

SCIENCE AND RELIGION GRADED PAPER 2

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The thesis and arguments

You begin with a reasonable thesis by claiming that both science and religion are beneficial and should both continue to exist. You explore syntheses and their problems. Then you dive straight into hot water. You make outrageous and unjustified (and unjustifiable) claims about how people would behave without religion. People have never really **been** without belief. Moreover, it is possible (and not too much of a stretch) to conjecture that people would behave more or less as they do now without religion. Too many of your arguments lack support, and are therefore easily ignored.

Moreover, you spend so much time trying to justify the need for religion (and doing so poorly) that you never address the question of whether *science* benefits from the existence of religion (and vice versa). You were in a good position to address whether the current tensions between the two is, overall, a net benefit.

The writing

The page limit was **4 pages**. Your writing spilled onto page 6. I stopped reading at the end of page 4. These limitations are real and you should expect them to be enforced.

Your writing is loose. Although your grammar and punctuation are reasonably good, you often employ excess verbiage, and you commit a number of word-choice errors. This writing needed some critical editing.

Items marked on the paper

(1) Gosse's conjecture is **not** an hypothesis. It is subject to neither empirical evaluation nor disproof, and thus it is not a scientific hypothesis at all.

(2) First, why must God be constrained by logical motivations? Second, motivations are rarely a matter of **logic**. Do not confuse *rational* or *compelling* arguments with *logical* ones. A logical argument requires only that, if the premisses are true, then the conclusion is compulsory. Logical argument has no place in ascribing motivations to God.

(3) Do you have support for this claim? For example, there's no need to ascribe offense to science. Gosse's conjecture was not amenable to scientific examination. Scientists could, quite apart from any emotional response, ignore his conjecture as one that science could not address.

(4) This objection is erroneous. Science doesn't seek *truth*. It seeks regularities—theories and laws—that explain and predict physical phenomena as accurately as possible. If the world being

measured and modeled has been rigged by God, that has little bearing on scientific exploration or value. It is given that empirical observation requires some level of trust in the senses. If senses cannot be trusted, then why are the observations so regular? Even if the universe that we think we see is somehow “false,” our ability to predict its behavior remains highly valuable. That is, there remains strong reason to “bother trying to learn anything about our world” exactly because we can still predict, manipulate, and understand our environment. Moreover, trying to deeply understand God’s fake universe is still deeply compelling, because it still would be a “true” real world.

Overall, I think you’ve simplified this analysis far too much. It’s easy to claim that science is trivialized by a universe made by God that is a lie. However, that overestimates the role of science as a “search for truth,” as opposed to an “effective method for exploring whatever type of universe we occupy.” The consequences of Gosse’s conjecture for science are at least complex, and not so likely to throw science on the scrap heap so easily.

(5) People who ascribe phenomena to God’s work do not *think* that they don’t understand the phenomena. They believe that their explanation works perfectly well, and therefore *does* impart understanding. Who is supposed to determine whether religious explanations are being so improperly applied?

(6) To believers, scripture is the **most valid** of evidence. Who decides what constitutes evidence? That’s a central difficulty in this conflict and always has been.

(7) And why is **that**? Support this bold claim. Certain characteristics of the Christian God may require this property, but I see no reason why a sufficient but more limited notion of God must also exist outside of space/time (whatever **that** means).

(8) You seem to have taken your concept of what is necessary for a synthesis off the deep end. Why can’t God be benevolent? It seems that we cannot ascribe **any** characteristics to God. But none of those characteristics leave any room for scientific contradiction, so what is the problem?

(9) This is the second half of an absurdly strong claim to make without justification. What evidence do you have that people who act morally wouldn’t do so even in the absence of religion? Why aren’t atheists largely immoral if religion provides such improvement in the frequency of moral behavior? There has never been a large scale, truly irreligious society, so we have **no idea** how people would behave in it.

Moreover, by asserting that science wouldn’t help people behave morally, you follow a false dichotomy. There is more to the world than religion and science. There is, even for the atheistic scientist, notions of non-religious philosophy that address problems outside of topics that fall within scientific purview.

Grade: C+

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Gosse's Failure at a Synthesis Between Science and Religion and Why Humanity Needs Them to Coexist As Separate Entities

Gosse's attempt at integrating science and religion ~~into a plausible synthesis~~ was conceived on a notion that would ~~satisfy~~ ^{satisfied} neither scientists nor ~~theists~~ ^{W.C. theodolians}. He hypothesized that the Earth was indeed ~~6,000~~ 6,000 years old, as the Bible teaches, but that God planted false clues ~~all over the Earth~~ ^{all over} to lead humanity astray from truth. This theory is supposed to explain how scientists

could have determined the Earth to be around 4.5 billion years old, yet make it possible for Earth's true age to be 6,000 years old. This explanation would resolve numerous other factual discrepancies between science and religion as well. ~~In theory,~~ ^T there are no logical inconsistencies with Gosse's hypothesis. However, people don't want the mere possibility of an idea; they want

to believe. To say that God planted false evidences ~~all over the world~~ is ~~in fact~~ possible, but it lacks conviction. ^{for whom?} ⁽²⁾ There is no logical reason why God would do that. Furthermore, it negatively

alters the persona of God, and discredits the practice of science. Not only is Gosse's idea based on an incredulous premise, ^{W.C. A premise cannot be incredulous.} but it completely offends both practices. Although he set out to

illustrate how the two fields could coexist in harmony, he ended up pushing them farther apart. ⁽³⁾

Despite the method of arbitration, ^{What arbitration?} the notion that humanity needs both science and religion is indeed accurate. ^{Evidence!} ^{what}

^{Thesis. ✓} ^{Meaning?} ^{emotional.} ^{was made worse by Gosse's conjecture?} ^{Better for polythe-ism?} ^{and that He loves us all} ~~Skeptical premise aside,~~ Gosse makes a mockery first of most monotheistic religions. In

theorizing that God intentionally leads us astray from truth, Gosse implies deception and mischief in God's character. This notion of God is drastically different from the teachings of these religions, which contend that God is an icon of morality and benevolence ~~and that He loves us all~~

superfluous

~~as His own children~~ Casting a religion's ultimate figure in a negative light will offend its followers, no matter what the intention.

On the other hand, Gosse infers that science's efforts are vain. Science seeks to find truth based on the laws of our world, and if those laws are all false, then we have no way of finding truth. Essentially, we can and do know nothing about the real world. We may as well not even bother trying to learn anything about our world because we will only discover the laws that govern a "fake" one. Granted, in this case science still has practical application in our everyday lives regardless of the false evidences it reveals, under Gosse's theory it is but trivial in the grand scheme of things. In other words, the applied science has use, but trying to comprehend the big picture is impossible because the theoretical science is entirely false.

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What is "the real world"?

Bunk. I don't buy it.

Bogus view. Too simple.

There can exist a peaceful synthesis between science and religion. However, in order for it to work, it is necessary to avoid using God as an explanation for things humanity does not understand.

If this mistake is made, it leaves room for a possible conflict between science and religion should a contrary scientific discovery be made. Rather, divine explanation should be used in order to account for the questions that presumably science can theoretically never know, such as how existence began. In other words, supernatural explanation should be employed for the unexplainable, not for what we can't explain. It is also necessary to base the conception of God on what is known rather than create a God that is ideal for humanity. Science does not assume any of its knowledge without valid evidence; therefore, religion must do likewise in order to be respected by and compatible with science. Following this logic, people must then be open to the existence of God in any form, for no one knows what form He takes, powers He has, or things He has done. In fact, we can never know these things because God, if he exists, would have to exist outside of space and time. As soon as people start to characterize God or claim knowledge of His

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Not so easy to identify, and too constraining for religion.

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actions in any way, they have made unjustified assumptions and left room for science to present evidence to the contrary.

Under these conditions, religion is thus obligated to sacrifice many of the ideologies that enable it to have such an immense impact on its followers. Religion can no longer say that God is omnipotent, or that He is omniscient and has a plan for us all. Nor can religion claim that God has any type of personal relationship with humans, because we don't and can't ever figure that out on our own. *Why not? No contradiction there. Gibberish.*

(8) However, without God having any of these characteristics, what type of value does religion really hold? If it can't be said that God is benevolent, it is wrong to assume God wants to help humanity. If it can't be said that God has a personal relationship with humanity, it is wrong to assert that God cares, watches, or is even aware of terrestrial existence at all. If it can't be said that God is judging us, it is wrong to say that the morality of our actions will affect any type of afterlife we may have. And if it can't be said that God is omnipotent, it is wrong to imagine God has the power to do all the great things that make Him worthy of worship and able to look after our species. However, these types of beliefs drawn from a characterized God are essential to religion; they provide hope, support, moral incentives, and guidance for its followers. Without characterizing God, nothing valuable can come out of this religion besides explanation. Instead, we are left able to simply state that it is possible God, in whatever form, exists.

The coexistence of science and religion as two separate practices is what is best for humanity. The effect of religion on people is undeniably real. Regardless of whether or not the premises of each religion are true or false, people ^{W.C.} harvest myriad of things through religion that are beneficial to themselves as well as society. Controversial. Evidence? People act more ethically in the face of religion, whether it be for genuine belief in God's word or simply because they fear His wrath. Even some

not so closely associated with religion will watch what they do "just in case." Many gather strength and hope from a variety of sources within religion; in the congregation of fellow believers, in the teachings of sacred text, in the possibility of an afterlife, or in believing that God is watching over them and their loved ones.

Science also plays an extraordinary role in the well being of mankind. Figuring out the laws of our world and how things work leads to advances in medicine, technology, food cultivation, and many other things critical in the survival and advancement of human civilization. Even understanding the history of the Earth through scientific technology such as carbon dating is vital so that we may learn from past occurrences and prepare for what lies ahead.

Furthermore, each of these fields in existence without the other would have devastating consequences. In a society without religion, the significant number of people who act morally out of religious faith or fear would no longer have reason to do so. Instead, science would only be able to guide people in relation to observable effects. For example, religion would say not to kill

someone because it is wrong to take life. Science would say the taking of life would amount to nothing more than a dead body, which will donate itself back to the natural process of nature.

Statistically, it seems likely that crime rates would in turn be higher than the present and aid for those in need would dwindle. Not only would participation in such programs as community service diminish, but the programs themselves would be fewer in number due to the sizable amount run through religious organizations. People wouldn't have religion to turn to for hope and support either; science may in fact have the opposite effect, using laws such as determinism to suggest the nonexistence of free will and even God. Many people need to believe in such concepts as free will and God in order to see the purpose of even living at all. that all morality stems from religion; I am simply acknowledging that a significant portion does

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quite claim that is a substantial

Justifi-
cation?!

Give me an arg-
ument
to eval-
uate.

Support?!

What you think does
not matter in being
persuasive.

and that without religion many people would be very lost. Similarly, religion is not the only place to turn to for hope and support, but for some it is the most prominent and reassuring source.

Religion without science is no better. We can look to history to show us how religion has even ravaged human society. Back in the olden days, Christianity used to advocate filthiness in order to show humility in the face of God. However, this caused all sorts of disease, which in turn decimated the population. When faced with such plagues, prominent Christian figures would claim them as the Wrath of God, and thus propose further filthiness as the solution, which obviously only made matters worse. It wasn't until science started studying the actual consequences of filthiness did we learn to embrace cleanliness. Religion does not empirically investigate the world and therefore through religion we can gain little knowledge about it past mere observation. The sophistication and advancement of humanity would be severely retarded without the vast amount of information science provides and the practical applications which stem from it.

There is no problem with the balance between science and religion as it exists in society now. The coexistence of both acts as a system of checks and balances. Although science would say that religion is putting restraints on scientific advancement, religion is valuable, questioning the moral implications of some of science's endeavors. For example, on the issue of cloning is science abusing its capabilities? Is cloning overstepping our boundaries as humans? Could disrupting the natural order of life have devastating consequences? These questions need to be seriously considered, regardless of what conclusion we come to in the end. Similarly, science checks religion, helping it to evolve for the good of mankind. As mentioned earlier in the example of plagues, the altruism religion seeks to advocate is often misguided by its own beliefs. The application of science to religious teachings is beneficial and sometimes even necessary for

human advancement. So despite the deeply heated controversies between science and religion, their coexistence as it is now is about as good as it ever will be, and as good as it ever needs to be. Even if a better synthesis than Gosse's or the aforementioned could be formulated is erroneous; we need not fix what isn't broken.

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Bibliography

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