

Example of a literary analysis in response to richard dawkins: is science a relig...

[Experience](#), [Belief](#)



If religion were never introduced to people, what kind of society could they have? If religion had been absent since time immemorial and if people were exactly the same as animals in the jungle, what lifestyle could they live for? And yet, if people and the rest of the animals on earth had been “ nothing but matter” (Dawkins, 3), what sense of life could have been left to them? To consider these conditional statements or these what-if situations, Richard Dawkins might think that humanity itself could be senseless because people lived without a sense of purpose. And if religion were purely a cultural and traditional dictate, at least people could have it as a guiding principle rather than a personal “ vice.” That is why this paper is going to re-examine his faith and logic, his careless analogy, his hyperbolic statement, his scientific view, and his line and point of argument.

Dawkins’ opening statement starts with a comparison that faith is like “ AIDS virus” and “ mad cow disease” (p. 1). His comparison suggests a one-sided argument since faith never falls into the category and characteristic of diseases. He further adds that faith “ is the world’s great evils” and that it is like a “ smallpox virus that is difficult to eradicate” (Dawkins, 1). In other words, Dawkins’s analogy is quite blunt as he continues to describe that “ faith is the principal vice of any religion” (p. 1) and that faith is a terrible danger that people must encounter. He seeks out for more answers to problems that science can provide from his simple to complex analogies. That is why Dawkins really holds onto his ideas that science can unravel the truth and can verify the problems of uncertainties.

Dawkins (1996) relies too much in science as the fundamental source of reason and logic. He confirms his phraseology when he asserts that science

is “ the most moral and the most honest disciplines” (Dawkins, 2). This time Dawkins believes that only science can provide accurate data and pieces of evidence because science can be associated with honesty. In other words, Dawkins fully understands the entire concept of accuracy, scientific method, and verifiable evidence. These three things are considered to be categories of science, not faith in any respects that science does exist with reason and logic and that all come into play to explain certain circumstances. Because science offers this door of knowledge based on facts, Dawkins rely only on the verifiable pieces of evidence. He surely is confident that all uncertainties can be identified, determined, tested, experimented, analyzed, and evaluated in order to come up with solutions to problems. Without this, Dawkins rejects any results if these data do not come from scientific studies and research findings. For Dawkins, he justifies this by describing that “ science, then, is free of the main vice of religion - faith” (p. 2). As such, Dawkins considers science as the most reliable form of real and factual evidence.

Religion is faith and faith alone is not enough foundation to search for nothing or for the unknown. Religion, according to Dawkins, helps determine people’s existence without questioning. What makes religion and science differ in some accounts is that religion provides answers all questions found in the verses or the chapters but that science offers answers to questions in an accurate and evidential way. In other words, science can provide measurable, quantifiable, and verifiable pieces of information. In fact, for Dawkins, “ science can offer a vision of life” (p. 3) and he is confident to accept for facts without further questions. In here, Dawkins fully depends on

science as the infinite knowledge and reason of his existence. Though he is aware that science cannot state directly about his existence, he believes in some theories such as the Big Bang Theory, Evolution of Man, and Plasma Theory. In other words, theories are not facts. Even if he does not have any idea regarding the origin of his existence and humanity, he still believes in it as a forwarding claim about life. Even if he denies that science is not belief, he clearly shows that he is making the opposite of his words. He has an extreme belief of science that it allows him to consume his realizations, his ideas, and his religious reservations. To evaluate Dawkins' phraseology, he never believes that SOMEONE is out there who creates life and the world. Granting that he is definitely and absolutely right of his statements, Dawkins fails to establish his claim that science is the most reliable source of information because he cannot justify his existence in this world. Granting again that he solely relies on science as the body of truth, how can he accept the fact of his unknown existence? Again, Dawkins faces another dilemma of uncertainty as he becomes inconsistent about his stand. And if forcing Dawkins himself to believe these theories namely Big Bang, Plasma, and Evolution as true and correct, then he falls himself on his own trap of denials. That is arrogance.

The lines of arguments in Richard Dawkins views structurally frame within the realm of evidence and eyewitness account. He introduces Apostle Thomas who doubts the existence of Jesus after death and who looks for evidence. By using this example, Dawkins testifies that Thomas too needs pieces of evidence in order to believe that Jesus is actually alive. However, Dawkins ignores the idea that Jesus' presence is being proven by other

apostles but that he remains skeptical. Thomas in the biblical readings wants to see the existence of Jesus personally with flesh and bones because he does not believe on evidence presented by other disciples and witnesses. If Dawkins pushes the idea that faith does not require evidence, he again fails to support his claim since Thomas does not believe in those revealed evidence. Now, the points of arguments fall on arrogance and skepticism. Dawkins shows inconsistency of his shallow arguments proving that religion and science are two separate entities and that they can never be collided in one prism of understanding. If Dawkins denies this attempt to combine religion with science, then he himself is arrogant and skeptical of the truth. As such, he has a limited capability to recreate a dimension of unity and acceptance, an important principle that is drawn to accommodate possibilities.

If people believe only in scientific truth that all are based on logic and evidence, it can be impossible to state the finality of the truth. Since some circumstances and phenomena cannot be explained and ruled out by scientific evidence due to unavailability of data, religious faith comes from the context of such phenomenon. There can never be enough reason and valid claim why faith in some points works out explaining such phenomenon. However, Dawkins will refute this idea since his mind is framed within and programmed into something definite and evidentiary based on what he sees and observes. If believing that people in the world will be all humanists like Richard Dawkins, what could be more dangerous than believing that the world dooms to an end? If people are the same as animals as viewed by Dawkins, then people live the same as animals in the jungles where only one

principle applies, survival of the fittest. If Dawkins is correct of his scientific reasoning, then it is believed that terrorism, borderless criminality, endless murder, unwavering bigotry, millions of killing, oppressive tyranny, and global abandonment happen and that people kill one another in order to survive. In the end, there is “ nothing left but matter” (Dawkins, p. 3) of dust of destruction. As such, morality disappears.

In light of Dawkins’ argument, his closing statements differentiate the line that draws along science and religion. As Dawkins mentions that “ there is a difference between a belief that one is prepared to defend by quoting evidence and logic and a belief that is supported by tradition, authority, and revelation” (p. 6), he definitely is true. However, if he pushes forward to eradicate religion or faith to humanity like a virus, what is then left to humanity (par. 1, p. 1)? It will be easier to believe that there can be a society of animals wilder than the other. If religion will be eradicated like a virus, then there can be no sense of purpose, of meaning, and of life left to humanity. At least, if there is religion, people can still hope for good things to come to life. If people believe that there is God and there God creates and designs everything in this world, people give enough rooms for other people the chance to be human persons not like purely animals as opposed to Dawkins’ worldview. If people think that religion is purely cultural and traditional, at least people learn to have good faith, faith that embarks goodwill, freedom, justice, and equality. If Dawkins understands this idea, he must have given other people a leeway to make balance argument. Though Dawkins presents his ideas in an interesting manner and incredibly intriguing supporting evidence, his logic and his reasoning must be re-examined and

re-evaluated because they only offer a shallow and debatable principle of truth. In his question if science is religion, the answer is yes. It is because science itself is built on belief.

Works Cited

Dawkins, Richard. "Is Science a Religion?" A Transcript of Speech Delivered in the 1996 Humanist of the Year Award. American Humanist Association.