

SCIENCE AND RELIGION
GRADED PAPER 2 REVIEWS
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Paper 1

The content of this review is good. You've read carefully and have meaningful comments on the writing and the content (i.e., the arguments). Your insights into the content are both specific to particular arguments and general to the paper as a whole.

The primary weakness of this review was the organization—there was no single, obvious, organizational principle. It was mostly text-ordered, which has the drawback of interleaving comments about problems at different levels (e.g., grammar and argument). However, you interspersed general commentary about the paper and thesis as a whole, making the review seem thoughtful in its criticism but unstructured in its presentation.

(1) Science and religion are not *diametrically opposed* right now, so Collins' position is not relevant for this argument. If some scientific investigation made belief in both scientific findings and religious doctrine mutually exclusive, **then** Collins' position would become untenable.

Grade: A-

Paper 2

Overall, this was an excellent review. You provided useful criticism of the most important element of any paper: its ability to persuade. Your comments showed a thoughtful reading of the original paper. The only weakness here is the lack of specificity for lower-level (e.g., grammatical) errors.

Grade: A

REVIEW #1

Your first two paragraphs (including the thesis) are clear and well organized. The biggest problems arise from individual sentences with awkward phrases. Consider changing phrases like “the nature of this truth is not consistent between the two” to something more concise (you could use one word to replace the second half of this sentence). In the second paragraph, your claim that “the clash between science and religion is most evident when a scientific hypothesis conflicts with religion doctrine” states the obvious. The last sentence of the second paragraph is confusing in its wording. Perhaps a different sentence structure that does not suspend the contradiction would clarify your point. When introducing an author for the first time in the body of your paper, use his first name as well as his last. Russells’ “underlying premise,” you say, is correct, although you disagreed with part of the quotation. You need to specify which part of the quotation is his underlying premise though.

On the second page, you state that “Disproving any of these fundamental beliefs would cause the entire religion to disintegrate,” and your next four sentences then state the same point in slightly different wording. Your argument would improve if you cut out the unnecessary sentences. I also don’t what you mean by “Multiple causes can be attributed plausibly to the same outcome, upon initial observation.” Causes are not attributed to outcomes (they produce them), and your prepositional phrase should either begin your sentence or not be separated with a comma at the end.

On the top of the third page, you mention the possibility of “applying religion to all that is currently unknown.” This suggestion seems to contradict your previous claim that

religious truths are unchangeable. As the knowns and unknowns change through scientific discovery, wouldn't that in effect change religious truths too?

At the end of this paragraph, you mention a gap between science and religion, which ideally, is an interesting idea, but you should define it when you introduce it. The only elaboration you give is that religious truths need a starting point. I don't see how the creation of a "gap" would follow. It is a hard concept to grasp with such sparse information. In addition, you should also state outright: "This could never work because...", because otherwise, the reader is left trying to figure out how this gap would work, but then you just move on. You also say this gap will leave a number of "unknowns temporarily unresolved." An unknown is, by definition, unresolved. *Not quite, but a useful point.*

Another confusing concept you mention is that ^①Equating fundamental laws of the universe with God prevents a scientist from even asking whether a more basic explanation could exist, and so this attempt at reconciliation fails." Why? Is the only point of science to find the most basic explanations? Why would a reconciliation fail just because a scientist has accepted a form as "the most basic?" Did Einstein fail as a scientist because he called an explanation "God?"

No, it isn't. The last paragraph of that page contains the phrase "irrevocably irreconcilable," which is redundant. A few sentences later, you state that as they stand, science and religion can "quite comfortably coexist." I am not convinced. Think about the heliocentricity arguments or the fact that so many people unsuccessfully attempt reconciliation.

Your concluding paragraph should (and does for the most part) wrap up your argument, but you add some new, irrelevant ideas like the fact that you can imagine an

experiment that could evaluate free will in the future. I also don't understand how the very act of this experiment would "question the method by which religious arrives at truth?"



You haven't previously mentioned that method. You also say that when science and religion are "diametrically opposed, a religious scientist would be an oxymoron." What about Collins? Are science and religion not diametrically opposed right now? I don't understand which situation you are commenting on.



Almost every sentence in this paper is passive (containing one of the passive verbs: is, are was, were, be, being). I found it slightly distracting, but more importantly, your arguments would come across stronger if you reintroduced the subject into the sentence.

I like the sound of your title, but the idea of religion as a "limiting factor" does not appear in your paper.

REVIEW # 2

awk
sentence

The first sentence, which states the basic information on which you build your argument is unclear to me, specifically, the phrase "improving its quality of life." First, the "it" refers back to humanity (which is not a living thing), but more importantly, you should define the meaning of the "quality of life." How does either science or religion make life better? You use this phrase throughout the paper, and it is never clear exactly what you mean. Your thesis relates synthesis, opposition, and partnership, but you don't define what these are either. While the concept of synthesis is clear, I don't understand what the difference between opposition and partnership mean. By partnership, do you mean that some ideas from both science and religion are combined (isn't that synthesis?) or that all the ideas from both are combined (isn't that impossible?) or that the two don't combine but merely coexist (isn't that opposition?)? Also, the last sentence of the first paragraph starts with "yet," which implies a future contradiction, but none follows.

Your topic sentence of the second paragraph is that "attempting to synthesize science and religion fails to increase human understanding of the world or improve the quality of life," but your examples show that a synthesis cannot even successfully exist. If that is your point, state it, don't lead the reader in the wrong direction.

You also need to explain the first sentence of the third paragraph. When/how does the allowance of the opposition of science and religion increase knowledge and improve the quality of life? You just state that it does allow it and move on even though it is a slightly controversial claim. Perhaps, once you define what improving the quality of life means, this will be clearer; however, you use these terms loosely, which makes your

Good!

argument vague. White's quotation at the bottom of page two confused me, especially because you introduce it with "science, too..." I'm not sure how this idea fits with the previous example of stem cell research, but my lack of understanding could stem from the fact that I didn't really understand the quotation itself. Your point that scientific discoveries strengthen religion because it induces the reexamination of faith is interesting insight, but if the "faithful" no longer "blindly accept a particular dogma," what are they now basing their faith on? What changes the way religious people see their beliefs? Is your point that their faith is stronger just because it must defend itself against an opposition?

Nice.

Your concept of "partnership" does not make sense to me. Is the only difference between partnership and opposition that in opposition people admit that they only believe either science *or* religion, and in a partnership, they only believe one but don't argue with the other side? Are you just advocating a peaceful opposition ("sciences and religion should become allies")? I don't know if that is a practical solution. Your statement that "while science is better able to describe natural phenomenon, religion proves a basic moral code..." is well taken, but your overall advice is just that "discussions remain reasoned and respectful."

✓

Overall, I am a bit unconvinced by your argument but that is may be because I don't understand its foundation. Are you suggesting a partial opposition in which religion stops trying to answer scientific questions and stick to moral issues? That people should stop questioning the relationship between science and religion even though you admit they share a common goal? That seems to be your conclusion, but not a focus of your paper until the last paragraph.

✓

There are several places in this paper where you use words and phrases that do not denote what you mean to say. You write about the quality of life being "increased," the battle of religion and science as "destructive," Gosse's theory "confirms" the scientific age of the earth and "advances" faith while it "diminishes" science and religion as belief systems. The phrase "yet in the end" does not refer to the end of anything, and the cost of conflicts are dealt in human "life and suffering," but I think you mean death and suffering.

There are also some places your writing could be more concise. Wordy phrases like "appearing to produce less" "at too many points in history" "this in turn played a part in" and "less ethically ambiguous" could be revised for a tighter, stronger paper. In the second paragraph, there are a few inconsistent tenses and a few typos later on. The organization of the paper is clear and assists the progression of your argument. You make some strong points, but clearer definitions upfront would support them better.

yes.

examples?