

Chatting with Glue*

COGNITIVE TOOLS FOR AUGMENTED CONVERSATION

Our conversations have a memory problem

online and offline

they meander and swerve focus, jumping between synchronous and asynchronous

wonderfully generative, yet hopelessly stunted and often irretrievable



I mean, you send your friend some ideas and

...and?

2 DAYS LATER

and uh

oh

see?? exactly!

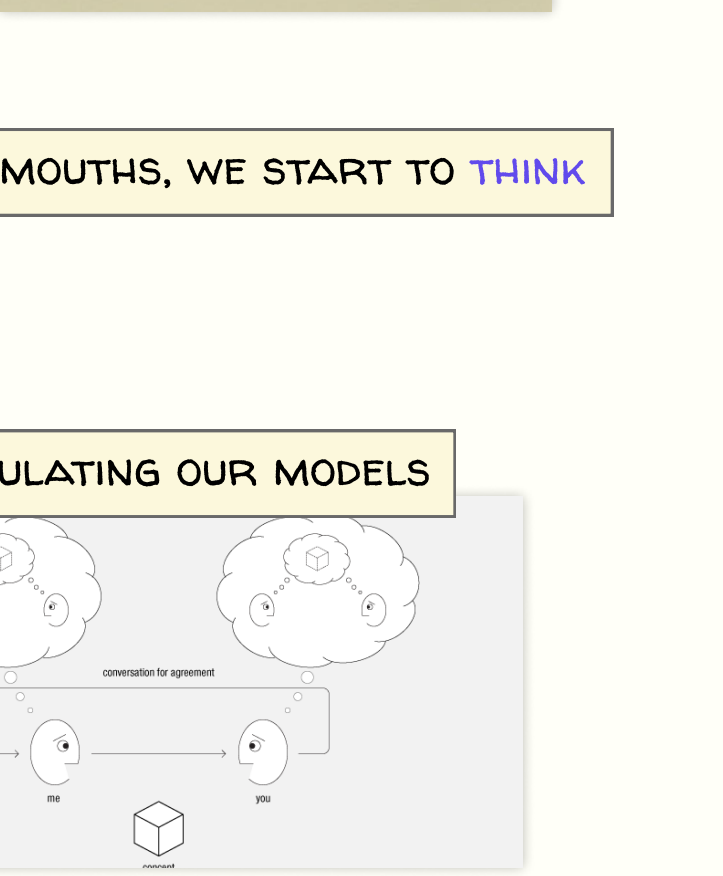
* a comic exposition

written for the Convivial Computing Salon, <Programming> 2020

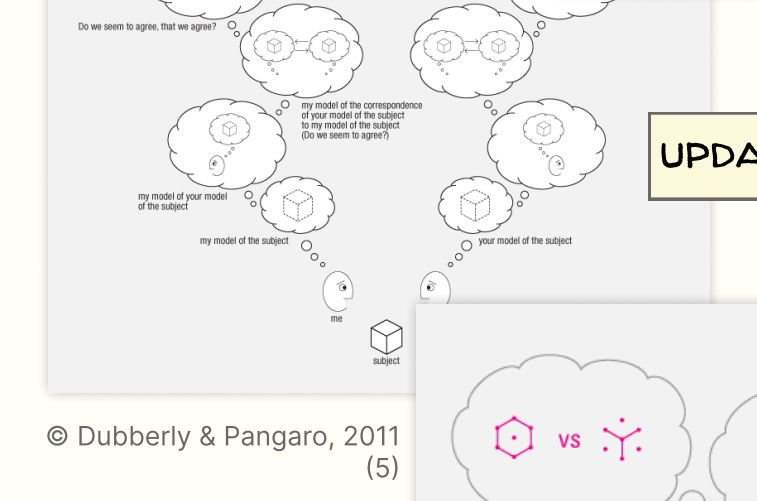
CHAPTER 1: THE PARADOX OF CHAT

WHEN WE CONVERSE, WE EXCHANGE INFORMATION

EEEEEE LL IIII ZZZZZZ AAAA
EE LL II ZZ AA A
EEEE LL II ZZ AAAA
EE LL II ZZ AA A
EEEE LLLLLL IIII ZZZZZZ AA A
YOU: Is something troubling you ?
YOU: Men are all alike.
ELIZA: What is the connection, do you suppose ?
YOU: They're always bugging us about something or other.
ELIZA: Can you think of a specific example ?
YOU: Well, my boyfriend made me come here.
ELIZA: Is it important to you that your boyfriend made you come here?
YOU: He says I'm depressed much of the time.
ELIZA: I am.
YOU: I'm sorry.
ELIZA: Can you tell me, what day it is today?
YOU: I don't know.

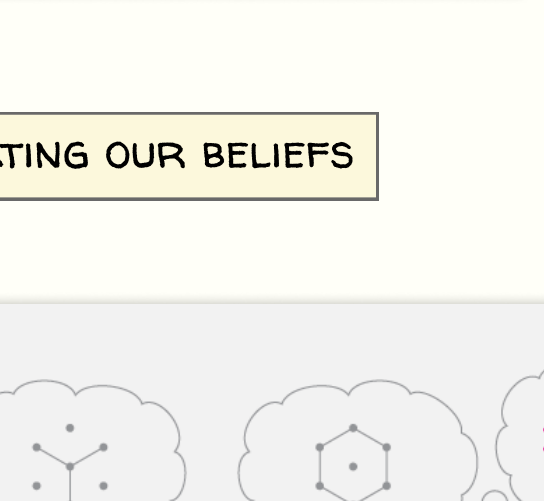


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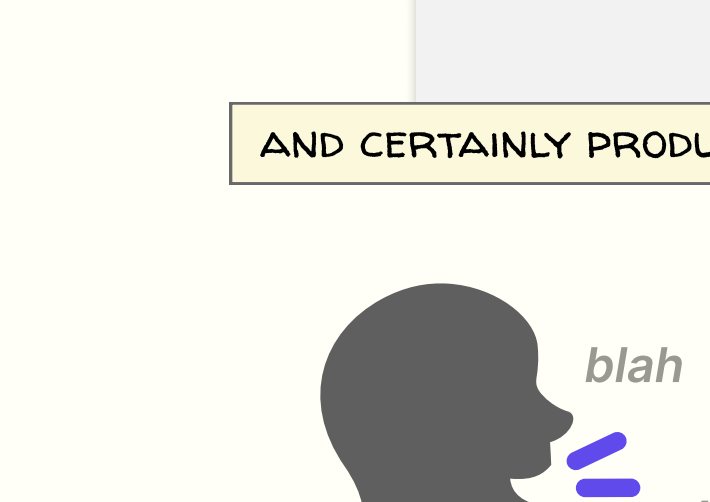
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BUT WE DON'T JUST TALK



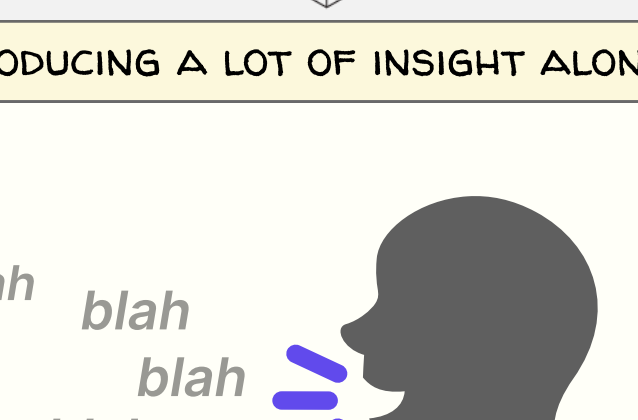
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AS SOON AS WE OPEN OUR MOUTHS, WE START TO THINK

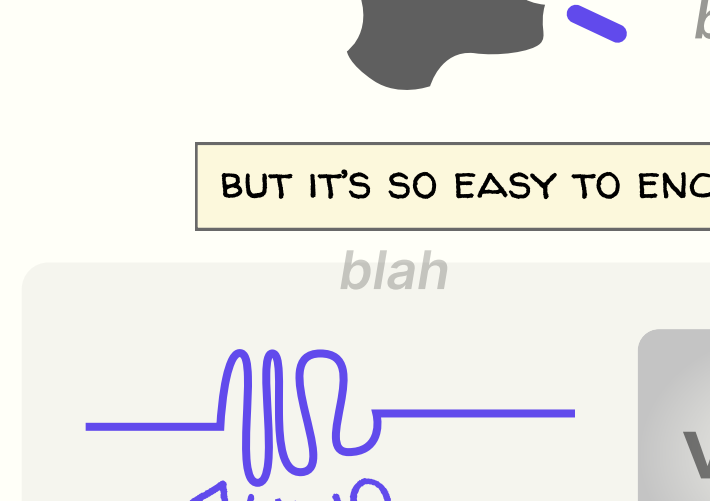


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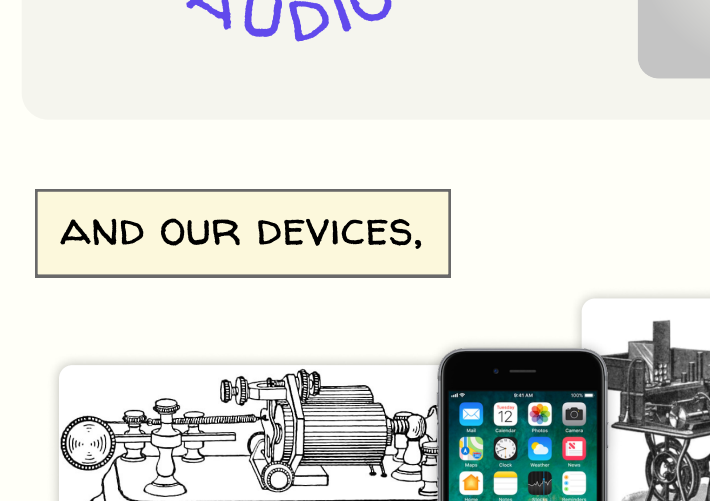
ARTICULATING OUR MODELS



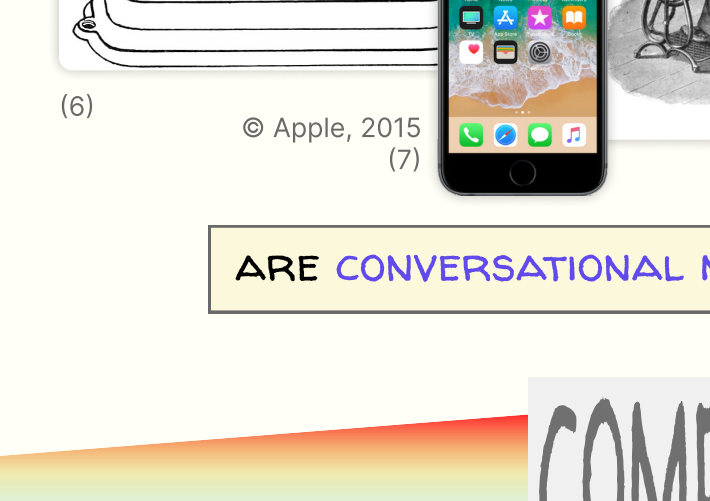
CONVERSATION FOR AGREEMENT



UPDATING OUR BELIEFS



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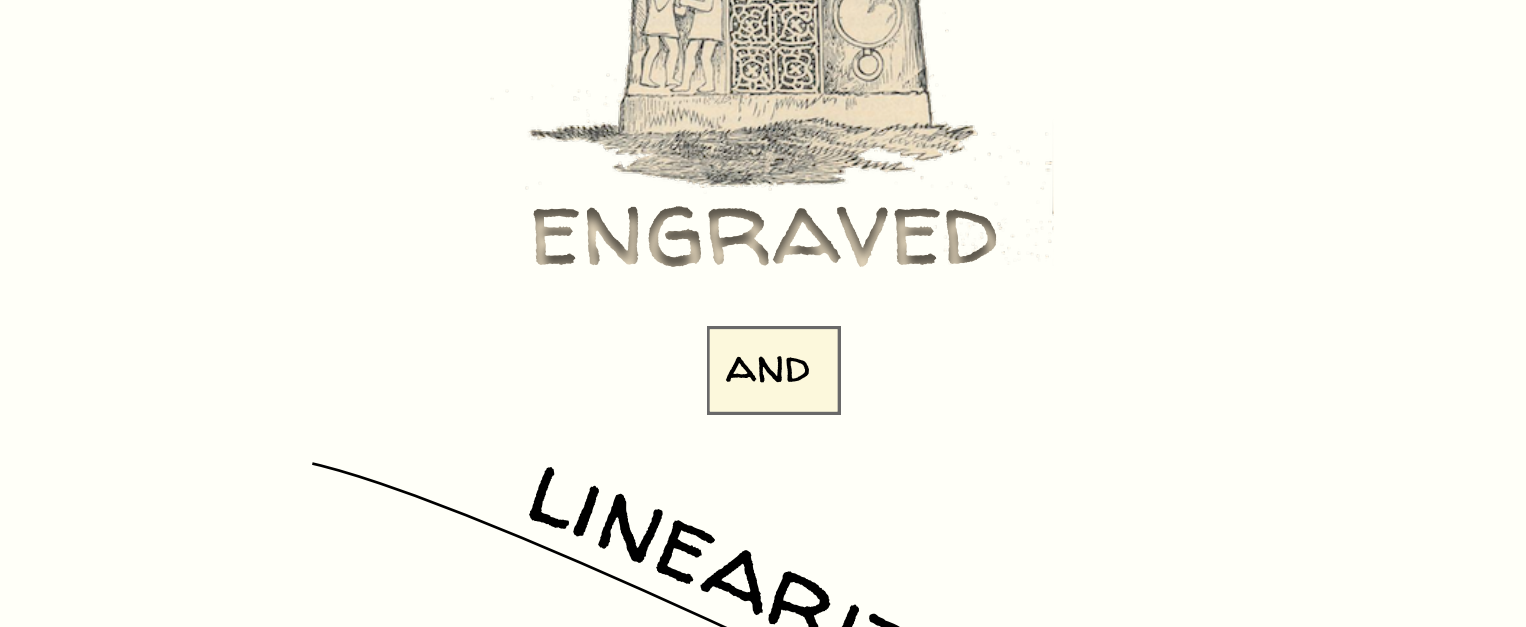


(5)

AND CERTAINLY PRODUCING A LOT OF INSIGHT ALONG THE WAY



BUT IT'S SO EASY TO ENCODE OUR UTTERANCES INTO:



AND OUR DEVICES,



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© Apple, 2015

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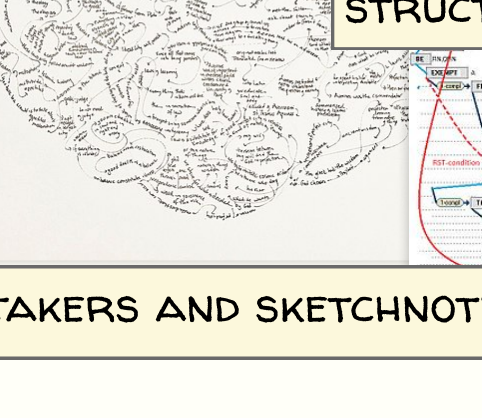
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ARE CONVERSATIONAL MEDIA THAT HAVE ACCIDENTALLY

COMPRESSED



ENGRAVED

AND

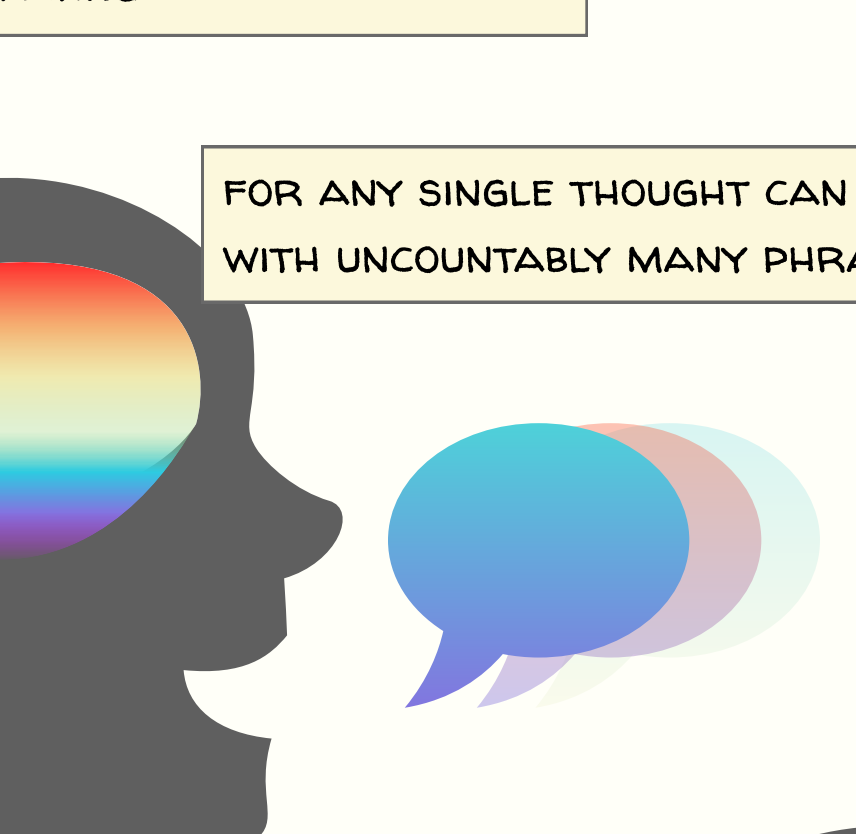
LINEARIZED

OUR THINKING

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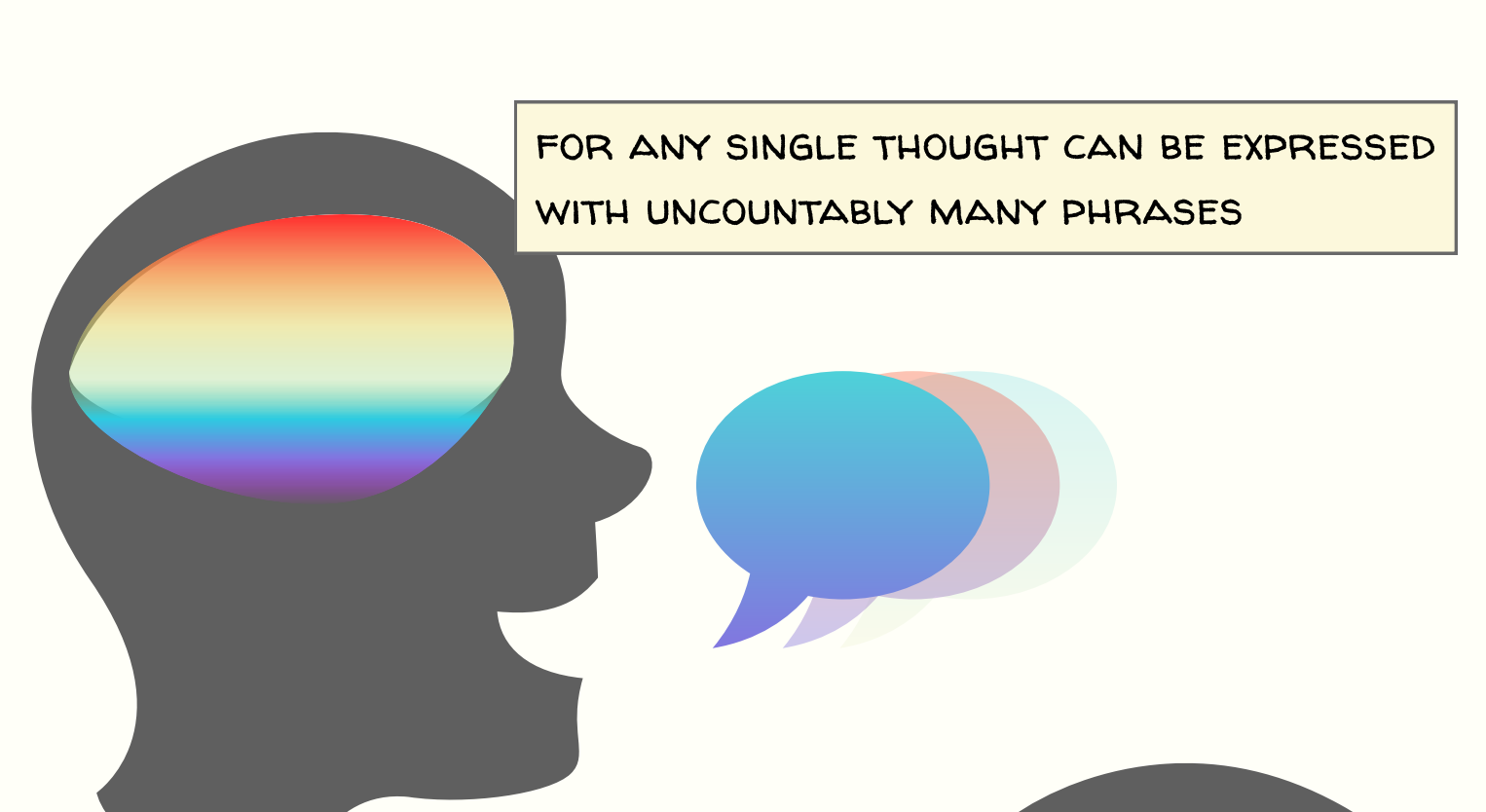
AS IF OUR CONVERSATIONS WEREN'T DESIGNED, BUT TRANSCRIBED

BUT THIS IS A PROBLEM.



A CONTRADICTION.

THERE'S A LOT OF RICHNESS IN CONVERSATION



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STRUCTURED INFORMATION

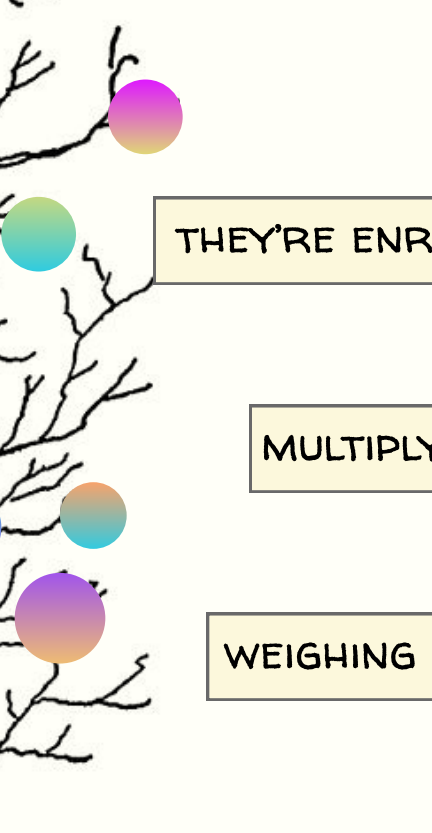
(NOTETAKERS AND SKETCHNOTERS KNOW THIS WELL)

(13, 14)

THIS RICHNESS IS MOST ABUNDANT IN THE MINDS PARTICIPATING

FOR ANY SINGLE THOUGHT CAN BE EXPRESSED WITH UNCOUNTABLY MANY PHRASES

EVERY CONCEPT, EVERY KEYWORD WE RECOGNIZE FANS OUT INTO DOZENS MORE



(THE BEST SPEAKERS ENDOW EACH WORD WITH DELIBERATE MEANING)

AND AS IDEAS SPROUT FROM OUR MIND-TREES

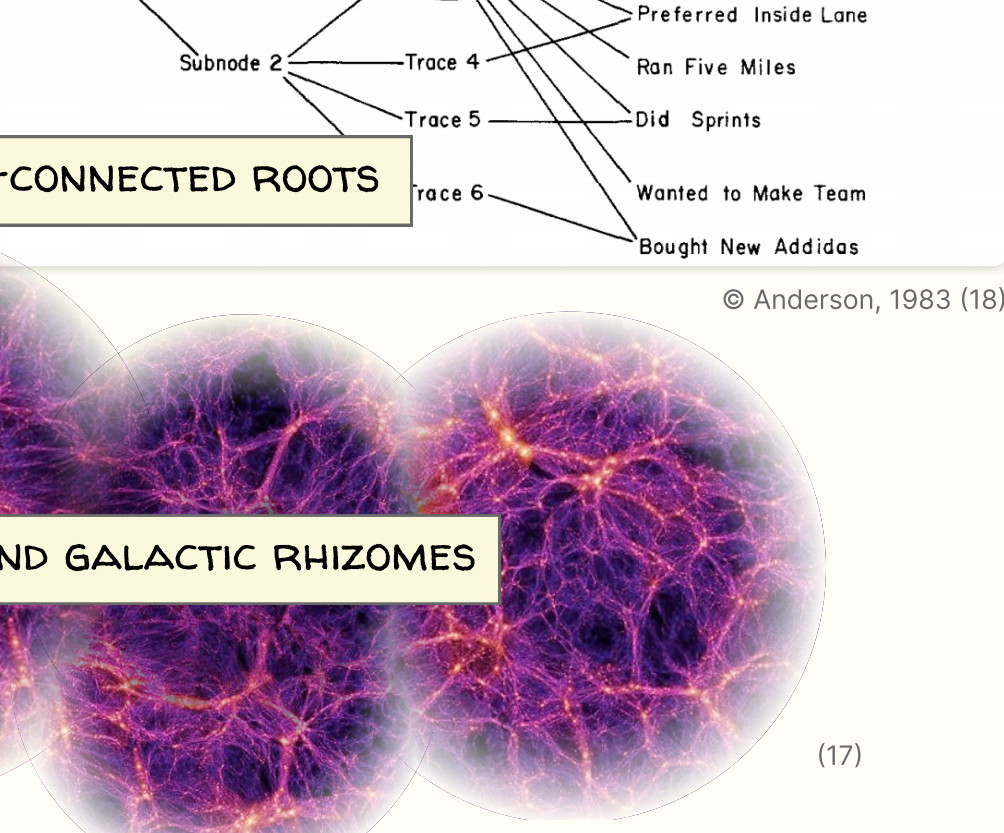
THEY'RE ENRICHED AND DIVERSIFIED BY OTHERS

MULTIPLYING IN VOLUME

WEIGHING DOWN SUPPLE BRANCHES

FALLING INTO ARTICULATION

AND THIS IS NO COINCIDENCE: OUR THOUGHTS ACTIVATE IN PATTERNS OF ASSOCIATION



© Anderson, 1983 (18)

THROUGH DENSELY-CONNECTED ROOTS

AND GALACTIC RHIZOMES

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WHAT DOES THIS SUGGEST ABOUT CONVERSATION?

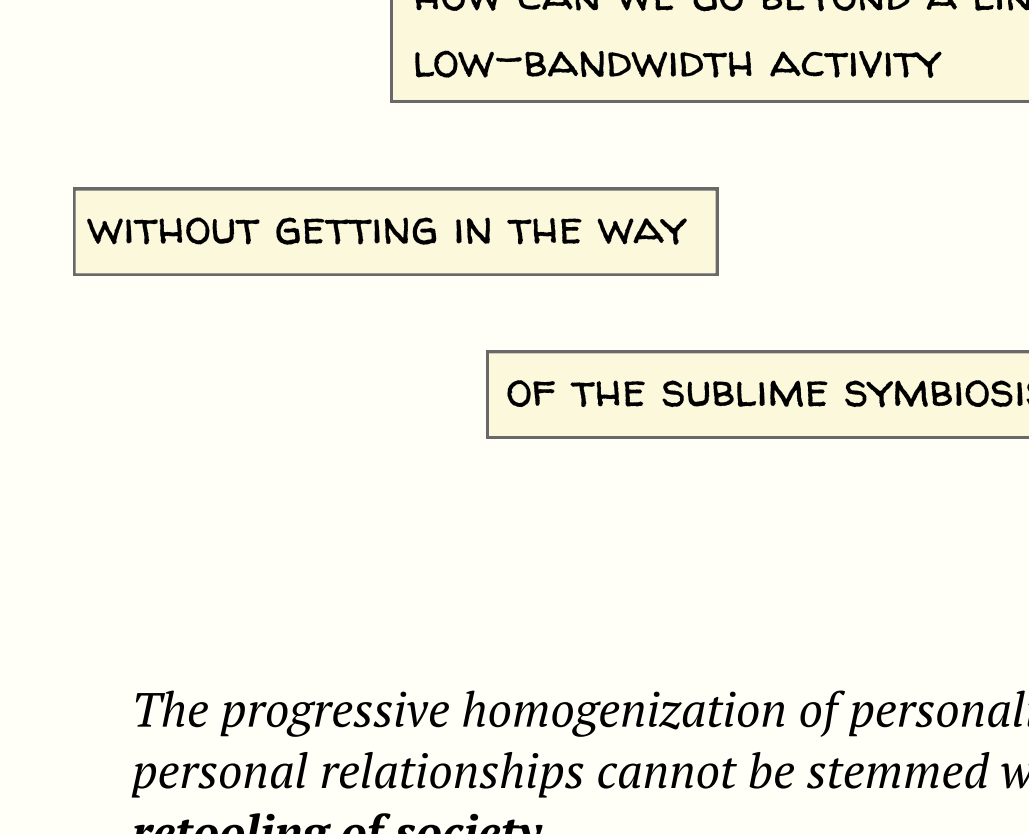


NOT ONLY IS IT MORE RICH THAN OUR UTTERANCES ALONE

BUT IT'S NONLINEAR

AND NEVER COMPLETE

AM I SUGGESTING CONVERSATION IS A CIRCLE?



A DISINTEGRATION LOOP?

The Disintegration Loops © William Basinski, 2002 (20)

HARDLY. I LOVE THE SNAPPY BACK-AND-FORTH,

THE STORY

AND THE BLEAK UNDERSTATEMENT

OF A GOOD CONVERSATION

BUT WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE EXPAND THE CONVERSATIONAL MEDIUM?

HOW CAN WE GO BEYOND A LINEAR, TEMPORAL, LOW-BANDWIDTH ACTIVITY

WITHOUT GETTING IN THE WAY

OF THE SUBLIME SYMBIOSIS OF SPEAKING?

The progressive homogenization of personalities and personal relationships cannot be stemmed without a retooling of society.

Ivan Illich, Tools for Conviviality