

“Different cultures have different truths.” “A truth is that which can be accepted universally”. What are the implications for knowledge of agreeing with these opposing statements?

“Different cultures have different truths.” “A truth is that which can be accepted universally”. By reformatting the word truth within the question to change it makes the question more comprehensible and more accurate. Instead of different cultures have different truths it can be interpreted as different cultures have different beliefs. The same can be applied to a truth is that which can be universally accepted. A more appropriate term instead of truth with still a similar meaning is a fact is that which can be accepted universally. I believe that it not necessarily how well proven a statement is but how widely accepted it is. As stated before many individual cultures have their own truths, which are only accepted within one culture but may be rejected by the outside world. Today’s world is a world of opinion and generally what is considered the “truth” is what is accepted by the majority, beliefs of a minority are rejected and therefore do not have a very long lifespan. I believe that it is true that there are differences in beliefs and truths from culture to culture but this can only be said if a certain truth is looked at from a global point of view. Many cultural truths don’t become universal truths because different cultures promote different ideas. This leads to that the acceptance of a statement can be deprived in one culture but promoted in another.

Before we can even make a statement about a truth being accepted universally we have to define universally first of all. Hundertwasser said that every person lives in their mind and their mind is their universe. The environment they are in is just a physical place to be but the real life is lived in their minds. This drastically changes the statement a truth is that which can only be accepted universally. Judging by this, a persons believe can be considered his own truth because that’s what satisfies him. “Different cultures have different truths.” Is subjective, since a person lives in a society where everyone around him believes the same thing it becomes a truth because his society accepts it. “A truth is that which can be accepted universally”, is objective and means that it has to be accepted from a global point of view, unless if it is looked at like Hundertwasser describes it. the word universally accepted does not have to mean a statement has to be correct or be accepted by everyone but the majority has to believe in it. Ideas promoted by minorities do not survive. This can be related to political parties. A small party is not taken as seriously as a big party. In Switzerland “die grünen” do not have much influence even though they promote very good ideas, but are dominated by the majority, which consists of the svp and fdp. Since in today’s world is dominated by democracy, the majority counts. Small cultures may find the correct truth but their statements won’t be accepted even if they are correct.

In the knowledge of history bias views play a major role. An example of this is the Cuban missile crisis. The ongoing struggle between communism and capitalism created enormous tensions between Russia and America. Both country’s strongly promoted their ideology and

emphasized each others weaknesses. When missiles were positioned on Cuba Khrushchev stated that these weapons were strictly for defensive means and for the protection of the American imperial threat. In America however, these weapons weren't seen as defensive but as a purely offensive structure in order to attack America. "our aim was only to defend Cuba. Everybody saw how the American imperialists were sharpening their knives and threatening Cuba with a massed attack." (H. Khrushchev speaking to the supreme soviet, 13 December 1962) Khrushchev presented this as the truth to the Russian people while John F. Kennedy stated the exact opposite. "Whereas the peace of the world and the security of the united states and of all American states are endangered by reason of the establishment of an offensive military capability in Cuba." (proclamation by president Kennedy of a blockade of Cuba, 23 October 1962) Both nations made bias statements about each other making it unclear which one is the "true" statement. Both cultures had different truths; however, after the crisis was over the universally accepted truth was that Russia intended not to defend Cuba but to attack America. This is considered the universal truth because the majority accepts it. The judgment the people made was also influenced by the background of both country's. Since Russia was very aggressive towards its own population as well as the outside world the rest of the world doubted their credibility.

A perfect example of universal acceptance is the field of mathematics. Unlike history, mathematics consists of solid rules and guidelines, which leaves no room for speculation or bias views. The rules of mathematics are the same everywhere in the world and therefore cannot be interpreted differently. A Person cannot say that the square root of 36 is 43 and expect his theory to be accepted. Mathematics leaves no opportunity for one to make bias statements; which proves the more widely accepted a "truth" is the more solid it is and the less bias statements can be made. With math it is the same concept that the majority believes in it which leaves it unquestioned. However, math intellectuals do not agree with this system, the average mathematician uses the base ten system, which originates from the human having ten fingers. But math philosophers such as Einstein do not believe in this one example is Einstein's theory of relativity, which disagrees with the widely used base ten system. however was proven right during numerous experiments. In order to understand the universe the base ten system is too simple, but since the majority accepts it, it is commonly used among humans. Einstein's theory also shattered Newton's laws of physics, but the majority still believes in Newton's laws therefore we consider it a truth even though it might not be correct in all aspects.

In ethics the main controversy revolves around the existence of a god. Unlike in math where there is a universal acceptance the question of divine intervention differs from culture to culture. Different cultures believe in different things, for example a Buddhist culture believes that there is no god while a catholic who grew up in a strict catholic family will believe in divine creation. It is what his family believes therefore the majority of people who he respects, which then

makes it a truth for him. A catholic also goes to church with other Catholics, which share the same faith and may live in a strong catholic community in which they all have the same believes; therefore making it a universal truth for his community. Universal truth does not necessarily have to be applied to everyone applied it is always a question of what the person considers as universal. However since so many different cultures have different believes there are a lot of bias views making it impossible to become a universal truth but making it a cultural truth. Through different well-respected and established views both cultures disagree with each other making it impossible for an agreement therefore making it impossible for it to become a universal truth. With it not being a universal truth does not make it incorrect but restricted to a certain population. An ethic truth is established through a set of beliefs which satisfy the person and giving him an explanation for unprovable occurrences, which then gives him/she the perception of truth.

Despite the examples above, which are considered new age universal truth many universal accepted ideas have mislead people for centuries. If something is universally accepted it does not have to mean it has to necessarily be correct. For many centuries the world believed the earth was flat. This information was passed down through word of mouth as well as written documents. In the modern world we know that this is impossible but in the 12<sup>th</sup> century this was universally accepted and therefore considered a truth. Truth is by definition conformity to fact or actuality. This example proves the statement “A truth is that which can be accepted universally” Wrong because even though it was accepted universally it still was not valid. Therefore the truths in different cultures maybe correct but they do not survive or are taken serious because many people are misled or do not accept it which causes doubt and criticism. These considerations lead to the fact that bias has a major impact and is significant in creating different truths in different cultures, but in some cases a universal acceptance is needed to conform an individuals statement or theory.

## Bibliography

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