

SCIENCE AND RELIGION  
GRADED PAPER 2 REVIEWS  
KRISTEN GARDNER

## **Paper 1**

A good and thorough review, well structured and helpful.

**Grade:** A

## **Paper 2**

Overall, a well written, well structured, thoughtful review. Nice.

(1) Text justified on both the left and right might look organized, but it's also more difficult to read. Left justification is best for single-column text.

(2) You confuse a divinely inspired scientific hypothesis and a conjecture that, because of its supernatural elements, is not a scientific hypothesis at all. The primary scientific reason to reject Gosse's synthesis is that it is unfalsifiable, and therefore not scientific. Science has no means by which to judge its validity, and that's a strong reason for rejection.

**Grade:** A

## Review for *On Gosse's Good Ideas and Bad Methods*

### General Comments

On the whole, this is a very strong start. To begin with a few formatting suggestions: you're using, I believe, 1.5 inch margins, which is actually larger than the default margin size in Word (1.25 inch). Professor Kaplan asked, in the assignment, for 1 inch margins so you might want to change that. Also check your font and size; it doesn't look quite like Times New Roman size 12 to me. I might also suggest using a justified alignment so your text is lined up on the right margin, but of course that's a matter of personal preference.

Your grammatical conventions are accurate. There are, however, many places in which you could convey your point more clearly by working with your syntax. For the most part your meaning is clear, but you should work on cleaning up your style a bit so that you leave the reader in no doubt as to what you are trying to say. A more important point about conventions is that you need to include references. It is considered plagiarism to not cite your sources, and so whatever else of my advice you choose to ignore, I would strongly recommend accepting this piece. ✓

In terms of your content, it is clear that you have thought through your argument thoroughly. You begin by breaking down Gosse's attempted synthesis, and then progress to building up your own notion of how a successful reconciliation should appear. However, I think there are a few holes in your logic that weaken your argument. I'm fairly sure that modifying the conviction with which you make certain statements can remedy this problem without substantially affecting your main point.

### The Title

Since the title is the first part of your paper that the reader will see, it's important it conveys exactly what you mean to discuss, and I'm not sure that your title does your paper justice. I'm a bit confused as to what you mean by "good ideas and bad methods." I suspect you intend this to mean that Gosse was justified in his desire to reconcile science and religion, but that his hypothesis was weak. But I interpret "Gosse's ideas" to mean his specific attempt at reconciliation, and I am at a loss as to how to interpret "methods." The word "bad" seems, to me, a bit weak. Also, in the title, you refer only to Gosse's ideas, whereas your paper goes far beyond that to analyze attempts at reconciliation in general, not only Gosse's specific effort. Perhaps you should expand this title to encompass both of the concepts that you examine.

### The Introduction

Your first sentence is one of the places where I think you could use a bit of work on the syntax. You refer to Gosse's ideas as a "plausible synthesis," but then go on to discuss how this synthesis is actually far from plausible; I would recommend choosing a different word here. You also mention an "outlandish notion," an "incredulous premise," and at the beginning of the next paragraph, a "skeptical premise," but you don't ever state explicitly what this premise is, and I am entirely unsure of what you mean. Furthermore, I am not sure the word "incredulous" means precisely what you want it to mean. The word means skeptical or disbelieving; I suspect your intent was for it to mean something closer to "unable to be believed" – a slight distinction, but important nonetheless. Given that God exists as a religious figure, is it redundant to say "the persona of God in religion"? I am not sure you can offend a practice itself, though certainly you can offend the practice's followers. You have a discrepancy in the verb tenses of the second to ✓

last sentence – past tense “set” disagrees with present tense “ends up.” Finally we come to your thesis, which I think, like your title, fails to do your paper justice. Here, instead of only referring to Gosse, you only incorporate the second argument of your paper; that is, that both science and religion are necessary. I think your intent with your thesis is to say that while Gosse’s synthesis is implausible, some means of simultaneously accepting both science and religion is necessary. If this is what you mean (or, indeed, if it isn’t) you need to work on your wording in order to convey as such.

## **The Body**

### *Syntax*

- You have a typo at the bottom of the first page – “and if the those laws...”
- There are a few instances in which I think your word choice is a bit weak. On page one, you refer to God as an “icon.” In a religious context, an icon refers to a visual representation of a figure; I think you mean something different here. Also on the first page, you write “Gosse infers that science...” Do you mean that we can make inferences based upon Gosse’s idea, or that Gosse himself has made this inference? A different word might clarify this.
- “Things” is in general a weak word. I think you use it three or four times in your paper, and in each case you can probably find a stronger word.
- In several places you use generalizing words – that is, “inevitably,” “obviously,” etc. Consider whether you want to make such broad claims. In order to prove an “all” argument false, only one counterexample is needed. This means that your argument is actually stronger if you leave room for exceptions.
- Look for places where your language is redundant; for example, “God in religion,” “extraordinarily significant,” etc.

### *Sentence Structure*

- Your third paragraph presents a very strong argument at its core, but I think your phrasing makes this less evident than it should be. Your second and third sentences are either redundant or ambiguous. I think there is a subtle difference in what you are saying in each; the second sentence comments on the fundamental laws themselves, while the third discusses the conclusions we have drawn from these laws. But this distinction should be clearer.
- In the full paragraph on the second page, and again in your conclusion, you write in first person. I think that generally in a persuasive essay, this is not a good idea. When you say, “I do not believe...” you are presenting this as your opinion, thereby leaving every opportunity for others to disagree. That isn’t the purpose of your paper; you’re trying to convince everyone else that what you are saying is correct.
- Your language becomes more colloquial towards the end of the third page. Phrases such as “back in the olden days” or “all sorts of disease” seem a bit too casual.
- I like your strategy of using rhetorical questions in your conclusion. You aren’t making direct statements, but instead leading the reader to a specific conclusion based on the questions you ask. The one issue I have with these questions is that you mention God: someone who doesn’t believe in God wouldn’t have reason to ask this question.

## Arguments

- I am fairly certain that you are a religious person. This isn't something that should come across in your writing. Your argument should be equally persuasive to those who are not religious as to those who are. But you spend a great deal more time on religion than on science, and your "pro-religion" arguments are in general much stronger than your "pro-science" arguments. Try to balance your paper a little more so you are completely objective in your evaluation. (If I am wrong, and you are instead a staunch atheist, the point still stands: you are writing from a Christian perspective.)
- At the bottom of the first page, you write "Science seeks to find truth based on the laws of our world." Does science need to determine these laws first, or do the laws somehow exist already, and science is just a matter of applying them?
- I think you contradict yourself at the end of the third paragraph. You state first that (under Gosse's hypothesis) we shouldn't try to learn about the world (and therefore that we shouldn't practice science), but then that science still has practical application. Are you referring to the difference between theoretical and applied science? You need to clear this up.
- You state, on the second page, that there are too many factual inconsistencies to create a plausible synthesis. I think if you are going to make such an assertion, you need to spend some time backing it up. The existence of people such as Francis Collins provides evidence that people can and do practice both science and religion simultaneously, so why do you think it is impossible?
- *Good.* The biggest quarrel I have with your argument is that you seem to be making the assumption that all morality comes from religion. I think this is most apparent on the third page, when you discuss the ramifications were religion to be eliminated. You claim that people would no longer act morally, that crime would increase, and, in your conclusion, that people would not question the ethics of certain scientific investigations. This is false. I am not a religious person, but I am ethical. I participate in community service, I am not a criminal, and I question whether cloning is ethical. On the second page, you state that "Even those not so closely associated with religion will watch what they do 'just in case.'" This, too, is entirely false. Certainly I watch what I do to ensure that I behave morally, but this has nothing to do with "just in case" there is a God. I think that once we accept the notion that morality can be derived from sources other than religion, your argument for the chaos resulting from a society lacking religion falls through.
- In the paragraph in which you present your claim for why religion without science is unsuccessful, you only mention science twice: in your opening sentence and in your closing sentence. This argument would be much stronger if you discuss how science has succeeded where religion fails, instead of just an example of one of religion's failures.

## The Conclusion

"Checks and balances" is a really interesting way of putting this concept. I think you should soften the word "need" when you state that "we need religion to question..." in order to leave room for ethical atheists. Overall, the problem with this conclusion is that it doesn't add anything to your discussion. You're primarily summarizing the arguments that you have already presented, but the conclusion should be a place for you to expand upon your arguments and draw larger conclusions. I think you're trying to do this in your last sentence, but I am not sure you

have adequately set up this statement. What exactly is “the situation now”? I suspect that if you asked a random sample of people, you would get vastly different answers. So you need to specify what the situation is now, and explain why this is so. As in your thesis, you only discuss half of your paper in your conclusion. The beginning of your paper is devoted to Gosse, but he disappears after the first page or so. You might want to bring him back here, at least for a brief appearance, so that you don’t lose that part of your discussion. Between your thesis and your conclusion, I am a bit lost as to exactly what sort of coexistence you intend. Do you mean that each individual ought to practice both science and religion? That society as a whole should have religious people and scientists? Can an individual maintain both beliefs simultaneously? Finally, what implications does your argument have? Once we arrive at the conclusion that synthesis is implausible but coexistence is necessary (is that what you are getting at?), what does that mean for the state of our lives, or for the future?



Review for *Philip Henry Gosse's Omphalos: How Third Party Politics Fails  
When up Against the Scientific Community and the Church*

### General Comments

I'll start with some formatting quibbles. Your 1.5 inch margins are wider than Word's 1.25 inch default size. Professor Kaplan asked for 1 inch margins in the assignment, so I would recommend adhering to that request. I tend to prefer justified margins so that your text is lined up on the right margin as well as the left, which I think makes the paper look more professional. I might also suggest single spacing your title. Of course, the last two comments are merely personal preference. ✓ (1)

Your grammar and sentence structure are ~~very~~ good. Your meaning is always apparent, though there are instances in which you could probably clean up your wording a bit to make your sentences tighter. A more important point on conventions is that you need to include citations. Not to do so is considered plagiarism, ~~so I would recommend you heed this particular bit of my advice, whatever else you may choose to disregard.~~ *State the case - no need to sell it.*

Your argument itself is strong. I have a few questions about some of the finer points, but on the whole, this is a really well thought out argument and there don't seem to be any significant holes.

### The Title

I like this title in that it introduces the overall theme of your paper. However, it is a little unclear that you are equating Gosse's idea with a third party candidate. Perhaps you could change the wording a bit to make this comparison more apparent. As your title currently stands, "up" should be capitalized. The usual convention for "up" as a preposition would be to have it in lowercase, but because it is functioning in the phrase "up against," it should be capitalized in this instance.

### The Introduction

Does the conflict only involve the Roman Catholic Church, or is it all of Christianity? White cites a number of examples of the Protestant church vehemently rejecting science so as to "measure up" to the Catholic church. You have a typo in the first line: it should read "is a political race." How would you define a political race other than as a struggle for power? You say that the main conflict is for influence, but I am not sure how else one would see a political race. You describe the parallel way in which religious groups and political parties are divided. I think it's interesting to note that if you look at profiles of each political party (Pew Research has some particularly useful ones) there is a definite correlation between religious and political views; religious conservatives tend to be politically conservative, and those who are more liberal religiously are in general political liberals. Because this jumped out at me when I read your introduction, but I don't think you are intending to make that point at all, you might want to consider rewording this sentence so that it gives a slightly different impression. Also, I am not entirely sure that your discussion of the religious spectrum is even relevant. All beliefs along the spectrum can be found among scientists and among non-scientists. In the next sentence, your verb tense implies that the lack of challenging has continued to the present; this is not what you mean. The beginning of your introduction (through "...unconventional challengers.") is a bit choppy, I think. You jump back and forth between comparing religion to politics, and various



issues that have divided religion and science. Try changing the order of your sentences to make this flow better.

Your next sentence begins with “All this changed,” which suggests that *everything* you present in the first few sentences of your introduction is no longer true. I don’t think this is what you intend. You state that Gosse’s idea was “confusing” to scientists and to “religious theologians” (which is redundant – theologians are religious), and I am not sure confusing is the right word. Later in the paragraph, you write “the similarities between the struggle between science and religion...” There is no grammatical inaccuracy here, but using “between” twice in such a small space is a bit ungainly. I don’t think you need to capitalize “government.” After setting up your argument so thoroughly, your thesis comes across as a bit frivolous. The analogy is amusing, but it puts a humorous slant on what is meant to be a serious argument, and makes your writing seem unprofessional.

## The Body

### Syntax

- On the second page, you say that Debs’ ideas “were far deviated from...” I am not sure if this is grammatically correct. If it is, it sounds awkward.
- At the bottom of the second page, you have two typos: “if God could creates” and “could He be also be lying.” At the bottom of the third page, you have misspelled “synthesizing.”
- Capitalize “Ten Commandments” at the top of the third page.
- You refer to Gosse’s idea as a hypothesis, and then a theory. Which do you mean? From a scientific perspective, the word “theory” is generally used to mean something that has been proven, to the extent that anything can be proven. A hypothesis is an unproven conjecture about a way that the world might be. I think “hypothesis” therefore would be a better word for Gosse’s idea. At the bottom of the third page, you use the word “theory” twice – do you mean “theory” or “hypothesis”?
- The phrase “a very fundamental topic” is redundant; if the topic is fundamental, it is fundamental, and the modifier is unnecessary.
- You need a comma after the phrase “a very fundamental idea.”
- “Alienates,” at the bottom of the third page, should be the plural conjugation. It is applied to the plural “theories” earlier in the sentence.
- You are valiantly trying to be politically correct with your “him/her” on the last page, but in formal writing, you can defer to the masculine. At the very least, make this “him or her” and eliminate the slash, which looks unprofessional.
- At the top of the last page, you refer to “synthesis ideas.” You’re using “synthesis” as an adjective here, but this is not the proper adjective form of the word.

### Sentence Structure

- In the paragraph at the bottom of the second page, you have a sentence that reads “The stage was set for a shift of power away from religion, and the church hierarchy knew it.” To me, this sounds like a one-line movie summary written by someone who is trying to make the movie sound more dramatic than it actually is. Consider rewording this.
- You state that scientists rejected Gosse “for different reasons” than theologians. It seems readily apparent to me that the reasons scientists would disapprove of Gosse’s ideas



would not be the same as theologians' reasons for disliking Gosse, so perhaps this phrase is unnecessary?

- I think you rewrote the sentence on page three beginning with "For some scientists," and didn't change the rest of the sentence when you modified part of it.
- At the end of this same paragraph, the last two sentences are redundant. You state that scientists feared losing relevance and influence, and because of this, the fear of losing relevance and influence led scientists to reject Gosse. This could be condensed into one sentence.
- Many of your sentences, particularly in the paragraph in which you discuss Darwin, present your ideas as conjecture; for example, "*Omphalos* must have appeared very threatening." You are right to introduce some doubt to these statements, because it would be very difficult indeed for you to unequivocally attribute particular emotions to the Church at that time, but your wording leaves a great deal of room for the reader to conclude that it is equally likely that your claim is false.
- I notice throughout your paper instances in which you use longer and more cumbersome wordings rather than the more direct phrasing. To cite a few examples, you write "the profession of science in general" (page 3), "was not dissimilar from" (page 2); both of these, as well as others throughout your paper, could be made more concise.
- You also tend to use phrases that make your sentences longer and wordier (perhaps in an effort to sound more erudite), but that don't really add anything to your argument. For example: "or the like" (page 3), "it is not as if" (page 3), "for that reason" (page 4).

### *Arguments*

- I am not sure Debs is the best example you could use here. You say that Debs was arrested because his political views were too far from either political party. I am not very well-versed in Debs' particular case, but my understanding is that he was arrested for violating the Espionage Act that was established when the U.S. entered WWI, not because of his radical political views. Debs was a socialist; he challenged democracy, not the specific views of either political party. Furthermore, while Gosse made an attempt to unite the two "parties," Debs' ideas were completely different from either side. I think in this analogy, Gosse is less like Debs and more like the only Independent in a country where everyone is politically polarized. Your extrapolation of this analogy, that without the support of a party, a third-party candidate cannot succeed, is very strong, but the particular example you have chosen doesn't quite support your point.
- You say towards the end of your first paragraph that Gosse's ideas scared the church and scientists. You first introduced this idea in the introduction, and I bypassed it then, thinking that you would extrapolate upon it later. But now you bring it up again, and it still is not explained. Perhaps your next sentence is meant to be the explanation, but I think the assertion that Gosse "scared" both sides is a claim you can't make; it is attributing an emotional state where you have no evidence to do so.
- In the third paragraph, you claim that the Church wasn't able to threaten people. Why not? When Galileo proposed his ideas, the Church was certainly capable of threats and punishments, so what changed?
- Your argument for the reason why science rejected Gosse is parallel to why religion rejected him. However, the argument is much stronger for religion than for science. Because religion lacks empirical evidence, calling into question one aspect of God's



character would certainly raise doubts as to the rest of religious teachings. But science is a predictive vehicle. Russell described science as the process of finding causal laws. If the scientific discoveries that are made can predict accurately what will be observed, then does it matter whether the foundation of these discoveries originated naturally or divinely?

- At the beginning of the next paragraph, you claim that the acceptance of Darwin's ideas proves that people were open to accepting new concepts. Is it necessarily true that people would be open to all new concepts, or only those that they thought made sense? As you have just described, nobody really liked Gosse's idea, and it had less evidence behind it than Darwin's, so the lack of proof simply made it easier to reject. I am not sure anyone would have believed Darwin if he didn't present his ideas with a great deal of empirical support – while Darwin had this support readily available, Gosse didn't.
- The conflict between science and religion isn't entirely about creationism versus evolution. You state that the issue of "the origin of humans" has polarized society, but Gosse's synthesis (and indeed all syntheses) is not aimed at solely the origin of humans. They are meant to reconcile all of science with all of religion, which goes considerably beyond creation.

### The Conclusion

Your phrase "a unifying synthesis" is redundant; the purpose of a synthesis is to unify. As you did earlier, you refer to Gosse's idea as though it applies to only human origins, while his thoughts actually are meant to examine all of religion and all of science. Your verb tenses are inconsistent. You use present tense most of the time, but you state in the first sentence "Gosse was the third party candidate." Perhaps this is not a verb tense issue so much as an issue of specifying the context in which Gosse resembled a third party candidate. Later in the paragraph, it seems unprofessional to use parentheses.

A larger issue with your conclusion is that you don't go beyond the arguments you present in the preceding paragraphs. The conclusion should be a place in which you extrapolate upon your ideas to give a larger sense of the state of the world; your conclusion summarizes your main points. I think you could almost use your last body paragraph as a conclusion, with just a bit of added content. If we look at the conclusion as the place where you bring in a broader theme, your last body paragraph does this. Throughout the rest of your paper, you discuss the specific incident of Gosse, but in the last body paragraph, you raise the question "if Gosse's synthesis fails, is it even possible for one to succeed?" This is the question that you should be answering in your conclusion. I like the idea you present in the last sentence of your conclusion, that attempts at synthesis are logical successes but societal failures, but aside from that point, I think your last body paragraph brings your paper to a much stronger close than your conclusion does. If you expand this paragraph to draw a bit more comparison between the general third party candidate and the general synthesis idea, this would make a really compelling closing argument.

(2)

God.