

# The educated imagination

Psychology



There are many theories as to how exactly humans, as a race, gain knowledge and how they apply it. The question has been asked ever since the dawn of man and to this day no solid answer has come about, but many different theories have been made. A theory that can fall under this category is Frye's theory as to whether or not an educated imagination will benefit us. Frye examines this theory through examining the three levels of the human mind. In terms of if an educated imagination would benefit the population and why we need it. The reason why we need an educated imagination is to express our selves not only through ordinary conversation and preaching but also to express our imagination with, "... the literary language of poems and plays and novels". Without the ability to transfer inner thoughts, ideas and overall imaginative premises onto paper, the rest of the world would be at a great loss not being able to experience the pure imaginative genius of those that take the time to transfer these ideas onto to paper for others to witness. Because People are gregarious by nature and therefore feel secure in groups. Unfortunate the majority of people are joining the group of the uneducated people tend to take the easy way out of most situations and when one does this the others follow. This is the safety of the mob, but it is one of the illusions of society many people fall into. Advertisers know this and try to lure you into buying their product by pandering to the basic human desires and with an uneducated imagination many people will be seduced by these advertisements and consequently bound by their gregarious nature tell there friends about it as well, this is influence, one the basic principals of mob rule. This is all junk food for the imagination and not what it is intended to do " The fundamental job of the imagination in ordinary life, then, is to produce, out of the society we have to live in, a vision of the

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society we want to live in." This requires opinion, and in mob rule there is no opinion; this is why we educated our imagination, so we may become individuals. The first of three levels of the mind laid out by Frye is the level of self-expression (awareness/consciousness). According to Frye " It's largely a language of nouns and adjectives". This level of the mind is concerned with what the reader can relate to. Reading is what you make out of it, not what the author sees. The reader won't want to read if they can't relate to the writing. You can't relate to sand or tree's because they don't respond to you. Frye expands upon the level of the mind stating that there is a difference between consciousness and awareness. You can be conscious and not aware of your surroundings and this all depends on two main things, " The emotions are unreasonable: for them it's what they like and what they don't like". In terms of science which does not use emotion when figuring out all aspects of the scientific field, it does not matter whether or not you like what you are studying or not, you are still going to study it. " We'd be naturally inclined to think that the arts follow the path of emotion, in contrast to the sciences. Up to a point they do, but there's a complicating factor". The complicating factor is the contrast between what the person likes and what they don't like. When reading, we truly tap into our emotions quite sparingly, and those times are in instances of identification, a sense of understanding and acceptance. We can't take literature entirely literally. When reading Macbeth, you would ask about the history of Scotland, and when you read Dickens, you should find qualities of Micawber in everyone, not just one person in particular. Literature isn't what you want, but what you build out of it. The second level of the mind is comprised of a " practical world...where actions speak louder than words. " This state allows a human to choose

between adapting to the current world and transforming it to self-interest. It deals with the same identification between what is desired and what is given, but in this level the individual can socially participate. This is where the individual uses what they are knowledgeable of whether it is science or art based in order to "create a world with a human shape" but this level is on a much more primitive scale than the previous. Frye describes it as, "...the process of adapting to the environment in the interest of ones species..." Frye then compares the actions of humans to that of an insect or beaver to show that all of these life forms all adapt to their surroundings and in turn replace an environment with a "home" because if the individual has not yet compiled ideas for a personally generated society, they immediately accept the society presented. It is the only society that the individual knows as it is the first to attract its attention when there is a lack of education to awaken the imagination. This is the language of practical sense where the science begins with the world we live in, then moves towards the arts as a mental construct and a way of interpreting. Literature is concerned with symbolic action, that literary or mythological characters are typical. The third and final level of the mind is the level of imagination where both the first and second level come together, where consciousness and practicality combine into one, "The third level is a vision or model in your mind of what you want to construct". It just so happens that man is fueled by a combination of many desires and one of these desires is the natural social desire of man. This desire ultimately is what pushes man to turn their imagination from just that, into a reality of sorts. Because of the desire which starts in the mind or imagination, this is what motivates man to act in order to achieve the desire. Without action these desires would never be fulfilled and man would be

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forever stagnant which is exactly what we do not want and this third level is what really makes our practical life human. An educated imagination is the key to the understanding of all literature and to life itself. With it, we can understand the literature that is written around us. With this ability, we are able to write our own literature for future writers to gain. It also allows us to see and change the world around us to a human world in which we want to live. We always use the human experience we have to create a new world we want to live in. This is the beauty of being human; people will create whatever is needed in order to sustain life and or to make life easier. The fact is that we need to educate our imagination in order to carry out the three levels of the mind, and in order for our race as humans to advance in every possible way. This is ultimately what man strives for, to fulfill the inner desires and put them into action to make them a reality, or is it the opposite which will lead us to destruction. To know or Not to know An Essay on the Educated Imagination ENG4U References - " Frye Quotes | frye festival." frye festival. N. p., n. d. Web. 16 Feb. 2010. . - Frye, Northrop. The Educated Imagination. 1st ed. London: Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1964. Print.