



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

## A Critical Sociolinguistic Approach to Atheism in American Religious Debates

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: Apr 24, 2024	This study is about is atheism which has been studied very much in the field of theology, but has very little attention, if ever, in linguistics, to the best of the researcher's knowledge. This study, thus, investigates the language of atheist scholars which they use to spread their ideology. The data of this study is a debate, entitled Atheism vs Christianity, between Richard Dawkins and Cardinal George Pell on the Q&A programme. The study tries to investigate how atheism is critically manipulated in Richard Dawkins' speech via answering the following questions: (1) What are the linguistic features of the atheist discourse? (2) What are the linguistic, dialectic, and persuading strategies used by Richard Dawkins to implement his ideologies? (3) What are the critical cognitive discursual strategies that are dominant in Richard Dawkins' speech? and (4) What are the social variables that contribute to revealing atheism in the selected speeches? The model of analysis is an eclectic one that is mainly based on Foucault's and Wodak's model. The analysis shows that Dawkins manipulates the method of propagation of knowledge that establishes, normalizes and legitimizes the ideology of atheism. Concerning the micro linguistic level, Dawkins uses some categorical terms to normalize the ideology of atheism such as Christianity, atheism, theism, Darwinian and religion. Dawkins uses some dichotomies such as right and wrong, hell and heaven to compare between Christianity and atheism. Dawkins also uses a kind of evaluative traits to degrade Christianity and upgrade atheism. He also manipulates the techniques of framing to almost nine times to reveal the ideology of atheism. On the macro level, Dawkins uses emotional attachment and mind control once and mitigating evidence four times. Finally, Dawkins focuses on the religion as a social variable as the debate is a religious one.
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## INTRODUCTION

Atheism is an age-old belief that states that there is no God or creator for this world, and all the creatures and the universe itself are created by the power of the material. Atheism has been studied very much in the field of theology, but has very little attention, if ever, in linguistics, to the best of the researcher's

knowledge. This study, thus, investigates the language of atheist scholars which they use to spread their ideology. The data of this study is a debate, entitled Atheism vs Christianity, between Richard Dawkins and Cardinal George Pell on the Q&A programme. The study tries to investigate how atheism is critically manipulated in Richard Dawkins' speech via answering the following questions:

1. What are the linguistic features of the atheist discourse?
2. What are the linguistic, dialectic, and persuading strategies used by Richard Dawkins to implement his ideologies?
3. What are the critical discursual strategies that are dominant in Richard Dawkins' speech?
4. What are the social variables that contribute to revealing atheism in the selected speeches?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2. 1. Critical Sociolinguistics

Critical sociolinguistics, according to (Mesthrie, 2000) locates itself at the crossroad between language in society and critical theory with great concern for linguistic inequality and power. In other words, CS considers the processes that create and maintain the social inequality system, with extra emphasis on language and its speakers rather than language use that accommodates and expresses other social inequalities and supports scepticism of any claims about how the language in society works (Dean, 1994).

From an epistemological point of view, the foundation of CS lies in the domain of critical theory which is related to society in general and to Marxist theory in particular which pays attention to the situation of the marginalized workers and looks for solutions to liberate them from slavery (Horkheimer, 1982).

Before publishing the book *Introducing Sociolinguistics* (Mesthrie et al. 2000), there was no coherent theory of sociolinguistics that can provide considerable, rich and diverse findings and approaches as Mesthrie and his colleagues did. Chamber (2003), for example, in his book *Sociolinguistics Theory* confines himself to establishing and explaining the results or findings of one branch of the field, which is variation theory, while Mesthrie (2009) states that variation theory is a central topic in sociolinguistics that can make use of other sub-fields in other domains such as bilingualism and the use of the honorifics in sociology and language planning in political science. This extreme position of variation theory tries to exclude the social position from the realm of sociolinguistics.

### 2. 2. Atheism

Atheism is an age-old belief that states that there is no God or creator for this world, and all the creatures and the universe itself are created by the power of the material. The term is coined from the Greek word "athoeos" which means without Gods. The main argument of atheists or proponents of atheism is that there is no evidence of God or gods, so as a result they reject the idea of divine being or power. The dogma of atheism has been a controversial topic throughout history and has been accepted in some countries and territories and refused and even met with hostility and persecution in other countries (Martin M., 1990).

Atheism as a belief is not something recent or modern, it can be traced back to the era of Epicurus and Democritus in ancient Greece, those philosophers question the existence of gods and the creation

of the universe. Atheism was only a religious trend against deities and did not gain significance until the Enlightenment period of the 18 century. Through that time, scholars, theologians and intellectuals began to argue and challenge traditional religions such as Judaism and Christianity (LeDrew, 2019).

Several philosophers have emerged to be famous for atheism belief in the Enlightenment era such as the French Philosopher Denis Diderot. He wrote extensively on the topic of atheism challenging that the existence of God is a superstition and that science and reasoning are the only approaches or methods to understand the world. Other renowned philosophers who adopted atheism in the Enlightenment era are Baron d'Holbach and David Hume. They wrote a lot about atheism and their works have contributed so much to the field of atheism (The Global Religious Landscape: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Major Religious Groups as of 2010, 2015).

In recent times, atheism has been widespread in the world, especially in Western societies. According to a Pew Research Centre survey in 2014, 22.8% of Americans are identified as atheist, agnostic, or "nothing in particular," up from 16.1% in 2007. In Europe, the percentage of atheists is even higher, with countries like Sweden and Denmark reporting atheism rates of over 80%. Even though atheism is widespread nowadays, it is still a controversial subject in several parts and countries of the world. Adopting atheism as a belief could be a crime in certain countries like Saudi Arabia and Iran, and those who adopt it could be punished by very severe sentences such as persecution. On the other hand, atheism in more secular societies might face social ostracism and discrimination (Zuckerman, 2007).

### **3. DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **3. 1. Model of Analysis**

Foucault presented the term problematization to refer to critique but in his way. According to Foucault's viewpoint, a critique is not a matter of judging something as right or wrong but it is a matter of referring to what kind of suppositions to be familiar with, unchallenged and unconsidered modes of thought, the practice we accepted or placed (Foucault, 1988). Just like other scholars who theorize in the field of critical studies, Foucault challenged those scholars to deal with the problems and coined a new term for the method that he used to question the shifts in the system of thoughts, this term is called problematization. This is a technique of raising questions to highlight and account for how some specific systems of thoughts and particular practices are comprehended in a particular way, this technique is suggested by Foucault to specify paradoxes, difficulties, and the circumstances in which people problematize what they are, what they do, and the world in which they live (Foucault, 1984). The technique of problematization structures the fundamental intellectual foundation of Foucault's inquiries about social and political systems of thought. The application of his technique can be found in his work entitled "Politics and the Study of Discourse" as he specifies and integrates his research of discourse, and power (Foucault, 1991a). The study deals with three main elements: discourse formation, discourse transformation and the relation between the two discourses. More specifically, he made an analysis of several diverse systems of discourse including their most central linguistic systems of discourse. Foucault also problematizes the concept of power by raising a set of questions which are related to problems of power relation, power effects and strategy such as: "What took place here?" "Can one speak of interests here?" and "What does struggle mean here?" (Foucault, 1980: 204, 209). To fully understand the concept of problematization in the field of power, we need to explore other two concepts that he presented: governmentality and subjectivity.

According to Foucault (1972) discourse production and formation are embodied by a series of sets of statements that form objects, concepts, subjects and strategies of which the people spoke. In such a way, Foucault is referring to the constitutive role of discourse where language does not actually

reflect the pre-existing objects, concepts, subjects and strategies, but rather serves the active function of creating and recreating that aspect within discourse. Foucault stated that discourses are analysed and controlled by rules and transformations and those discourses can only be identified by those rules of formation for all the objects, concepts, subjects and strategies. The set of these rules constructs the systems of thoughts that determine what could be said, who could speak, the positions or situations from which they could speak the points of view that could be presented and the interests, stakes, and institutional domains that were presented. Hence, the main goal of discourse analysis is to emphasize the formation and transformation of discourse and the ideas are set together to make discourse (Foucault, 1978)

The process of discourse transformation happens within a set of historical circumstances. Those circumstances structure statements and concepts, and determine the set of power relations by taking apart from all the statements that are possibly accepted (Foucault, 1980: 197). Foucault(1984:12) stated that his analytical approach was to search for examples of discursive practices, the production of power and the propagation of knowledge. His search for examples of discursive practices emphasized the formation, modification and transformation of meaning in addition to focusing on the determinative rules that decide what may be said. The main goal of his approach was to consider the fact that discourse is what is talked about and what is said, while power lies in what is at stake, the veiled interests, acts of resistance and contested truth claims. The process of searching for the propagation of knowledge identifies another process, it is establishing, normalizing, and legitimating specific concepts and theories and defining the positions of and functions that people could occupy in the diverse discourse (Foucault, 1972:200). The main challenge that linguists and scholars face is the way of integrating these three approaches to construct a coherent critique of discourse practice during a discourse transformation or era of discontinuity.

Wodak & Reisigl (2001) proposed the following discursive strategies along with their objectives and devices to analyse the data selected.

Strategy	Objective	Devices
Nomination	discursive construction of social actors, objects/phenomena/ events and processes/ actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• membership categorisation devices, deictics, anthroponyms, etc.</li> <li>• tropes such as metaphors, metonymies and synecdoches (<i>pars pro toto, totum pro parte</i>)</li> <li>• verbs and nouns used to denote processes and actions, etc.</li> </ul>
predication	discursive qualification of social actors, objects,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stereotypical, evaluative attributions of negative or positive traits (e.g. in the</li> </ul>

	phenomena, events/ processes and actions (more or less positively or negatively)	form of adjectives, appositions, prepositional phrases, relative clauses, conjunctive clauses, infinitive clauses and participial clauses or groups) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explicit predicates or predicative nouns/adjectives/pronouns</li> <li>• collocations</li> <li>• explicit comparisons, similes, metaphors and other rhetorical figures (including metonymies, hyperboles, litotes, euphemisms)</li> <li>• allusions, evocations, and presuppositions/implicatures, etc.</li> </ul>
argumentation	justification and questioning of claims of truth and normative rightness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• topoi (formal or more content-related)</li> <li>• fallacies</li> </ul>
perspectivization, framing or discourse representation	positioning speaker's or writer's point of view and expressing involvement or distance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deictics</li> <li>• direct, indirect or free indirect speech</li> <li>• quotation marks, discourse markers/particles</li> <li>• metaphors</li> <li>• animating prosody, etc.</li> </ul>

intensification, mitigation	modifying (intensifying or mitigating) the illocutionary force and thus the epistemic or deontic status of utterances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• diminutives or augmentatives</li> <li>• (modal) particles, tag questions, subjunctive, hesitations, vague expressions, etc.</li> <li>• hyperboles, litotes</li> <li>• indirect speech acts (e.g. question instead of an assertion)</li> <li>• verbs of saying, feeling, thinking, etc.</li> </ul>
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### 3. 2. Debate Analysis

#### 3. 3. 1. Propagation of Knowledge

Richard Dawkins initiates his speech by establishing an idea that the existence of good deed and morals are not derived from Christianity but it is there in most religions and non-religious doctrines as in 1- **“um it is true that uh Christianity has adopted many of the best values of humanity but they don't belong to Christianity or indeed to any other religion.”** Dawkins tries to propagate and establish the idea that we do not need religion to be good, he tries to negate the existence of heaven and hell and people do not need to be afraid of going to hell or hoping to get into heaven, from text 15 below, it is clear that they are only claims without any concrete evidence. See the following excerpt: 2-**“religion I think it would be very sad if it were true that you really did need religion in order to be good because if you think about it what that would mean would be either that you get your morals and your values from the Bible or the Quran or some other holy book or that you are good only because you're frightened of God because you don't want to go to hell or you do want to go to heaven.”**

The second stage is normalizing the idea of God inexistence.

#### 3- **“Now as for getting your morals from the Bible I very sincerely hope nobody does get their morals from the Bible.”**

Dawkins tries in these lines to normalize the idea that good morals are not necessarily deduced for the Bible of other holy books. Besides:

#### 4-**“the fundamental idea of New Testament Christianity which is that Jesus is the son of God who is redeeming Humanity from original sin.”**

He denies the belief which says that Jesus has come to earth to redeem humanity from the original sin by sacrificing himself. Moreover, he puts himself as a judge to submit suggestions to God to present a better way rather than sending a messenger. This is the beginning of the legitimizing process as this process is depicted in the following extract:

**5-“the idea the fundamental idea of New Testament Christianity which is that Jesus is the son of God who is redeeming Humanity from original sin.”**

The legitimizing process continues by Dawkins in the following extract when he starts legitimizing his idea that the scientific research does not come from Christianity despite the fact that Christianity does not hinder science or scientific research but rather support them.

**6- “when you say that Christianity has been responsible for a lot of good including science by the way which is somewhat ironic.”** Dawkins emphasizes that he as an atheist and his atheist followers can survive and contribute without any need of religion denying the fact that Christianity has good deeds and principles and can guide humanity to a safe world.

**7- “I as an atheist my friends as as atheists lead thoroughly worthwhile lives in our opinion because we stand up look the world in the face face up to the fact that we are not going to last forever we have to make the most of the short time that we have on this this planet we have to make this planet as good as we possibly can and try to leave it a better place than we found it.”** The process of legitimization can be seen clearly in the following extract:

**8- “it's an astonishing idea to say why should you bother just because we have a scientific understanding of why we're here we do have a scientific understanding of why why we're here and we therefore have to make up our own meaning to life we have to uh find our own purposes in life which are not derived directly from uh our scientific history um when you say that Christianity has been responsible for a lot of good including science by the way which is somewhat ironic um I think that most of the great benefits in humanity such as the abolition of slavery uh such as the emancipation of women which the Cardinal both uh mentioned both of um these have been rung out of the our Christian history without much support from uh from Christianity I as an atheist my friends as as atheists lead thoroughly worthwhile lives in our opinion because we stand up look the world in the face face up to the fact that we are not going to last forever we have to make the most of the short time that we have on this this planet we have to make this planet as good as we possibly can and try to leave it a better place than we found it”**

The process of legislation continues when he submits a kind of scale in his book *God Delusion*, that scale grades people from one which means “totally confident that there is GOD” and number seven which means that “I am totally confident there is no GOD”

**9- “in The God Delusion I made a seven-point scale one is I'm totally confident there is a God Seven is I'm totally confident there is not a god um six is to all intents and purposes I'm an atheist I live my life as though there is no God but any scientist of any sense will not say that they positively can disprove the existence of anything um I cannot disprove the existence of the Easter Bunny and so I'm agnostic about the Easter Bunny it's in the same respect that I'm agnostic about God what proof by the way would change your mind it's a very that's a very difficult and interesting question because um I mean I used to think that that if somehow you know great big giant 900t High Jesus with a voice like Paul robes and suddenly Strode in and said I exist here I am .”**

The scales in between are regarded as a gradation of agnostic or sceptic, according to Dawkin's scale, some people are certain about some facts and doubt others. This is a kind of judgment that is proposed without any scientific or experiential proof or evidence. This process of legislation is depicted in the above extract no 21

### 3.3.2 The Micro Level

The next three levels are the critical ones. The first is the micro level which includes the linguistic devices that are used by the speaker to prevail his ideology. The micro level encompasses four sub-level, they are nomination, prediction, perspectivization, and intensification. The first sub level is nomination which involves membership categories devices, deictic expression, verbs and nouns that are used to nominate the ideology of atheism. Dawkins in his speech uses the terms **“Christianity, atheism, theism, Darwinian and religion”**. All these terms are used to nominate the main idea of his claim which calls for atheism against Christianity or religion as a whole. He also uses the dichotomy **“heaven and hell”** to refer to the supernatural issues in which he does not believe. See the following extract:

**10- “yes I mean that could hardly be otherwise um it is true that uh Christianity has adopted many of the best values of of humanity but they don't belong to Christianity or indeed to any other religion I think it would be very sad if it were true that you really did need religion in order to be good because if you think about it what that would mean would be either that you get your morals and your values from the Bible or the Quran or some other holy book or that you are good only because you're frightened of God because you don't want to go to hell or you do want to go to heaven.”**

The Dawkins' speech involves a set of verbs that are specifically used to denote his ideology. Those verbs are **(adopted, belong, think, frighten)**. Other verb that are used to convey the sense of horror against deity are **(redeem, sin, forgive, torture, and execute)**. Other categorical nouns which are used to deny the idea of god existence are as follow: **sin, death, Paragon of wisdom , knowledge**

The second sub level is called prediction which involves stereotypical, evaluative attributions of negative or positive traits, explicit predicates or predicative nouns/adjectives/pronouns, collocations explicit comparisons, similes, metaphors and other rhetorical figures (including metonymies, hyperboles, litotes, euphemisms). The analysis will reveal which ones are used.

Richard Dawkins' speech involves firstly a kind of evaluative attribute to degrade the people who believe in god's existence or christianity by chance found their morla in the Bible **I think it would be very sad if it were true that you really did need religion in order to be good**, but it is not necessary that they are original in the Bible or are inspired from god. Dawkins uses several collocation such as **redeeming humanity, forgive a sin, heaven and hell** and the like. Dawkins is professional in using such collocation to denote his ideology.

The third sub level of micro structure is framing. This level includes deictics direct, indirect or free indirect speech quotations, discourse markers/ particles metaphors. In the following extract, Dawkins frames the idea that we have to lead a scientific search to find out why we are here and why we are created

**11- “it's an astonishing idea to say why should you bother just because we have a scientific understanding of why we're here we do have a scientific understanding of why why we're here,”** Dawkins emphasizes that the good deeds that exist in Christianity are ironic **“when you say that Christianity has been responsible for a lot of good including science by the way which is somewhat ironic”** because they ,as atheists, can live and lead good lives without following Christianity or any other deity. He focuses on the adoption of science rather than religion.

**12- “it's an astonishing idea to say why should you bother just because we have a scientific understanding of why we're here we do have a scientific understanding of why why we're here**



and we therefore have to make up our own meaning to life we have to uh find our own purposes in life which are not derived directly from uh our scientific history um when you say that Christianity has been responsible for a lot of good including science by the way which is somewhat ironic um I think that most of the great benefits in humanity such as the abolition of slavery uh such as the emancipation of women which the Cardinal both uh mentioned both of um these have been rung out of the our Christian history without much support from uh from Christianity I as an atheist my friends as as atheists lead thoroughly worthwhile lives in our opinion because we stand up look the world in the face face up to the fact that we are not going to last forever we have to make the most of the short time that we have on this this planet we have to make this planet as good as we possibly can and try to leave it a better place than we found it”

In the next extract, Dawkins uses indirect speech to frame the Darwinian idea. Dawkins proposes that the society should not follow up a Darwinian way of life in spite of the fact that he is passionate Darwinian **“I've often said that I'm a passionate Darwinian.”** This is a kind of contradiction in his speech.

**13- “we don't revert to the idea of survival of the fittest in planning our politics and our values and our way of life I've often said that I'm a passionate Darwinian when it comes to explaining why we exist it's undoubtedly the reason why we're here and why all living things are here but to live our lives in a Darwinian way to make up to make a society a Darwinian society that would be a very unpleasant sort of society in which to live it would be a sort of Thatcherite uh Society um and we want to I mean in a way I feel that one of the reasons for learning about Darwinian evolution is as an object lesson in how not to uh set up our values and our and our social lives.”**

Dawkins uses simile in the following extract to convey the idea that the question why we exist is silly and unanswered just like why mountains exist **“question you cannot ask a question like why do mountains exist as though mountains had some kind of purpose.”** Dawkins uses the way of raising questions to doubt the reason of our existence. Dawkins presented a vague idea that the reason of our existence is unanswered just like the existence of mountains, he claims that religion cannot fill in the gaps that science fails to bridge. In the following extract, Dawkins makes this comparison just to raise a question or a problem without giving any way or solution to solve it.

**14-“why be good is a separate question which I also came to why we exist you're playing with the word why there science is working on the problem of the antecedent factors that lead to our existence now why in any further sense than that why in the sense of purpose is in my opinion not a meaningful question you cannot ask a question like why do mountains exist as though mountains had some kind of purpose what you can say is what are the causal factors that lead to the existence of mountains and the same with life and the same with the universe now science over the centuries has gradually pieced together answers to those questions why in that sense it's true that there are still some gaps but surely Cardinal you're not going to fall for the god of the gaps trap saying that um that religion is going to fill in those gaps which science has so far not.”**

Dawkins takes a stance of perspectivization when he compares Hitler as a Christian and Stalin as an atheist. Dawkins compared the principle of Darwin with the principles of Quran while they are totally different perspectives. Darwinian theory is a biology theory whereas Quran is a divine book

**15- “that's exactly why I said that I despised Ouran natural selection as a motto for how we should live I tried to say we should not live by Darwinian principles.”** Dawkins makes such a

comparison to grasp the attention of the audience to the proposition that atheism is different from the principle of Darwin and the religious principles of deities. Dawkins raises an unanswered question instead of answering the original question **“why do we exist?”** and this is one of the ways that Dawkins uses to distract the attention of audience.

**16- “that's ridiculous that is ridiculous nice unbiased audience you've attended here by the way right let's clearly distinguish to two things here first atheism had nothing to do with Hitler or Stalin was an atheist Hitler was not it doesn't matter what they were with respect to atheism they did their horrible things for entirely different reasons now you are right when you say that aspects of what Hitler tried to do could be regarded as a rising out of Darwinian natural selection that's exactly why I said that I despised Ouran natural selection as a motto for how we should live I tried to say we should not live by Darwinian principles but Darwinian principles explain how we got here and why we exist in the scientific sense now Cardinal you said it's part of human nature to want to ask the question why in the sense of purpose it may very well be part of human nature but that doesn't make it a valid question there are all sorts of questions which you can ask what's funny about that what is funny about that okay we'd like the audience not to yell out if we can do that that would be great um we're going to move on I didn't finish I'm sorry okay we'll finish your point because there are lots of questions pertaining to this we will the question why is not necessarily a question that deserves to be answered there are all sorts of questions that people can ask like what is the color of jealousy that's a silly question exactly why is a silly question why is a silly question you can ask ask what are the factors that led to something coming into existence that's a sensible question but what is the purpose of the universe is a silly question.”**

Dawkins makes in the following lines a very specific perspective when he makes a scale of people from one to seven classifying the degree of believing in God existence, this frame is a kind of proposition done by Dawkins to classify the society members to two extremes, those who definitely believe that there is God and other extreme represents people who totally do not believe in God existence

**17- “The God Delusion I made a seven-point scale one is I'm totally confident there is a God Seven is I'm totally confident there is not a god.”** This frame is a kind of personal perspective proposed by Dawkins to categorize people. Those people according to Dawkins in between number one and number seven believe in one aspect but not necessary believe in other aspects of god existence. See the following extract.

**18- “The God Delusion I made a seven-point scale one is I'm totally confident there is a God Seven is I'm totally confident there is not a god um six is to all intents and purposes I'm an atheist I live my life as though there is no God but any scientist of any sense will not say that they positively can disprove the existence of anything um I cannot disprove the existence of the Easter Bunny and so I'm agnostic about the Easter Bunny it's in the same respect that I'm agnostic about about God what proof by the way would change your mind it's a very that's a very difficult and interesting question because um I mean I used to think that that if somehow you know great big giant 900t High Jesus with a voice like Paul robes and suddenly Strode in and said I exist here I am um but even that I actually sometimes wonder whether that would I”**

The final sub level in micro level is intensification and mitigation. This level includes diminutives or argumentative (modal) particles, tag questions, subjunctive, hesitations, vague expressions, etc. hyperboles, litotes indirect speech acts (e.g. question instead of assertion) verbs of saying, feeling,

thinking. We will see what is there in Dawkins' speech concerning this level. In following extract, Dawkins tries to intensify the idea that Christianity does have good deeds and morals but he is trying to mitigate their importance being a part of Christianity

19- **"it is true that uh Christianity has adopted many of the best values of of humanity but they don't belong to Christianity or indeed to any other religion,"** Dawkins tries to reveal that other religions have the same morals and even atheists people have those morals, but he forgets to mention that those people are originally theists, then they turn to atheism. Dawkins always tries to intensify atheism and mitigate other deities.

20- **"Richard Dawkins let's start with you well obviously the answer to that question is yes I mean that could hardly be otherwise um it is true that uh Christianity has adopted many of the best values of of humanity but they don't belong to Christianity or indeed to any other religion I think it would be very sad if it were true that you really did need religion in order to be good because if you think about it what that would mean would be either that you get your morals and your values from the Bible or the Quran or some other holy book or that you are good only because you're frightened of God because you don't want to go to hell or you do want to go to heaven."**

Dawkins in his speech tries to mitigate the importance of the Bible as a holy book of Christianity. He uses a diminutive practice to show his disrespect for the Bible. He is urging people to get any morals from the Bible and all the good morals which exist in Bible are occasional.

21- **"Now as for getting your morals from the Bible I very sincerely hope nobody does get their morals from the Bible. it's true that you can find the occasional good verse and The Sermon on the Mount would be one example but it's lost amid the awful things that are dotted throughout the Old Testament and actually throughout the New Testament as well because the idea the fundamental idea of New Testament Christianity which is that Jesus is the son of God who is redeeming Humanity from original sin."**

The following extract show the hesitation device used by Dawkins to doubt the belief in God. He presents the question: **"why are we here?"** he considers this question unanswered and cannot be answered by the scientific research or historical Christianity. Dawkins denies some contributions of Christianity such as abolition of slavery and woman emancipation:

22- **"I think that most of the great benefits in humanity such as the abolition of slavery uh such as the emancipation of women which the Cardinal both uh mentioned both of um these have been rung out of the our Christian history without much support from uh from Christianity."** He intensifies that he and atheist friends lead a moral life without following a deity religion. They think that they should do good things because the good things are genuinely good:

23- **"I as an atheist my friends as as atheists lead thoroughly worthwhile lives in our opinion because we stand up look the world in the face face up to the fact that we are not going to last forever we have to make the most of the short time that we have on this this planet we have to make this planet as good as we possibly can."** They forget that all the deity religions come to emphasize the good things and demolish bad things.

24- **"It's an astonishing idea to say why should you bother just because we have a scientific understanding of why we're here we do have a scientific understanding of why we're here and we therefore have to make up our own meaning to life we have to uh find our own purposes in life which are not derived directly from uh our scientific history um when you say that**

Christianity has been responsible for a lot of good including science by the way which is somewhat ironic um I think that most of the great benefits in humanity such as the abolition of slavery uh such as the emancipation of women which the Cardinal both uh mentioned both of um these have been rung out of the our Christian history without much support from uh from Christianity I as an atheist my friends as as atheists lead thoroughly worthwhile lives in our opinion because we stand up look the world in the face up to the fact that we are not going to last forever we have to make the most of the short time that we have on this this planet we have to make this planet as good as we possibly can and try to leave it a better place than we found it."

#### 4. Results of the Analysis

The following results are arrived at from the analysis of the debate:

1. Dawkins manipulates some categorical term such as "**Christianity, atheism, theism, Darwinian and religion**". "**Christianity, atheism, theism, Darwinian and religion**" to denote the ideology of atheism, he also uses specific dichotomies **right and wrong, hell and heaven** to show the comparison between Christianity and atheism
2. Dawkins also uses a kind of evaluative traits to degrade Christianity and upgrade atheism. Dawkins uses the techniques of framing to almost nine times to reveal the ideology of atheism.
3. Dawkins uses dialectic and persuading strategies such as establishing, normalization, legitimization, and simile to spread the ideology of atheism.
4. On the macro level, Dawkins aims to reveal his ideology by adopting discursial cognitive strategies by following the strategies: emotional attachment and mind control, he uses them once for each. But the strategy of mitigating evidence is used for four times.
5. Concerning the social variables, Dawkins focuses on the religion variable as the debate is a religious one.

#### 5. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that Dawkins tries to call and spread his stance of the ideology of atheism by adopting discursial such as establishment, normalization and legitimization and linguistic strategies such as nomination, prediction, and framing to prevail his ideology. He does not present any concrete evidence against the evidence of Christianity, his highly usage of language as a critical tool to call for atheism. Dawkins aims to evaluate atheism with a high level against the degrading of Christianity. He tries to mitigate the evidence of Christianity and attract the attention of the audience for the sake of atheism. Dawkins skillfully controls the mind of his audience in the debate without any evidence just the manipulative use of language.

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