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Identifying Patterns

Faith in Science and Religion

In Frederick Grinnell’s critical analysis in The Everyday Practice of Science, he develops the steps researchers explore in scientific studies. Grinnell explains how scientists extrapolate information to make new discoveries. They consider their instincts and diverge from the standard scientific method. He believes that scientists cannot simply rely on the linear model -- “the path from hypothesis to discovery.” (Grinnell, 4). Grinnell breaks down the thoughts of scientific intuition into five different components of discovery, credibility, integrity, consent, and faith. The first four ideas are logical when researchers explore unchartered territories. However, faith seems to act against the groundwork scientists try to inspire. Faith is commonly identified in a religious scenario. Yet, its definition states that it is a belief in anything, as a code of ethics, standards of merit, etc. Science and religion have always differed on issues in which neither side will surrender. Grinnell acknowledges this division in science and religion and challenges that faith provides a common ground. Faith affects research in science just as it determines religious beliefs.

Nature’s natural landscape changes with seasons and time periods. Researchers study the changes to contemplate whether new antibiotics are possible. Yet, where does faith come into this equation? This answer requires an appreciation of the patterns researchers conclude in science. They trust that in faith, “there is an Order of Nature” (Grinnell,168) that will create new hypotheses and beneficial results. All researchers understand this structure and evaluate nature’s patterns to decide if a discovery appears credible. Scientific faith reveals the truth in a problem. Grinnell addresses truth as either capital “T” Truth or little “t” truth. (Grinnell, 11). Capital “T” signifies that there is no further experience or research to change concepts, while little “t” explains concepts as we now understand them. (Grinnell, 11). Faith in terms of science falls into little “t” truth. Although, nature’s sequences arrange for these new ideas, they still are not permanently set. Remarkably, the order of nature can always evolve. Therefore, researchers need to capture faith and hope that they identify it in their observations about nature’s pattern.

Different from faith in science, faith in the religious community establishes capital “T” Truth. The community accepts the religious thoughts and debates others who question its beliefs. Religion’s lack of evidence makes its argument more difficult to welcome. Yet, its commitment represents the undeniable faith in its passion.

“The way things are,” (Grinnell, 161) Grinnell believes, associates science with religion. Religious activists become furious when issues on abortion and stem cell research interest examiners. The idea that humans will be “playing God and tampering with God’s will,” (Grinnell, 159) heats the religious community. Yet, scientists appreciate the value in studying the effects of each issue. The religious community does not imagine a person holding the power to decide another’s life. The scientific and religious faith desires the other to question their logical reasonings. The people do not see any similarities in their outlooks. Nevertheless, Grinnell acknowledges their different reasons, but realizes their similarities in their thought processes. He feels that science provides technology where religion maintains the core values that should be completed (Grinnell, 177).

The controversy between science and religion benefits both the scientific and religious communities. Their thoughts balance each other and motivate individuals to work for their chosen community. The people study each aspect of the issue providing creative and reasonable answers to questions. This idea is a concept that Grinnell borrows from Neil Bohr, “Complementarity.” Complementarity is when individuals’ perspectives change, but the identity of the object remains fixed (178). This approach allows researchers to comprehend the entirety of a question. Science and religion both raise interesting questions to identify the other’s flaws. However, individuals examine these questions and make new discoveries.

One example in the complementarity of viewpoints is the different types of geographical maps. Grinnell discusses how specific maps represent certain geographical data. Each may be correct, but without the knowledge from other maps the geographical features are incomplete. For instance, a road map of a certain location expresses the different streets in the area. Yet, maps that study resolution, topography and points of interest interpret a different view of the same location. Both are right, but use varying tools to arrive at a specific conclusion. Independently, their arguments may be completely different, and might receive skepticism from the other’s argument. It is only when researchers evaluate the different maps together that they acquire a more descriptive and useful meaning. Thus, Grinnell’s connection with science and religion constructs a valuable argument.

Grinnell’s viewpoints are logical because they evaluate both sides of the issue. He makes a strong argument in the ways that science and religion work off each other. Yet, I believe he might be misguided with his thoughts on the religious community. Many individuals refuse to consider any scientific evidence about controversial issues. These narrow-minded people believe that the almighty God is the only answer to the evolution of man. The religious community accepts the capital “T” Truth that it reads in its religious scriptures. I question how the complementarity of viewpoints motivates researchers to produce experiments since the religious community will not change their beliefs. Religious faith overrides the credibility demanded in scientific findings. Substantial answers remain unknown in religion. These dilemmas cause me to ponder how much the scientific and religious communities can actually balance each other.

On the other hand,I agree that each community has its own faith. Faith is commonly tied with religion, but it can be equally important in science. Science operates on the patterns of nature. These sequences allow researchers to hypothesize and come to certain conclusions. Whether these conclusions are correct or incorrect is insignificant because they inspire an idea that another person might expand on in the future.

Grinnell fails to stress the use of technology which helps determine human thoughts. Many topics arise because researchers are capable of manufacturing tools that setup the experiment. Faith might not help researchers unless they possess the proper instruments to study a hypothesized reaction. Unlike religion, science gains new devices to acquire deeper results. These results are important and keep the little “t” truth constantly changing. Faith motivates researchers to follow intuitions based on the technology that is currently available.

Grinnell’s focus on faith establishes a unique relationship between science and religion. Many people confine themselves to one side of the issue and deeply resent the other. On the contrary, Grinnell appreciates both aspects of thoughts. He believes that the constant debacles harmonize the opposing views and allow for new improvements. I would not argue on Grinnell’s well thought-out comparison. I would only contribute that other factors like technology might also develop new improvements. Regardless, Grinnell craftily expands from the linear model individuals commonly categorize with science. He demands that individuals remember the instinctive thought processes research needs. Also, Grinnell relates that every answer is not always extracted while addressing a problem. Instead, he hopes people will have faith that their commitment in a study will lead to a credible advancement.