**1: Within an area of knowledge, is it more important to have credibility or power? Discuss with reference to the natural sciences and one other area of knowledge.**

There is a massive amount of pseudo-scientific "facts" that we are exposed to whilst browsing the internet. You may have heard that we only use %10 of our brains. With reductionism proving popular, such simple claims spread and affect many, including me, signaling that they are surprisingly powerful in influencing individuals or society. Yet, since they lack an adequate scientific background, such claims fail to gain credibility. In natural sciences, credibility is the degree of trust and consensus on a knowledge claim provided by a particular segment of a community, usually the experts in the field. The more convenient a knowledge claim to the scientific method, the more credible it is in essence. In my other AOK, arts, credibility is the state of being backed by an art critic, curator, or magazine since they tend to have a deeper insight into artistic works. Nowadays, the credibility discussion is more crucial than ever, considering the credibility crisis in daily life. We should question the importance of credibility and power, as attributes of knowledge claims, for producing, recording, owning, sharing, and transferring knowledge. Having power determines the effects of a knowledge claim on the public, depending upon factors such as fame or intelligibility. In contrast, credibility affects the falsification/ verification or recognition of knowledge, making it more important, which will be discussed in this essay.

When I was preparing my presentation on evolution for my Biology HL class, I came across the works of Alfred Russel Wallace. To my surprise, I found out that even though he has contributed to the evolution theory quite a lot, his name is barely known. I even checked the IB Biology Curriculum to see whether his works are recognized. Unsurprisingly, the book "On the Origin of the Species" by Charles Darwin is the mere resource to consult. Later, I learned that while working on the Origin of the Species, Darwin received a 20-page letter from Alfred Russell Wallace in which he described the similarity of Darwin's discovery of the mechanism of "Natural Selection". Wallace had discovered the same law of nature entirely independently of Darwin. Wallace sent that letter to Darwin, asking for a review of his findings as a fellow scientist. The publication of this letter before Darwin's book could have caused Darwin's work to fall into the background and even be forgotten.

Despite the simultaneous discovery of two scientists, Darwin is given almost all the credit. The main reason for that, he had been working on the theory for two decades and collected more data than Wallace[[1]](#footnote-1), indicating that his work was more convenient with the scientific method. When it comes to producing scientific knowledge, credibility that depends on the scientific methods is the core of this AOK. Even though Wallace's discovery could not compete with Darwin's, he also did produce scientific knowledge because his research was acknowledged as credible years later. On the other hand, if a scientific paper is not credible, meaning it is not convenient with the universal and efficacious scientific method, the produced knowledge cannot be scientific; besides, the science community would not acknowledge it. Thus, there is almost no room for generating a knowledge claim without credibility within the framework of the natural sciences.

Another reason why Darwin was prioritized when giving credit for the evolution theory is his background. His grandfather Dr. Erasmus Darwin was a distinguished English scientist and was well-known by science communities[[2]](#footnote-2). Therefore, when Darwin presented a practical explanation for the phenomenon of evolution, his grandfather's scientific reputation gave him power, eventually making his knowledge claims powerful. Thus, his work had more power in drawing attention than Wallace's. This example indicates that being supported by influential people can be more important than having credibility in owning and sharing scientific knowledge. The same phenomenon is present in today's science community, as scientific journals have the utmost authority to decide which piece of scientific knowledge is accepted. Knowledge claims endorsed by recognized expertise, in this case, major journals of science such as Nature or the Cell, are likely to be perceived as credible and thus, to have more power among the public. Interestingly, the concept of credibility can become an element of power. Thus, one can argue that having power is more important than mere credibility for the initial confirmation, sharing, interpretation, organization, and even application of knowledge in the natural sciences. However, without the production of scientific knowledge, which depends on credibility, none of the above would be possible. Therefore, we can draw this conclusion from the aforementioned discussion: Credibility is more important than having power in natural sciences.

The idea that credibility contributes to a knowledge claim to have power is also apparent in art. After reading all about them in art magazines, when I first had the privilege of seeing Rodin's sculptures, they made me stop walking and talking with all their intricate details. Since then, Rodin has never failed to impress me and shaped my perspective on sculpting. It was not until I came across a magazine article about a modern sculpture by Salvatore Garau and his non-existing artwork that I started to question what the components of artwork are? Was it only the signature of the artist that makes a piece valuable? In his sculpture named "Io sono," Garau only used the "existence itself," as he puts it. Many art critics defined his attempt as a "breakthrough" and therefore gained colossal credibility. The art society has witnessed its influence on common people; hence its power has increased as it became more popular, eventually sold for $18000. Even though I would not say I liked the idea as a passionate Rodin follower, I had to accept that it was a powerful sculpture even though it physically does not exist. Therefore, in this context, having credibility is more important than having power in owning and sharing knowledge regarding the arts.

The opposite is true for Banksy, an anonymous artist who creates controversial pieces. His art is said to have power since it influences several people. He is not the only artist whose artworks’ power originates from breaking accepted conventions, such as using art as a tool for reflecting political issues. Graffiti, as a pioneer category of protest art, is often not supported by traditional art critics yet still influences public opinion. Graffiti art is usually easy to understand, leading a wider audience, thus, having more power. In fact, during the 1980s, many jurisdictions sought a way to reduce and eliminate graffiti from society because they were afraid of political revolution or degradation of society[[3]](#footnote-3). Some art critics referred to graffiti as “visual terror” and claimed it is not an artistic innovation but a type of public harassment[[4]](#footnote-4). Therefore, graffiti is an excellent example in terms of indicating "power with no credibility". Still, without the credibility provided by art authorities, graffiti art would not gain much recognition like Rodin’s sculptures.

In the previous counter-claim, I argued that one of the reasons why Wallace could not gain recognition as much as Darwin is because his work lacked power and thus, did not acknowledged by the credible science community immediately. In contrast, graffiti and Banksy's artworks proved to be powerful and gained recognition even though it was not backed by an art magazine or a critic, as such support would be contrary to graffiti’s rebellious nature. So perhaps, there is some merit in power with no credibility, depending on the particular area of knowledge in question. However, without acknowledgment from art authorities, such artworks that rely only on power would not be as famous as Rodin’s sculptures, for example. Yet, we do not know the details of specific graffiti artworks. Thus, credibility is more important than having power in arts, not for production, but for recording, owning, sharing, and transferring knowledge. Without those, the importance of producing an artwork would be underrecognized.

The relationship between power and credibility is complex. I thought that I myself had a definite answer when I first read the question. I could say confidently, "Having power is more important in natural sciences and arts," mainly because I have not thought about the actual mechanism of the science or art community. However, the more I thought about it, the more I began to ask myself, what makes a scientific claim or an artwork powerful? And the more I asked, the more I realized there is a realm beyond the credibility discussion. I have approached the issue through a double-sided inquiry in which I have discussed credibility with no power and power with no credibility for both areas of knowledge. In natural sciences, credibility is more important as it is the core requirement for knowledge production, whereas having power affects the recording, owning, sharing, and transferring of knowledge. In arts, despite the great importance of having the power to influence a large audience, credibility is what brings an artwork appreciation and sometimes prevents it from being forgotten. These two opposite practices, art and science, demonstrate that to build, transfer and share a reliable body of knowledge, it is more important to have credibility rather than sheer power.

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