

On Religion, Philosophy, and Science

Religion, philosophy, and science are all similar if defined as the fruits of man's search for a "truth". Religion came about as the product of man's search for truth. From this truth comes reverence for the sacred. The sacred is what causes a person a sense of awe; submission to a power. Religion is limiting though because unlike science, it is not based on theories. Religion is based on the sacred; the absolute. This means that religion's ability to explain anything, to understand anything, will always connect its findings to its dogma. Religion is unlike philosophy in that it does not question nor ponder the sacred, the sacred simply is, always was, and always will be. Religion has no need to question the sacred because it adheres to it, it follows and accepts the truth they find and give to the sacred.

Philosophy does not bind itself to a truth; it finds the idea of any "absolute truth" to be a hindrance to itself. The reason for this is that philosophy is not content with "what is", and it asks "why is this so" because it refuses to limit its understanding of meaning. Philosophy requires a one to step out of [his or her] their current meaning and reexamine their meaning in the pursuit of clarity. It is required to examine one's meanings in order to see why it is that they see things from their current point of view. This process has the individual reconstruct themselves continuously in order to test their grasp on what is. But the reason for this is not only to question, but to learn from one's own self-examination. Rigorous testing of the meaning of things is done via what is experienced and what is not understandable via the senses. This is where philosophy differs from religion; it does not limit its manner of examining the world through the scope of religious dogma. Unlike religion it does not accept anything as absolute, and unlike science it is not empirical.

Comment [dp1]: redundant

Comment [dp2]: Was religion a search for truth or was it a by-product or co-product of how religion meets human need? In other words, should we say from the reverence for the sacred emerged certain beliefs?

Comment [dp3]: At some point, however, religions become doctrinal, rational, theological, and attempt to rationally reflect upon and/or support themselves.

Comment [dp4]: Philos has been the search for truth. Often philosophers have attempted to provide what they considered to be rationally supported truths. But many philosophers have rejected the idea of an absolute truth. Almost all have rejected relativism, the idea that truth depends on an individual or group. The notion of what truth is has undergone radical changes in the past two centuries.

Comment [dp5]: define

The sciences when split into the Greek and modern sciences do differ though. Greek science is theoretical in nature, dealing with what is and why it is so, modern sciences use proven methods of sense experience that attempt to explain what is experienced. The Greek sciences depend on theories that are mostly intellectual, almost philosophical. Modern sciences however use systematic observation as experimentation to prove any hypothesis as currently valid, it denies the findings of religion if it is lacking actual data supporting its claims, the sacred simply does not add into the equations the sciences break existing into. Science is the study of specific areas using proven experiments revolving around experiences to gain understanding systematically. Science uses empirically based logic to reason with what is observed and from there it takes the observation and forms an explanation.

It is essential to make the distinction between religion, philosophy, and science because they are not the same thing. Religion holds itself to the sacred; the absolute. Religion will always find a way to explain how things fit into its dogma. Philosophy will always test what is so that it does not remain fixated on a current meaning. Philosophy refuses the notion of an absolute, takes into consideration the possibilities available via logic, and acts on them accordingly via questioning the very nature of what meaning is attainable from those tests. Science does not revere the sacred for what it instills in the hearts of men, science does acknowledge what is though; based on its proven methods and theories. Science is unlike philosophy in that it does accept possibilities, yet only within the realm of its own parameters. Philosophy is not systematic like science, it is a process that works on the syntax people associate words with; meaning. The reason to always keep all three separate when attempting to practice them is because philosophy

Comment [dp6]: say a bit more about experimental design, what it is what it does as a testing procedure and the difference between a hypothesis and a theory.

Comment [dp7]: Confirm or disconfirm

Comment [dp8]: Science, as science just ignores religion because it has no bearing on science. But when science is used to argue against religion, that is a different matter. It may be a response to those who try to make religion compete with science, in which case the mistake is on the part of those who attempt this. On the other hand, if one uses science to try to generally discredit religion, that is a form of *scientism* and is not science. Science simply cannot address the issues in religion regarding the sacred and it cannot address issues in philosophy of value, such as justice or morality.

Comment [dp9]: Better to say religions are ways of approaching the sacred. If a religion holds itself to be sacred, that would be blasphemy and very arrogant, just the opposite of what religions at their core are: deep humility in confronting human finitude in the face of the power and mystery of being.

Comment [dp10]: If a religion holds itself to be the absolute, this could arguably be considered a perversion of religion, a misapplication of the logic of propositions to something that cannot be addressed with such logic. On the other hand, when religions attempt to approach "the absolute" it can only be with the deepest humility and unknowing, that is with a deep felt sense of the ignorance of finitude when it attempts to approach the absolute.

Comment [dp11]: The sciences as a methods of empirical testing cannot approach the sacred, but a scientist as a human being certainly can, and his or her sense of wonder that may arise in the scientific process can be expressed poetically and with a sense of reverence for the mystery that there is a world at all and that humans can investigate it scientifically. Science looked at from outside the scientific method, is itself a wondrous thing to behold.

Comment [dp12]: Right. Science is powerful precisely because it is so limited to what its methods can address.

Comment [dp13]: When philosophy is done well, it is very rigorous and carefully examines what it is concerned with. There is a process to this, though it would not be quite proper to call it a system or a method in the sense of the sciences that are based on exactitude, that is, mathematization of space and time. Philosophy, however can examine such presuppositions of science that application of number to phenomena in space and time can produce something called knowledge. Such examination cannot be addressed in science, only in philosophy.

turns “bad” when it is done with religion holding it back (your observations will force you to translate everything into your dogma), this same reason holds true for attempting science with religion explaining your findings. Science does question itself like philosophy; however it only accepts any findings with verifiable evidence that is the result of strenuous testing and observation, the key word being observation. Religion cannot be religion if it falls back to a theory (like science), and it cannot question the sacred (like philosophy) because then the absolute truth becomes myth. Thus it is imperative that one keep all three separate in order to do each one efficiently.

Comment [dp14]: This would not be philosophy but theology. The two can overlap with regard to what they investigate, but it is the purpose and motive that makes them distinct. Theology is carried out from within a commitment to a dogma, philosophy is not. Both can question and try to understand the concept of god, for example, and their arguments can even be very similar or the same. But the purpose is different. Theology arises from within religion and makes no sense without it. Philosophy is independent. It is an attempt to clarify and understand things, theology is an attempt to support religious commitment.

Comment [dp15]: In what sense?? Given what you say after this, I would say your claim is **false**. Science cannot, as science, question itself, cannot scientifically investigate the phenomenon of science. You cannot run a physics experiment to see if physics is a proper method of investigating nature. A science can only question its proper object of investigation and whether its methods are being carried out properly in this regard. The minute it begins to reflect on the efficacy of its methods as something that can work at all, this has lapsed into philosophy. Of course, one can be both a scientist and a philosopher.

Comment [dp16]: First, this is muddled in a way that I will not try to clarify here. Second, you are on the verge of something important that was asked in the question of why it is so important to get clear on the distinction of what philos, religion and science are. One answer is that science would cease to function if it tried to do what philosophy and religion do. But there is much more to this. Our world is racked by conflict that arises due to the clash of religions and the clash of scientism with religion and philosophy. Your essay needed to go further into this and how some clarity on what philosophy, science and religion are, what they can and cannot address, and how the notion of “truth” is very confused with regard to these, could simply prevent much of the conflict. That is where hermeneutics has a great deal to contribute in showing how these conflicts are artifacts of deep misunderstandings about language, meaning and truth and how this leads to a great deal of confusion in what to make of philosophy, religion and science. It could show us how to get the most out of each of these without nearly as much conflict that arises merely from mistakes and confusions about language, meaning and truth.

Grade: B