

“That which is accepted as knowledge today is sometimes discarded tomorrow.” Consider knowledge issues raised by this statement in two areas of knowledge.

As a child I loved Christmas - the time when Santa came to town and gave everyone presents, when families got together for big dinners and when everyone was happy. At about the age of seven, my vision changed somewhat. My knowledge about the event was altered due to my parents, which at first upset me greatly. I had always accepted that Christmas was the time we all received presents from Santa as knowledge. For me that was correct and therefore true knowledge. However, one night my parents changed this completely, as if they took the knowledge away from me to a certain extent. Still today at an older age I believe Christmas is a time of year where families get together with joy however it isn't exactly the same, as now I know where the presents really come from. In the end, I did not discard my knowledge about Christmas, I refined it.

I will explore the concept of accepting and discarding knowledge in two different areas of knowledge. In both psychology and the arts, we accept knowledge today that we may discard tomorrow however there are cases too, in which we refine the knowledge. We build on previous knowledge to then gain new knowledge. I shall explore how firstly in psychology at times we tend to discard information completely, such as the blank slate theory. The same applies to the arts when exploring the ideas portrayed in literature. However, in other cases such as the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders in psychology and the cubism style in visual arts, we refine knowledge and use it to create a better understanding.

Discarding knowledge is the act of believing knowledge to be true one day, however false and incorrect the next. In science theories are created, theories that have been around for centuries and some only for a certain amount of years, however they all bring knowledge. One theory believed to be knowledge and truthful was the Blank Slate theory, (*helping Psychology*) which argued that all people are born with no built-in personality traits or tendencies. Psychologists and philosophers believed that all mental content was the result of human experiences, culture and education. None of it was due to personal nature. As this was stated as a theory, it provided knowledge about humans and people believed it greatly, however a few years later scientists proved it to be incorrect. (*Psych Central.com*) Today, it is accepted that genes and other family traits are immediately inherited at birth together with other innate reflexes. Therefore, the theory that was accepted to be providing correct knowledge was built upon by today's new technology. New ideas came to mind and so the theory was completely discarded and is no longer believed to provide us with knowledge and true facts.

Similarly, the concept of discarding is also applicable in the Arts, focusing mainly on literature. If I believe parents who are extremely religious should make sure their children are religious too then that is my personal belief. Therefore, the Arts can cause you to discard beliefs in many specific areas, in this case ethics. This is different from psychology as there it is about the whole theory and the actual science not the personal beliefs. For my IB English course, we read the novel *Purple Hibiscus*, written by Adichie. In the novel an extremely religious father raises his two children in the way he

believes is correct. He tortures them after they have conducted sins, by for example burning them. He does this because he thinks it's the only way his children will learn but for me this isn't correct. Therefore the knowledge I previously believed was true about having to raise children very religiously has now been discarded. My opinions have changed due to the piece of literature and the ideas presented in it.

This demonstrates that both in psychology and arts we discard knowledge, however we also tend to refine knowledge. In the examples above it is not just a matter of discarding, there are elements of refining involved. For example, the Blank Slate theory has been refined into a more sophisticated theory about nature and nurture. Additionally, in the arts I did not just discard all beliefs about how parents should or should not raise their children. I refined it with respect to particular extreme circumstances.

Furthermore, psychology is a new science compared to for example biology and chemistry. Psychologists are still building up on ideas and concepts. Psychiatrists and professional doctors use the DSM to analyze patients and to figure out what disorders their symptoms match up to. For many years Asperger's syndrome was considered as a separate syndrome in the DSM 5 however, now due to the latest research the DSM 5 has taken away Asperger's syndrome, though not discarded it. Scientists worked on it and used the knowledge they contained about this syndrome to come up with a new disorder, which combines several together, now named the Autism Spectrum Disorder. The knowledge scientists had about Asperger's syndrome

was used and refined to then create something new, new knowledge, new classifications and overall a new combination.

In addition, in the arts, knowledge we gain from visual arts isn't completely discarded one day to the next, it is polished. Knowledge is a different concept in the arts in comparison to science. In this case we personally gain knowledge from the piece of art in many different ways. Maybe it is that you feel there is a message behind the piece, or you gain knowledge about a certain style, or even gain knowledge as in a personal opinion. For example, when you go to a museum and see a piece of art you find extremely impressive, you process your thoughts and ideas therefore you are processing knowledge. In visual arts, ideas and knowledge are still surrounding the same basic artistic themes and concepts today as several hundred years ago. Cubism is a style for visual arts for which Pablo Picasso was famous and still is today for his paintings. Modern cubism is a new form of this genre, which means that still today artists use this style however in different manners. In the arts it is mainly about the person's individual opinion and thoughts about the arts. Cubism is a genre of art some people appreciate and others don't appreciate as much. Individual artists who don't appreciate Picasso's ideas yet like the basic concept of cubism are able to take ideas, refine them to a certain extent to then please their needs. This demonstrates that in visual arts knowledge is refined depending upon the individual meaning for the individual artist and for the individual viewer.

Psychology and the arts are both considered different areas of knowledge and therefore contain a different definition for knowledge. When considering psychology, we humans gain knowledge from the different theories published, we see a theory and learn. Therefore, the knowledge is provided to us globally, everyone has access to it, it is known as shared knowledge. On the contrary, in the arts, an art piece is appreciated by some yet disliked by others. This means that some will generate a response to the knowledge from the art piece however some won't. The first goal of the artist was to share a message or a theme of some sort to everyone. However in the end the knowledge, which is created from this by the individual, becomes individual – and so has to be integrated into what he or she already knows. That is equivalent to saying that the individual has to refine their knowledge. This raises crucial differences between the disciplines in the two Areas of Knowledge. The two types of knowledge associated with the Areas of Knowledge are different however there is a balance between private and public. Although there is an obvious difference, the structure appears to be similar which could then be further applied to the other Areas of Knowledge.

It therefore seems that at times we tend to completely discard knowledge from one day to the next, and in other cases we build on it, refine it to then create new knowledge. Even though psychology, a human science, and the arts are completely different Areas of Knowledge I argue that in both we at times discard knowledge completely and sometimes refine knowledge to match it to modern society however the balance is different for each. In psychology there is something close to the truth, so we can discard facts, as there are definitely

things that are false. However, in the arts, the definition for truth is a subtler one and therefore refining is more likely. Finally, when referring back to the very first example of Santa, instead of discarding the whole concept of Santa and Christmas I discarded one fact, which was the fact that presents came from Santa and replaced it with another, that presents come from parents. Therefore, I can conclude that discarding something even if it is just a small fact is a crucial part of refining. A simple distinction must be discarded in order to arrive at a more refined view.

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