Language & thought

The film "Arrival" (based on the short story by Ted Chiang) posits that learning a new language can change the way you think. Is thought separate to language or does language form the gauge of one's tracks of thought? Will learning French help me think philosophically? Can the visual language of art change the way I think about the world? Or will learning the language of maths help me think about the universe? Programming languages could help one's logic and sequential, algorithmic thinking? Does the grammatical and syntactical structure of a given language bound my thought (patterns and direction)? Is language just the tool by which I can communicate my thoughts and ideas with others or does it limit the very thoughts and ideas I can have? Either way, let's talk.

Afghan Funeral in Paris
by Aria Aber

The aunts here clink Malbec glasses
and parade their grief with musky, expensive scents
that whisper in elevators and hallways.
Each natural passing articulates
the unnatural: every aunt has a son
who fell, or a daughter who hid in rubble
for two years, until that knock of officers
holding a bin bag filled with a dress
and bones. But what do I know?
I get pedicures and eat madeleines
while reading "Swann's Way." When I tell
one aunt I'd like to go back,
she screams It is not yours to want.
Have some cream cheese with that, says another.
Oh, what wonder to be alive and see
my father's footprints in his sister's garden.
He's furiously scissoring the hyacinths,
saying All the time when the tele-researcher asks him
How often do you think your life
is a mistake? During the procession, the aunts' wails
vibrate: wires full of crows in heavy wind.
I hate every plumed minute of it. God invented
everything out of nothing, but the nothing
shines through, said Paul Valéry. Paris never
charmed me,
but when some stranger asks
if it stinks in Afghanistan, I am so shocked
that I hug him. And he lets me,
his ankles briefly brushing against mine.

https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/06/03/afghan-funeral-in-paris

Scientific hypotheses from linguistics on how language influences thought:

The Sapir–Whorf hypothesis in linguistics states that the grammatical structure of a mother language influences the way we perceive the world. The hypothesis has been largely abandoned by linguists as it has found very limited experimental support, at least in its strong form, linguistic determinism.

Chomsky's independent theory, founded by Noam Chomsky, considers language as one aspect of cognition. Chomsky's theory states that a number of cognitive systems exist, which seem to possess distinct specific properties. These cognitive systems lay the groundwork for cognitive capacities, like language faculty.
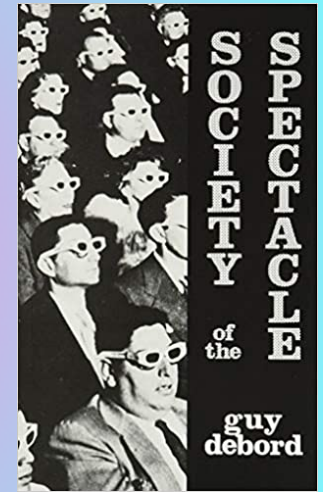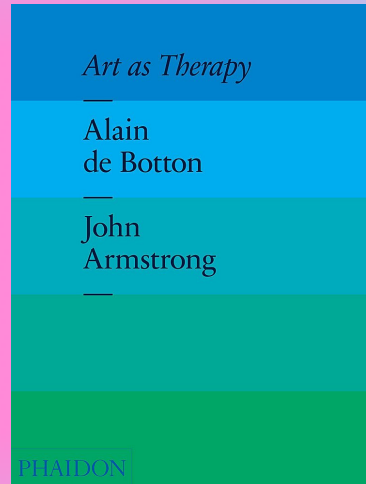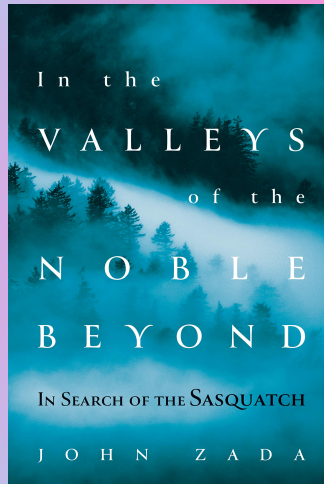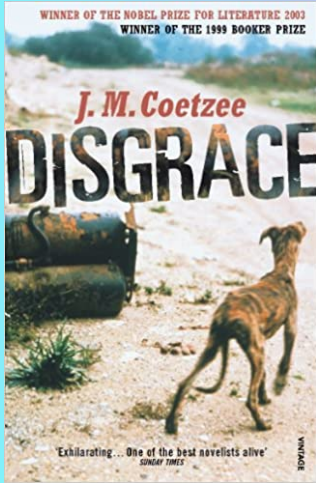
Piaget's cognitive determinism exhibits the belief that infants integrate experience into progressively higher-level representations. He calls this belief constructivism, which supports that infants progress from simple to sophisticated models of the world through a change mechanism that allows an infant to build on their lower-level representations to create higher-level ones. This view opposes nativist theories about cognition being composed of innate knowledge and abilities.

Vygotsky's theory on cognitive development, known as Vygotsky's theory of interchanging roles, supports the idea that social and individual development stems from the processes of dialectical interaction and function unification. Lev Vygotsky believed that before two years of age, both speech and thought develop in differing ways along with differing functions. The idea that relationship between thought and speech is ever-changing, supports Vygotsky's claims. Vygotsky's theory claims that thought and speech have different roots. And at the age of two, a child's thought and speech collide, and the relationship between thought and speech shifts. Thought then becomes verbal and speech then becomes rational.

According to the theory behind cognitive therapy, founded by Aaron T. Beck, our emotions and behaviour are caused by our internal dialogue. We can change ourselves by learning to challenge and refute our own thoughts, especially a number of specific mistaken thought patterns called "cognitive distortions".

In behavioral economics, according to experiments said to support the theoretical availability heuristic, people believe events that are more vividly described are more probable than those that are not. Simple experiments that asked people to imagine something led them to believe it to be more likely. The mere exposure effect may also be relevant to propagandistic repetition like the Big Lie. According to prospect theory, people make different economic choices based on how the matter is framed.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language_and_thought

The Conversation: *Book Recommendations*

J. M. Coetzee
DISGRACE

'Exhilarating... One of the best novelists alive'
SUNDAY TIMES
VINTAGE

In the
VALLEYS
of the
NOBLE
BEYOND
In Search of the Sasquatch
JOHN ZADA

Art as Therapy
—
Alain
de Botton
—
John
Armstrong
—
PHAIDON

SOCIETY OF SPECTACLE
of the
guy debord

Art of the week — "Untitled" Lee Bontecou (1961)

Are we looking down, or up, or along? There is only darkness beyond, the void into which we stare. Teetering on the edge. Stumbling along. Trapped and hopefully looking up. The boundary is hard, cold, solid, immovable. Steel or iron bonds. Yet the tunnel or shaft invites progress. It asks us to move, to travel through the space, the liminal space and escape into the blackness beyond. This is a visual, antinomial discourse. Unresolved contradictions and oppositions between the seen and unseen, the known and unknown. Stay where you are (better the devil) or fall/climb/move beyond the threshold of the immediately visible.

The Conversation
Talking about Education

YOU CAN PRESENT THE MATERIAL, BUT YOU CANT MAKE ME CARE.

Cryptic Crossword C(s)OTW:
It's an unusual material (5)
Cheese briefly insect free (4)
Pig or snake seen by river (4)

The Conversation

Check out our new Podcast, available on Spotify at TheConversation.Education

@theconvo_edu

www.theconversation.education

YouTube
Our Channel is...
TheConversation.Education

Find us on 'gram town' @
TheConversation.Education

Find us on Social Media and join in the Conversation