Beyond Two Books: Metaphors For The Relationship Between Science And Religion In The 21st Century

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Outline

• Introduction
  – Context of course
  – Barbour’s typology
  – History of Two Books metaphor

• The Metaphors:
  1. Space and Earth
  2. The Ladder
  3. Bipartisan Politics
  4. PC vs Mac
  5. Hardware-Software

• Conclusions

• Acknowledgements
Introduction

• **University of Illinois Springfield**
  - Established 1969
  - Approximately 5,000 students
  - Public liberal arts college of Illinois
  - Tradition of upper-division geneds
Science and Religion in the Western Tradition

— No prerequisites
— Approximately 20 students per term
— First offered in 2004

• Plato, *Timaeus*
Barbour’s Typology

- Conflict
- Dialogue
- Integration
- Parallels
- Separation
- Spiritual
- Material
- Biblical

New Synthesis

The Two Books Metaphor

• Book of God’s Works: Nature
• Book of God’s Words: Scripture

• God is the Author of Truth, so...
  – the Books cannot conflict
  – Science and religion work together
History of Two Books Metaphor

• Used by the Church Fathers and Early Scientists

• Used today in Christian philosophy and theology

• Limitations

• Deconstructionism
  – can we know the author’s intent?
Digital Age: End of Books?

“On average, Americans ages 15 to 24 spend almost two hours a day watching TV, and only seven minutes of their daily leisure time on reading.”

From *To Read or Not To Read* (Research Report #47), courtesy of the National Endowment for the Arts © 2007.
Other Popular Metaphors

• Warfare (Dawkins)
  – Conflict
• NOMA (Gould)
  – Independent
• Bridge (CTNS)
  – Dialogue
• Spiral (Metanexus)
  – Integration
Class Assignment


- Class discussion of history and demise

- Students brainstorm possible new metaphors

- Group project: research one metaphor, write term paper and present group poster
Group Poster Session
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students’ Metaphors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Earth and Space (we are a part of nature, while religion is distant)</td>
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<td>Net or Ladder (vertical and horizontal interconnected)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bipartisan political system (similar goals, different methods)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PC vs. Mac (different operating systems, can network together)</td>
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<td>Yin/Yang (constant flow, separate, equal)</td>
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<td>Hardware and Software (observable nature, religion as a guide)</td>
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<td>Celebrities and the Masses</td>
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<td>Interconnected triangles in a circle of Truth</td>
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<td>Modern Marriage (equal, united)</td>
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<td>Apples and Oranges (different flavors, both fruit—make salad?)</td>
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<td>Developmental Stages of Humans (grow beyond metaphors to holism)</td>
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<td>Levees (science and religion fill in each other’s gaps)</td>
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<td>G.U.T. (grand unifying theory of physics—we’ll eventually know all)</td>
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1. Space and Earth

- Earth is like science – direct interaction
  - “how” questions, quantifiable, technology
- Space is like religion – provides context
  - few experience first hand
  - “see” through the “telescope” of Scripture
  - “why” questions, mystery
- Dialogue and Integration

2. The Ladder

- Two parts of a ladder
  - Vertical supports-religion
  - Horizontal rungs-science

- Integrated whole helps humanity closer to God

- Example of quantum view of light

3. Bipartisan Politics

• Two parties
  – Different methods
  – Same goals

• Republicans-conservative (religion?)

• Democrats-liberal (science?)
  – Religion often the most important factor in choosing a political party

• Complementary and Conflict

4. PC vs Mac

- Two types of computer systems competing in the global market (Conflict)
- Different operating systems and different functions (Independent)
- Both are computers, with similar software and uses (Dialogue)
- Superficial differences—can run both operating systems on one computer (Integration)

http://www.themesiphone.com/iphone-wallpaper/technology-wallpaper/pc-vs-mac
5. Hardware-Software

• Hardware: religion
• Software: science


• Different components analogous to different areas of science and religion
• Some form of Dialogue/Integration: separate but work together

Evaluation

• Some metaphors more flexible than others
  – They can be used to illustrate many different interactions between science and religion (PC vs. Mac, )

• Some metaphors more explanatory
  – Hardware-software

• Some metaphors more biblical
  – Earth-Space (Ps 19)
  – Ladder (Gen 28)
Conclusions

• Five new metaphors to relate science and religion based upon modern culture
  – Emphasizes human effort rather than divine revelation
  – Tend toward cooperation between science and religion
• Can they last as long as the Two Books (>2,600 years)?
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