

12/6/11

Paper 1 Review – “Exploring the Paradox of Intelligent Design”

General:

- Really well written for a rough draft!
- I found that something shifted between the introduction of your thesis and the conclusion of your paper. I think I got the wrong impression of your paper based on what I thought was your thesis. I thought your paper would be focused on the logical flaws in Intelligent Design. Instead you focused on Intelligent Design's perception and lack of following. This is a really interesting idea for the paper, I wish I had known for sure what it was about the first time I read through it.
- The proportion of analysis of Behe to analysis of Bauman is off. If you have three big paragraphs explaining Behe you need at least two explaining Bauman. Your arguments, when you finally introduce them, are really interesting and I wish you had expanded them more.
- There are a couple of places where Intelligent Design needs to be capitalized.

First Paragraph:

- General Idea: Introducing thesis and main arguments
- Positive:
 - This is a strong opening to what you will be arguing in the rest of the paper. It clearly defines your perspective about the validity of Intelligent Design while providing support (Emily Bauman) for these beliefs. You also introduce the source you chose to examine early to give the reader a sense of what is to come.
 - Your thesis is unique because it is not directly attacking Intelligent Design and what it stands for but rather explaining why the theory lacks a following in both religious and scientific circles.

- Negative:
 - You started one sentence with “On the one hand...” but it seems that you never really finished that thought (you never say what is on the other hand). I think you should delete this phrase and make the sentence “There are a lack of evolutionary explanations...” or “Behe argues that there are a lack of evolutionary explanations...”
 - I dislike the abbreviation “ID” for Intelligent Design. I find it distracting when reading and I also think that using it has allowed you to be repetitive. For example in the sentence “The publication of this book and other ID texts has stimulated intense debate and speculation, yet ID curiously remains a fringe movement with little support in scientific or religious circles.” You use “ID” twice. Perhaps you could substitute one of them for a pronoun or another name.
 - If you decide to keep the abbreviation, and again this is just my personal preference, you should introduce it and its relation to what it stands for. The first time you say Intelligent Design (after your first sentence) you should have some note after it saying that you will be using the abbreviation ID from that point onward. For example:
Intelligent Design (ID) or Intelligent Design (abbreviated as ID).

Second Paragraph:

- General Idea: Analysis of Behe’s arguments against scientific explanations for the origins of life etc.; explains the appeal of Intelligent Design because the scientific model is flawed
- Positive:
 - This paragraph is vital to your paper because it shows Behe’s arguments (and those of Intelligent Design) in their strongest light. You have avoided the straw man argument by including this analysis. It also introduces the best of Behe’s statements for you to poke holes in later paragraphs

- Negative:
 - Some might argue that this paragraph is too long. However, it is consistently one idea and there is no clear place to break it up so I don't have a problem with it.
 - There are a couple of grammatical mistakes such as, "Moreover, even if amino acids may have been synthesized but a spark of energy..." Maybe "but" should be "by." Also later, "...science has showed us that..." "showed" should be "shown."

Third Paragraph:

- General Idea: Continuation of analysis of Behe's arguments ending with an introductory transition into arguments against Intelligent Design.
- Positive:
 - Another solid paragraph with a smooth transition from the preceding paragraph and ending with what looks like a transition into your actual argument.
- Negative:
 - This paragraph does not do much to advance the paper. It dwells on the same ideas as the preceding one.
 - I thought I was getting a taste of your arguments against Intelligent Design at the end but was surprised when the next paragraph also builds support for the theory rather than for your ideas.

Fourth Paragraph:

- General Idea: Analogy between computer programming and evolution
- Positive:
 - This paragraph neatly explains the parallels drawn between computer programming with random entries and the random mutation in evolution.

- Negative:
 - You don't need this paragraph at all. It doesn't really have anything to do with your argument and is kind of a tangent on the whole Intelligent Design. At this point in the paper, after all of the explanation of how great Intelligent Design is you should be ready to argue against it. This added support, though well written, does not strengthen your argument.

Fifth Paragraph:

- General Idea: The reasons why Intelligent Design will never have a strong following while competing with evolution and Creationism
- Positive:
 - Here is the meat of your entire paper. You finally point out the flaws in Intelligent Design
- Negative:
 - This paragraph could use a lot of elaboration (I'm thinking at least another paragraph). I feel that this is only the beginning of your analysis of Bauman's work.
 - The quotes need citation. I assume they are from Bauman but I'm not sure.

Sixth (Last) Paragraph:

- General Idea: Summary and conclusion of paper
- Positive:
 - Concisely sums up the ideas in paragraph five and the preceding paragraphs supporting Behe.
- Negative:
 - Could use a bit of fleshing out after you've analyzed your argument more.