

## The Bias of Science – Review

It is human nature, not doctrine or dogma, which causes humans to act in a volatile way when their beliefs are brought into question.

- Summary
  - Original church belief similar to scientific thought in that it drew extensively from observation
  - Technology permitted people to deviate from the Church's party line
  - The fallacies of science parallel the fallacies of religion
    - Zumdahl, Nye discussion of atomic theory's evolution
  - Science and religion differ in the manner they treat each other's theories, although both use precedent to create doubt.
  - Conclusion: Science and Religion similar, but religion gets a bum rap because of its prior greatness.
- General comments
  - The Good
    - The general angle is very good
    - Good job reaching for sources outside the class; it shows you've given much thought to this paper
  - The Bad
    - Personally, I like to analyze my quotes beyond simply integrating them into a paragraph
      - You integrate quotes in a way that makes it look like any other sentence, except with " " around it. And you do a damn good job of it, too – the transitions are seamless. That said, you can take this up a notch by giving some kind of analysis to the quote. Otherwise, the quote looks like nothing more than an appeal to authority.
        - You've gone 8 yards. Finish up and go the whole 9 yards; otherwise, your quotes will be far less consequential.
    - Style (nit-picky)
      - Certain stylistic practices have a generally bad perception
        - The ambiguous antecedent starting sentences "It is..."
        - The use of the passive voice
        - Anthropomorphism – A subject like this requires over-simplification of science and religion, so some anthropomorphism is inevitable. That said, keep an eye out for whenever you treat "science" the social phenomenon and human abstraction as "Science" the objectively existing entity in and of itself.
        - (Taken from Strunk and White's Elements of Style) – Use the paragraph as the unit of composition. Your paragraph design is at 80% - good, sufficient, but could be much better. Specifically, give

each paragraph one idea to convey, convey that idea in the first sentence, develop the idea, then end with a subtle transition to the next paragraph/idea

- Specific Comments
  - P1
    - Strong emotional charge
      - “Inevitable,” “terrible,” “forced,” “unfortunately”
    - Misuse of the semi-colon
      - Follow the semi-colon with an independent clause; dependent clauses require commas, not semi-colons.
    - Over-use of the semi-colon
      - I love that thing, so I know where you’re coming from. That said, the intro’s kind of long for my personal style (note: this is personal taste). Removing unnecessary semi-colon statements will make this paragraph easier/quicker to read
    - Fluff
      - “In the same way as religion” -> Like religion
    - Thesis
      - Overall, good
      - Specifically, changes in science changed the scientific understanding of the world, not necessarily the human understanding; by equating the two you’re implying something that goes against the theme of your paper
  - P2
    - Awkward quote
      - The quote’s 2-sentence nature makes it awkward to read
    - Beyond that, the ideas in this paragraph are cool
      - Have a source? Not needed for analysis, but crucial for
  - P3
    - “can also be considered” – See above, passive voice
    - Cite a source – I’d love to hear your analysis of the facts, but I’d rather see a source for the facts themselves
  - P4
    - Awkward first sentence
    - Everything in this paragraph is debatable, so you \*really\* need to have a source
      - If the church believed in Freewill, then why did it put so many dissenters to death?
      - The general tone of the class and everything I know about Church history goes against the idea that the church’s beliefs protected scientific dissent. In this sense, I feel that I am not alone. You need a compelling source (I know you have one) to justify the foundation of this.
  - P5 (While the Church)

- By this time, I feel that too much of this paper is history and enough of it is analysis
  - Excess wordiness → Convolution
- P6 (While it is)
  - This has an emotional charge
  - No transition from the past idea
  - Repetitive paragraph introductions
  - Ambiguous antecedent
  - You keep inserting all this discussion about how science is persecuting religion; I'm not sure how much of this is part of the paper and how much of this is soapbox ranting. The idea is definitely good, and you can definitely integrate it into your paper. The way you integrate it, however, is crucial; in the status quo, you turn your reader off.
- P7 ("It is safe")
  - See discussion of quotations
- P8 (This example of)
  - More quasi-soapbox moments
  - Emotional charge "many incorrect hypotheses"
  - Make a clearer argument
    - Ideal: <Claim>. <Evidence>. <Illuminating example>
    - You: <Claim>. <Noah's Ark>. <They did this to other stuff, too>.
      - It's there, but flush it out
- P9 (While much of)
  - Your idea is that the Church and Science (note: anthropomorphism → Scientists and theologians in general, not their respective institutions) treat each other's and their own past mistakes differently.
  - How does that Bible sentence relate to the surrounding ideas?
  - Don't both scientists and theologians cite prior mistakes by their rivals to make themselves look good?
    - If that's true, then you've shown how they respond the same
- P10 (Although they are)
  - First sentence needs comma
  - Really long sentences
  - Incorrect comma usage
  - More soapbox ranting at end of paper (Religion's the *real* victim here → Neither you nor I started off playing the blame game. I just want to know how science and religion parallel. If you stated just once that most people hold religious doctrines to a higher degree of scrutiny because of the Church's past greatness and subsequent decline, that's cool. If you keep repeating this persecution line in simple, emotionally charged language, then I begin to doubt your objectivity.)
- Overall
  - Great job – This criticism focused on the bad, but don't lose sight of all the paper's good.

- Give this thing another 1-2 hours of clean-up, take it to the writing center, and you'll be okay.