

“Art upsets, science reassures” (Braque). Analyze and evaluate this claim
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At first view this statement can mean that art is not beautiful, and that science is- this view is the opposite of the general view of art and science that people hold. To average people art has the stereotype of being beautiful and soothing; science on the other hand holds the power for destruction. Art is something that is highly subjective and extremely hard to define- yet most objects can be differentiated by most people as being objects of art or mere simple objects. What is to be known is that there are various forms of art- such as paintings, poetry and music. Because of the complexity of the definition of art; the assumption that the reader knows what art is will be done and the definition will not be given. Science is a broad subject as well- there are various types of sciences fitting in three categories, natural sciences, social sciences and mathematics. The sciences that will be observed in the analysis of the given claim are the social sciences, and the natural sciences; as they are different from each other yet are still sciences. Mathematics is only a series of different usages of numbers to resolve problems- which is not a topic known by many although it is still very crucial to our society; thus why it will not be used to analyze the given claim. The final point to this introduction is that the words upsetting and reassuring are very broad as well- the word “upsets” gives a connotation of negative feelings, and the word “reassuring” gives a connotation of positive feelings. For this reason various feelings that are categorized as positive and negative will be discussed in relation to the analysis of the given claim.

The claim is much too general to be precisely correct; at this point it can be said that it is only partially correct. That is because there is art that upsets and science facts that reassure people, just as there are science facts that upset people and art that reassure people. The common trait that science and art share at this point is that both invoke feelings in people.

As mentioned before art can have a positive as well as a negative effect on people. To take superficial examples: a comedic play with a good moral such as the fables of Jean de la Fontaine- can be positive messages that invoke reassurance. On the other hand play with a heavy theme, such as betrayal and confusion can be very destabilizing to the audience and can upset them.

As the given claim is about people in general, the most popular respectable art will be discussed in the analysis of the given claim- the Theater. The reason for which movies hasn't been chosen is that it is made no longer for art but for money (in the most part). Theater is used in many various ways to convey all sorts of messages and feelings. The two plays that will be analyzed in regards to the given claim are: Blood wedding by Garcia Lorca and The Marriage of Figaro by Beaumarchais.

The first play to be discussed is Garcia Lorca's Blood Wedding. The story of a man and a woman that were lovers and refuse to let each other go; despite a wedding coming soon for the woman (the man married another). The play incites at many times confusion in the public as they do not know much- this can be viewed as disturbing. After all most art that is incomprehensible to a certain individual is frustrating, confusing and thus unappreciated- all negative feelings that can be considered as “upsetting”. This play contains no happiness, or positive message, it is a pure tragedy made to incite sadness in the audience. The lovers never get to be together for good, even though bride runs from

the wedding- and her lover, as well as her meant to be groom kill each other, leaving her alone. Thus there is no positive message in this play, only a led heavy one- which leaves the public uneasy, disturbed. It is necessary to know that this play is based on a real event, as most art is supposed to represent a certain aspect of reality. If art is upsetting, it maybe because it represents reality in an awful way or because it represents a harsh and hard reality- as is the case here.

The second and last play Beaumarchais' The Wedding of Figaro is the opposite of the past two plays mentioned. It is a comedic representation of the 18th century aristocracy. It is the story of a man a servant (Figaro) that wants to marry his colleague female servant (Suzanne)- but won't be given the permission until the Count is given the right to "deflower" Suzanne. The play is thus the battle of Figaro, a low class man but with education- to obtain his right to marry Suzanne without losing any of her virginal aspect, against his chief. He does so by making the count the ridicule of the whole play, and thus dropping his social level. This sort of revolt gave hope, strength, and happiness to the common public which consisted at the time of a majority of 3rd class people. To add with those positive feelings, the comedy that reigned in the play inspired happiness and joy. With these feelings invoked by the play it is impossible to say that the play was upsetting. The irony is it was upsetting to the aristocracy and the monarchy, leading Louis XVI to forbid the play being played, in fear of it inciting revolution- Beaumarchais fight strongly for it, it played, and a revolution occurred that made France what it is today.

These are two examples which portray two extremes, yet there are many other plays that convey other feelings which are either reassuring or upsetting, or even both. Of course the effects of the plays on emotions that have been discussed have been generalized as there are many exceptions to the feelings that they invoke depending on the people. In the Marriage of Figaro for instance the higher class people were very unhappy with it- it upset them. But I cannot think of someone that would not feel upset by the tragedy seen in Blood Wedding. It is possible though that there be an appreciation for the style of the play- which can be reassuring in some way.

As for the sciences' role in this analysis; the study of psychology as a social science, and Medicine as a natural science will be analyzed in regards to the given claim. One of the hardest things to be studied is the human brain and its functioning. The more we discover about it, the more we can understand ourselves scientifically- although it is regarded as a soft science; whereby everything is not concrete- theories are formed but can be disproved, and tend to do so often.

The main way in which psychology can be reassuring is by providing us with healings to the pains that are inside. Pains that we would think are abnormal, that would cause actions that are unacceptable by society. Freud was the first one to observe hysterics and came up with the free association technique where patients would speak about everything on their mind and be miraculously healed. Yet as one speaks and reveals their darkest secrets it maybe upsetting to be around a person that would hear everything that is deemed confidential to you- that someone knows so much about you can be worrying, uncomfortable, otherwise known as upsetting.

Though there are many different perspectives to psychology (the humanist, behaviorist, cognitive, psychodynamic) and many psychologists with different theories, and applying each other's theories- there is a great variety of therapy available- which is

reassuring; as there is most probably a perspective that would get someone out of their mental problem. Finally the disturbing aspect of psychology as a science is that; he who will manage to one day understand the mind fully will be able to control men and women as he wishes. This is a highly disturbing thought.

Medicine is a reassuring science in general- it works to save the lives of men and women, or make them better. Though certain remedies, for example against gangrene involve a forever lasting scare- an amputation. This idea might be disturbing to some, but less so than that of dying because of gangrene. Science has also improved our life style by having a higher level of technology- things are much easier today then they used to be, especially communication: this is pleasing, relaxing, helping,- all positive feelings, thus it can be said that in this perspective science is reassuring. But one must not forget the Atom bomb, biotechnological weapons, and other arms of destruction. These are not pleasing at all- they are more upsetting then they are relieving- they incite destruction, chaos and death- all aspects of life that are feared and disliked. Because of that, one that is ethical must agree that they are upsetting. Even though weapons are said to maintain peace in the end they seldom do. They may keep peace, but it is a forced one- as in Hiroshima, during WW2- in my opinion Japan surrendered only to avoid having more deaths.

In conclusion the statement is right to a certain extent, but it should sound more as such: “art and science have the power to both upset and reassure”.

Word count: 1575 words.