

Spring 5-3-2018

The Role of the Imagination in Religion and Science

Jonah Koetke
jonah.koetke@valpo.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.valpo.edu/cus>

Recommended Citation

Koetke, Jonah, "The Role of the Imagination in Religion and Science" (2018). *Symposium on Undergraduate Research and Creative Expression (SOURCE)*. 754.
<https://scholar.valpo.edu/cus/754>

This Oral Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the Office of Sponsored and Undergraduate Research at ValpoScholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Symposium on Undergraduate Research and Creative Expression (SOURCE) by an authorized administrator of ValpoScholar. For more information, please contact a ValpoScholar staff member at scholar@valpo.edu.

The Role of the Imagination in Religion and Science

A Psychological Examination

Jonah A. Koetke

Valparaiso University

Abstract

Western culture has seen a great separation between two once-connected disciplines: the scientific and the religious. The religious is part of the humanities, thus it utilizes imagination, while the world of the scientific is based in objective facts. However, I would like to argue that this aspect of the separation does not suffice. I posit that both of these realms use an aspect of the imagination, just with different ends in mind and different mindsets. The definition of the imagination I am using focuses on the creation of a particular world and therefore worldview. I will be using the psychological framework of the pragmatic and the narrative mindsets put forth by Jerome Bruner in his book, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*. Breaking down this one barrier between these realms may open the way for further collaboration between these different worlds and assist in reducing conflict between them. Those who feel an affinity for both may not have to choose between these two realms, as they can learn the similarities and utilize the shared faculties involved.

The Role of the Imagination in Religion and Science

Introduction

Western culture is one of separation. In the last few hundred years, one separation in particular has become more and more pronounced. This is the separation of the religious and the secular; the faithful and the scientific; the church and the state. More and more are these two spheres of life and culture considered to be oppositional, yet many are expected to, or attempt to, reside simultaneously in these two realms. Thus, the increase in this separation socially, becomes a separation internally. Suddenly, individuals seem to be stuck between two sectors that society says are immiscible. They have a choice to involve themselves in one of these two spheres or else be trapped in this confusing limbo. So what is the difference between these two worlds? One answer that many have adopted is that of the imagination. Choosing to reside in the world of the religious means relying on one's imagination, not just external experience. The world of religion is one of the humanities. However, this answer does not suffice, as some form of imagination is actually involved in each, just with different goals that stem from different mindsets. In order to show this, I will be utilizing the psychological framework of the pragmatic and the narrative mindsets put forth by the influential psychological thinker, Jerome Bruner, in his book, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*. I will also be relying heavily on the work done by the Christian theologian, Garrett Green, in his book, *Imagining God*, who attempts to breach this same divide by looking at it from a purely theological perspective. I will be attempting to breach this separation by placing it in the psychological. For the use of this paper, "imagination" will refer to the faculty of humans to psychically create an image of a certain world, and in this way a worldview.

This paper will begin with a brief history of this separation between science and religion in society, being followed by an explanation of Bruner's framework. After this, I will examine how each of these mindsets, put forth by Bruner, utilize their own form of imagination as a tool in their respective disciplines, the pragmatic in the scientific world, and the narrative in the religious. Lastly, I will examine how one is expected to communicate across this seemingly growing divide between worlds and then look at the possible implications and uses this ability may have practically.

Separation between Science and Religion

Before starting with the current argument, it may be helpful to lay out a brief history of the religio-scientific separation. The science historian, Steven Shapin, wrote a thought provoking article, *The Virtue of Scientific Thinking*, in which he examines the historical divorce of science and morality. In the Christian tradition, he sees that certain sects have had a very favorable view, Puritans in particular, claiming that the search for knowledge was a religious act. Shapin says that in this tradition, the natural world was seen as, "...the Book of Nature, the second of the two books written by God to make His attributes and intentions accessible to man" (Shapin, 2015). In this case, the first book was Scripture itself. This started a long tradition of natural philosophers that saw their scientific venture as one of religious merit, examining the world God gave them.

This view was slowly shifted, however, as scientists began to question the once apparent connection between the natural world and theology, and with this questioning began the separation that is now apparent. One theorist who made a popular counterclaim to the religious view of science was the sociologist Max Weber in his famous work, *Science as a Vocation*. He

writes, "...it is one thing to state facts, to determine mathematical or logical relations or the internal structure of cultural values, while it is another thing entirely to answer questions of the *value* of culture and its individual components and the question of how one should act..." (Weber, 1946, p. 146). Weber divorces science from questions of meaning and value, seeing that one can claim objective scientific observation, but the other belongs in a different realm. He sees that these two facets of human life need to be separated as they are not of the same sort of knowledge. He continues to say, "...whenever the man of science introduces his personal value judgement, a full understanding of the facts *cease*" (Weber, 1946, p. 146). Weber sees knowledge of value and meaning to be fundamentally different from that of scientific fact, and therefore needing to be separated. He claims, "... the prophet and the demagogue do not belong on the academic platform," as this is where science and scientific fact rule (Weber, 1946, p. 146).

Different Kinds of Mindsets and Definitions

In order to explain this social separation between religion and science as it is seen today, one must examine the different, but related, mindsets individuals in these disciplines use. Jerome Bruner, in his acclaimed book, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*, discusses the difference between two different kinds of human mindsets. Bruner does this by looking at literature, and the mindset that accompanies it. He contrasts this with science and the accompanying logical mindset. He says, "Both science and the humanities have come to be appreciated as artful figments of men's minds, as creations produced by different uses of the mind" (Bruner, 1987, p. 44). For Bruner, these differing mindsets are the reason for such differences in human product, whether that be story or logical assertion. Each one leads to a particular outcome. With that outcome, comes a particular kind of goal that each creator attempts to reach. He says,

A good story and a well-formed argument are different natural kinds. Both can be used as means of convincing another. Yet what they convince *of* is fundamentally different: arguments convey one of their truth, stories of their lifelikeness. The one verifies by eventual appeal to procedures for establishing formal and empirical proof. The other establishes not truth but verisimilitude. (Bruner, 1987, p. 11)

Stories aim at producing something, not empirically provable by one's experience interacting with the world, but rather of potentiality; that what they are saying is plausible, not necessarily provable. A logical argument, on the other hand, attempts to do the opposite, making a claim that is immediately testable and provable in the external world. Bruner refers to these two kinds of mindsets as the narrative and the pragmatic, respectively. These are the terms that will be used to refer to these mindsets for the remainder of this paper.

The other text which I will be relying on heavily is one by Garrett Green, who attempts to answer this same issue of religio-scientific separation through similar means. He attempts to argue for the use of imagination in theology as the point in which the human touches the divine, at the moment of spiritual revelation. He wishes to look primarily at the imagination of religion in the objective sense, trying to avoid the pitfalls of delegitimizing religious belief through subjective imagination. To do this, he likens it to Kuhn's paradigms of scientific thought from Kuhn's seminal work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. These paradigms, for Kuhn, act as lenses created by the scientific community that the members of that community collectively see through. In this way, Green sees that both scientific and religious thought utilize the same kind of objective imagination based in the real and empirical world. However, through this he ignores another part of imagination that is also critical to religious belief, the tool of the subjective imagination. I will be focusing on this function of imagination, looking at the idea heralded by

C.S. Lewis of imagination being able to reach out of the realm of the empirical and worldly, to imagine a different world. This different world is one where desires can for the first time be fully satisfied, unlike what is possible in the earthly world. However, like Green, I will be pointing to some form of the imagination being utilized in both the scientific, and the religious. I will be placing this view in line with Bruner's framework.

In order to make an argument utilizing the imagination, it is critical to first define what is meant by this term. Imagination, as Green (1989) describes, is a term full of ambiguity (p. 62). The most basic part of imagination is that it is an image making function. The very first sentence of the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy's article on imagination says, "To *imagine* something is to form a particular sort of mental representation of that thing" (Gendler, 2011). In this way, the imagination is a human faculty used to create an image, or experience mentally, that which is not being experienced sensually. However, what is conceived of mentally is still rather vague. In the case of this paper, that which is being conceived of is a particular worldview or, to put it another way, it is a faculty of world creation. The imagination then, for the purpose of this paper, will be referring to this capacity to create a particular world mentally.

In order to combat the ambiguity that Green sees in the term "imagination", he puts forth a brief explanation for the different ways this term is used in popular, as well as philosophical, discourse. He sees that imagination can be divided into two kinds, the "realistic," and the "illusory" (Green, 1989, p. 63). This realistic imagination is that kind of imagination based in "...real objects that are not directly accessible to us," while the latter kind of imagination deals in those things not based directly in this real world (Green, 1989, p. 63). Hence, the realistic imagination deals in those things that are, as Bruner would refer to them, pragmatic. The illusory then deals in those that are part of the narrative mindset. Green (1989) sees that the

illusory is not inherently helpful in matters dealing with religious belief, as it inherently degrades this belief to *only imaginary* (p. 25, 63). However, I would like to posit that in the realm of the religious or narrative, this kind of imagination is also critical. Therefore, I suggest a change in name from illusory imagination, to *otherworldly* imagination. This kind of imagination can be used to subjectively look beyond the current world, in which the realistic imagination is trapped, and into another world.

The Narrative Imagination and the Religious Use

This view of how the imagination is used in religion, however, is not ubiquitous in theological thought. The relationship between theologians and the imagination has historically been varied. Green traces the history of this relationship through the past few hundred years and reaches a few conclusions. While there were great theorists who saw that the imagination has been instrumental in the religious experience, these opinions have been recently tainted with counterclaims asserting that imagination, "... is the realm of the merely imaginary, and the job of the critic is to replace the imaginations of earlier and more ignorant ages with the truths uncovered by modern science" (Green, 1989, p. 25). In this way, modern theorists equate religious imagination to being antithetical to scientific thought, and therefore inferior.

This is where Green attempts to rectify confusions on this topic. His thesis is the following: "I will argue that imagination, adequately conceived as a human activity and rightly employed as a theological concept, need not lead to reductionist conclusions" (Green, 1989, p. 26). Green does this through first arguing for the existence of the realistic imagination that plays a role in all modern scientific thought through the paradigmatic formula put forth by Daniel Kuhn. Green then attempts to place the religious imagination in this same mode of imaginative

thought, claiming that it too, when properly utilized, is bordering on paradigmatic and therefore objective, based in the real world.

This is a different path from the one this paper is arguing, being based in Bruner's narrative mindset. This mindset is one not entirely based in this world, therefore not residing in the realm of the empirically testable, and not objective like the imagination Green refers to. This mindset is that which Bruner sees as being used in the act of composing stories. Bruner (1987) writes, "Stories of literary merit, to be sure, are about events in a 'real' world, but they render that world newly strange, rescue it from obliviousness..." (p. 24). This kind of mindset, while at once similar to this world, requires a removal from the world of the familiar. Bruner (1987) asserts, "...that if we are to appreciate and understand an imaginative story (or an imaginative hypothesis, for that matter) we must 'suspend disbelief,' accept what we hear as putatively real, or stipulative" (p. 51).

It is here that the imagination enters into play. In order to do this suspension, one must momentarily utilize imagination to imagine a world separate from the current one. This process of imagining is a subjective experience, rooted in the opposite of the realistic imagination. These worlds that are created are made by separate individuals, therefore being different, yet, also subjectively true to that individual. He writes, "The plot then becomes a hypothetical actualization of the reader's own internal 'psychodynamics'" (Bruner, 1987, p. 28). They are rooted in individual experience. This, however, does not immediately, as Green fears, degrade the religious experience. This is but a tool that individuals utilize when entering into the religious or narrative mindset, and is necessary in order for an individual to comprehend what is meant by the religious.

The imagination, then, is an integral part of recognizing and accepting religious belief. In order to show how specifically, I will begin to lean heavily on the writings of the great theologian and author, C.S. Lewis. Lewis, while entwining this idea through many of his texts, really expounds upon it thoroughly in one of his lesser known pieces of fiction, *Till We Have Faces*. This text examines the idea of the religious experience and the creation of another world through a retelling of the myth of Psyche and Cupid. The story is told through the narrative lens of Psyche's sister, Orual. In this text, the other world is represented by the mountain where "the god" resides. Psyche eventually crosses over into this other, spiritual world, and is seen as being in sharp separation to the earthy one, where Orual still resides. Orual calls it, "A sickening discord, a rasping together of two worlds, like two bits of a broken bone...For the world had broken in pieces, with Psyche and I were not in the same piece" (Lewis, 2012, p. 120). This other world is somehow fundamentally different from the earthy one. This is because it is a world where desires can be fully satisfied.

For Lewis, this other world is discovered through the subjective experience of desire. Psyche, throughout the book prior to her reaching the mountain, always had a longing for this other world. She could see the mountain in the distance, but it was irrational for her to attempt to reach it. She says,

And because it [the mountain] was so beautiful, it set me longing, always longing.

Somewhere else there must be more of it... The sweetest thing in all my life has been the longing - to reach the mountain, to find the place where all the beauty came from...

(Lewis, 2012, p. 74-75)

She realized the existence of this other world from her desire of it.

This other world, however, goes against what is found in earthly experience. Earthly experience, and the corresponding lessons taught by it, do not offer any rational evidence for any place in which all desires can be satisfied. C.S. Lewis personifies this in his fantastical, yet autobiographical, tale of his conversion to Christianity, *Pilgrim's Regress*. The protagonist, John, is on a journey attempting to find a place where his desires can be filled. However, he gets captured by a giant who goes by the name of "The Spirit of the Age" (Lewis, 2014, p. 55-61). He is literally imprisoned by the ideas of his time and place, his *Zeitgeist*. This keeps him, momentarily, from advancing closer to his eventual goal of his religious awakening.

This imprisonment of the mind by the earthly world can only be overcome through imagination. Psyche imagines the other world from early on in the novel. She is described as being,

... from the beginning... half in love with the Mountain. She made herself stories about it... 'I will be a great, great queen, married to the greatest king of all, and he will build me a castle of gold and amber up there on the very top.' (Lewis, 2012, p. 23)

Though this imagination, she is able to believe in the other world and eventually reach it, managing to have all of her desires fulfilled. When meeting with Orual for the first time after reaching the mountain, she responds to Orual's alarm at the situation with, "Do? Why, be merry what else? Why should our hearts not dance" (Lewis, 2012, p. 105)? Psyche, despite what the earthly world claims is possible, was able to imagine a world which then allowed for her belief in it. This belief was then proven when she eventually reached the other world.

This desiring, for Lewis, is often seen in other and differing ways inside the minds of individuals. For instance, in *Pilgrim's Regress*, John begins his journey attempting to satisfy his various desires (Lewis, 2014, p. 20). These kinds of differences in real world experience are

what leads individuals to utilize the narrative imagination, as this is based in the subjective experience. Bruner (1987) writes that the “Narrative [mindset] deals with the vicissitudes of human interactions” (p. 16). In this aspect of religious experience, individuals subjectively imagine a world where these kinds of desires can be fully sedated.

This explanation of imagination in the religious experience does not degrade this experience, or religion, in the slightest, however. Green (1989) warns that, “... imagination as a subjective experience contains no clue to the *truth* of what is imagined, since imagination can serve also as the organ of fiction and deceit” (p. 84). This use of the imagination is not making the claim that religious experience or belief is in itself *imaginary*, in this case meaning fantastic and unreal, but rather that it is a necessary tool to picture a world contrary to one’s experience in the earthly world. The fact that it is based in subjectivity does also not degrade this kind of imagination, rather it explains the differing ways individuals reach religious belief based on different real world experiences. Green is correct in saying that this kind of imagination does not necessarily contain objective truth about religious realities. Even C.S. Lewis acknowledges this when Psyche reaches the other world she imagined, and realizes it was not like the image she had invented. This is because the aim of this tool is not to discover exact information about the other, religious world, but rather allow oneself to believe in the other world and therefore in the claims of religion itself.

When the Pragmatic becomes Paradigmatic through Imagination

Lewis’ view of the imagination, while it explains how the imagination is used in religious belief, does not help us understand the imagination’s use in science. This is because Lewis is referring to only the narrative imagination, which cannot explain what occurs in the scientific

realm. However, another kind of imagination can: the pragmatic. This kind of imagination is based fully in the real world, being able to be tested empirically and experienced. In this way, it resides in the world of Green's realistic imagination. Bruner (1987) says that, the "Paradigmatic 'imagination' ... is not the same as the imagination of the novelist or poet. Rather, it is the ability to see possible formal connections before one is able to prove them in any formal way" (p. 13).

Much like the narrative imagination, this kind of imagination is used in the process of world creating. "Its domain is defined...also by the set of possible worlds that can be logically generated and tested against observables - that is, it is driven by hypotheses" (Bruner, 1987, p. 13). This world that gets created is not based in subjectivity, hence multiple individuals are not involved in creating multiple worlds, rather, all the individuals reside in the same world that is based on evidence. This world, then, is inhabited and used by individuals until a better basis or worldview is developed.

Once a particular worldview is created, this becomes the lens through which the world is seen, as this is the objective experience. At this point, Bruner sees it as becoming paradigmatic. The idea of scientific paradigms is one created by Daniel Kuhn in his revolutionary book, *The Structures of Scientific Revolutions*. He describes a paradigm as "...accepted examples of actual scientific practice... (they) provide models from which spring forth particular coherent traditions of scientific research" (Kuhn, 2012, p. 11). These are a particular worldview of a particular field of science, which is based on objective observation, that subsequent scientific thought is built on. Kuhn (2012) refers to these subsequent thoughts as "normal science", or "...research firmly based upon one or more past scientific achievements, achievements that some particular scientific community acknowledges for a time as supplying the foundation for further practice" (p. 10). Kuhn sees that this "normal science" is what the large majority of scientific study falls

under. Scientists learn the accepted worldview, a process of "...preparing the student for membership in the particular scientific community," and see the world through these paradigms (Kuhn, 2012, p. 11). Therefore, what they imagine and then test in practice, is based on the created worldview that the community commits to and experiences objectively. The world the researchers experience becomes universalized and unified in that community.

So then, the majority of science is this kind of normal science. Kuhn (2012) writes, "The success of a paradigm...is at the start largely a promise of success discoverable in selected and still incomplete examples. Normal science consists in the actualization of that promise..." (p. 24). Kuhn sees that the start of normal science is the discovery and acceptance of a particular paradigm. The scientific action following is working within the bounds of this paradigm. Kuhn (2012) sees this actualization in, "...extending the knowledge of those facts that the paradigm displays as particularly revealing, by increasing the extent of the match between those facts and the paradigm's predictions, and by further articulation of the paradigm itself" (p. 24). Normal science, then, works within the realm of the particular paradigm, further matching it and extending it to the real world.

This does not mean that the paradigm is static, however. This objective worldview is open to shifts when someone uses their pragmatic imagination to color their experience differently, imagining a different, still objective, world. This happens through the course of normal science, when certain anomalies develop. However, "...novelties emerge only with difficulty, manifested by resistance, against a background provided by expectation" (Kuhn, 2012, p. 64). When instances that are not cohesive with the current collective worldview or paradigm are shown through normal science, they are often met with resistance, as it questions the very way that individuals see the world around them. Often times, different individuals from the

discipline will try to incorporate novelties into the paradigm through their own adjustments. Kuhn (2012) writes, “An even more important source of change is the divergent nature of the numerous partial solution that concerted attention to the problem made available” (p. 83). This results in a fracturing of the collected worldview of the discipline. The world created by the paradigm no longer is effective and united, hence it begins to fail the community. This fracturing is only mended when there is an “...emergence of a new candidate for paradigm and the ensuing battle over acceptance” (Kuhn, 2012, p. 84). However, this can only happen with use of the pragmatic imagination, imagining a new world that will replace the one previously accepted. Thus this kind of imagination is also utilized in the creation of a new world.

Once this world is conceived, it begins the process of being accepted. Bruner (1987) writes, “Once [theories or paradigms are] up, we throw them away... in favor of a formal, logically consistent theory... that can be stated in mathematical or near-mathematical terms. The formal models that emerge are shared, carefully guarded against attack, and prescribe ways of life” (p. 48). This begins the paradigmatic cycle over again as this worldview, once unknown, becomes accepted and used by all in a scientific field.

Communication across the Divide and Use of Language

By understanding these similarities and differences between these two imaginative mindsets, one can begin to see how communication between them can appear difficult. This difficulty lies in the kind of communication being attempted. Bruner uses a term, “transactions” to describe effective and normal communications. He says these are, “...dealings which are premised on a mutual sharing of assumptions and beliefs about how the world is, how mind works, what we are up to, and how communication should proceed” (Bruner, 1987, p. 57).

However, when attempting to communicate between mindsets, these shared assumptions can seem difficult to find. But this only means that, in order to effectively communicate, one must not be aiming for a normal transaction. By this I mean, if two individuals attempt to reach a consensus on a problem, when one is utilizing the pragmatic and one the narrative mindset, then they will be talking past one another, making no meaningful headway precisely because they are making an assumption that what they are having is a transaction, believing that they have shared mindsets. This then leads to confusing and ineffective communication.

Bruner, once again, has a proposal for dealing with this difficulty. He sees the answer to this issue in the use of language (Bruner, 1987, p. 62). Language is a tool that, even across the mindset divide, provides some sense of consistency between parties and can be helpful in avoiding confusion.

The role language takes is that of clarifying, or as Bruner (1987) calls it, “calibrating” the world from which the individuals are talking from. He writes that humans must,

...not only be able to calibrate the workings of their minds against one another, but to calibrate the worlds in which they live through the subtle means of reference. In effect, then, this is the means whereby we know Other Minds and their possible worlds.

(Bruner, 1987, p. 64)

If one understands the difference between these mindsets, one can understand how the other is using their imagination and their world-making ability, either narratively, relying on the subjective imagination, or pragmatically, relying on the objective one. Bruner (1987) rightfully argues that language has the function of explaining the world in which individuals are residing in, and through this “...create and stipulate realities of its own” (p. 64). Individuals who express their worlds through language then create a world of understanding in which they both inhabit.

Bruner (1987) says language is used in, "...converting our mental processes into products and endowing them with reality in some world. The private is rendered public. And thereby, once again, we locate ourselves in a world of shared reality" (p. 65). So then, communication across this divide is best done through better use of the communication itself, using language to express worlds, and through this, creating a shared reality in which communication is possible.

While this communication is possible across mindsets, some may wonder what the purpose of this kind of communication may be. Why force communication between individuals who are residing in fundamentally different experiences of the world around them, excluding the obvious answer of lessening conflict between parties? The answer lies precisely in this difference. Both the narrative and the pragmatic use their shared, though different, function of imagining and creating other worlds. Therefore, both of these mindsets can benefit from learning how to better use their imagination by examining the other.

Implications in Society

For the common person in modern Western society, the separation between these disciplines is seen and felt both between people and within people who are personally conflicted. With this formulation, individuals may no longer have to choose between these worlds. If individuals are seen communicating across these disciplines, as the previous section assumes possible, then assuredly the separation between religion and science will begin to lessen over time. In society, they could be seen as complements, each reaching mutual understanding through their acceptance of their varied use of the imagination.

The social acceptance of reaching across this divide would then encourage other individuals that it is, not only acceptable, but possible to reside in these two spheres

simultaneously. Individuals would not feel the pressure of having to choose only one, belief in religion or belief in science, and through this they may relieve some of their personal dissonance. They could utilize these two kinds of imagination with different goals in mind, but still use both. Thus, by viewing these disciplines through the lens this paper suggests, there would be a lessening of both interpersonal, as well as personal, conflicts concerning the issue.

There are many possible ways this could potentially be seen in society. For instance, within the context of ministry, those ministering to scientists, may be able to adjust their counseling to fit the individual, shifting the kind of imagination used from the kind usually expected, the narrative, to the pragmatic. In this way, the minister may be able to communicate effectively, expecting what kind of mindset his or her audience resides in. Likewise, in the academic or research setting, scientists may be able to better cross disciplines, studying interactions between their own scientific field, and that of religion or religious belief. By understanding the narrative mindset and form of imagination, these scientists may be able to use this kind of imagination in tandem with their own pragmatic mindset to research these other topics and how they may relate to their field. In the clinical setting, practitioners may also be to use this kind of communication to better treat their patients. If the patient is one who is unsatisfied with the purely empirical or scientific input, they may require counseling that utilizes the narrative imagination, appealing to their belief that there is, in fact, another world in which these kinds of diseases do not run so rampant, where the desires of health and happiness may be finally met adequately. This cannot be given to them if the practitioner refuses to utilize and appeal to the narrative imagination in addition to the pragmatic.

Conclusion

Though this paper, I have shown that both the scientific and the religious share the use of the imagination in its function of world building. The difference between them lies not in their different faculties, but through different uses of the same faculty. The religious uses Bruner's narrative mindset and imagination, creating worlds based in subjective experience of desire, to discover the potential of a world beyond this one. The scientific uses the pragmatic mindset and imagination, creating paradigmatic worlds objectively, with the community of science, basing them on the realities of this earthly world. Individuals who are separated between these realms have the ability, once they recognize the differences between their mindsets and uses of imagination, to communicate more effectively across the divide, thus reducing conflict externally. This then would likely spread to an internal reaction, allowing individuals in society to be accepting of both of these, thus reducing conflict internally.

References

- Bruner, J. (1987). *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gendler, T. (2011, March 14). Imagination (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). Retrieved from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/imagination/>
- Green, G. (1989). *Imagining God*. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, Publishers.
- Kuhn, T. S. (2012). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lewis, C. S. (2014). *The Pilgrim's Regress*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- Lewis, C. S. (2012). *Till We Have Faces*. New York, NY: Mariner Books.
- Shapin, S. (2015, January 20). The Virtue of Scientific Thinking. Retrieved from <http://bostonreview.net/steven-shapin-scientism-virtue>
- Weber, M. (1946). *Essays in Sociology*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.