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Theory of Knowledge

Dr. Rossi

Out-of-Class Essay #1

Word Count:

Question Selected: 2) “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” and “A truth is that which can be accepted universally” are two very opposing statements which can rely on each other or can be complete contradictions of each other. There are numerous amounts of cultural aspects that affect the definitions of true statements to each culture but there are also so many truths that are regarded globally by all people, from all different cultures combined together. Both statements need each other to define truth in a way that it doesn’t end up being false and doesn’t end up being dependent of everybody’s belief. These two quotes separate truth into two parts: cultural truth and global truth. Different opinions can either agree to one quote, both quotes, or neither of the quotes.

“Different cultures have different truths” means that each culture has different truth statements that are based on its societal aspects. These societal aspects such as religion, politics, geographical location, language, etc, influence the truths that are applied and used by the people of that culture. For example, religious authority such as the Catholic Church can affect and control actions taken by their members such as the use of contraceptives. This builds a truth which is that all dedicated members of the Catholic Church and Religion should

not use contraceptives. Is this a truth that is universal and that can be applied to all people from all religions? No, because only Catholics *should not* use contraceptives. This is only a truth that can be projected towards Catholic Church members.

“A truth is that which can be accepted universally” means that true statements are agreed by all people of Earth, so all cultures combined. Since everybody is involved in this truth, the true statement needs to be as objective as possible and therefore needs to be independent from everybody’s beliefs, since it is public. For example, a few centuries ago, people thought that the Earth was flat. They had studied this fact many times, they had tried to prove it many times, and in the end, everybody who was involved in the study of this fact ended up persuading everyone else that the Earth was flat. Now, this statement didn’t necessarily have to be true, but it was true to everybody because it was everybody’s belief. Truth cannot be true for me and not true for you. It has to be true to everybody so in this case, at the time, the fact that this Earth was flat was truth for *everybody*. Of course, in the future, people contradicted this statement, and it became false because now everybody knows that the Earth is round. Now the universal truth is this fact: that the Earth is round. However, centuries ago the *universal* truth was that the Earth was flat.

It is very contradicting and difficult to believe both quotes because the quote about having different truths in different cultures contradicts the statement that truths cannot be true for me and not true for you. This is because there are aspects that are connected to beliefs that are involved in different cultures that affect the kinds of truths that are followed by the people of those cultures. However, the universal truths can be more objective than cultural truths because they deal with facts and information that everyone has to agree with which are most likely to be scientific or dealing with the natural world rather than with morals and values.

Truth is difficult to attain and difficult to deliver. Truth is difficult to attain because the world is complicated; the further you go, along the paths of physics, economics, logic, etc, the

stranger it gets. Here is a list of important things where our grasp of the truth is not firm enough to make reliable predictions: inflation, unemployment, stock prices, love, acoustics, influenza, and speciation. The truth would be hard enough to see even if other people weren't routinely trying to hide it. Politicians, businessmen, lovers, siblings, and professional colleagues routinely tell us things that are not true. Untruths become lies when spoken knowingly. Unwilful untruth is just ignorance and is to be overcome, like a river in one's path or a sore muscle. Wilful untruth is the telling of lies; it should be fought with passion and without mercy, ripped flesh from bones and left to rot in the cold light of day.

As you can see, different cultures obtain different truths based on their cultural aspects but the world obtains global truths that depend on the global aspects that relate to all the people of the planet. You need all of these kinds of truths in order to create *the* truth that can be defined from all three theories of truth: the pragmatic theory of truth, the coherence theory of truth, and the correspondence theory of truth. Many perspectives can argue that only one quote can be stated, that both quotes can be stated, or that none should be stated. Nevertheless, both quotes can apply to the truth that people live with, but the opinion of which atmosphere of truth really exists is up to the person's beliefs.

Bibliography

- ❖ Class-Notes
- ❖ http://dir.yahoo.com/Society_and_Culture/
 - Used for list of cultural and societal aspects.