

Paper #2: *On Gosse's Good Ideas and Bad Methods*

It is a little hard to identify the thesis in this paper. In the introduction, several different points are made in successive sentences, but it is hard to tell which is the main argument of the paper. After the reader sees the title, he/she expects the thesis to match up to that title, but I was not able to identify it as such. As a suggestion, I would try to unify and concisely state your argument in one sentence or two in order to make it more clear for the reader.

For the arguments of the paper, there is a rational argument behind many of them; however, the evocative language used in presenting the arguments may insult readers. This is especially true in the first few pages of the paper, and readers may be insulted and stop reading before they get to the more neutral latter half of the paper. In the first sentence, Gosse's ideas were "conceived on an outlandish notion" already shows a strong bias you may have against Gosse's ideas. In general, it is a good idea to stay away from appearing that you as the author have any personal feelings on the topic that may impede your ability to properly analyze it.

As for the logic of the paper, there are some sections with very good logic, but some others where the arguments could use some fine-tuning. For example, the second paragraph contains very good arguments. The third paragraph, however, over-exaggerates some arguments and is rather susceptible to counterarguments. Gosse's ideas only deal with a small part of science, and only indirectly. Readers of his ideas could draw the conclusion that some portions of scientific research are nullified; however, Gosse does not infer "that science shouldn't even be in practice."

If you tone down some of your statements, and go further with acknowledging possible counterarguments, you will be far more persuasive.

In this topic, it is hard to avoid making speculative arguments and that is understood. However, it would be wise to acknowledge these places in the paper. In the sixth paragraph, for example, you make the argument that without religion, the morality of people would decrease drastically. Since it is hard to prove this statement, try not to present these speculative arguments as facts. Instead of, “crime rates **would** be much higher,” maybe try “crime rates could increase noticeably” or the like.

For the majority of the time, the paper flows very well and you transition nicely between paragraphs and arguments. The one exception to this is in the fourth paragraph, where it is a little confusing because the argument drastically shifts at one point. The paragraph starts out talking about the feasibility of a synthesis of religion and science, but in the middle switches over to the effect of religion on people. After reading it a couple times, I understood your train of thought, but it would be much clearer to read if the paragraphs were separated at some point. Also, I would avoid the use of “I” if possible in order to make the work seem more academic and less informal.

In the second paragraph, you present one of your trickier arguments. For the most part it deals with inferring and speculation, and is easy to argue against. So, I would recommend that you maybe define “science” to better be able to prove why Gosse nullifies it.

Your word choice and syntax are very good and the paper is very readable. In terms of writing mechanics, I think it is very solid. For argumentative sake however, I would really recommend examining the language that you use in many of your arguments. Before using absolute adjectives such as “completely” and “impossible,” really think if that is technically true. It is much easier to argue points when not dealing in absolutes and thus from a philosophical standpoint, your arguments will be much easier to believe.

Overall, great work, and I’m sure that with a few modifications this paper will turn out to be even better.