

Purposefully Preparadigmatic: Religion's Resistance to the Kuhnian Revolution (Paper One)

***Thesis: If I am correct, your thesis statement is that religious conversion cannot be considered analogous to the paradigm shift since a paradigm shift is based on discovery of an anomaly through the scientific process. That kind of evidence is impossible to correlate to the process of religious conversion. The paradigm cannot be compared to a religious institution.

1. First Paragraph (introduction)

- I was particularly impressed by your clear thesis and the strength of your argument. I also noted how you were careful enough to say that paradigm status is achieved after “*nearly* universal status.”
- When you refer to religious leaders guiding “flocks,” it may have a negative connotation to some only because you could be, unintentionally, insinuating that religious followers are “sheep” and easily persuaded in herds. Maybe you could choose to revise your choice of diction here.
- In the last sentence, the word choice “assumption” is disconcerting for me but I will discuss that in the following section.

2. Second Paragraph (body)

- By saying that a paradigm consists of “fundamental assumptions” that scientists adhere to, I think you might be degrading the level of research used by scientists in determining a paradigm. I say this only because the term “assumption” denotes “taking something for granted by supposing something *without proof*.” Obviously, the paradigm is formed through a great deal of research where the proof points to the validity of the paradigm at that time.
- Although it is true that no religion can be nearly universally accepted, it is difficult for me to believe you when you say that “theologians and believers are perhaps even farther away from developing any sort of agreement about the nature of God.” It might be better to say something along the lines of: “Theologians and believers are still far away from developing....”
- The comparison of the current state of religion to the preparadigmatic state about the nature of light is excellent. It really served to illustrate your point well and it is an excellent example of the similar competition between the different school and sub-schools of religion.

3. Third Paragraph (body)

- I believe this to be the strongest part of your essay, which says a lot about the strength of your argument here. There are few things that I would dream of altering in this paragraph. I would only point out that while paradigms are based on group consensus where as religious conversion is relegated to the territory of the individual, both paradigm shifts and religious conversions will begin in the realm of the individual. It is the individual scientist that will first discover the anomaly. There might be another scientist after that who builds upon the anomaly and so on and so forth until the group consensus emerges and the revolution occurs. It is a small contention but one that might make a difference to you.
- Perhaps Dronen is also equating the idea of a test of faith to a test of proof and evidence. In that way, religious conversion can be considered comparable to the paradigm shift in that the central aspect of the religious worshipper (faith) is

tested in the same way that evidence contrary to the current paradigm will test the scientist as well.

4. Fourth paragraph (body)

- You again use the term “flock” here to when describing a group of religious people led by a priest. Again, the term insinuates a negative connotation to some which might turn the religious reader off to your valid points. I advise using a more neutral term here such as “congregation.”
- Also, I could argue here that in the same way that “personal convictions and experiences... shape a religious leader’s individual analysis of religious texts,” a scientist is largely influenced by his own personal convictions and experiences as to how, why, when, and where he will conduct certain experiments. From the technology and methods he uses in an experiment to when it is carried out, a scientist is also largely affected by personal matters in these professional choices. This means that personal experiences affect his individual analysis of an experiment – this is a point that Kuhn himself explicitly stated in *SSR*.

5. Fifth paragraph (conclusion)

- This concluding paragraph is short and to the point. It is very concise and consistent with the previous arguments you have laid out. The last sentence is excellent. I would not a change word since every word here counts.

6. Overall

- Overall, your essay is extraordinarily good. From the diction to the quality of your arguments, everything works together nicely. The small changes and the possible counterarguments that I have offered are just suggestions for you to consider that you may or may not act upon. The state of your paper right now is good enough to warrant an excellent grade in my opinion with or without any considerable changes.