

Peer Review: Design of the Gaps

SUMMARY

After reading your essay, I arrived at the summary below. I put it down so that you can see if your writing achieves what you have intended.

Thesis: “Intelligent design has proven to be an unscientific proposition and formidable obstacle in the effort to espouse scientific ignorance.”

Argument:

- History of science and how it shapes the empirical and systematic characteristics of the modern science;
- The hypothesis of irreducible complexity cannot be tested and thus bears little scientific merit → like pseudoscience; design of the gaps flaw;
- The ignorance on the knowledge of evolution in American general public (which can be partially attributed to ID movement) has a negative effect on the development of science and society;
- Comparison between evolution and ID: evolution – “One of the many attributes that solidify the scientific validity of evolution is that it is falsifiable,” while ID’s core idea has “been discredited;”
- Human eye example: a detailed description on how it could be evolved and evidence supporting this claim;
- “The evidence for reducible biological complex system has made the notion of a designer an extraneous proposition that is easily extricated by Occam’s Razor;”

Conclusion: Science will be the vehicle to empiricism and ID is an obstacle on the way that will soon be removed.

STYLE & STRUCTURE

Your essay is very concise and clear. It has a very organized structure that assists the readers to quickly grasp your point. There are abundant statements in your essay; they are very powerful and show that you are confident in your thesis and reasoning.

Your first part of the introduction is extremely engaging. For a topic that requires some professional knowledge to understand, the introduction serves as a great background guide that successfully informs the readers and immediately makes them interested in the topic.

The flow in the essay is very smooth. Often times you would summarize the paragraph in the first sentence while referring back to the last paragraph. The transition from paragraph to paragraph is natural.

However, there are too many assertions in your argument. For example, in paragraph 4, you said, “this position blatantly disregards the overwhelming wealth of fossil and geological evidence that confirms evolution and its time scale.” You did not give any further explanation or list any of the “evidence” therefore cannot convince the reader that ID “blatantly disregards” the facts. By presenting more convincing facts and establishing their connection to the conclusions, objective descriptions can replace the use of emotional words like “surprisingly,” which would strengthen your argument.

Besides that, you have a few minor grammatical mistakes. But overall style wise it is a very good piece.

THESIS & ARGUMENT

Your first paragraph gives a very good introduction to the topic. And the second part of your first paragraph also articulates the thesis in well-chosen language. But I have trouble deriving your thesis from the decoding process you explained in the first half. It seems that all the process you mentioned is *apparently very complex*; saying that irreducible complexity is unproven and controversial right after the complex description is very counterintuitive. There is no step that illustrate (not even a hint) why it is unscientific. Thus the “consequently” is very confusing to readers. I see that the body of the essay explains the missing reasoning chain in the first paragraph, but if you can bridge the fact and its unscientific nature in one sentence, the intro would make much sense.

You have chosen the evidence and proof from a variety of sources: biology, geology, and public survey, etc. However, as mentioned in the last section, a lot of times you did not use data to back up your argument; the conclusions are not referring back to the evidence, which makes the related facts seem isolated. For example, in paragraph 6 and 7, you are using human eye as a case of “irreducibly complex” organ to disprove ID hypothesis. The description in paragraph six is very straightforward and paragraph 7 draws some interesting conclusions. But if you can combine the two separate sections into one and use the description to prove that half an eye still functions, readers will can follow your argument more easily.

SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS

This part mainly focuses on parts that need improvement. There are lots of merits that I cannot present due to limited space.

Introduction

- Please make proper change to the transition that links the description and the thesis. Although the reasoning behind may seem apparent to you, it is very hard for reader to believe that ID is unproven and controversial. From your description, it just seemed so

appropriate!

- “Consequently” sounds weird because there is no immediate correlation between an unproven concept and a formidable obstacle in the effort to espouse scientific ignorance.

Body

- Para 2 “Moreover, each... disciplines” – By describing the history of scientific revolution, you are hoping to show the trend of science development constantly rules out supernatural components, right? It serves well but you did not summarize the historical trend, which makes the first half the paragraph a bit redundant.
- Para 2 “A purely empirical and systematic... supernatural causation” – This is an excellent generalization! Good job.
- Para 3 “Is the proposition that” – “proposes that?”
- Para 3 “The hypothesis of *irreducible complexity* and a designer cannot be tested.” – Here it leaves reader wonder why it cannot be tested. This concept is very difficult to explain, but it is important because your later argument is based on this assumption.
- Para 4 “American national opinion the topic of evolution” – Evolution is a very broad topic, can you either specify “topic” of evolution (like the acceptance,) or just delete “the topic.”
- Para 4 “...and it’s time scale.” – “its.”
- Para 4 “This position blatantly... time scale” – As mentioned in the earlier section, you did not give reader any examples of “overwhelming wealth of fossils” or cite any sources; this weakens your statement. Make it more concrete and avoid emotional adverbs.
- Para 5 “If just one fossil... has ever been found.” – This is nip picking. Geological timescale is partly based on the fossils discovered in the sedimentary layer. In other words, geologists assume that evolution is true and derive the age of the layer from the fossils remained in that particular layer. That’s why there cannot be any anachronistic fossils.
- Para 5 “If just one fossil were every found...” – Oops, “ever”
- Para 5 “...which have been discredited and shown not to be irreducible after all” – To emphasize this point, an alternative way would be to separate the clause into two sentences. Also, this sentence seems to relate more to the following paragraph. Consider rearranging the transition part here.

Conclusion

- “The mark of our species will be... mirror of human progress” – You are making very definite assertions here. Be careful when you are predicting the future with very strong statement, especially when the progress is in debate even among the most prestigious scientists themselves.