

BRIDGING WORLDS: THE ROLE OF IMAGINATION IN PHILOSOPHICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL THOUGHT

Bawa, Simmin¹, Bagla, Kunjal² and Parikh, Deeya³

¹Head of Department, Philosophy and Assistant Professor, Jai Hind College, Mumbai

²TYBA student Philosophy-Psychology, Jai Hind College, Mumbai

³TYBA student Philosophy-Psychology, Jai Hind College, Mumbai

Abstract

The term imagination has several definitions varying with its use in different contexts and fields of study. Traditionally recognized as a cognitive function of the mind, it not only enhances creative thought, but also acts as an essential link in grasping the complex nature of human experience. Humans use imagination for a broad range of purposes including reaching one's developmental potential. This article draws attention to the fact that imagination has a greater impact on civilization and humankind than what may be perceived in the ordinary sense. In this paper, we aim to explore the application as well as outcomes of imagination in psychological and philosophical specialties. While psychology emphasizes on the scientific understanding of imagination and its mechanisms, philosophy centres around the existential impact and significance of the same. The process and mental state of imagination differs greatly from other states of mind, and this research paper endeavours to explore a few of these mental states associated with it such as perception, dreaming, belief and desire. It makes an attempt to provide reviews of appropriate texts and literature that deal with the thoughts of prominent schools of philosophy and spirituality. Additionally, the paper intends to incorporate a more psychological and cognitive perspective on the functioning of imagination as propagated by various European and Western scholars. Focusing on an important aspect of this research composition, there is an emphasis on the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Virtual Reality (VR) in the destruction of pure human imagination and thought. Through this paper, we aim to investigate these psychological states of escapism caused by this obstruction of reality, contrived through an elaborative analysis of the process of imagination and its evolution through different time periods, and the ethical implications it holds in the modern age.

Keywords: Imagination, Psychology, Philosophy, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality (VR), Escapism, Obstructing reality, Mental States, Human Experience.

INTRODUCTION

Several fields, philosophy, and psychology in particular, seem to have developed a growing interest with the function that imagination has in human cognition and experience. More importantly, in visions and even thoughts, imagination is said to be having a significant effect on our perception of the real world, as well as on us in general. Attempting to connect with and engage with reality has the essence of constructing specific images, ideas, and experiences without any immediate stimulus from engaging in something. This narrative systematically investigates the intricate nature of imagination in both philosophy and psychology, with a focus on how imagination works and at times hinders engagement with reality. Many philosophers have made imagination a key point in their work spanning from Plato and Aristotle to Kant, Jean Paul Sartre and others have not been excluded from this premise of thought. These thinkers have respectively argued that imagination is the fountain from which creativity springs, it is a means of acquiring knowledge and in addition to these aspects, it is an avenue through which the limitations of the material and tangible can be overcome. What stands out most with regards to this interaction is the notion that imagination denies the existence of reality. Imagination is often considered in the psychological literature in terms of images, virtual reality, dreams, and fantasies and even illusions, all of which can interfere with and distract from direct and real-life experiences. This phenomenon raises the question about the reliability of the senses and the extent to which imagination generates reality. This research aims to investigate the complex patterns that influence perceptions and imagination through the interaction of imagination and reality.

A conceptual clarification of imagination is constructed by reviewing the socio-philosophical and psychological literature that covers the interaction of imagination with other mental states such as perception, belief, dreaming, and desire. It attempts to understand the possibility of an imagination as a barrier against reality (escapism), and the implications of such findings on the understanding of human consciousness and behaviour through a progressive examination of philosophical and psychological literature. This work is oriented towards providing a synthesis on how imagination

is used to interpret reality and how technological advancement allows for an expansion of one's imagination through virtual reality and artificial intelligence.

IMAGINATION AND OTHER MENTAL STATES

Perception and Imagination

Imagination and perception with a psychological perspective are primarily understood as the key processes of cognition affecting the manner through which people comprehend and interpret the world. This perception is yet another mental construct as a tangible entity is created through the help of the five senses; smelling, tasting, touching, seeing, and hearing. This process of perception contains the selection, accumulation, interpretation, and organization of such sensory input in such a way to have a coherent view of the world. Imagination, on the other hand, which is perceptual (rather than the propositional kind) is the ability to form ideas, concepts and images in the mind that are not related to any external stimulus.

Indian philosophy can broadly be classified into Two classes: The Orthodox and the Heterodox. Many of these Indian Philosophical traditions have examined Pratyaksa, the perception closely and accepted it as a valid source of knowledge, or Pramana. As per Nyaya philosophy together with the Nyaya sutra, vision is a form of knowledge that is derived from the relationship of an object and sense organs. It is one of the most valid and dependable sources of knowledge and a reliable source of information. And, however they do not agree on verbal and well-set cause type of perception and together with indeterminate and determinate types of perception caused out of that.

Nyaya says that imagination is rooted in earlier experiences and sensory impressions, rendering it secondary rather than unique. Similar is the case for the Samkhya school of philosophy. Among the Advaita Vedanta's, perception is regarded as impermanent and misleading. Although sensory awareness might be useful in navigating the dualistic world, it is not the only source of reality. Imagination, on the other hand, denotes conceptions and thoughts which are beyond the realm of the perceivable or real, referred to as 'Avyakta' or the unknown. It is said to have a component of illusion of the mind which confuses the temporal world with the endless brahman. Yoga approaches the concept of perception by not only connecting it to sensory skills but also to the purification of the mind to avoid any role of mental disturbances that may ultimately cause distortions in what is seen in the true sense. Among the yogic thinkers, "Vikalpa," another word

for imagination, is viewed as a two-edged sword that can either act constructively, encouraging creative exploration, or negatively, causing distraction and delusion. According to the Jainas, perception is largely obtained through the five senses, but it is also modified by experiences and mental conditioning, making it relative and personal. Jainism emphasizes the detrimental aspects of imagination, perceiving it as a catalyst for flawed conceptualizations of reality, which are likely to result in distortions of the true nature of existence. As a result, it concludes that, while perception is closely tied to objective reality, there are limitations to the subjective observer's lens, and imagination can generate false events that must be tamed to move down the path to liberation. Finally, in Buddhism, perception is seen as a critical component in comprehending and interpreting the world. However, it is not immune to conditioning, which emerges because of mental habits, societal influences, and previous experiences. Buddhist philosophy focuses on relieving one's suffering and obtaining salvation or nirvana. Imagination is viewed as a mental formation that can be either positive or harmful depending on how one approaches it.

Dreaming In Upanishads and Carl Jung's Theory

As a bridge between the conscious and subconscious realms, dreams are deeply significant in both contemporary psychological theories and ancient spiritual writings. The foundational works of Indian philosophy, the Upanishads, view dreams as a window into deeper levels of awareness that mirror the soul's passage through many realities. In the same manner, dreams are emphasized in Carl Jung's analytical psychology as windows into the collective unconscious, filled with archetypes and symbols that direct individual development and self-realization. In this paper, by examining the similarity between Jung's insight and the ideas assumed in the Upanishads we illustrate the conversation between the ancient knowledge and the modern one revealing the role dreams play in understanding the hidden innate aspects of human consciousness. Imagination and dreaming have also been revered as powerful tools by the sages and Islamic scholars, where dreaming was thought to be a gift from God. Dreaming was often considered a religious or spiritual experience in ancient cultures such as the traditions found in the Upanishads and Greek philosophy, where creative thinking was regarded as a means of going beyond the material world. In this case, imagination could be termed as an ability which helped visionaries, sages, and even poets to portray these heavenly conditions. It was believed that dreams were simply the pathways to experience better truths by allowing the mind to connect with God or Universal energy and

Emotion, Dreaming and imagining were also believed to be interconnected and influential. Now, with the development of psychology and neuroscience, the relationship of imagination and dreaming could be explained. On the one hand, dreaming and imagining could be transformed into the creative processes within measurable boundaries of modernization, sequence of events, and fantasies constructed with the mind. In such a view, it is not unusual that the idea that there is an intermediate stage between dreaming and creation for this proves pervasive in thought and the pursuit of greater comprehension.

The revelations of the four states of consciousness—waking, dreaming, deep sleep, and turya (the fourth state, or the state of enlightenment)—come from the Mandukya Upanishad. According to the famous Yogi Shankaracharya, this Upanishad together with Gaudapadas commentary incorporates the essence of the significance of the Vedanta. Such states of individual consciousness in which dreams are defined as the great prajna or consciousness within accepting consciousness are referred to in the Mandukya Upanishad as Svapnasthana. Your brain most likely views the external world differently than your consciousness does. However, exactly what does your internal mind see, yet do not recognize? It is called Antah-prajna, and it indicates simply internal awareness. Taijasa, more commonly referred to as the Individual Consciousness, is an aspect of the Hiranyagarbha or the Cosmic level of subconsciousness and imagination. It is within this same consciousness that resides the Antah-prajna: the ability to dream as well as the ability to sleep. When our natural biology is alive and fully functional, Hiranyagarbha is the ideal state of individuality. It possesses a thunderous tone and is deeply terrifying, because it has never been experienced before. People refer to this state and concept as ‘Svapnam,’ which means dreaming. There is a theory presented across multiple Upanishads that describes an individual’s consciousness as dormant remnants of time, living memories, unconscious psychotic events, as well as symbolic recollection. Every dream has its importance and represents different things.

The thesis of C. G. Jung comes as quite interesting, he is a native of Switzerland, a psychiatrist and a psychoanalyst who put up a school of thought known as analytical psychology. His approach is of greater concern to the symbolism of the images of dreams as well as the concept of the collective unconscious. This, he contended, is a particular region of the unconscious shared by members of the same species. It contains the archetypes which are patterns of characters, scenes, storylines, and themes that recur in the mythology, dreams and art of all ages and cultures. Jung

postulated that though dreams are private, some elements are collective and transcend individual experience. Jung emphasized the need to understand what dreams symbolize. Resolving dreams is understanding the meaning of the dreams and using the knowledge controlled by the unconscious to attain a more optimal and balanced self.

The significance of the unconscious mind is emphasized in both the Upanishads and the Psychoanalytic theory (of Carl Jung). While the Upanishads mention various levels of consciousness, including the dream state (Svapna), Jung concentrates on the collective unconscious and archetypes. Both believe that dreams represent symbolic meaning. While the Upanishads view dreams as symbolic representations of inner ideas, desires, and fears, Jung believed that dreams symbolize archetypes and universal human experiences. Both place an emphasis on human development and self-realization. In Jung's view, individuation entails combining the conscious and unconscious minds to create a balanced self, which is comparable to the Upanishads' emphasis on spiritual illumination and self-knowledge (Atma Jnana). Both view dreams as a tool for self-discovery and spiritual development, leading to a better comprehension of reality and the self.

Belief and Imagination

In psychology, the term 'belief' is used to mean acceptance of the truth, fact, or validity of something, particularly when it is not substantiated. While, in the casual view, imagination and belief might be two different kinds of mental functions as they serve different purposes, one is creative and goes beyond the world and the other is tightly connected to the information from the concrete world. Still both processes are referred to as a representational cognitive attitude, in this case, both imagination and belief. The basis for the functional resemblance of the two is the sameness of the representational format. Following such a conception, deceased persons can be believed who cannot be regarded as factually doing anything. For example, "the girl believes her dress is flying," the words an attitude or belief of a person resembling the girl attaches to the proposition in question. The same happens with imagining "the girl imagines her dress is flying," where a certain position, in this case imagination, was directed to, in this case to the girl. This is important because it signifies the existence of believers in parallel with images, of which there are many, but other differences such as the attribution of the belief and attribution of the imagination are differences but also similarities.

Many influential philosophers argue that the only important difference between belief and imagination is its goal. Believing is directed to the goal while imagination is not. They state that belief has a truth standard but it is not the case in imagination. Accordingly, seeing that emotions cannot be controlled, Aristotle also says that imagination is voluntary while thoughts, whether correct or false, are not. The capacity to generate mental pictures and control when and what images are produced may be termed as cognitive control. In a similar way, some such as Gendler, David Velleman and so forth elaborate on the concept of truth to resolve the issue in sharp contrast. Neil Sinhababu, on the other hand, claims in his dissent that truth standard is neither necessary nor sufficient for the purpose of distinguishing between believing and imagining. Another purported difference is their relationship to emotion, or more specifically, what they consider. Belief in something does go alongside imagination. The difference is that beliefs will invoke emotional attachment to real ones.

Currently, it seems to be the case that there is a consensus of polarities on distinguishing between believing and imagining. Yet, there are two notable exceptions to this unanimity. Some philosophers, for instance, investigate more novel psychological phenomena, such as delusions or absorbed pretence, depending on the reintegration of imagination and belief, in which case it is difficult to specify if it was belief or imagination that was exercised. They argue that imagination and belief are manifestations of a continuum. But, other philosophers, on the other hand, have pointed out other similar psychological phenomena and contended that the best explanation for such phenomena is the assumption that belief as such can be subsumed under imagination.

Desires and Imagination

Desiring and imagining are two separate yet interconnected mental states. Physiological needs, tantalizing emotions, and complex psychological requirements all fall under the desires' umbrella. The antenna can cover more fundamental needs like social connection, self-fulfillment, achievement and even more basic requirements like thirst and hunger. Imagination refers to the capacity of constructing ideas, images, and sensations in the mind in the absence of any internal or external stimulus and it is quite important for inventiveness, tackling issues, and envisioning future possibilities. It also has a vital role in helping us understand each other, because it enables us to sympathize with other people's opinions.

These two mental states have a profound effect on each other: on the one hand, imagination can enhance desires by helping people to see and anticipate events in the future, whereas, on the other, desires add substance to the imagination by providing direction and focus. This interaction between desires and imagination is necessary for humans for proper development and achieving goals as it expands drive, emotional regulation, and performance to desired standards.

It follows that the controversies regarding the relationship between desire and imagination are related to the believer and imagination controversy without surprise. The motivation to act (desire) to imagine a scene is one of the reasons to believe in a conative imaginative disposition. The believing-kind argues that Doggett and Egan (2007) activity suggesting an action-generating system combines cognitive and conative imaginations together as belief and desire do.

CONTEMPORARY THEORISTS

A huge range of branches of thought throughout Europe are a part of Continental philosophy. Their aim was to understand the meaning, history, culture, and analytical interpretations of research done under philosophy. The ability to have mental images and to make irrational, associative transitions between them is commonly regarded as the imagination, or "fancy," in the context of modern philosophy. In contemporary philosophy, the imagination, or "fancy," is often understood to be the capacity for mental imagery and the ability to make illogical, associative transitions between them. Various contemporary philosophers' ideas of the imagination are based on this conventional wisdom. Many of them expand on it in different ways. For instance, some are of the view that imagination and the brain are closely related; others say that imagination has significant interactions with the passions; while others still say that the imagination is essential to understanding how we produce art and value the aesthetic qualities of things.

Philosophers who hold the conventional view of the imagination have engaged in several significant debates during the modern era. The most significant difference between Hobbes, Gassendi, and Hume is that Descartes, Arnauld and Nicole, Spinoza, and Leibniz contend that we possess a faculty of pure intellect or rather pure understanding in addition to the power of imagination. The link between logic and imagination, as well as the potential function of the imagination in producing modal knowledge—that is, knowledge of what is conceivable rather than just actual, are the subjects of other significant debates.

Kant, for his part, concurs with the conventional wisdom that the imagination is a tool for creating and connecting mental images. However, he contends that the human mind's reproductive capacities are made possible by distinct, fruitful uses of the imagination that were overlooked by previous philosophers. His explanation of these creative uses of the imagination is essential to both his aesthetics and epistemology. Although Gilbert Ryle did not develop a thorough, independent theory of imagination, his treatment of the idea can be explained in the context of his larger view of mental processes. He defines mental states, including imagination, in terms of behaviour and real-world interaction in *The Concept of Mind* (1949). According to Hume, imagination is a necessary skill that works in tandem with perception and reasoning to generate knowledge, establish convictions, and mould our perception of reality.

IMMANUEL KANT

On April 22, 1724, Immanuel Kant was born in Königsberg, Prussia. Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* demonstrates this brilliant philosopher's utmost potential. His broad view of imagination is partly responsible for the account's lasting influence. He views imagination as a more widespread mental ability that contributes to the cognitive, aesthetic, and moral facets of our lives, in contrast to philosophers who interpret it as something that functions within relatively limited criteria, such as only in acts of make-believe or visualization.

Kant has stated, "Imagination is a faculty for representing an object even without its presence in intuition". As a result of this, Kant is talking about that type of thought where we can see objects even without their presence, producing sensible representations not only pertaining to their physicality. Additionally, he speaks about physical objects, intellectuality, pertaining to concepts, ideas, etc. As a faculty of intuition, in the absence of the object, the power of imagination can be either productive, that is, it can present the object in its original form, which comes before experience, or reproductive, that is, it can present the object in a derivative form, which recalls an empirical intuition it once possessed. When the imagination serves as the initial inspiration for a presentation, it can be used to fulfil its productive purpose. Imagination, in its reproductive sense, produces presentations that are based on prior experience, acting in a completely empirical manner. According to Kant, imagination mediates between the sensible and non-sensible facets of our lives by sensibly expressing what is absent in a generative or reproductive manner. Kant completely reimagines the boundaries of human knowledge and reason, placing himself between the

empiricism of Locke and Hume and the work of Leibniz. In this way, his contribution challenges both empiricists and rationalists, changing the course of philosophy. Ultimately, this line of reasoning leads to Kant's contention that the imagination is essentially a tool for creating representations that bridge the divide between the sensible and the non-sensible (or intellectual) world.

DAVID HUME

David Hume is best understood as one of many continental philosophers of Scottish origin and is notable for his philosophical empiricism and scepticism. Hume understood philosophy as a science of human nature and that humans are driven by their imaginations. He contends that the formation of an individual's personality and workings of society in general result from the individual's imagination. Imagination extends the boundaries of reasoning and enables self-reflection and visualization, foresight, and the injection of new concepts into classical thinking which explains the reasons for the need for political change. Hume maintains the view from the old school that those values which are open to critique are more of the fantasies of mankind. Hume, in *Treatise* mentions of imagination in two ways: There are some who speak of imagination as rationality in other words, amalgamative inclusive imagination, or as non-rational as the capacity of draughts for fancies and day-dreams. He then proceeds to explain the concept of inclusive imagination, "among which is the associative, the combining of parts of ideas, the closing of the union of related objects, and others". For Hume, imagination plays a crucial role in the transition from impressions to ideas. When a person's perspective shifts from one thought to another, the different notions that one comes up with are bound by specific logic and not by reason, and these ideas are crafted in the imagination. For example, Associative imagination creates the impression and conception of smoke as a combination of fire. However, they differ fundamentally and form in play because of distinct and rigid boundaries that are imposed on their formation. Hume further investigates how we form the mental embedding of cause and effect, whether it is an inherent conception that deeply coursed through all our thoughts. For us, the belief in these causal connections like cause and effect is based on the tradition of relational or egocentric connections, and not factors of proof. We constantly observe that one event happens after another and link them in our minds, interpreting it as evidence of a driving force. In effect, we build up theories of causation out of frequent recurrence of events, inferring the basic concepts of imagination in empathy, claims Hume.

Imagination allows us to view the world from a different perspective, create new possibilities, think outside the box and all this while reinforcing our understanding of the world and also facilitating further innovation.

GILBERT RYLE

Gilbert Ryle came into this world on the 19th of August in the year 1900 in Sussex, England. When Gilbert Ryle is mentioned, he is often referred to as an ordinary language philosopher or as one in support of a movement for the discipline of philosophy to take more hands-on encroachment. Ryle maintains that there is no separate faculty of imagination devoted exclusively to seeing and hearing fiction. He believes that imagination, while active, isn't attributed to a picture. More so, the right way to understand mental activities such as thinking or visualizing is as the behavioural tendencies towards certain types of activities. Kelley, In contrast, "seeing," recollecting things is a more declarative exercise, and "smelling," beauty through the nose of the mind is rather eccentric.

Professor Ryle explains that when a person tells you he "sees" something, the utterance is in inverted commas, which is to say, he deliberately describes what it differs from the actual "seeing." To illustrate this point, Ryle does not confine his examples to imaging cases, but cites the case of a patient with delirium tremens who is said to "see" snakes. Ryle seems to suggest that to imagine is merely to do some well-defined acts or mental processes that are usually performed in imaginative activities like visualizing an image, engaging in pure thought or pretending to be another person or thing.

To entertain the question of "forming a mental image", Ryle's analysis of perception raises the more fundamental consideration, which has nakedness for its final objective centre, as to why does see in the mind's eye resemble seeing with one's eyes. Ryle's Conclusion regarding 'Perception' and the 'having at least one sensation...' Hence, it must follow that a mental image implies having sensations if seeing is what that kind of image means or having a voyeuristic tendency. Not unlike private interpretations of imagination, Ryle's remarks on cognitive functions emphasize the social and dispositional aspects of mental presence, and yet he failed to do a good job of exposing imagination.

ETHICAL USE OF IMAGINATION; DRAWING FOCUS TOWARDS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND VIRTUAL REALITY**Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Virtual Reality (VR)**

Artificial Intelligence (AI), in simple terms, refers to technology that enables man-made machines to simulate human learning, comprehension, problem solving, decision making, creativity and autonomy. Human beings are able to facilitate exploration and interaction with a virtual environment in Virtual Reality (VR), which is a simulated three-dimensional (3D) environment that mimics reality as experienced by the user's senses in today's world.

In this generation, while recognizing the role of Artificial Intelligence in human life, there must be equal attention on the likely positive and negative connotations. In addition to its positive effects on making everyday chores easier, it also has the unintended consequence of undermining and disturbing the function that human imagination plays. AI and VR have immensely transformed creativity and innovation through inspiring new ideas, however its detrimental impact on uniqueness of imagination cannot be overlooked. AI-powered decision-making may potentially impede on autonomy and critical thinking of human beings. Individual opinions may be impacted, diminishing the diversity of ideas and homogenizing them. The growing usage of technology (AI and VR) in daily life restricts our ability to express ourselves and the aspect of spontaneity.

AI is frequently promoted by businesses as a strong, "intelligent," and "scientific" way to solve issues, which appeals to customers. The word "artificial," however, suggests that these systems are not as sophisticated or genuinely miraculous as they may appear. AI systems, although not inherently revolutionary, are employed to advance specific ideologies and to cater to the needs of a "techno-elite" – a dominant faction of technology firms and individuals who profit from marketing these AI solutions. In simple terms, the expectation that a positive transformation will take place is being turned on its head, as artificial intelligence is being misused to fuel someone else's business interest. This has greatly improved stories, education, and entertainment as it makes them look interesting. Recruits within professional fields and even patients undergoing treatment may utilize tele-immersion or what is normally known as Virtual Reality (VR) technology as a substitute for actual hands-on experience in a suitable and controlled setting. However, the tactile sensations provided by VR devices may also be used to shape mindsets and behaviours, which in turn creates an environment where certain acts are acceptable, or exposure to them becomes

common. Also, VR has an impact on society and relationships because it creates systems where people can interact in pretend worlds. Virtual Reality requires a lot of imagination from people to invent and use it. It uses the imaginations of people to invent new devices and applications, but at the same time it encourages imaginations by providing a platform where people can express and explore their thoughts freely. Even though creativity of a human cannot be done away with, the use of artificial intelligence and virtual reality enhances one's productivity and efficiency. In this era of new technology, expanding our creativity while actively considering the advancement of AI is significant. While adapting to new technologies such as AI and VR, individuals need to accept AI as well as exercising their own imagination. When developing nascent technology such as AI and VR, it is essential to keep in mind the interdependence and balance between scientific evolution and imagination.

Ethics

There should always be concerns when it comes to technology and, the emerging tech like AI and VR, their impact on privacy, bias, self-governance, and the welfare of society is also needed to be examined. Virtual reality raises concerns about potentially addictive and psychologically harmful experiences, while weakly constructed AI tools hinder the separation between reality and virtual space, exacerbating the problem of addiction. AI's capability to gather data for prediction systems can also breach privacy and abuse such power by steering users to specific outcomes. There persists a need for deep social bonds along with assurance of fair job opportunity but these technologies have the potential to tear them apart. Finding or creating systems prioritizing user experience, non-bias and inclusivity while also being able to hold the accountable for producing mass harm is a tough nut to crack. Overcoming the societal issues associated with the fourth industrial revolution requires endless regulations and policies aligned with transparency while also maintaining the focus on minimizing damage and harm. It is very important to be cautious about how you approach technology that votes to put people first; otherwise, a plethora of problems can ensue. It is critical to build awareness about such ideas to build a sufficient base to avert such situations.

OBSTRUCTION OF REALITY Plato's 'Allegory of the Cave' demonstrates how the prisoners' images of humans and other objects were shadow figures, demonstrating how imagination impeded reality. Since this false reality was all, they knew, it distorted their sense of genuine reality

and created an unrealistic worldview. Jung asserted that although imagination might enhance self-awareness and symbolic comprehension, an overdependence on it may hinder one's capacity to interact with reality. Carl Rogers, a humanistic psychologist, regarded imagination as a facet of self-actualization but cautioned against excessive indulgence. Maurice Merleau-Ponty examined the indistinct borders between imagination and reality, noting that when imagination diverges the usefulness and impact of imagination, as well as the ways in which it is connected to reality, have been the subject of numerous works created by other thinkers and scholars throughout the years. excessively from lived experience, it obstructs reality and may result in dream or delusion.

Since imagination extends beyond the limitations of reality, it often develops as an innovative process that enhances the scope of development and leads to innumerable possibilities involving creation. It guides the flow of out of the box thinking, however individuals may frequently employ this as a mechanism to divert attention from reality. Imagination is a crucial element in fostering creative thought and transformation. The pursuit of cognitive realism may occasionally hinder modernization, thus it is critical that imaginative thinking remains vibrant. To challenge the current quo and, in some ways, upend existing realities, artists, authors, and activists use their creative powers to envision new ways of being, producing, and engaging with the world. The evolution of cognition across the many phases of childhood and adulthood is another function of imagination. It helps people grow by enabling them to develop abilities like problem-solving, which become crucial in day-to-day living. Children who engage in imaginative play are also able to push the boundaries of rules and regulations, developing the independence to envision and construct their own innovations. Role playing exercises help to promote social and emotional growth attributes such as empathy, cooperation, self-esteem, and others. Acting out events from books and movies additionally boosts language and communication skills.

In the present era, imagination is increasingly viewed as a coping technique for persons wanting to deflect from stressful situations or important life experiences that may raise major questions about their individuality, formation of self, and so on. One of the consequences of imagination is daydreaming, which can cause one to lose control or sight of real-life events and serve as a diversion that may eventually lead to procrastination and a loss of focus. Though it might momentarily release pleasurable feelings and act as a technique for eliminating tension from real-life circumstances, losing oneself in one's thoughts leads to negligence and lack of duty. Overactive

imagination has occasionally been shown to lead people to live in denial of unfavorable outcomes, which raises the likelihood that maladaptive behaviours may manifest.

CONCLUSION

The development of humankind and its capacity for modernization and progress has been demonstrated to be greatly aided by imagination throughout history. The world as it exists today was created, thanks to imagination, which has also helped find solutions to problems, develop creative novel approaches, and nurture innovation. Imagination, as a distinct mental process, has been influential in terms of creation and transcendence, allowing people to imagine what once seemed impossible. This paper has examined imagination from the perspectives of several philosophers, distinguished between distinct mental states and imagination using theories, and finally examined the ethical function of imagination. Even though believing, perception, dreaming, and desire are all connected to imagination in different ways, they are not the same thing. Apart from creating countless opportunities and helping to shape a forward-thinking future, with AI and VR also playing a crucial role, there has been a significant amount of development. But amid all this, there has also been a lot of debate about the moral feature of such technological advancement and how it contributes to the distortion of reality. Imagination does, in fact, produce reality, but it also blocks it, drawing our attention away from realities. To navigate the intricacies that AI and VR bring to our society, it is imperative that we use our imaginations ethically. Making sure that the advantages of such a high level are utilized to a satisfactory degree and that any negative consequences—such as loss of autonomy, dehumanization, escapism, and addiction, amid others—are avoided is critical. By effectively utilizing new development resources, we may move toward a future that strives for social justice, empathy, and well-being. Although imagination is frequently viewed as a tool that allows individuals to transcend beyond the boundaries of reality, it may also cause a detachment from reality, which can further distort one's perception of the world and lead to disillusionment and escape. Human thinking and experience are constantly challenged by the conflict between imagination and the impediment of reality. It can be crucial to control our imagination to prevent the development of negative avoidance behaviours. As a harmful coping strategy for stress, imaginative thinking can gradually develop into a disengagement from reality and an unwillingness to face and overcome challenges.

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