

“Science is the Best Route to Truth”

Evaluate with references to The Arts

This claim can only be assessed after the definition of key words in it have been decided, and realising that what we are debating is that whether science is the best route to truth and not the only route. The science referred to here is the natural sciences, which are based on observation, research and experimentation. Science is based on inductive proof, therefore it cannot be absolute, and this raises a few problems such as can something that is not certain can lead to truth, which is certain. The truth in discussion is the correspondent theory of truth, which is that absolute truth is out there; we just have not discovered it or have reached it yet. However scientific theories arise from them been verified and accepted by the scientific community so they are therefore coherent in truth. The other route to truth that is an option for discussion here is The Arts. These can also possibly lead to truth but they may not be the best route. Within the topic best refers to the most efficient, easiest and fastest route to truth.

Before deciding whether science is the best route to truth, the truth that science can offer has to be examined. As stated before science is inductive and based on the probability of a certain event occurring. When science proves an event or discovers a new phenomenon in falls into two out of the three categories of truth that being either coherent or pragmatic. It can be coherent because it has to be accepted by a group of people and it can be pragmatic because like quantum theory when it was introduced explained something but was rejected by many people because of what it predicted. So science can offer us truth that is certain but it cannot give or offer us absolute truth of the correspondent type. There is the possibility that a scientific truth can be exactly the same as a correspondent theory but because we do not know any correspondent truths it would seem impossible to reach it. This truth is an invisible finish line that we cannot know if we have crossed or not, so this leads to the question of what type of truth is it that we are after. Are the ‘lesser’ types of truth enough to sustain us, and are they what we are after? This need to be contrasted to the truth that The Arts can offer, because if they can offer a correspondent truth then are they not the better route because of the higher level of truth. The Arts many not fulfil the requirement set out earlier but the goal that they achieve is greater than what science can offer, therefore by outcome art is the best route.

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Achieving correspondent truth in science is something that I believe is possible only when we have answered every question that science offers us and no longer have unanswered questions. Correspondent truth is an idea that the truth is out there, we just have not found it yet; correspondent truth is absolute and leaves no room for argument or contradiction. This type of truth has to this day has only been found in mathematics but some do believe that it can be found in other areas of knowledge such as history etc. The only reason that mathematics has this type of truth is that it is based on axioms and once they are assumed correct then the rest of maths follows. Can science & art, which currently have no axioms, have correspondent truths? It would appear that it does not because if scientific logic is traced back to its roots these roots can be debated. However if it was agreed that the big bang theory was what started the universe and before that there was nothing and this was made into an axiom then it would be possible to obtain correspondent truth in science. If a math axiom was that $1+1=11$ then we would have different truths in maths but they still would be correspondent truths. So because science cannot give us correspondent truths then it is not the type of truth that we are looking for. The route to truth that science or art can offer will then have to be one that leads to a pragmatic or coherent truth and not a correspondent truth. If axioms are what is needed to obtain correspondent truth then we could eventually agree on theories of the universe and receive our truth then. However axioms only produce certainty and this certainty does not guarantee truth. All axioms can do is give us a chance of getting close to the truth. We have no definite way of finding correspondent truth or are put on the path to discovering it, if we do manage to get there then it would seem impossible to know when the absolute truth has been obtained. This is why it should not be correspondent truth that we are looking for.

There is truth to be found in art, Just as a historian can place certain slants on what he writes about a historical event the artist can do so as well. This also works in other areas of knowledge; plays can be done on historical and futuristic events, accurate maps can be drawn of countries and moral and ethical issues can be debated and discussed in The Arts. However the truth that these works place forward do not fall precisely into a category of truth. They are not correspondent and if only the artist accepts the truth offered in his/her work then it cannot by definition be coherent because a group has to accept it for it to be coherent. This leaves pragmatic truth as

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the only option that it could be, along with coherent, providing that a group of people accept it. Now we know that both mediums can offer truth through pragmatic and coherent theory the question remain which one is the best.

Just like many other areas of our lives art can lead us to truth. However finding truth in art is not and easy and direct as finding it in science. This is because the truth that could be represented in art is open to interpretation and the ways in which we interpret it affect the truth that could be found in it. If some art is interpreted literally then it is most likely that no truth will be found in it. This immediately poses an answer to our question about which is the better route to truth art or science. If art if open to interpretation then finding truth in art is dependent on the skill of the person involved. Another important point with art is that many times the person viewing/experiencing the art is often unaware of the truth that it may be conveying to them, to them it is just an aesthetic pleasure. Art is dependent on the person viewing it to deliver us truth so it would seem that this may not be the best route for this reason, also because the definition of what is art is so loosely based it is hard to analyse everything that we could call art and that many pieces of art are extremely similar.

The claim that science is the best route to truth does not have a definite answer, but from the above discussion an answer can be put forward. Both science and art can lead to the same types of truth and both science and art may be incorrect in this truth that they present. I believe that out of the two options science is the best route because it is more direct and the finding present by one person would be similar to the finding of another person doing the same experiment. Two artists could both present the same paly but there would be two distinct versions of the play. Science is the best route to truth because of its direct nature and it ability to be accepted in more places by more people than a piece of art would.