

# Human Identity: Scientific and Theological Perspectives

Alister McGrath

# William Hazlitt (1778-1830)

“Man is the only animal that laughs and weeps; for he is the only animal that is struck with the difference between what things are and what they ought to be.”

William Hazlitt, *Essays*. London: Walter Scott, 1889, 269.

# Richard Dawkins

*The Selfish Gene* (1976)

“A monkey is a machine that preserves genes up trees, a fish is a machine that preserves genes in the water; there is even a small worm that preserves genes in German beer mats.”

# Francis Crick

“You, your joys and your sorrows, your memories and your ambitions, your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behaviour of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules.”

Francis Crick, *The Astonishing Hypothesis: The Scientific Search for the Soul*. London: Simon & Schuster, 1994, 3.

# Dawkins on the human difference

“We can “defy the selfish genes of our birth”.

Once we understand how these “selfish genes” predispose us towards certain patterns of behaviours and beliefs, we can resist and subvert them.

“We, alone on earth, can rebel against the tyranny of the selfish replicators.”

# J. R. R. Tolkien on the Image of God

“Fantasy remains a human right: we make in our measure and in our derivative mode, because we are made: and not only made, but made in the image and likeness of a Maker.”

# Augustine of Hippo

“The image of the creator is to be found in the rational or intellectual soul of humanity . . . [The human soul] has been created according to the image of God in order that it may use reason and intellect in order to apprehend and behold God.”

# Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

“If only it were all so simple! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?”

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago 1918-56*. London: Harvill Press, 2003, 75.

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