

# Imagination

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Is Imagination More Important Than Knowledge? The French philosopher Simons Well wrote, " Imagination and fiction make up more than three quarters of our real life. " The more you think about this quote, the more you realize it is rather accurate. We are surrounded by the creative imaginations of millions of people. They intrude into our everyday lives, from the books we read, to the television we watch, to the design of the last building you saw. These manifestations of imagination have become a part of not just our lives, but of our culture.

This begs the question, how much of our lives and what we know of our lives depends on this capacity to imagine? According to Albert Einstein, " Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand. " I however, disagree with Mr.. Einstein. There Is an Intrinsic relationship between Imagination and knowledge, both relying upon the other's existence to develop new Ideas. Once Imagination and knowledge have been defined, their Interrelation can be more easily understood.

Without Imagination, humans would lack the ability to derive new ideas, but without prior knowledge, they would not know how to go about putting the new ideas into action. Every idea that imagination cogitates is based upon knowledge of another idea. The Romans, for example, borrowed the idea for their aqueducts from other ancient civilizations and improved upon it. The dependency between knowledge and imagination in determining new ideas is so complex, that neither can be deemed of greater importance than the other.

To better comprehend the complex relationship between Imagination and knowledge, one must first understand what they entail Individually. The Oxford Dictionary defines Imagination as " the faculty or action of forming new Ideas, or images or concepts of external objects not present to the senses". Imagination is the capability to conceive something new, but not entirely without precedent. Without this capability, humans would not have the mental capacity to derive anything new and thus would not be able to improve. Humanity without imagination could no longer be considered humanity, as we would essentially descend to the level of animals.

Knowledge is described by the Oxford Dictionary as " 1 . Facts, information, and skills acquired through experience oreducation; the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject. 2. Awareness or familiarity gained by experience of a fact or situation. " Note that both definitions expressly state the requirement of experience as a prior necessity. This suggests that you can't make something out of nothing, there has to be a platform on which to begin and off of which to expand. Existence. To begin, humans need imagination to acquire new knowledge.

Without imagination in thisrespect, humans wouldn't have the understanding that there is in fact more knowledge to be acquired. Even if this were not so, imagination would still be required to develop a method of obtaining the new knowledge. Imagination is also essential in the acceptance of new ideas. Humans need the capacity to imagine the possibility of something other than what they know exists, in order to accept the new knowledge. Now to consider the opposite side of the relationship: imagination's dependency on

knowledge. New ideas, the products of imagination, are improvements of existing ideas, or previous knowledge.

Inventors use their imagination to address a problem that they have happened upon in an attempt to resolve the issue. An article from The New Yorker by Malcolm Caldwell suggests that all inventors are actually attackers. "The tweaked inherits things as they are, and has to push and pull them toward some more nearly perfect solution." All new ideas are therefore based on a pre-existent notion. Knowledge of that notion and its flaws as well as how to improve upon its flaws are necessary to come up with a new idea that is in theory, better than the revised one.

A relatively well-known example of attackers in human history is the Romans. The Romans borrowed most of the ideas that most people now give them credit for from other ancient civilizations, notably the Greeks, Egyptians, Assyrian and Babylonians. One such improved upon invention that we use to this day would be plumbing. Roman aqueducts are renowned for their efficiency and ingeniousness, yet they were first used in Egypt, Assyria and Babylon. The Romans simply took an idea they coveted and improved upon it, using it to combat drought and water their crops.

The Roman's improvements eventually led to our version of plumbing, something indispensable in modern homes. The complexity of the interactions between imagination and knowledge are better understood after they have both been defined. Imagination is the capability to conceive a notion based upon pre-existent knowledge, whereas knowledge is obtained by imagination being allowed to improve upon existing ideas. The Romans

frequently improved upon pre-existing ideas borrowed from other civilizations, the results of which we still use today.

Imagination and Knowledge are like two parts to a ricer, but you can't tell which part of the circle is which. They are interdependent, each relying upon the other's existence to aide our society in thriving.