ideas and uses of attention and economic systems ... uh ... social structures – all of these conspire to make us happy or miserable • and there will be right and wrong answers • we will know this biochemically. • they are...they ...their truth claims cannot be disentangled • this entails claims about the human survival of death, apparently human flight without the aid of technology • the communion host is thought to be once blessed, is thought to actually <i>physically</i> be the body of Jesus, and therefore, if its mistreated, you know you can literally, in torturing a cracker, you are torturing the body of Jesus. There are accounts of whole villages purged of Jews who were accused of having mistreated crackers. You know, so the question is, does the belief in the trans-substantiation – which is a belief that I would have thought could be rather harmless – have anything to do with the idea that someone can mistreat a cracker and that you should kill them for it. Yes, it does have something to do; it's impossible to believe in the torture of crackers unless you think trans-substantiation is a fact. • we know that almost everything you take yourself to be, as a matter of subjectivity, has its basis in the brain • And the proposition is that if you damage a brain a little bit, you destroy English and the ability to recognize faces • 98% of all human beings who ever lived have had an intuitive sense that there is something,
6. 'Hedging' rhetoric	a) Subjective argument	The positioning of an argument in somewhat uncertain terms, terms based on probability, or with qualifiers (Crismore & Vande Kopple, 1990). Stylistic features of this rhetorical strategy include the use of personal pronouns and the use of the following terms: I think; I don't think; I believe; how I feel; my experience; my faith; my understanding; we; perhaps; to a certain extent; maybe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think has made many people uncomfortable • I think that one thing to notice is • I just think • I think • I think • I think • I think • I think • That's how I feel • I said <i>my</i> experience of certain human beings • it has to do with my experience. <p>Do you understand? It has to do with my experience of you. When I'm looking at you right now, you may assume that what I see is material. But that's not what I see.</p>

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			<p>And it's not what I believe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I practice my religion because it gives me the things it gives me and because I believe it to be true my understanding of religions is that they go through a spiritual evolution I don't think
	b) Admission of uncertainty	<p>The positioning of an argument as being based on partial knowledge. Often seen as a virtue in scientific discourse, this rhetorical strategy uses the following terms to express lack of knowledge: we don't fully understand; uncertainties remain; yet to fully characterize; with one exception; gaps; don't know (Crismore & Vande Kopple, 1990).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'm certainly ... um ... open to the possibility that we have yet to fully characterize the good life we know this for ... with one exception ... I have written about this ... we have not reduced consciousness itself to brain fuction
7. 'Emotional' rhetoric	a) Appeal to audience	<p>A direct appeal to the audience. This rhetorical strategy draws the audience into the debate and challenges them to engage with the argument being presented. Stylistic features include posing questions to the audience, and the use of the following terms: ladies and gentlemen; I want you to know; for you to notice; how many people in this room...; just think of how...; it should be obvious to all of you; anybody who has children...; raise your hand; we; you.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OK, this is something I want you to all know: before we talk on that level, I want kind of a big picture view for you all to notice how many people in this room think animal sacrifice is somehow really as good as it gets in terms of the spiritual life? just think of how good a book would be if it were authored by the creator of the universe. that it should be obvious to all of you Anybody who has children, or who believes that they're doing something important in this world, or who works in difficult circumstances to bring water to villages or food to hungry people I'm just curious, how many of you eat meat? Just raise your hand.
	b) Enthymeme	<p>An appeal to what the audience already partially believes to be true. This powerful rhetorical strategy uses deductive arguments with unstated assumptions that must be true for the premises to lead to the conclusion (Gitay, 2009; Craig & Muller, 2007). It also relies on justifiable opinion rather than empirically sound claims. Stylistic features include posing questions to the audience and framing statements as though they are truths.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the place to put our faith is in human conversation clearly 9/11 did something to our discourse But a religious answer to life is much better now than the poor science that was Marxism – or for that matter I would say then the not very good science that was Freudianism. What it is a claim about is the idea that natural laws, which themselves, by the way, are an article of faith, Well it has throughout history. Sure it has. Absolutely. I mean even <i>today</i> the idea that if somebody is a member of a certain faith, such as Christianity, which introduced the idea of toleration to the western world, that therefore they can't be tolerant, is clearly contradicted by much of history, the only transcendent idea that I can think of that really does tie one person to another is god I mean why in the world should science work if your brain is purely a product of evolution? Right. There's no reason why you should understand the world or be able to understand the world. A moral judgement for which you have no basis if there is in fact no moral order; If there is – I'm not saying this is a

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			<p>proof, but it's important, no doubt – if there is a God who ordains a certain morality, and you live that morality, and in fact it creates a good society and a happy life and all those things, then of course it lends credence to the idea that the world is designed a certain way by a designer who wants a certain thing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • my understanding of human beings and my experience of other human beings leads me to believe that there's something more than material. My understanding of the design of the world leads me to believe we are here not by accident. My appreciation of the fact that human being – even though we are made of stuff – have consciousness • No, it is an imperfect institution that is adopted by imperfect people in an imperfect world. And if you expect that it's going to be perfect, then you will be consistently disappointed, and that's why every religion that I know of emphasizes the fact that goodness is a continual and often-failed struggle, and... • I don't think that the bible is a verbal record of the revelation of god to human beings. I think that it's a human product of god's self revelation • the fact that we don't understand something greater than ourselves, doesn't mean that it doesn't exist. • It's the recognition that human beings have a certain purpose in this world. It's the things actually that you espouse, although you don't espouse them with religious purpose. It's the thing that gives meaning to what you say when you say this form of religion is bad and this form of religion is good. • there's no reason why a Christian can't say that the laws of biology have been suspended once in history or will be suspended some time in the future • I practice my religion because it gives me the things it gives me and because I believe it to be true
8. 'Credibility' rhetoric	a) Referencing other people	<p>Evoking feelings of credibility within an argument by referencing other people; including scientific experts, religious figures, historical figures, scholars, and philosophers (Tietge, 2008). This rhetorical strategy sometimes includes a quotation from the author, or a paraphrased passage from their body of work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rick Warren • Francis Collins • Rabbi Ikeva • I'm sorry I brought a quote. This is from Victor Franco, who is a survivor and a therapist. This book, <i>The Doctor and the Soul</i>: "The gas chambers of Alschuwitz were the ultimate consequence of a theory that man is nothing but the product of heredity and environment, or as the Nazis like to say, blood and soil. I'm absolutely convinced that the gas chambers of Auschwitz, Trablanka, and Madonic were ultimately prepared not in some ministry or other in Berlin, but rather at the desks and in lecture halls of nihilistic scientists and

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			<div><div>philosophers.”</div><div><div><div>•</div><div>Gaylin Strausin</div></div><div><div>•</div><div>Bertrand Russell</div></div><div><div>•</div><div>Dawkins</div></div><div><div>•</div><div>Richard Fienman</div></div><div><div>•</div><div>Eric Wellish</div></div></div></div>
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3. Hitchens - D'Souza

Broad Category	Concept	Definition	Examples
1. 'Comparative or Attack' rhetoric	a) Compatibility of religion and science	The positioning of science and religion as compatible and complementary. Stylistic features of this strategy include the following: mentioning of both science and religion, use of scientific terms (ie. evidence, claim, skeptical inquiry, constitute), use of examples of historical parallelism, agreeing with points made by opponents, and the use of the following terms: 'agree', 'compatible', 'synergy', 'friendship', 'co-exist,' and 'common.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suddenly the Christian concept of eternity, of a god being outside of space and time, which for centuries was scientifically unintelligible is now not only coherent, but riding along side the most cutting-edge discoveries in modern physics and modern astronomy • . Now, these are not scientific theories. If you talk to the ancient Hebrews and say, "How do you know that there was nothing and there was a universe?" They didn't do any scientific experiments. They basically said, "God told me." But I'm saying that if you look at that as a prophecy or as a factual claim about the world, we now know 2,000 years later that it is, in its essence, correct. • I've argued that I think Christians need to learn to be bilingual. And by that I mean to speak, perhaps, two languages: a Christian language at home, or in church, and a more secular language in the public square. Not because we want to wear two faces, but because we want to make our arguments accessible to people who may not share our assumptions • I think, in a democratic society the common ground of reason is a perfectly appropriate language for democratic discourse • So what we're doing here is a secular, intellectual enterprise.
	b) Incompatibility of religion and science	The positioning of science and religions as incompatible. This rhetorical strategy tends to be used to demonstrate shortcomings of the opposition, ridicule the opposition, or demonstrate the incompatibility of the two positions. Stylistic features of this strategy include the use of scientific terms (e.g. antidote, falsifiable, good science, causes, claims, biology, evidence), and oppositional phrases such as: at odds; trespass; erosion; rival; naïve; anti-scientific; against; not scientific claims (Gitay, 2001).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • think it demonstrates very clearly the moral superiority of the secular concept of justice and law over Canon Law and religious law, with its sickly emphasis on self-exculpation in the guise of forgiveness and redemption • Well, these are non-overlapping magisteria, the material world, the scientific world and the faith world." I think "non-overlapping" is too soft. I think it's more a question, increasingly, of it being a matter of incompatibility, or perhaps better to say, irreconcilability. • It's instead a refusal of faith and a refusal to use it as a method of reasoning. So, it's not comparing like with like at all. • in the world we're not in a position where there's only one explanation contending, there are rival explanations. There is a theist explanation (the God explanation) and there is a non-theist, or atheist explanation. We have to weigh the two against each other • you get it in church or you get it in synagogue or you get it every Sunday, the argument from the Bible, the argument from authority. I know it's a useless argument to use in a secular

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			setting especially when debating with an atheist
	c) Critique of religion and/or faith	The positioning of religion and/or faith as illogical, inconsistent, limited or flawed. This rhetorical strategy tends to point out the unfalsifiability of religion and/or faith, the tendency of religion to reject or adopt science when convenient, and the tendency of religions to make supernatural claims on insufficient evidence. Stylistic features include the use of the following terms: falsifiable; superstition; dogmatism; false; claim; standards of rationality; incompatible; arrogance; naïve; immune to criticism; problem; appalling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It seems to me that is the one position—it's what I call the faith position—that has to be discarded first • think it demonstrates very clearly the moral superiority of the secular concept of justice and law over Canon Law and religious law, with its sickly emphasis on self-exculpation in the guise of forgiveness and redemption • That's not the only reason why religion is a problem: it's a problem principally because it is man-made. • This is not modesty or humility, it's a man-made false consolation, in my judgment, and it does great moral damage. It warps—it begins by warping what we might call our moral sense of proportion • It quite clearly shows that it's the first, the most primitive, the most crude, and the most deluded attempt to make sense. It is the worst attempt, but partly because it was the first. • the worst thing it did for us was to offer us certainty, to say, "These are truths that are unalterable; they're handed down from on high; we only have to learn God's will and how to obey it in order to free ourselves from these dilemmas." • can you be brought to believe that the main events in human history, the crucial ones, happened 3,000 to 2,000 years ago in illiterate, desert Arabia and Palestine? • Now can you think of any religious spokesman you've ever heard who would tell you in advance what would disprove their hypothesis? Of course you can't, because it's unfalsifiable. • that unfalsifiability in a theory is a test not of its strength, but of its weakness. • And there's no argument that I can bring or that anyone can bring against it, and that's what should make you suspicious. • he announced, I have his words, he was going to talk without reference to Revelation, Scripture, or Scriptural Authority. Now, why ask yourselves then—I'll ask you, why is that? Why do I never come up against someone who says, "I'll tell you why I'm religious: because I think that Jesus of Nazareth is the way, the truth, and the life and no one comes to the Father except by Him and if you'll believe on this you'll be given eternal life." • I'd be impressed if people would sometimes say that. Why do the religious people so often feel they must say, "No we don't—well that's all sort of metaphorical." In what sense are they then religious? • That cannot be disproved, it can only be argued that there's no evidence for it. • But the deist, having established that position, if they have, has all their work

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			<p>still ahead of them to show there is a god who cares about us, even knows we exist, takes sides in our little tribal wars, cares who we sleep with and in what position, cares what we eat and on what day of the week, arbitrates matters of this kind</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't think it's absolutely certainly established there is such a person or that He made those pronouncements or that He was the son of God or the son of a virgin or any of these things • it can't be demonstrated to me that Socrates ever walked the streets of Athens. • not all these religions can be simultaneously true. • there are enormous numbers of competing religions, it's another reason that it's obvious to me that they're man-made • Either one of them is completely true, as the Roman Church used to say, it was the one true church, some of its members still do, or all of them are false, or all of them are true, which, of course, can't be true • Really there was nothing and the Hebrews were so clever that they knew that and therefore they must have been right about God as well." This is ridiculous. The ancient Hebrews also thought that God made man and women out of nothing, or out of dust and clay, whereas we have an exact knowledge, or an increasingly exact knowledge of precisely the genetic materials in common with other creatures from which we were assembled • I don't think it's wise or moral or decent to try and detect the finger of God in human quarrels. I think the enterprise is futile and it incidentally shows the absurdity of all arguments from design. • My admitting that I don't know exactly how it began is not at all the same as Dinesh's admission that he doesn't know either because he feels he has to know, because if it's not a matter of faith and not a matter of God he can't say he believes in it a little bit, it must be a real belief to be genuine, and it must have some explanatory value. And he doesn't hold it very strongly and it doesn't explain anything for which we have better explanations • Likewise about where we're going: we have a very good idea now of the time and the place, if you like—the time anyway when our universe and sun and indeed the cosmos will come to an end. Dinesh might say, "Well then if you look at the Bible it proves right all those who said the end of the world is at hand. There's biblical authority, it just proves me right all along." Yes, except that they said that by repenting you could prevent this outcome, which you cannot • You can't know that and you shouldn't
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			<p>say it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take nothing for certain, don't believe in any absolutism, don't believe in any totalitarianism, don't ask for any supreme leader in the sky, or on earth for that way lies madness and torture and murder and always will. • Because religion is man-made • a faith-based position which has no evidence • actually what many people mean is hell is for other people and they have just a strong a wish thought that other people suffer eternally as they have the thought and the wish for themselves that they should be in paradise
	d) Critique of atheism/secularism and/or science	The positioning of atheism/secularism and/or science as illogical, inconsistent, limited or flawed. This rhetorical strategy tends to point out the inability of science to evaluate religious claims, the limitations of scientific knowledge, and the inability of science to contribute to a discussion of morality. Stylistic features include the use of the following terms: narrow; can't evaluate; unprovable; cannot; undermine; undercut; mockery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • But of course evolution does not explain the presence of life on the planet. Darwin knew that. Evolution merely explains the transition between one life form and another. • Why should the universe be structured in precisely this way and no other way? What is the best explanation? I'd like to hear it • So how do you explain this human evil that far outruns necessity and reaches depths that seem almost unfathomable? Evolution cannot account for rationality because evolution says we are programmed in the world to survive and reproduce. Our minds are organs of survival. They are not organs of truth. So if we believe in rationality we require something outside of evolution to account for that. • My contention is that the atheist explanation flounders when confronted with all these facts: the complexity of the cell, the fine-tuning of the universe, the fact of morality, the depth of human evil, the reality of morality in the world • What's the purpose of our life?" or "Why are we here?" or "Where are we going? What happens to us after we die?" Here are the scientific answers to those three questions: "Don't have a clue," "Don't have a clue," and "Don't have a clue." • let's remember that the atheist premise is that we are evolved creatures in the world and that's it. So evolution has to do a lot of work. It has to explain the human desire to give blood to strangers. If it can't do that, then it fails as an adequate explanation for a very important form of human behavior, morality, that is seen in every culture known to man. It requires explanation • And it's in me but it's not of me. In fact, it's often stopping me from doing what I want to do. It's blocking my self-interest. Where does that come from? How does evolution account for that? • The problem with that is, you can call it not only a scandalous violation of Ockham's razor, it's essentially syllogistic promiscuity • Imagine if I were to try to show the

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			<p>following: money comes out of nothing. Proof? All assets will be counted as “plus”; all liabilities will be counted as “minus”; the pluses and minus cancel out. We have money, but there’s a zero on the balance sheet. Money comes out of nothing. You would say this is a little bit slight-of-hand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Krauss is trying to make an atheist argument in an atheist venue drawing on science. But I’m saying look at the lengths to which the guy has to go to try to defy the normal operations of reason to tell us not only a molecule but an entire universe – wow – popped out of absolutely nothing. You can believe if it you want to, but it sure does take a lot of credulity. • Science has no insight on that question
	e) Associating religion with violence and injustice	<p>The positioning of religion and/or faith as a contributor to historical and current conflict, terrorism, corruption and/or unjust traditions. Stylistic features of this rhetorical strategy include referring to scripture and the use of the following terms: human sacrifice; honour killing; human suffering; terrible; holocaust; murder; values vacuum; martyr; pedophile priests; threat; human sacrifice; virulent; suicide murder; war; jihad.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Israeli settlers are stealing other people's land in the hope of bringing on the Messiah and a terrible war. • Islamic jihadists are preparing a war without end, a faith-based war based on the repulsive tactic of suicide murder and all of these people that they have a divine warrant, a holy book, and the direct word of God on their side. We used to worry when I was young, what will happen when a maniac gets hold of a nuclear weapon? We’re about to discover what happens when that happens: the Islamic republic of Iran is about to get a nuclear weapon and by illegal means that flout every possible international law and treaty • further quarrelling • Christian Europe throwing living Jewish babies into furnaces • Slavery, burning, torture—no one knows the numbers are but they’re horrifying • Second, the Thirty Years War has to be considered a war of religion and we don’t know how many were killed there either but the retarding of civilization was absolutely gigantic as well as the appalling harvest of innocent population • In fact, we never will get over what happened in that war, and those are wars of religion • it leads to fanaticism and torture and murder and war • actually what many people mean is hell is for other people and they have just a strong wish thought that other people suffer eternally as they have the thought and the wish for themselves that they should be in paradise
	f) Associating atheism/secularism with violence and injustice	<p>The positioning of atheism/secularism and/or science as a contributor to historical and current conflict, genocidal regimes, and failed states/societies. Stylistic features of this rhetorical strategy include referencing non-religious dictatorships and flawed science and political philosophies, as well as the use of the following terms:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you take Hitler, Stalin, and Mao alone, the three of them, collectively in the space of a few decades killed close to 100 million people. And that’s the tip of the iceberg. What about Ceausescu, Kim Jong Il, Fidel Castro, Pol Pot? Pol Pot, he’s a junior-league atheist. Normally you don’t even name the guy, but his Khmer Rouge regime in Indochina following the Vietnam War kills about two million in

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		bloodbath; blood; mass murder; Freudianism; Marxism; genocide; regimes (ie. Hitler, Mao, Stalin, Pol Pot); nihilistic scientists.	<p>about three years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that the twentieth century saw secular regimes which tried to get rid of traditional religion and morality and establish a new man and a new utopia, the secular paradise and look what it brought us: an ocean of blood, a mountain of bodies. So for this reason I'm concluding that it is this effort to enforce secular utopia, and not religion, that is responsible for the mass murders of history.
2. 'Scientific' rhetoric	a) Praising the scientific method	The positioning of the scientific method as the best and only respectable means of determining empirical knowledge. Stylistic features of this rhetorical strategy include using scientific-based language and the use of the following terms: evidence; scientific standards; scientific methods; appropriate; rigor; peer review; doubt; skepticism; free and unfettered inquiry; intellectual; respectable; progress; straight; reasoning; modern tools (Tietge, 2008).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the only respectable intellectual position is one of doubt, skepticism, reservation and free—and I'd stress free and unfettered inquiry, in that lies, as it has always lain, our only hope Haldane said, "Well, show me rabbits' bone in the Jurassic layer and I'll give up. which explains to you how indeed you can get very large numbers of things from nothing with the proper understanding of quantum theory
	b) Atheism/Secularism as a force for good	The positioning of science and secularism as a contributor to social progress, moral enlightenment, goodwill, and the erosion of religious authority. Stylistic features of this rhetorical strategy include referencing a gradual societal shift away from religious morals, and the use of the following terms: erosion; moral progress; secular progress; under assault by science; morality; the good life; the golden rule; moral intuitions; reasonableness; generosity; standards of morality; love; friendship; solidarity; imagination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to have a germ theory of disease relieves you of the idea that plagues are punishments. That's what the church used to preach, that plagues come because the Jews have poisoned the wells, as the church very often preached, or that the Jews even exist and are themselves a plague, as the church used to preach when it felt strong enough and also was morally weak enough and had such little evidence. You can free yourself from the idea that diseases are punishments or visitations. he announced, I have his words, he was going to talk without reference to Revelation, Scripture, or Scriptural Authority. Now, why ask yourselves then—I'll ask you, why is that? Why do I never come up against someone who says, "I'll tell you why I'm religious: because I think that Jesus of Nazareth is the way, the truth, and the life and no one comes to the Father except by Him and if you'll believe on this you'll be given eternal life." It's so nice that—and how much we've progressed. No one now argues against the evolution of the eye think it demonstrates very clearly the moral superiority of the secular concept of justice and law over Canon Law and religious law, with its sickly emphasis on self-exculpation in the guise of forgiveness and redemption who refuses, furthermore, to be told that if I don't believe it that I wouldn't have any source for ethics or morality You'd have to think, "Then we're alone. Then how are we going to know right from wrong? What can we do?" I maintain with Socrates that on the

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			<p>contrary, the moral problems and ethical problems and other dilemmas that we have would be exactly the same as they are: what are our duties to each other? How can we build the just city? How should we think? How can we face the possibility of our loneliness? How can we do right? These questions would remain exactly as they are and as they do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where is the role in the atheist world, the unbelieving world, for the numinous or the ecstatic or the transcendent? Well, come on, those of us who can appreciate poetry and music and love and friendship and solidarity are not to be treated as if we have no imagination, as if we have no moral or emotional pulse, as if we don't feel things at nightfall when music plays and friends are around, as if we don't get great pleasure we don't meet to repeat incantations we've had dinned into us since childhood. We don't feel so insecure that we must incant and recite and go through routine and ritual. We meet to discuss our differences and to discuss the challenges to our world view...
3. 'Religious' rhetoric	a) Experiences of the divine	A type of argument based on personal experiences of the divine, references to the metaphysical qualities of life, and broad, interpretive statements, usually not susceptible to scientific scrutiny or based on empirical evidence. Stylistic features include the use of the following terms: presence of god; eternal; not physical; not of the world; invisible order; transcendent; intangible creator; consciousness; spiritual evolution; soul; I see; I believe (Wuthnow, 1988).	
	b) Religion as a force for good	The positioning of religion as a contributor to social progress, moral enlightenment, and goodwill. Stylistic features of this rhetorical strategy include referencing the values that societies derive from religion, and the use of the following terms: decent world; creation; humility; lived; happier; values; not the problem; answer; love; forgiveness; family; lower anxiety; profounder understanding of life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> religion is not the problem. God is not the problem. God is, in fact, the answer to the problem They rushed into the arms of the missionaries because they promised something that the Hindus couldn't: universal brotherhood Never in human history, by the way, has a ruler ordered a conquest stopped for moral reasons and it was the missionaries who made that argument. So, factually it is not true that the deaths of the Indians, most of which, by the way, were through malaria and other diseases to which they had no immunities, but it had nothing to do with the missionaries
	c) Appeal to scriptural authority	An appeal to the value – and drawbacks – of holy texts. This rhetorical strategy refers to both the literal value and the interpretive value of scripture, often citing the ability of religious communities to continually reinterpret scriptural meaning. Stylistic features include directly referencing passages and authors, as well as the use of the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> you get it in church or you get it in synagogue or you get it every Sunday, the argument from the Bible, the argument from authority. I know it's a useless argument to use in a secular setting especially when debating with an atheist

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		following terms: explicit propositions; claims; literature; interpretive; nourishment; static; biblical claim; bible; holy book; religious text; story; Leviticus; Deuteronomy; Abraham.	
4. 'Distinguishing' rhetoric	a) Differences between religious viewpoints	The positioning of religion as a heterogeneous body of thought and practice, with beliefs ranging from the 'moderate' to the 'fundamental.' This rhetorical strategy is often used to differentiate between viewpoints within and between religions. Stylistic features include the use of the following terms: form of religion; particular brand; good religion; bad religion; kind of religion; moderates; only a minority; militant; blind faith.	
	b) Differences between atheist/secular viewpoints	The positioning of atheism/secularism as a heterogeneous body of thought and practice. This rhetorical strategy is often used to differentiate between viewpoints within science and atheism, as well as to identify the diversity of views within atheist thought. Stylistic features include the use of the following terms: differentiate; part company.	
5. 'Rational' rhetoric	a) Appeal to rationality	The positioning of an argument as being based on rationality or reason. This rhetorical strategy tends to use the language of science and tends to be presented in an objective manner. Stylistic features include the use of the following terms: process; reasoning; rigorous; fact; authenticate; reasonableness; argument; common sense; false analogy; true; understand; postulate; standard (Tietge, 2008).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can you be brought to believe that the main events in human history, the crucial ones, happened 3,000 to 2,000 years ago in illiterate, desert Arabia and Palestine? • Either one of them is completely true, as the Roman Church used to say, it was the one true church, some of its members still do, or all of them are false, or all of them are true, which, of course, can't be true • And that's what you'd expect from a predatory, fearful, partly-evolved, primate species that was making up a religious story about itself. • You mean I'd have much more meaning in my life if I thought that I would die and I'd be given one chance, or would have been given, while I was alive, one chance, that if I'd make a mistake, I'd be condemned eternally, that that was the kind of judge I'd be facing • But what I want to do is meet Christopher on his own ground. He says we should be doubters, and I'm going to be a doubter. He says we should be skeptics and I endorse that completely. In this debate at no time will I make any arguments that appeal to Revelation, Scripture, or Authority. I'll make arguments based on reason alone. And I want to engage the argument on Hitchens' own ground by—not by making the easy argument for the utility of religion (it's good for us, it makes practical sense, it's consoling, that's all true) I'm going to actually make an argument for the truth of religion

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if you can explain these facts better than I can, I will happily, as a skeptic, concede to your point of view. Glve me a better explanation for these facts. • What could be more appropriate than to address these arguments in the vocabulary of reason? we are at a state of cultue in which we have to use rational arguments if we are trying to communicate in secular venues • So, my point is let's supply the reasonable standard. If we see a fine-tuned universe, what's more likely, someone fine-tuned it, or it fine-tuned itself? Could the universe have created itself out of nothing? Is there some alternative explanation for the data at hand? No. So I'm simply saying let's go with the best explanation. • A final point about this is that we're committing here what could be called a genetic fallacy. We do it with religion, we can always can see the fallacy if we apply it to any other area. For example, it is very probable there are more people who believe in Darwin's theory of evolution who come from Oxford, England than who come from Oxford, Mississippi. It's probably equally true that there are more people who believe in Einstein's theory of relativity who come from New York than who come from New Guinea. What does this say about whether Einstein's theory is correct or no? Nothing. The origins of your ideas have no bearing on whether they're true or not • I think, in a democratic society the common ground of reason is a perfectly appropriate language for democratic discourse • So what we're doing here is a secular, intellectual enterprise. • So, the point I'm simply saying is that based on current knowledge—and all arguments have to be based on what we know now. We're all open to new ideas in the future. There is currently no good explanation. • if I was walking down and I looked in an alley and I see a head rolling around, I conclude that somebody committed suicide or somebody killed someone. It's a reasonable inference from the data. You could say, "Well, that's a rather presumptuous conclusion. There might have been natural ways in which the head detached itself from ... there could be, but what's the most plausible under the circumstances? • So if nature is an embodiment, a network of intelligent systems, isn't the most reasonable explanation that intelligence put it there? If we need intelligence to get it out, how'd it get there in the first place? • Imagine if I were to try to show the following: money comes out of nothing.
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			<p>Proof? All assets will be counted as “plus”; all liabilities will be counted as “minus”; the pluses and minus cancel out. We have money, but there’s a zero on the balance sheet. Money comes out of nothing. You would say this is a little bit slight-of-hand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Here’s my point, here’s the argument tightened up: everything that has a beginning, all material objects that have a beginning have a cause. The universe is a material object that has a beginning. The universe has a cause. The cause could be natural or supernatural. The cause cannot be natural, because nature can’t cause itself (unless Professor Krauss is right). Since the cause can’t be natural, it’s more believable that a supernatural being and moreover a supernatural being with a lot of power and a lot of knowledge, and a lot of concern for us because life is the outcome of this process. These are reasonable inferences to a cause • Ultimately I think I want to show that the believer’s position, no less than the atheist’s, is an attempt to grapple with the facts, to make sense of the data, to illuminate rationally the world that we live in
	b) Appeal to factual knowledge	The positioning of an argument as being based on facts or indisputable data. This rhetorical strategy tends to use impersonal language and numerical evidence. Stylistic features include the use of the following terms: objective facts; right and wrong; know; truth claims; basis in the brain; understand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everybody knows it’s a medical fact: morale is an ingredient in health • Religion was our first attempt to make sense of our surroundings. It was our first attempt and cosmology, for example, to make sense of what goes on in the heavens. • the rate is increasing, the Big Bang is speeding up • 99.8% of all species ever created, if you insist, on the face of this planet have already become extinct, leaving no descendants. I might add that of that number, three of four branches of our own family, Homo sapiens—branches of it, the Cromagnans, the Neanderthals, who were living with us until about 50,000 years ago, who had tools, who made art, who decorated graves, who clearly had a religion, who must have had a god, who must have abandoned them, who must have let them go, they’re no longer with us, we don’t know what their last cries were like. And our own species was down to about 10,000 in Africa before we finally got out of there, unforsaken this time or so far. • Faced with these amazing, overarching, titanic, I would say awe-inspiring facts—like the fact that ever since the Big Bang every single second a star the size of ours has blown up. While I’ve been talking, once every second a star the size of our sun has gone out—faced with these amazing, indisputable facts • That cannot be disproved, it can only be argued that there’s no evidence for it. • which explains to you how indeed you

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			<p>can get very large numbers of things from nothing with the proper understanding of quantum theory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Really there was nothing and the Hebrews were so clever that they knew that and therefore they must have been right about God as well." This is ridiculous. The ancient Hebrews also thought that God made man and women out of nothing, or out of dust and clay, whereas we have an exact knowledge, or an increasingly exact knowledge of precisely the genetic materials in common with other creatures from which we were assembled • To the question of where are we from, both in the macro and the micro term, where did we come from, the cosmological, the Big Bang and the micro, the unraveling of the human string of DNA and our kinship with other animals and indeed other forms of non-animal life. We are enormously to a greater extent well-informed about our origins • Likewise about where we're going: we have a very good idea now of the time and the place, if you like—the time anyway when our universe and sun and indeed the cosmos will come to an end. Dinesh might say, "Well then if you look at the Bible it proves right all those who said the end of the world is at hand. There's biblical authority, it just proves me right all along." Yes, except that they said that by repenting you could prevent this outcome, which you cannot • All the elements from which we and our surroundings are made are from exploded stars, from the stars that blow up and die at the rate of one every second and have been doing that since the Big Bang • Certainly we know in our own little suburb of the solar system that all the other planets don't support life. They're either much too hot or much too cold as are large tracks of our planet and we have every reason to know now that we live on a climatic knife edge and in the meantime, our sun is preparing to blow up and become a red dwarf • Evolution depends on a sun that's eight light-minutes away. Evolution depends on the constants of nature. If I were to pick up a pen and drop it, it would fall at a known acceleration to the ground, gravity. The universe has a whole bunch of these constants, hundreds of them • if you change that, not 10% or 1%, but one part in a hundred thousandth millionth million, we would have no universe, we would have no life, not just Homo sapiens, no complex life would have evolved anywhere. In other words our very existence here is dependent upon the fine-tuning of a set of constants in nature • there was nothing and then there was a
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			<p>universe." And I want to suggest that modern science has proved this to be 100% correct.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Spanish Inquisition was the worst and over 350 years the number of people killed in the Inquisition was fewer than 2,000. Now, 2,000 people, 350 years, it works out to about five guys a year, not normally considered a world historical crime
6. 'Hedging' rhetoric	a) Subjective argument	The positioning of an argument in somewhat uncertain terms, terms based on probability, or with qualifiers (Crismore & Vande Kopple, 1990). Stylistic features of this rhetorical strategy include the use of personal pronouns and the use of the following terms: I think; I don't think; I believe; how I feel; my experience; my faith; my understanding; we; perhaps; to a certain extent; maybe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I believe I don't think I don't think I think
	b) Admission of uncertainty	The positioning of an argument as being based on partial knowledge. Often seen as a virtue in scientific discourse, this rhetorical strategy uses the following terms to express lack of knowledge: we don't fully understand; uncertainties remain; yet to fully characterize; with one exception; gaps; don't know (Crismore & Vande Kopple, 1990).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> what we don't know we don't claim to know My admitting that I don't know exactly how it began is not at all the same as Dinesh's admission that he doesn't know either because he feels he has to know, because if it's not a matter of faith and not a matter of God he can't say he believes in it a little bit, it must be a real belief to be genuine, and it must have some explanatory value. And he doesn't hold it very strongly and it doesn't explain anything for which we have better explanations
7. 'Emotional' rhetoric	a) Appeal to audience	A direct appeal to the audience. This rhetorical strategy draws the audience into the debate and challenges them to engage with the argument being presented. Stylistic features include posing questions to the audience, and the use of the following terms: ladies and gentlemen; I want you to know; for you to notice; how many people in this room...; just think of how...; it should be obvious to all of you; anybody who has children...; raise your hand; we; you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ladies and gentlemen we've met tonight at an institution of higher learning, and the greatest obligation that you have is to keep an open mind I suggest, again, to an institution of higher learning, that's a responsibility we all have to take on I stand before as someone who quite simply cannot And there's no argument that I can bring or that anyone can bring against it, and that's what should make you suspicious. And so all that is necessary is to transcend the superstitious, transcend the mythical, and accept the responsibility, take it on ourselves that no one can do this for us. And I would hope that in a great university, that thought might carry the day. Thank you. ladies and gentlemen take nothing for certain, don't believe in any absolutism, don't believe in any totalitarianism, don't ask for any supreme leader in the sky, or on earth for that way lies madness and torture and murder and always will. Ladies and gentlemen I ask you, whose design is that? I don't think it can fairly be said in front of an audience like this why do I care? Why do I care about

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			<p>Rwanda? Why do care about my Iranian friends fighting theocracy? Why do I give up my own time to them? Well I'll tell you why, and I say it, I suppose, at the risk of embarrassment: it gives me great pleasure to do so.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So my closing recommendation is: why not try the stoical and Socratic life for yourself? Why not examine more close the tradition, the great tradition that we have, from Lucretius and Democritus that goes through Galileo, Spinoza, Voltaire, Einstein, Russell, and many others. A tradition, I think, much greater than the fearful and the propitiatory and the ritualistic. • So here we are at a university • wherever Christopher and I got our ideologies or our religious convictions, you should weigh our arguments on the merits.
	b) Enthymeme	<p>An appeal to what the audience already partially believes to be true. This rhetorical strategy uses deductive arguments with unstated assumptions that must be true for the premises to lead to the conclusion (Gitay, 2009; Craig & Muller, 2007). It also relies on justifiable opinion rather than empirically sound claims. Stylistic features include posing questions to the audience and framing statements as though they are truths.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there are enormous numbers of competing religions, it's another reason that it's obvious to me that they're man-made • So how did we get a cell? The very idea that random molecules in a warm pond through a bolt of lightning assembled a cell would be akin to saying a bolt of lightning in a warm pond could assemble an automobile or a skyscraper. It's preposterous. • What about the God explanation? Seems obvious to me it does one heck of a lot better. Why do we have a cell that shows the structure of complexity? Because the cell has been intelligently designed perhaps by an intelligent designer. Why does the universe show complexity and rationality? Well, those are the characteristics of the creator who made it that way. Why are there depths of human evil? Because our lives are a cosmic drama in which good and evil are in constant struggle (the Christian story). Why is there morality in the world? Why do we all feel, even when it works against our advantage, a moral law within us? Well that's because there is a moral lawgiver who gave it to us. So when we put it all together, the presupposition of God—God is invisible, I concede that, we can't see Him. But if we posit Him, all these mysterious facts—suddenly the lights come on. It provides an explanation • So, my point is let's supply the reasonable standard. If we see a fine-tuned universe, what's more likely, someone fine-tuned it, or it fine-tuned itself? Could the universe have created itself out of nothing? Is there some alternative explanation for the data at hand? No. So I'm simply saying let's go with the best explanation. • So I'm saying that the God hypothesis casts more light on that subject, the hypothesis of a moral lawgiver. In fact,

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			<p>even the hypothesis of a life to come, you may say a final court, in which our moral deeds will be adjudicated, explains why we act the way we do now. Otherwise, our own behavior is incomprehensible to us</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • faith is the bridge between limited, always limited human knowledge, and the inevitability and necessity of human action • When you look at the fact of religious experience in the world today, to simply write it off as a primitive explanation of why ancient man couldn't explain the thunder seems idiotically unrelated to the fact that religion serves current needs and current wants
8. 'Credibility' rhetoric	a) Referencing other people	<p>Evoking feelings of credibility within an argument by referencing other people; including scientific experts, religious figures, historical figures, scholars, and philosophers (Tietge, 2008). This rhetorical strategy sometimes includes a quotation from the author, or a paraphrased passage from their body of work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getrude Stein • Father Richard McBrien • Richard Dawkins • Daniel Dennett • Charles Darwin • Heinrich Heine • some people say the great Stephen Jay Gould, who I admired very much, from whom we all learned a great deal about evolutionary biology, used to say • Newton • Sir Martin Ryle • Vladimir Putin • Albert Einstein • Professor J. B. S. Haldane • Karl Popper • Thomas Paine • Thomas Jefferson • Professor Lawrence Krauss • poet George Herbert • William of Ockham • Laplace • Napoleon • Father Bartolomeo de las Casas • Kaiser Wilhelm II • the czar of Russia • George V • Adolph Hitler • Father Tiso • King William • The Pope • Professor Krauss • Stephen Jay Gould • Jean-Paul Sartre • Sigmund Freud • Pascal • Winston Churchill • Darwin • Franklin Harold • Richard Dawkins • Stephen Hawking • Adam Smith • Ockham • Henry Kamen • las Casas • Hitler • Hugh Trevor-Roper • Martin Bormann • Newton • Einstein • Larry Krauss

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Simon Conway Morris• Christian de Duve• Brownlee• David Hume• Freud
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