

New Frontiers Program Exploration Traveling Fellowship Grant

Abstract

In “The two cultures and the scientific revolution”, C.P. Snow (1959) described the chasm between pure and applied science, on the one hand, and the arts and humanities, on the other. Snow was concerned that the complete lack of understanding between the two “cultures” would hamper the spread of the scientific/industrial revolution from rich nations to poor. Because of his conviction that this revolution had made lives longer and more comfortable for people of developed nations, he forcefully argued that the two intellectual cultures must be bridged – the sooner the better.

The gap between these two cultures, of course, still exists. Meanwhile, the arts are neglected in primary and secondary schools. Further, the science vocabulary of adults in the U.S. appears to be so poor that a scientific theory is considered suspect simply because it is ‘just a theory’. Such problems may create increased competition between the two cultures. A probable result would be short-sighted prescriptive measures that are at best worthless and at worst dangerous to the mission of bridging the two cultures. A better approach may be to examine interdisciplinary fields where this gap seems less wide, for clues to a bridge.