



# The Challenge of Things: Thinking Through Troubled Times

*A.C. Grayling*

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A. C. Grayling's lucid and stimulating books, based on the idea that philosophy should engage with the world and make itself useful, are immensely popular.

*The Challenge of Things* joins earlier collections like *The Reason of Things* and *Thinking of Answers*, but this time to collect Grayling's recent writings on the world in a time of war and conflict. In describing and exposing the dark side of things, he also explores ways out of the habits and prejudices of mind that would otherwise trap us forever in the deadly impasses of conflicts of all kinds.

Whether he is writing about the First World War and its legacy, free speech, the advantages of an atheist prime minister or the role of science in the arts, his essays are always enlightening, enlivening and hopeful.

## The Challenge of Things: Thinking Through Troubled Times Details

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Author : A.C. Grayling

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## From Reader Review The Challenge of Things: Thinking Through Troubled Times for online ebook

### Jamie says

A.C Grayling's "The Challenge of Things" is a near perfect collection of essays on philosophy, science, history, politics, religion, mythology, society, social issues, education, literature, abstract concepts, and everyday affairs; about life and the human condition. The writing is excellent, the polemics passionate and well-reasoned, and the preponderance of information gives one a helpful refresher in a dozen different subjects. One of the best books I've read this year.

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### Andrew Paterson says

One of the best written books I have read in years, very high quality language & grammar, covers an extremely wide variety of subjects so there is no lack of interest at anytime, short reads on essentially social sciences with a remarkable underlying sense of open debate and thought provoking angles, one of those books that you really never read and put away on a shelf - instead, you keep it near for further use.

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### Amni says

His essays are a joy to read, not only because of his expansive analyses and insights, but also because of his graceful writing. This book gave me different and more penetrating viewpoints on topics that are central to human existence.

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### Chris Withers says

A.C Grayling presents an interesting collection of essays on a wide variety of contemporaneous topics. In particular, I found his positions on matters of life, love and philosophy incredibly insightful - but in contrast, his political viewpoints were a little charged, especially those on China - which he aggressively describes as a "[ruthlessly] irredentist regime". That said, these positions illuminate his strong position on the fundamentals of human rights. All in all, an enjoyable read that was intellectually enlightening.

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### Tammam Aloudat says

This is an interesting and very well written book by a well versed and thoughtful philosopher and author. I have enjoyed Grayling's other books including War: An Enquiry and Democracy and Its Crisis and picked this one when I saw it on a bookstore shelf.

The book is immensely interesting and the essays range in topics and tone. They are mostly before-published articles in a range of publications. The problem with many articles in a book is that any given topic is shallow and some are barely addressed but that is somewhat compensated by beautiful sentences and good

argument.

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### **Joe Sampson says**

This is a collection of essays on topics such as philosophy, politics, psychology and religion. Grayling is very perceptive.

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### **Lesley says**

I picked up this book hoping to read a series of essays that touched on some of the issues that make these "troubled times." No such luck. Instead this is a mish mash of topics that veer from book reviews to mini biographies, while in between offering some thoughts on free speech, the value of a humanities education, the rise of China and women's equality.

Oh, and if you're flying from Kathmandu to Bhutan, it's extremely unlikely that you'll see K2, which lies over 1.200km to the northwest, in Pakistan. The mountain the author saw was Kanchenjunga, the world's third highest mountain

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### **Sharon Bakar says**

Listened to this as an audiobook and look forward to buying a physical copy of the book. A collection of very short pieces that encompass a whole range of issues from philosophy to politics to religion to the importance of friendship. A little taster I think of Grayling's work. I would have liked to many of the issues to be explored in greater depth (the ones that especially interested me - the need to deglobalise and the rise of China) but this makes it more likely that I'll pick up his other books!

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### **Calzean says**

Obviously Grayling is a great thinker. His analysis is often frightening true. But in this book it felt like he had to meet the needs of his publisher. As a result the depth in some of the articles was shallow. Some of the argument repeated previous ones. Still it is refreshing to read someone willing to challenge the traditional media's view of society's challenges.

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### **Vicky says**

Another good book by Grayling. He is a philosopher that I can easy understand and relate to. His collection of essays is challenging, honest and very relevant.

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## Gibson says

There are intelligent people who write well. Some write freely. Some also have intuition, empathy, humanity, call it what you will.

Grayling has these extras. This book is a collection of short writings, some very short and perhaps written as opinion pieces for weekend magazines. There is one technical piece which is completely out of place, "The Unity of Good" which, judging from its vocabulary, hair splitting and average sentence length, was written for an academic journal.

The book is a curate's egg, good in parts. Perhaps that is a bit unfair, it is mostly good.

It is tedious when he is on the bandwagon of the late 2000s, shooting fish in the barrel of religious thought.

It is average when it is a compendium of tropes, as in "The Whole Life, The Point of the Humanities". This is the sort of essay that makes holders of the view the writer espouses feel that with friends like this we do not need enemies. It is a weak essay constructed of vague generalisations.

It is very good in short essays such as "The Hinges of History".

His essay on Montaigne makes the interesting point that Montaigne was one of the first writers to put the person onto the page. I would have liked Grayling to do the same in his quite interesting essay on "The Care and Maintenance of Friends". How good that might have been.

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## Ally says

Another excellent book of modern philosophy by AC Grayling. Grayling is refreshing with his no nonsense analysis of challenging modern issues. His stand against current ultra PC behaviour, for example, the acceptance and tolerance of radical and fundamentalist religion, is right on target. He clearly expresses that one is under no obligation to respect another person's ideas on a matter such as religion, unlike race, class and gender, religions are chosen and are therefore not above scrutiny. Many other very relevant issues also discussed. A very interesting read.

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## Anna says

3.5

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## Tracey says

Grayling is not only a great thinker but makes you as a reader think.

As a first time reader of his works, I was not sure what to expect. I had heard about him on a podcast and was suitably interested to make a purchase of this book. I found the reading challenging, in that I was confronted with ideas and thoughts not readily expressed elsewhere. There were times when I found myself easily agreeing with the arguments he presented and at other times questioning his views.

It is the kind of book that you can not rush as you need time to spend picking over the themes and theories that are presented. As it is a really interesting collection of essays and articles that are very diverse in content.

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## **Dan Graser says**

Grayling is one of the most important thinkers of our generation. This is an extremely interesting collection of essays and articles that only loses a star due to several inclusions that seem unnecessary or at least out of their depth with the rest of the collection.

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