

**Sample comments on PAPER 1 first versions in other semesters****No thesis, no argument, unclear argument, irrelevant content, answers wrong question**

You need to work on developing an argument. Currently, the paper is more like a book report on what happens in BNW. The problem may be in the argument you seem to be framing, so I'll say a bit about that. ....[I explain how his implicit argument answers a very different question than the one asked]

Your paper is mostly describing what happens in BNW and doesn't say how what you describe is relevant to answering the question. You say that we will end up there, like BNW, but not why. For example, how are the forces creating and sustaining BNW like or unlike what's happening in our pursuit of medical utopia? You need to analyze that.

Your paper started out clear and with strong points (such as.....), but gradually began to veer off course. By the end, I wasn't sure what your thesis was. For instance, do you see us becoming more human or less human?

So clear, so well written! Paragraphs make points—good points, too. I am not sure they add up to an argument, however. You don't state a thesis anywhere. .... You make some good points about what's lost in BNW (e.g., ----). But how are these points relevant?

Each body paragraph describes something different about BNW: 1)---- 2)--- and 3)--- . These are all bad things. It's not clear, however, how they illustrate anything similar in today's world. Each paragraph ends with a sentence or two that says, in essence, "this could happen here too." But why? You don't say.

Your argument seems to rest on a single point—that today's scientists do not \*intend\* to create a BNW in which the government controls us. That we must be careful not to let science fall into the wrong hands of people with evil intent. But is that really the issue? It's a rather obvious point that one needn't read BNW to make. You need to go deeper.

You capture really well some of the crucial features of BNW. You now need to use them to build an argument about how they do and don't reflect the sorts of forces that might be operating in our society as we seek medical utopia. The----- tendencies that you mention throughout might be a good core for an argument.

I don't see a thesis or an argument yet. You have identified some promising emphases in your successive paragraphs (-----) but their separate points are not yet clear, nor do they yet build upon each other to create a clear \*line of argument.\* Currently, the paper reflects more a sampling of our discussions in class than an analysis of BNW. You mention parts of it, but do not use it to probe or interrogate what we might unwittingly be doing to our humanity right now. Currently your paper is mostly a string of disconnected points. Go through your paper with an eye to what deeper issues or themes you may be touching on. For example, in the second paragraph on immortality you say a longer life will change how we will act and think. But exactly how?

I ask you this question because it might help you tighten your argument to be more specific, in your mind, about WHAT might be lost or corrupted and HOW that might be happening today, if it is. Currently, your "what could happen" is clearer than your "how it could happen." Specific example: "----" might be lost (as it was in BNW), but \*how\* do you see that happening to \*us\*?

You have a long introductory paragraph about the nature and aims of modern genomic technology. It's interesting, but it states no thesis. You state a conclusion only: that it is leading to dehumanization. A thesis would give the gist of your argument why.

Your paper should then develop that argument. I don't see such an argument in your paper. Basically, you just assert that this will happen without saying why or how it will. It isn't obvious to your reader. You need to explain it. You also need to use BNW in providing that explanation—how does the book's utopia help you illustrate your argument (not just provide an example of a bad outcome). BNW describes a dystopia, but what about it rings true for today, and why? You don't actually say much about BNW, except to describe similarities in technology (artificially inseminated or otherwise "unnatural" babies—but what's wrong with that? How does it lead to dehumanization?)

You make some great points but overall argument not clear. How do paragraphs each illustrate an overall argument? What is the flow of the argument from para to para (what new point does each make)?

The most important thing is to clarify your argument. If the thesis hadn't been there, I wouldn't have known what it was. What exactly does each paragraph contribute to the developing chain of argument? Here are some specifics to think about..... Finally, make sure that everything you include advances your argument—the next to last para seems to veer off track by suggesting that BNW has become a "guidebook for scientists." Even if true, how is that relevant? Be careful to distinguish between scientists' aims and offerings, and the average person's aims and desires.

**Writing mechanics (clear, concise, no empty or fuzzy words, say what you really intend, other reader-friendly stuff like good transitions and paragraphing)**

A second thing to work on: Try to make your writing more concise. As an exercise, see how much of the first paragraph you can get rid of without removing your essential point(s). Start by just crossing out words or phrases. Do different sentences say essentially the same thing?

There is lots of rich detail, which is great. There is a thesis, which is also great. You could work now on two things. The lesser item is to tighten up the writing per se. There are some wonderful turns of phrase (e.g.,-----) but also occasionally vague or awkward writing (e.g., "They can bring to reality our desire...", on p. 2; "every thought is coherent..." on p. 3) and general wordiness or flabbiness of expression. For instance, I can't follow the last sentence of top para on page 2. Also be careful about saying "society desires X"—people or leaders desire, not some anonymous entity (p. 2).....

Your different points flow in a clear progression (good!), though sometimes several are packed into the same long paragraph. You might also work on clarity and precision in writing when you clean up the writing for your second version. Also look to removing or condensing text that does not add much of substance—e.g., much of the first paragraph?

Be more precise about what you really mean throughout. ....When you speak of the medical utopia ahead, or our "perfect bodies and perfect health," do you really mean "the pursuit" of them? There is no such thing as perfect bodies and perfect health—its definition would forever elude us, right? And isn't it the pursuit, bit by bit, that dehumanizes us before we even get there? Maybe not, but you need to decide what you really mean.  
Great start.

Be careful to think about what you mean by broad terms such as emotions, family, and morals. You tend to use them interchangeably. Thinking about that might tighten/clarify your overall argument. Be careful about treating stated intent (trying to do X) as if that paralleled what actually would happen (good intent doesn't guarantee good results, and stated intent need not even represent the real intents or self-interests of the people involved). Great insights, but all needs to be pulled together into more coherent whole