

Welcome to...

# THE CONVER SATION

A place for sharing  
and discussing ideas  
about education

Huguette Caland: photo by JR, Tate St Ives



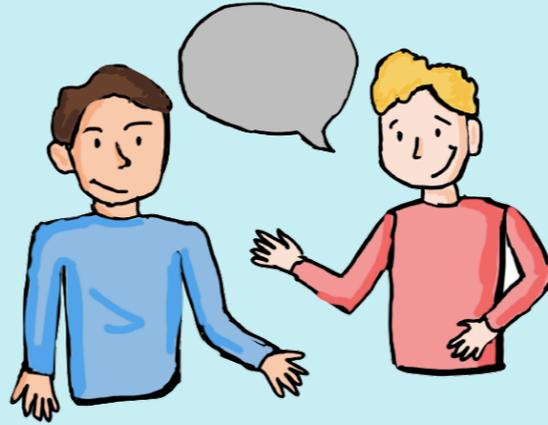
Issue 06

# THE CONVERSATION

## Contents

- Leader
- Art as Experience
- Is knowledge useless?
- The Conversation Podcast
- Reading as emancipation
- Panta Rhei
- Epiphany: by Ian Cross
- 12 Books for Christmas
- The Manifesto

## The Conversation



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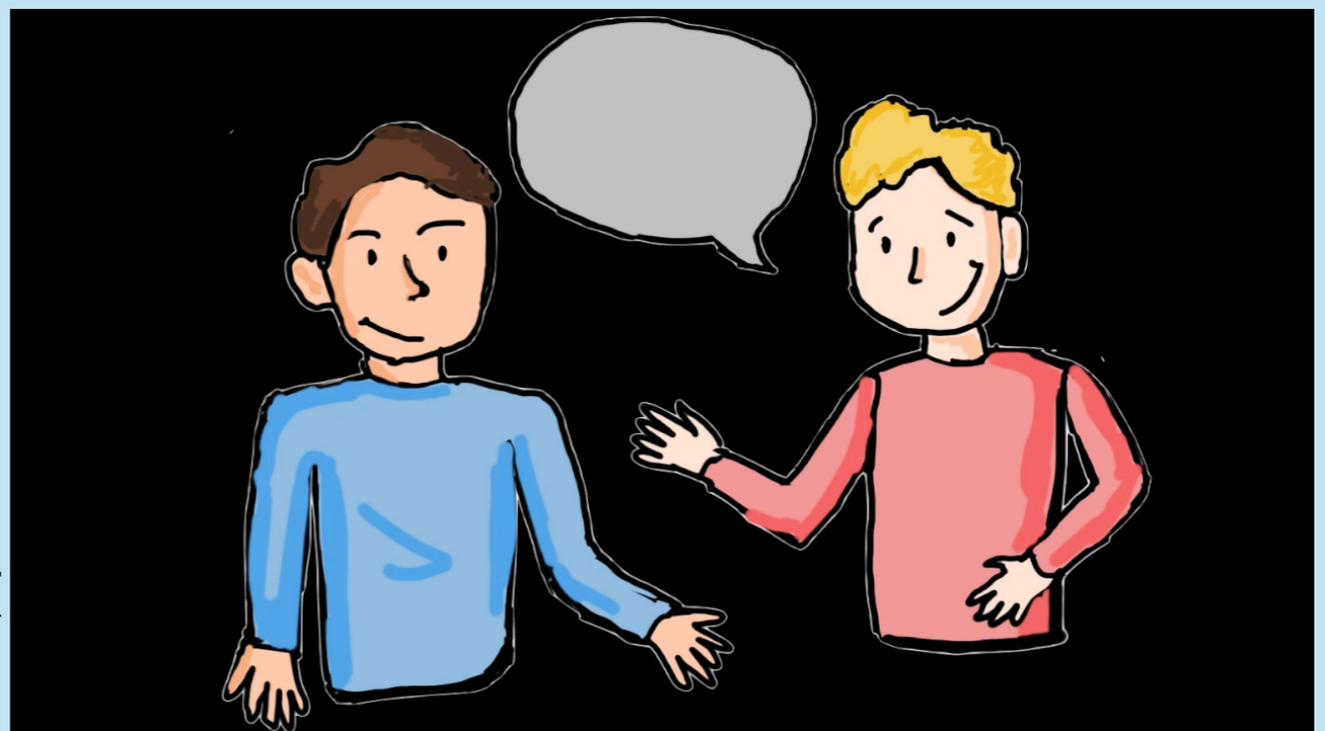
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# THE CONVERSATION LEADER

Welcome to issue 6 of The Conversation. As you can see, if you have read any of the previous issues, the style has changed. This issue is designed to be consumed in ePub format, best read on iBooks if you have that ability. Both the ePub and PDF formats are available to download from [www.theconversation.education](http://www.theconversation.education). Why the change? Two reasons: to reduce paper usage by printing fewer physical copies and to maximise multi-media content.

However, the aim of The Conversation remains the same. In an age where technology has accelerated the 'culmination of separation' and 'the spectacle' has achieved totality (see [Guy Debord's The Society of the Spectacle](#)) there is inherent danger that this quarterly publication is subsumed into the separate pseudo-world as an image; that which was meant to encourage directly lived experiences receding itself into a representation of the spectacle. It is with a keen sense of the irony implicit in this new image rich, multi-media saturated format, that I want

OP-ED



to call forward the true intention of The Conversation project; namely as a means of promoting, encouraging and facilitating authentic experiences that are directly lived, engaged with and lift educators out of the false consciousness of the spectacle and into real life.

Real conversations have the power to do this. They have the power to connect us to our colleagues. They can be transformative; challenging our ideologies. They can be caring; supporting those around us. Conversations can alleviate the isolation too often inherent in teacher's lives.

In a recent [survey](#), [Teacher Tapp](#) found that only 20% of teachers have sufficient contact with colleagues. That leaves 80% with insufficient contact. Isolation in the profession has many causes and many consequences.

It was always the intention of The Conversation project that authentic dialogue would increase within the sphere of education. This magazine (now iBook) was conceived only as a spur towards this end. It was never designed to be the representation of collegiate discussion, the image of a profession in conversation; rather it was, and remains, a tool to promote dialectic engagement between real teachers and educators, living and working in real schools.

I have come to realise that perhaps it is a foolish thing to hope for from this project. The reality is that we are incessantly busy and increasingly isolated as a result.

A further irony is that I spend longer and longer producing, writing and editing The Conversation, and talking about it with colleagues less and less.

Despite this, I have never wavered from the belief that the best form of CPD or professional development comes as a result of education professionals talking to each other. That might occur as a result of writing an article for this magazine and chatting with colleagues about it. So my intention is to keep producing The Conversation, to keep writing about things I have spoken to others about, to encourage others to write articles for discussion. I aim to make something of value in the fight against alienation and 'the spectacle'; work that involves individuals seeking to engage in lives lived in the first person.

If you would like to discuss the ideological foundation of The Conversation project further, please email me at [editor@theconversation.education](mailto:editor@theconversation.education). To contribute to The Conversation visit the [website](#) or email [submit@theconversation.education](mailto:submit@theconversation.education) .



# ART AS EXPERIENCE

I have always thought of myself as a rational materialist. As a science graduate and teacher, I have mostly concerned myself with a material world view and modes of thought that rely on the language of science and mathematics to adequately explain the reality of the universe. Of course I understand that science works to model reality and that with any language there are inherent problems with disconnect between words or symbols as signifiers of the objects and the objects themselves. But, nonetheless, I was fairly happy to proceed within this paradigm.

C.P. Snow described a thesis of two cultures. The argument was "the intellectual life of the whole of western society" was split into two cultures - the sciences and the humanities - which was a major hindrance to solving the world's problems. Despite my love for science, I have also always been a lover of art and literature, feeling comfortable standing with a foot in both camps. For me the two cultures has always been a false dichotomy. Not that I would consider myself anything other than a novice admirer of the arts.



Tate St Ives: photo by JR



Huguette Caland: Tate St Ives, photos by JR



Huguette Caland: Cancer (or Soleil Rouge) 1964. Photo by JR

It has been my great fortune to have stood before some of the most famous art works in the world. I have seen Da Vinci's, Canaletto's, Rembrandt's, Dali's, Titian's, Vermeer's, Lowry's, Pollock's, Caravaggio's, Michelangelo's, Van Gogh's, Picasso's, Monet's, Manet's, Cézanne's, Mondrian's, Ruben's, Botticelli's, Munch's and so on and so on. I have gazed and appreciated, as best I can, these works of art.

I have read many books about art; Gombrich, Berger, De Botton, Graham-Dixon, Obrist, etc and tried to glean from these how best to 'read' art, how best to see it, to 'look' at it.

But try as I might, I have never really understood much of modern art. 'Fountain' by Duchamp for example.

I am aware that 'Fountain' is seen by some as a Dadaist work (or even Conceptual Art) but hopefully you get my point: I often find that a great deal of modern art leaves me feeling cold, or worse still, feeling nothing at all. Now this is almost certainly due to my inability to relate to the aesthetic language of conceptual and modern art rather than any paucity in the artist's ability. But even with the aid of curatorial commentary and critical description that might permit me to understand a piece of modern art (say, for example, the deconstructed landscapes of Mondrian or the temporal dimension of Pollock's action painting) I really only engaged with art on a cerebral level, not an emotional one.

That was true until I saw "*Soleil Rouge*" (or 'Cancer') by Huguette Caland, recently on display at Tate: St Ives.

Standing in front of this large, red painting was an experience unlike any I have ever had. I was transfixed, mesmerised, captured by it and stopped for a long time in front of it. It drew me back again and again, even after visiting other pictures and galleries, I found myself wanting to see it again; I wanted to be in its presence. Luckily the gallery was not so busy, but on my 3rd or 4th visit to the painting (each time spending 15 minutes or so staring at it) a young gallery attendant asked,

"You seem taken with this work, is there anything particular you like about it?"

What surprised me then, as it still does now, is that I could find no words to describe the experience I was having.

Milan Kundera said:

*"Through ecstasy, emotion reaches its climax, and thereby at the same time its negation (its oblivion). Ecstasy means being "outside oneself," as indicated by the etymology of the Greek word: the act of leaving one's position (stasis).*

*To be "outside oneself" does not mean outside the present moment, like a dreamer escaping into the past or the future. Just the opposite: ecstasy is absolute identity with the present instant, total forgetting of past and future. If we obliterate the future and the past, the present moment stands in empty space, outside life and its chronology, outside time and independent of it (this is why it can be likened to eternity, which too is the negation of time).*

*Man desires eternity, but all he can get is its imitation: the instant of ecstasy. Living is a perpetual heavy effort not to lose sight of ourselves, to stay solidly present in ourselves, in our stasis. Step outside ourselves for a mere instant, and we verge on death's dominion."*

The experience I had of standing in front of *Soleil Rouge* was ecstatic. Ecstatic in the Kundera sense of the negation of emotion, of time, of self.

And yet I still find it hard to put into words what happened to me as I stood in front of that picture. It was numinous. It was indescribable. It was... an experience. An experience that remains with me now, months afterwards. An experience that still leaves me searching for the right words, unsure even how to explain what I felt, what I thought in the ecstasy of staring into the concentric rings of red paint.

This makes me think about the inadequacy of language. There are some experiences for which there are no words; emotions that are impossible to verbalise. At the very least we may find that words are not enough. Who can really say, for example, what it feels like to be in love? What a wholly inadequate word for such a rich, diverse range of feelings and experiences both emotional and visceral. How could one possibly explain, in any coherent way, the experience of holding one's newborn child for the first time?

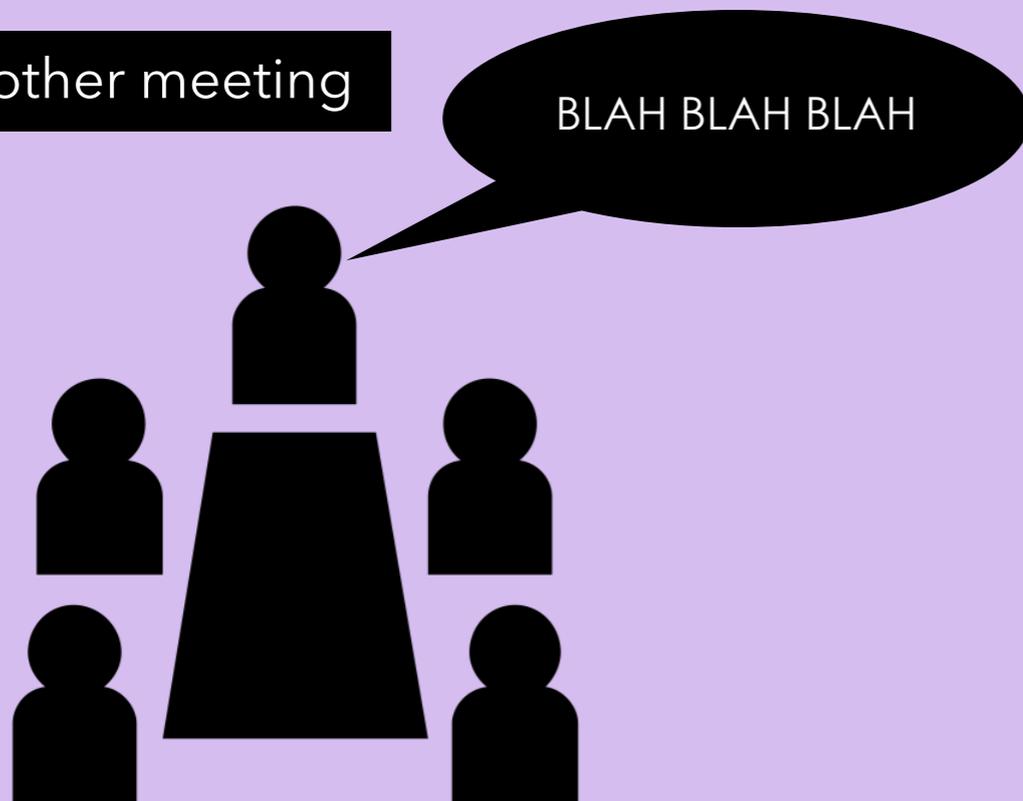
Perhaps this is the function of art; to grant us experiences that make up for the inadequacy of language. If one encounters art as experience, there may be no need for

words, the experience in itself being enough. Art as experience may serve the purpose of fulfilling some primal urge within us, or filling some void that exists. It may bridge the gap between the reality of the world as mediated by words and the reality for which language is inadequate. Art as experience is 'ecstatic' truth and reality and, as Kundera might say, the zenith and simultaneous negation of both. The tension between climax and oblivion provides the momentary ecstasy of art as experience. To live a fully engaged life, in the first person, maximising experiences and situations such as this should be a daily goal. As educators, providing opportunities for experiences such as this will lift the consciousness of our students and help them live more fulfilling lives.



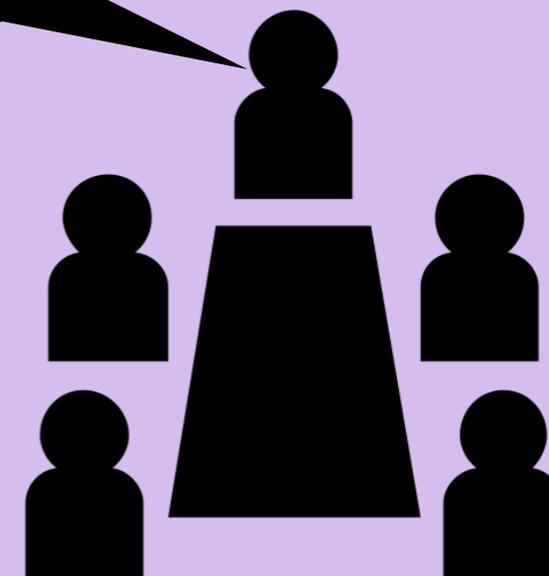
Jackson Pollock's One: Number 31 <https://www.flickr.com/photos/wallyg/564040776>

Yet another meeting



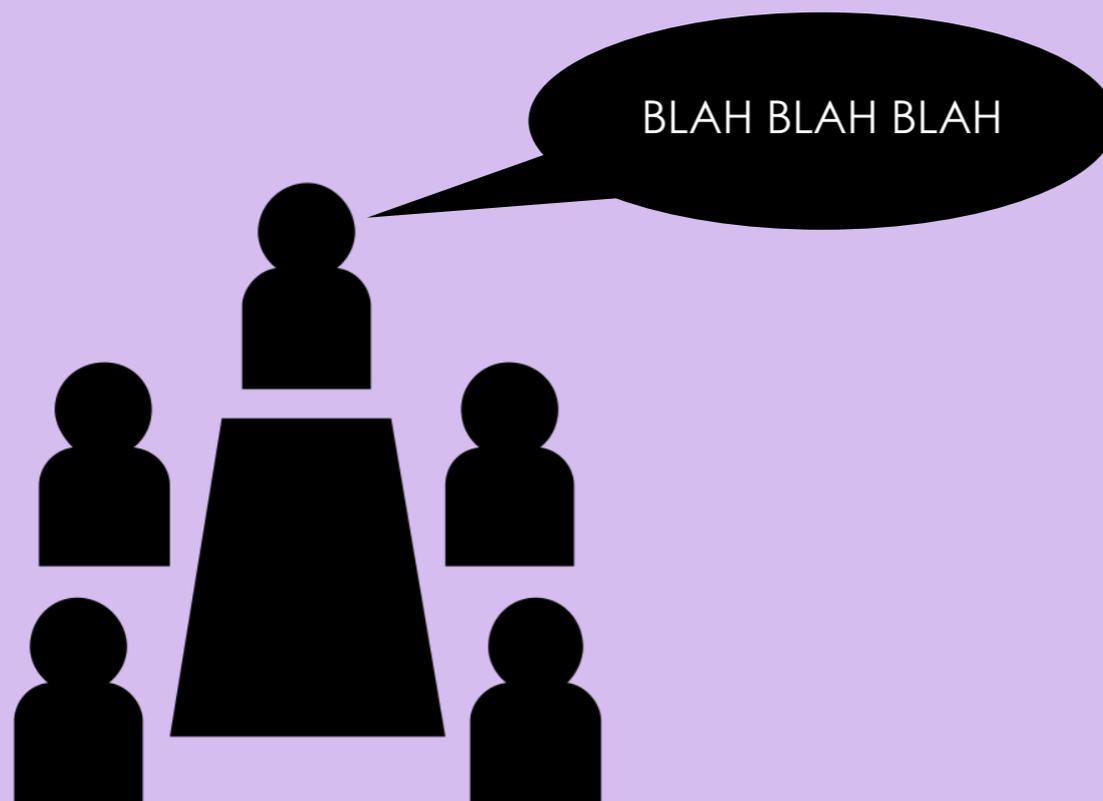
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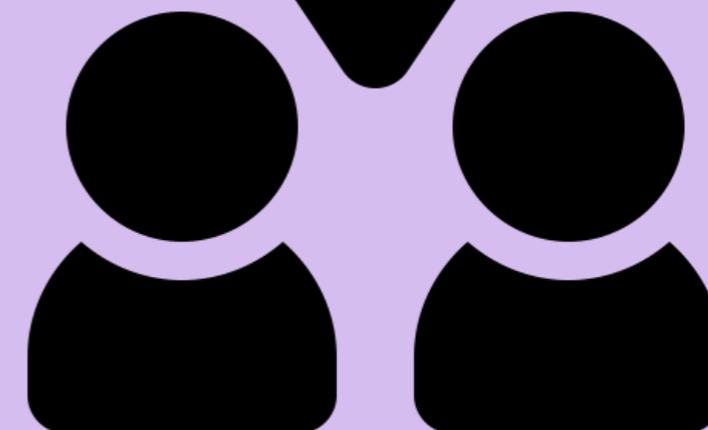
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**HE HAS A NIAGARA  
OF WORDS BUT A  
SAHARA OF  
MEANING**



Created by Nawicon from Noun Project

# IS KNOWLEDGE USELESS?

“What is wrong with this descendant of Spencer’s principle is that it pays too little attention to how the mind uses knowledge. The provisions of the Treaty of Nanking and that sonnet of Shakespeare that you learned by heart do not exist in the mind as in a library. The mind is an organ that perceives and feels as well as knows, and the three, along with other features of our mental lives, are combined in ways we haven’t the vaguest understanding of. What we know forms a resource for our imaginations. All the facts in the library that I know how to locate do not inform the way my imagination works. All the poems stored on a computer will influence the rhythms of our language and our images and emotions not a whit, whereas those we learned by rote are a constant resourceful the imagination when we write or talk or lie silent in the night.”

“The mind is not a zero-sum container. Indeed, paradoxically, it seems closer to the opposite: the more you know, the more you can learn.”

**Kieran Egan:** *‘Getting it wrong from the beginning’*

getting it  
WRONG  
from the  
beginning



Our Progressivist Inheritance from  
Herbert Spencer, John Dewey, and  
Jean Piaget

Kieran Egan

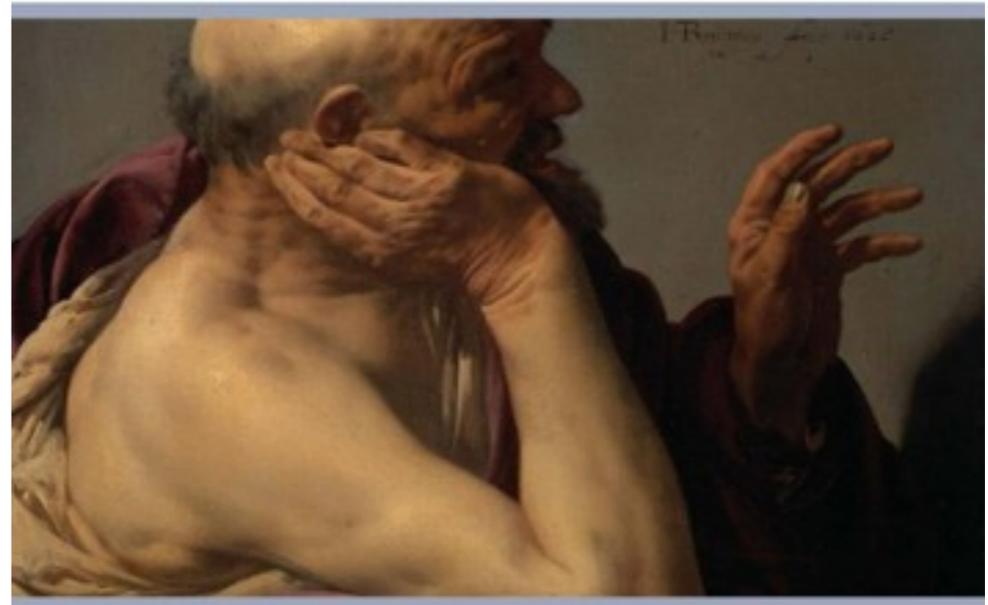
*Recipient of the Grawemeyer Award in Education*

“At the Egyptian city of Naucratis, there was a famous old god, whose name was Theuth; the bird which is called the Ibis is sacred to him, and he was the inventor of many arts, such as arithmetic and calculation and geometry and astronomy and draughts and dice, but his great discovery was the use of letters. Now in those days the god Thamus was the king of the whole country of Egypt; and he dwelt in that great city of Upper Egypt which the Hellenes call Egyptian Thebes, and the god himself is called by them Ammon. To him came Theuth and showed his inventions, desiring that the other Egyptians might be allowed to have the benefit of them; he enumerated them, and Thamus enquired about their several uses, and praised some of them and censured others, as he approved or disapproved of them. It would take a long time to repeat all that Thamus said to Theuth in praise or blame of the various arts. But when they came to letters, This, said Theuth, will make the Egyptians wiser and give them better memories; it is a specific both for the memory and for the wit. Thamus replied: O most ingenious Theuth, the parent or inventor of an art is not always the best judge of the utility or inutility of his own inventions to the users of them. And in this instance, you who are the father of letters, from a paternal love of your own children have been led to attribute to them a quality which they cannot have; for this discovery of yours will create forgetfulness in the learners' souls,

*From Phaedrus by Plato: <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/phaedrus.html>*

because they will not use their memories; they will trust to the external written characters and not remember of themselves. The specific which you have discovered is an aid not to memory, but to reminiscence, and you give your disciples not truth, but only the semblance of truth; they will be hearers of many things and will have learned nothing; they will appear to be omniscient and will generally know nothing; they will be tiresome company, having the show of wisdom without the reality.”

# PHAEDRUS



PLATO

The Conversation Podcast is available from Spotify (search for TheConversation.Education) or from Anchor <https://anchor.fm/>

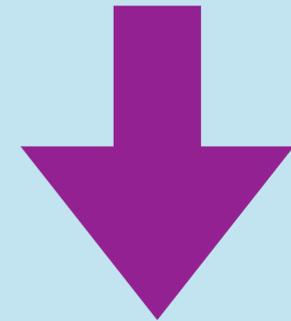
# THE CONVERSATION PODCAST

In a special episode of The Conversation Podcast recorded for this issue of The Conversation magazine, host John Rodgers talks to Duncan Yeates, Assistant Principal at Mounts Bay Academy.

One of the many things discussed are the Situationist International: a group of artists, writers, film makers and philosophers whose activity provided the intellectual foundation for the *soixante huitards*.

If you would like to have a conversation and contribute to the podcast please email [editor@theconversation.education](mailto:editor@theconversation.education)

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# READING AS EMANCIPATION

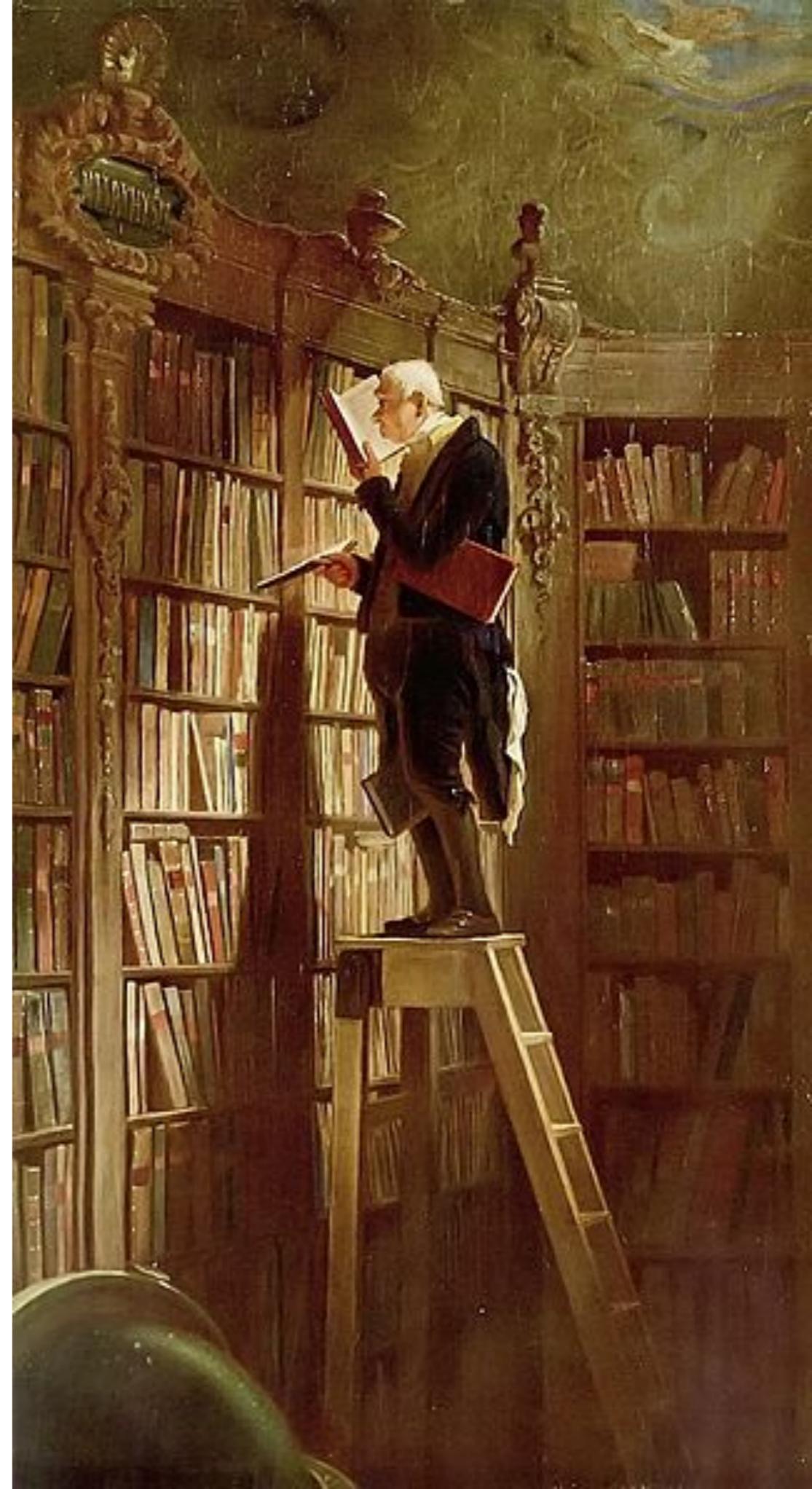
Karl Marx said that ideology was false consciousness. Philosopher Slavoj Žižek argues that this is wrong; that ideology **is** consciousness. Through a Lacanian psychoanalytic analysis of Marx, Žižek says that ideology presents the topography of the world we live in, which the mind then mirrors to provide context for itself. "Ideology is not a dream-like illusion that we build to escape insupportable reality: in its basic dimension it is a fantasy construction which serves as a support for our 'reality' itself."

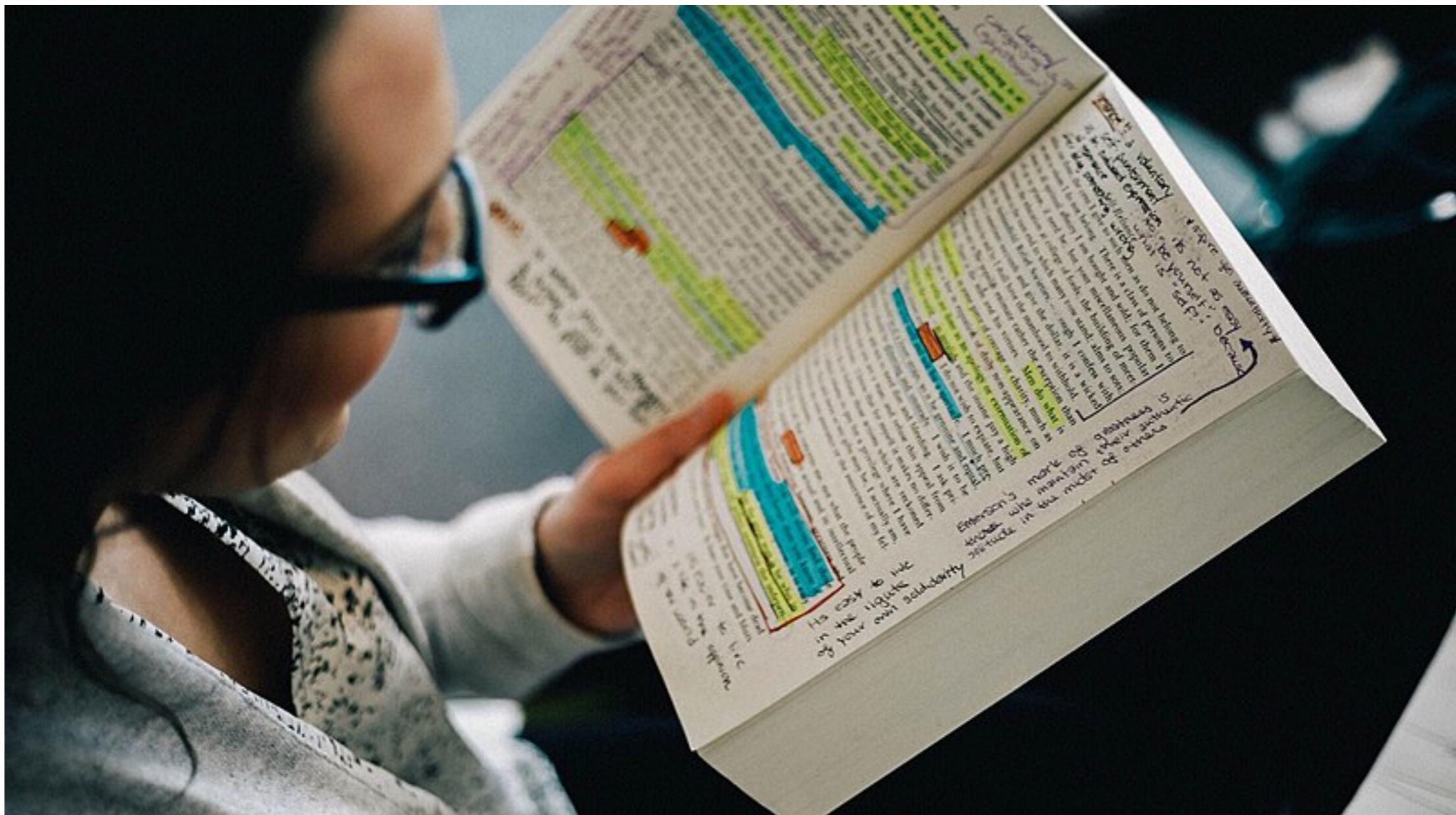
Whichever side of that debate you may choose to fall, there seems to be an inherent problem with both: ideology enslaves the mind. Ideology controls what we think, the way we think, it is the paradigmatic lens through which we see the world and respond to it. Ideology is a filter, an echo chamber, it is the schematic architecture of our mind and consciousness. It provides the foundation, the blueprint for all we see, hear, think, say and do.

What happens when the ideology one has is wrong? How could we 'free' ourselves from the bonds of a heretical ideology?

My suggestion is that reading can provide emancipation.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Bookworm\\_\(painting\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Bookworm_(painting))





[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Reading\\_Comprehension.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Reading_Comprehension.jpg)

Reading allows humans to transmit ideas and knowledge through time, across the centuries, around the globe. It allows us to connect with minds from different eras, from different places and to think about the ideologies of people different to us. Reading allows us to imbibe the very best that humans have said and thought and discovered.

Reading can be emancipating because it can give our own minds glimpses of different possible ideologies. It can provide us with a vision of a different path, can give us new, unthought of ideas, can present to us modes of thought previously unimagined. Reading can free us from the bondage of our own ideology. Reading can set you free.

Reading can emancipate us from ideology in the same way that conversation can. It has the advantage though because text is transmittable and portable through time and space in a way that people are not.

Reading as emancipation is like grabbing a desperate gulp of air as you surface from beneath the water.

Reading as emancipation is like spending years in a prison cell with four bare walls and suddenly being moved into a new cell with a window, where you can see a tree, or even water.

Reading as emancipation is like listening to jazz and hearing a melody phrase that makes you think of something else.

Reading as emancipation is like waking from a dream.

Reading as emancipation is like seeing the light at the end of a long dark tunnel and hoping the light is not a train.

Reading as emancipation is like a single crepuscular ray on a cold, grey winter's day.

Reading as emancipation is like the first daffodils of spring, trumpets heralding the promise of light and warmth in the days ahead.

Reading as emancipation is like the first breathe of a new born baby, and the heart response of the father holding his

first born child, somehow understanding the potency of a child, the limitless possibilities that lie ahead, the latent power that wails in his arms.

Reading as emancipation is like a bird taking flight.

Reading as emancipation is like meeting a stranger and instantly feeling like you have known them for years.

Reading as emancipation is like struggling with a crossword clue, not knowing how to approach the problem and the solution suddenly popping into your mind as if from the muses themselves.

Reading as emancipation is like a severely myopic man putting on spectacles for the first time.

Reading as emancipation is the liberation of your mind from the past, from itself and from the chains of ideology.

*"I know you're out there. I can feel you now. I know that you're afraid. You're afraid of us. You're afraid of change. I don't know the future. I didn't come here to tell you how this is going to end. I came here to tell you how this is going to begin. I'm gonna hang up this phone, and then I'm gonna show these people what you don't want them to see. I'm gonna show them a world without you, a world without rules and controls, without borders and boundaries... a world where anything is possible. Where you go from here is a choice I leave to you."*  
*Neo: The Matrix*



What do you think of social mobility?

Isn't that just buying poor people better cars?





# PANTA RHEI

Ceaselessly the river flows, and yet the water is never the same, while in the still pools the shifting foam gathers and is gone, never staying for a moment.

32 years from my 55; 38 weeks from each year's 52; 5 days from every 7; 8 hours from every day I have sat here and watched. Here I sit, behind this desk. A blackboard that turned white with age, as I have done some years ago, is behind me fixed to the wall. To my right is a computer and a newer laptop sits on the desk in front of me. The walls are littered with posters, samples of work, exemplar material, key words from topics recently studied. These things change, every year or so. The paper is flimsy and transient, curling ears indicating a need for restoration. And this room has seen restoration, updated 6, 7 years ago. Before, it had rows of wooden benches behind which the children sat on high wooden stools. The age of the desks dated not in the rings like a tree trunk but the dates accorded to pieces of graffiti, "Frank woz 'ere September 1989" or "I hate Jason - Baz B '93". The dark wood was varnished, would be defaced, sanded down and varnished again, an almost natural cycle giving me the sense of fecundity about the room.

Now, the room is sterile. The new desks have laminate coatings and are geometrically designed in pods so children can sit facing each other. Designed for collaboration they have become abused by too much chatting and distraction. The children sit on blue plastic stools with metal legs, which they gleefully scrape across the new floor.

But here I still sit. In this room I have spent literally years of my life. Apparently teachers can have 1000 separate interactions per day. I must be in the millions by now. I enjoyed most of them. The majority were verbal, some not; instead they were expressive like a glare, or a scowl, even a raised eyebrow. Some were shouted, some whispered, some spoken with a wink in the eye, others with a tear. Some were inflammatory, some offensive, some instructive and some soothing.

But here I sit still. Teaching the children of children I once taught. The subject remains the same but the faces change. Plants will always photosynthesise, animals will always respire, and organisms will always reproduce. The children come in and out of the door to my classroom like waves of the sea. Over time and the years, class upon class, wave upon wave of young faces break upon my classroom shore, flowing ceaselessly through room 28, my room. Sometimes faces remain familiar for longer, like a leaf that finds itself caught with floating debris in an eddy circling behind a rock in a lazy river. Students make an impression, a connection is made, maybe even a friendship, but time and

the flow of its waters soon loosen the anchor of attachment and faces will float off into the distance of memory.

But here I sit still, my feet dipped in that flowing river, sensing the strength of the current increase, the flow quicken. The years pass by with alarming rapidity. Without noticing entire cohorts of children can come and go through the doors of the school. Faces remembered as tiny, anxious little ones will change, quick as a flash into proud older teenage faces, dressed in fine clothes for the leavers ball.

But here I sit still, because I haven't changed. My face and flesh may flow, sinking downwards as the tide of youth recedes but I don't change, me, the id, my ego. It's still me.

You know, I read once that you cannot step twice into the same river.



# EPIPHANY: IAN CROSS

In his book 'Shoe Dog' Phil Knight, the owner and founder of Nike, writes about a moment when his fledgling business was being threatened by a competitor. Knight describes a scene witnessing his first employee's pet octopus:

"Stretch just injected poison in the crab," Johnson said, grinning like a proud dad...It was a morbid puppet show, a dark kabuki play, starring a witless victim and a micro-kraken - was it a sign, a metaphor for our dilemma? One living thing being eaten by another? This was nature, wet in tooth and claw..." (Knight, 2016 p.97-98)

And nature as we know from watching David Attenborough documentaries is brutal. Crocodiles jump out at Wildebeest, snakes chase lizards across tropical beaches, baby turtles are devoured in their hundreds. Evolution, so-to-speak, is dog-eat-dog and so is business.

Or so I thought.

Because following from my research for the last 'Conversation' I had an epiphany.



My previously unexamined deductive reasoning went:

Evolution is one of the means by which the world has come into being in its present form.

Evolution is individualistically competitive and only the fittest survive.

Evolution is natural.

Capitalism is a consequent of evolution.

Conclusion: capitalism has the characteristics of evolution - it is individualistically competitive and only the fittest survive. Capitalism is natural.

This argument is neatly entailed but in researching about Huxley and Kropotkin's competing interpretations of Evolution I wondered if it was an a priori fallacy. Deductive arguments must move from the general to the specific, which this purports to do, however it denies the role of interpretation in establishing our paradigm of evolution. My revised consideration was this:

Evolution is one of the means by which the world has come into being in its present form.

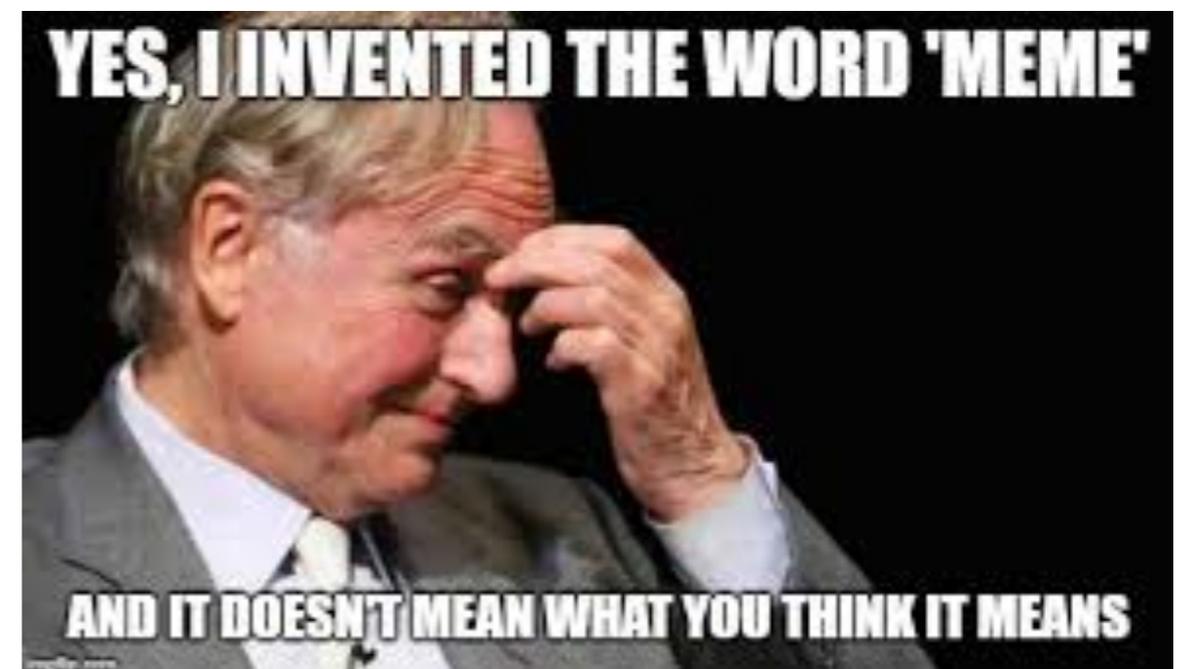
Evolution is natural.

Capitalism is a precedent of evolutionary theory.

Capitalism is individualistic, competitive and only the fittest survive.

Conclusion: evolutionary theory took on the characteristics of capitalism in its interpretation - that it is individualistic, competitive and only the fittest survive. Capitalism isn't intrinsically natural.

How, I wondered, did I come to this unexamined assumption about dog-eat-dog capitalism being natural? Propositional 'knowledge' and genes both work in similar ways. Richard Dawkins refers to these knowledge-beliefs as Memes (coining the term, though these are very different from animated gifs of 90's TV characters dancing).



Any gene that promotes its own 'means of transmission' will be found in increasing proportions in any given population over time. Hence the neural framework required for orgasms. But what if in a population the genes for orgasms were tied up with the genes for an increased likelihood of bowel cancer? Over time that population would have an increased preponderance of bowel cancer is what. Analogously, if propositional knowledge is transmitted mostly through secondary sources, this knowledge is propagated and survives or dies due to its accuracy and verification. For example, most people believed the earth was flat from their own experience of looking to the horizon but over time accepted that the earth was spherical from the evidence of others who circumnavigated the globe and eventually went into space, transmitting images back to us. Most people have not themselves circumnavigated the world or been to space but understand that without a roughly spherical globe we wouldn't have continental trade routes, oceanic shipping, GPS and the like. Just as with genes, if a particular belief has some property that facilitates its own transmission then that belief will inevitably be held by an increasing number of people. This is how errors of thought can be commonly held.

'False beliefs that happen to promote stable societies tend to propagate because people who hold these beliefs tend to live in stable societies, which provide the means by which false beliefs propagate.' (Gilbert, p217).

For example it is well established that after meeting our needs for shelter, warmth and sustenance, there is minimal uplift in happiness from increased wealth, what economists call 'declining marginal utility' (Scitovsky, 1976) (Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003), and yet we slog away producing and consuming because that is what our system of capitalism needs from us. The belief that money leads to happiness is a consequent of the needs of the economy not the needs of the individual. (I think my own day-to-day happiness is largely dependent on the agreeability of my students to throw themselves wholeheartedly into the learning tasks I devise for them). Money leading to happiness is a super-replicating fallacy because it drives amongst other things technological innovation, including medicine, which is surely a good thing. Similarly the belief in Evolution mimicking the paradigmatic form of liberal capitalism only serves to strengthen this system. When I asked a class of year 10 students 'do teachers ever tell you: work hard so you can get good GCSE's so you can get a good job so

you can earn lots of money to be happy?' The response was emphatic: 'All the time!' I wondered if we have a duty as educators to the truth or to perpetuate falsehoods that lead to stable societies when instructed?

At school how do we promote these synthesised capitalistic/evolutionary ideas? Sometimes through assemblies that borrow from American sports motivational exhortation, inspired by Nike advertising. For Phil Knight, sport and business are about winning (or at least not losing). After watching Steve Prefontaine compete in 1972 Knight writes:

"I told myself, Don't forget this. Do not forget. I told myself there was much to be learned from such a display of passion, whether you are running a mile or a company... We'd compete as if our lives depended on it. Because they did." (Knight, 2016, p.212)

They didn't. He could have gone back to being an accountant if his business had failed... and lived.

Running, like many sports, is mostly zero-sum and so fits the thesis of Huxley's dog-eat-dog individualistic capitalism. A recent video shown to all our students stated in all seriousness: 'I will win or I will die trying'. This was

deemed analogous to GCSE's, and yet most of life is not zero-sum, there are not binary categories of winners and losers like there are in boxing matches or corporate court cases. This is why we have a glass cabinet of sports trophies but no glass cabinet of science, drama, english, maths or art trophies. No glass cabinets of competitive empathy, kindness or love. Meanwhile in video after video athletes train alone, sweat dripping in glorious slow motion, driving themselves through trials and tribulations until overcoming all like Nietzsche-esq supermen. Nike has just won an Emmy award for their advertising campaign with the slogan 'Believe in something. Even if it means sacrificing everything.' (Guardian, 2019) Whilst Colin Kaepernick and many of the featured athletes may be well worthy of our acclaim, how about other prominent Nike sponsees Lance Armstrong and Alberto Salazar? The slogan itself is so vacuous it could equally be applied over a photo of Hitler or Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The notion that success might be based on collaboration and co-reliance is absent in this hidden curriculum. The message is that you need to be an individual ('don't believe you have to be like anybody'), you will only be successful if you win ('be the fastest ever') and winning inevitably comes at the expense of others. If you are not a winner then you are a loser.



I am not for one moment suggesting that I am anti-competition, nor that life can't at times be competitive, but when I stop to ponder I realise that I am collaborating more often than I am competing and therefore, I wonder if it is Kropotkin's paradigm that is more prescient than Huxley's.

As we head towards irreversible climate change Greta Thunberg points out:

"We are in the beginning of a mass extinction, and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth." (Thunberg, 2019) "And if solutions within this system are so impossible to find then maybe we should change the system itself." (Thunberg, 2018) I wonder if in order to save nature perhaps we have to change what we consider to be natural.



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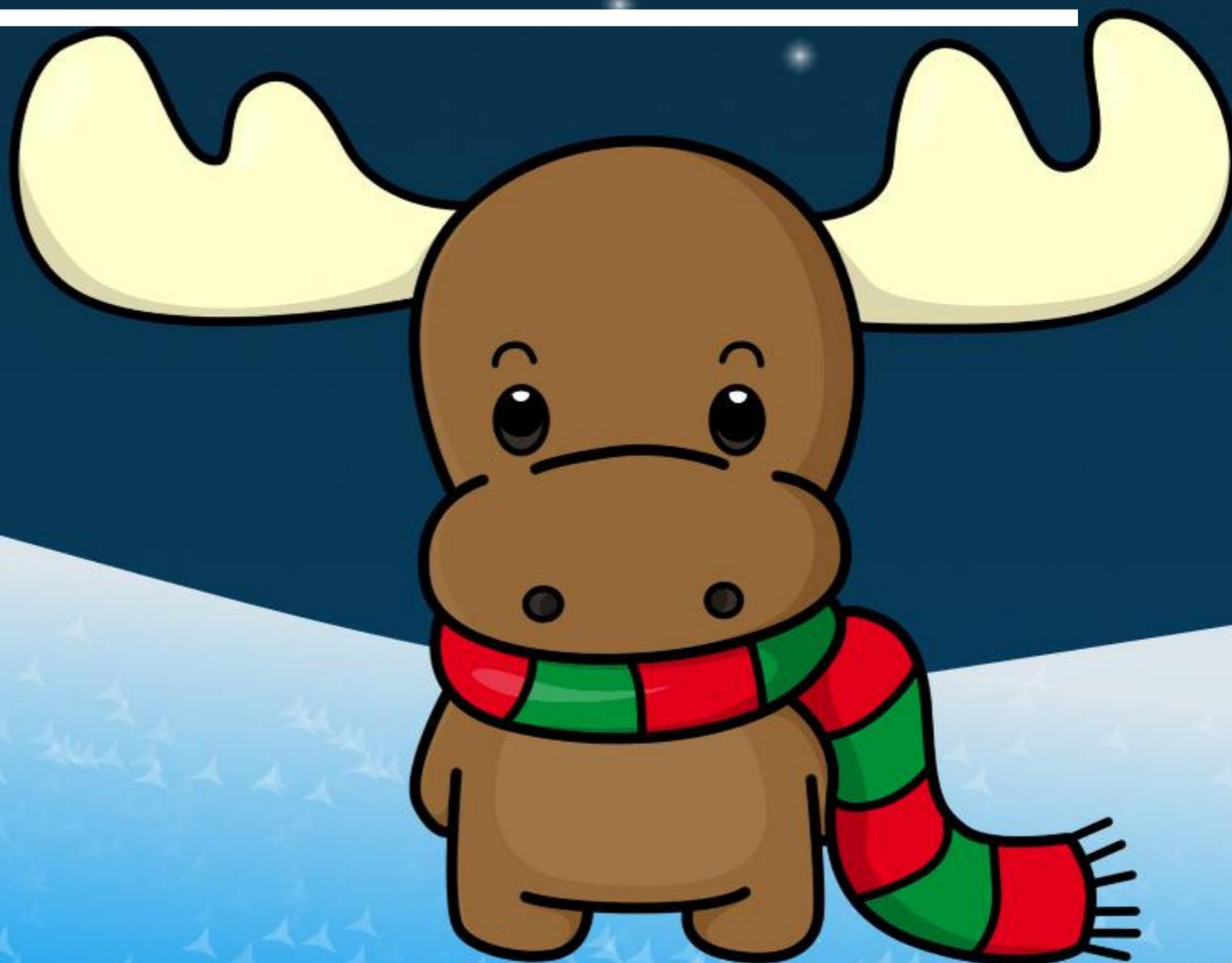
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*12 Books for*

*Christmas*







Theory is when you know everything but nothing works.

Practice is when everything works but no-one knows why.

In our school, theory and practice are combined:

Nothing works and no-one knows why.

## The Conversation

# MANIFESTO

### The Conversation has the following aims:

- To encourage more conversation between education professionals
- To increase incidents of serendipitous knowledge exchange
- To provide content that challenges, inspires and provokes
- To be a vehicle to carry content created by education professionals
- To provide a forum for conversation through the website & social media

**The Conversation** is a response to didactic modes of teacher development. It is a response to the commoditisation of CPD and an attempt to encourage authentic experiences for education professionals. It is a response to the frustration of modern and perpetual modes of relation and seeks to promote direct, unmediated communication between educators. When we assert our irreducible individuality, we call forward qualitative richness into our professional situations. It is an attempt to encourage the construction of situations; moments of life deliberately built for the purpose of reawakening and pursuing authentic desires and interests, experiencing the feeling of life and adventure, and the liberation of our everyday lives as educators.

At **The Conversation** we believe that giving educators the space and time to talk about teaching and learning is essential.

Conversations can generate ideas, inform pedagogies and inspire reform. A conversation implies a measure of equality and that listening and sharing without limit, without judgement, without inhibition can lead to incredible things. Conversations allow us to explore ideas, to challenge and ask questions of ourselves, each other and the systems we work in. They inspire us to create, analyse and evaluate ideas. They provoke us to engage intellectually with the latest research and make links between theories and praxes. Conversations can lift us, excite us and challenge us. So join in the conversation!