



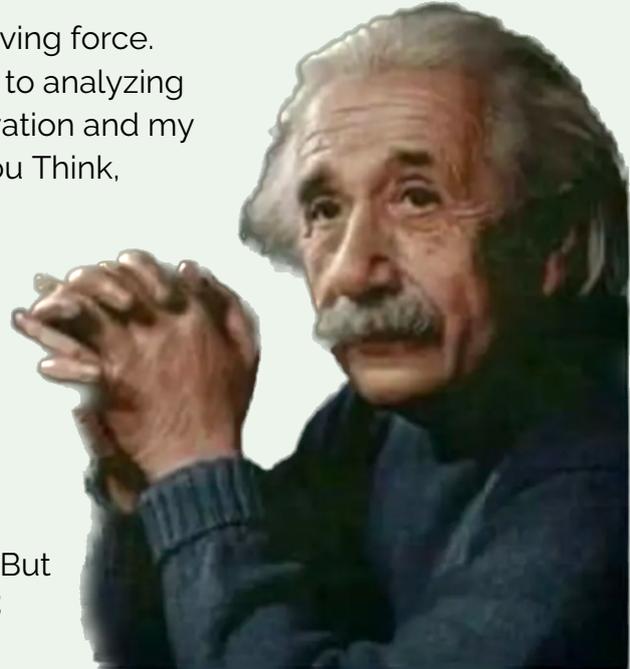
This Week's **Research Reflection**

## Curiosity – What's There?

This logbook examines curiosity as a driving force. Welcome to a down-to-earth approach to analyzing curiosity mostly through boredom, observation and my active principle. "To Change the Way You Think, Change the Way You See."

"I think 99 times and find nothing. I stop thinking, **swim in silence**, and the truth comes to me."  
*Albert Einstein*

Read about thirty research articles last fall, and I must say, they bored me to death. So much so that I started questioning their truthfulness and how method-driven the whole field really is. But I'm not here to critique academic works; I'm here to write about myself and my thoughts. And truth be told, my boredom turned out to be fantastic. It pushed me to check out the History of Ideas department at Stockholm University, and now I love every single text I read.

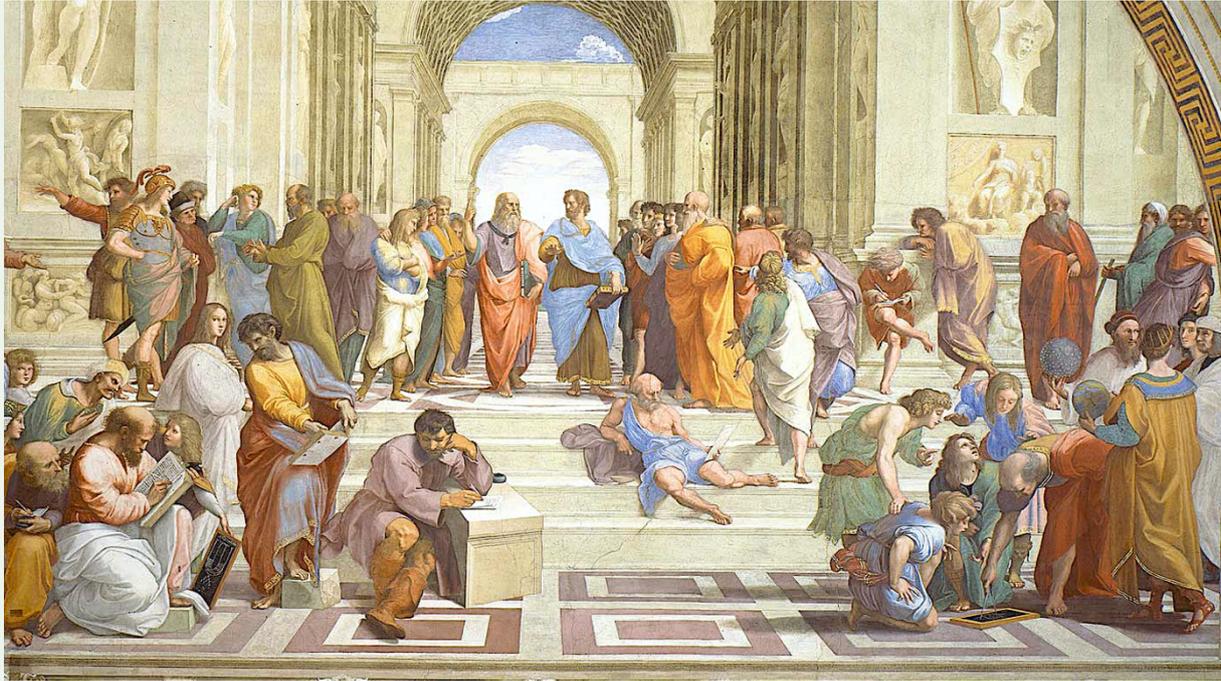


That said, one does wonder, how many women spend their time thinking about the Roman Empire? Tonight, I'm diving into Realism, Conceptualism, and Nominalism. Do universals (e.g., "humanity," "goodness") exist as independent entities, or are they just names we assign to individual things? The eternal debate, what is real, and how do we recognize and understand the world?

In Plato's realm, where ideas reside, there floats humanity, pure and wide. An eternal form, a lasting light, a being above the earthly fight. Pointing Up! Platon dressed in red (look at the picture below), he thought women could think... at least a little.

But Aristotle, grounded and wise, Saw concepts in bodies, in action, in ties. No distant spheres, no lofty halls, Just forms within the world's own walls. Down among the plants, dressed in blue, sadly, he thought women lacked the "active principle." Did I say the Middle Ages was a patriarchy...?

Ockham laughs, his razor cuts: "Only particulars, nothing but!" No grand ideas, just words in play, a world of names, of language's sway. And so the battle rages on,



through ages past, yet never gone. Is justice more than a door ajar, or merely a name, a whispering star?

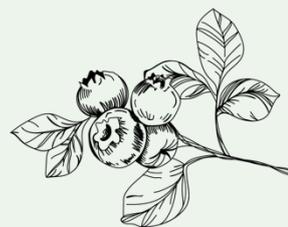
Plato and Aristotle sparked the debate, both arguing for realism but in different ways. Medieval thinkers like Thomas Aquinas expanded on realism, while Peter Abelard (who cares, you might think) introduced conceptualism as a compromise, universals exist in our minds but not beyond them.

William of Ockham took it a step further (finally, the language philosophers are smiling), claiming universals are nothing but names (think words!). In doing so, he set the stage for empiricism and modern science.

Now back to the books! I can't express how happy I am about my professor, Karolina, at Stockholm University's History of Ideas department.

Read more! Do your own research © BAAM

MALIN PEDRO



The Meaning School



Diary, 17:12, December 2, 2024. Airplane between Stockholm and London, on the way to lead a leadership program

Observation: Seatback. Harvard professor Roberto Verganti's mouth is wide open.  
Thought: We have assistance from Karin from the Stockholm School of Economics.  
Feeling: Good, but also aware it's a new relationship to manage. There are pros and cons to that.

Thought: The new contact from the client, he seems nice.

Wants: Looking forward to Thursday evening in London with Roberto. Last year, we rushed home after the program. We've learned to stay an extra day when we work.

A day in London, I wonder what we'll do, what we'll see. I can use this diary as material to understand the articles on curiosity. (*Reading two articles linked in this text*)

Feeling: Honestly, these articles, they're so boring.

Thought: The method section seems dominates. Why don't professors research their own practice? How are they supposed to understand if they're not grounded in the context? I wish I could sleep like Roberto. Observation: His jaw has dropped even lower now. The keys on my laptop clatter. The flight attendant looks at me and asks: Tea or coffee? I answer "Tea, please I am bored, I drink tea when I am bored."

Than it came. The idea to start to study again, yey!

<p><b>My observations</b></p> <p>Verifiable facts on what happened (typically behaviors, statements, events)</p>	<p><b>My thoughts</b></p> <p>Interpretations Assumptions Fantasies Stories</p>
<p><b>My needs/wants</b></p> <p>Intentions Motivations Vision</p>	<p><b>My feelings</b></p> <p>Emotional reactions Good or bad feelings Fears</p>

### The art of Observation

An article written by Adam Brandenburg and published in *Harvard Business Review* [HBR](https://hbr.org) in April 2019 bore the title: "To Change the Way You Think, Change the Way You See."



In his article, Adam Brandenburg references [Sherlock Holmes](#), who once told Watson: "You see, but you do not observe. The distinction is clear." Further advice on breaking through the familiar to truly observe comes from psychologist and author [Maria Konnikova](#) in her book *Mastermind: How to Think Like Sherlock Holmes*. She writes: "To observe, you must learn to separate situation from interpretation, yourself from what you see."



To develop this skill, Konnikova suggests describing a situation of interest aloud or in writing to a companion. As she notes, Holmes often used Watson in this way, **talking through his observations** while investigating a case. This exercise frequently revealed the key points of the matter. This technique is valuable not just for aspiring artists and entrepreneurs but also for **“consulting detectives.”**

### Hello, here’s an example

One favorite Sherlock Holmes story, *The Adventure of Silver Blaze* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, focuses on the disappearance of a racehorse and the murder of its trainer. The curious element in this case was that the dog in the stable did not bark during the night. Could it be that the killer was known to the horse? Holmes discusses his observations with Watson, using this dialogue to reframe and reason through the case.



How to move forward in an uncertain and undefined context. The power of hypotheses and abductions in the example of Sharlock Holmes, the quintessential abductive thinker



[Inspector] Is there any other point to which you want to draw my attention Mr. Holmes?

[Holmes]  
To the curious incident of the dog in the night time

[Colonel]  
The dog did nothing in the night time

[Holmes]  
That’s the curious incident

Whereas all other investigators do not see any anomaly in something normal (the dog did not bark), Holmes imagine another possibility: the “normal” was “not normal”. If an unknown person (supposedly the killer) would have walked nearby, the dog would have barked. So the killer cannot be an unknown person, contrary to what others believe.




Let's use that as a working hypothesis.

If our supposition is correct, it must have crossed it!

You see. The value of imagination. It's the one quality that inspector Gregory lacks. We imagined what might have happened. Acted upon the supposition. And found ourself as justified.

### Ciao, what does research say about Curiosity?

First my own definition: It's the spark that drives us to look beyond the surface, to ask questions that might not have answers, look closer, and to venture into territories you never explored before. Perhaps curiosity is a form of energy, a restless pulse that move us forward. It's not satisfied with what is; it wants to know why, how, and what if. It grows in environments where there's space for wonder. To be curious is to admit we don't have all the answers, to embrace the vulnerability of not knowing. It's a kind of bravery, a willingness to jump into ambiguity and stay there long enough to learn something new. Whats there?



Is it a mask down there? If you get in love with your hypothesis the risk is that the reflection gets locked.

1. "Curiosity is the desire to know, to see, or to experience that motivates exploratory behaviour, information seeking, and learning" (Lievens et al. 2022).

2. "Not only "notice what has changed" but also "to change what is noticed" (Weick 1996)

3. "Curiosity when entering something new: "an important *meta-competency*, that is, the capability for learning how to adapt, enabling the ability "to explore and experiment . . . to draw on a variety of experiences to make sense of one's situation".





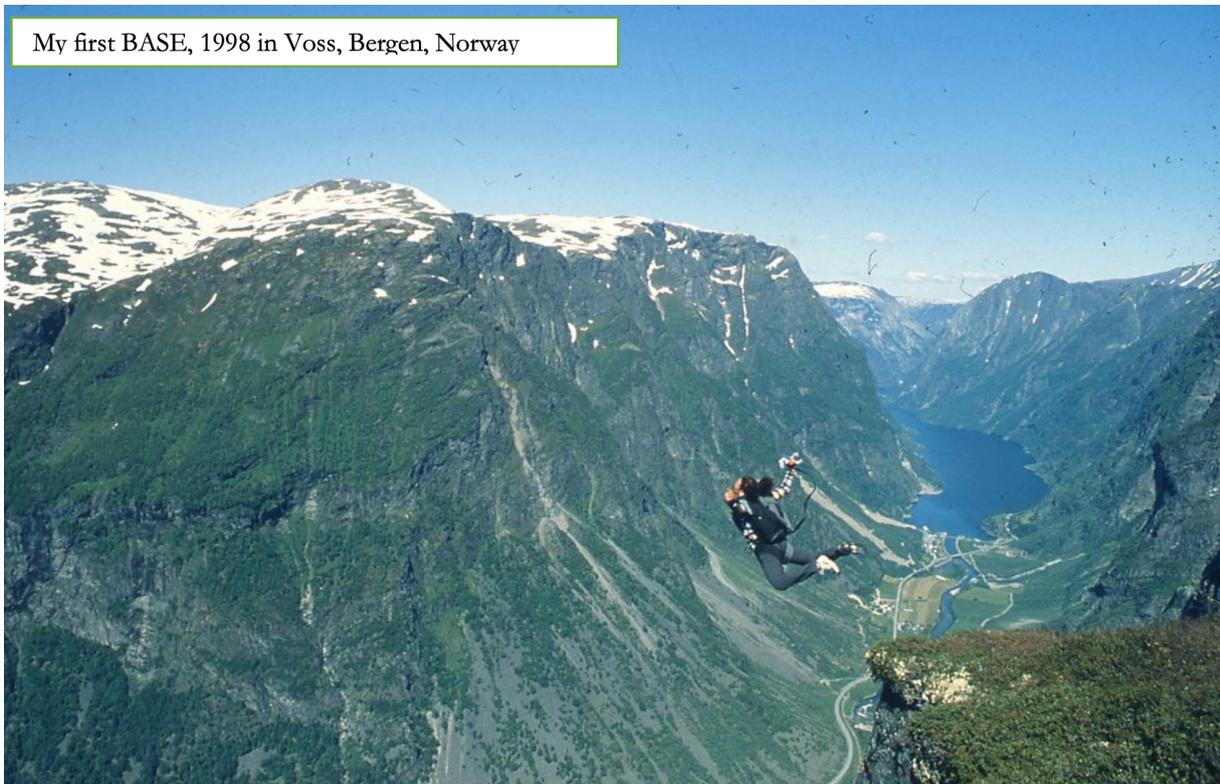
4. "Individuals with strong dispositional tendencies toward divisive curiosity are attracted to a broad array of novel stimuli, the point is not to find a particular or precise piece of information but **a new way of seeing the situation**". Harrison et al. (2011)

To delve deeper into this type of curiosity, see "*Killing the Cat: A Review of Curiosity at Work*" by Filip Lievens [artikeln](#). Even more inspiration (or boredom) can be found in the article "[Curiosity Adapted the Cat](#)" by S. Harrison, here you can read more about curiosity, both specific and diversive.



5. Specific curiosity, which drives one to seek precise answers, resembled the engineers in this company, eager to solve concrete problems. Diverisive curiosity, with its broad and playful perspective, reflected the visionary leaders who could transform sustainability challenges into more tangible ideas and opportunities.

My first BASE, 1998 in Voss, Bergen, Norway



Last word for today

Think about curiosity while you are engaging in it, write down the explicit experience. To critique boredom while experiencing it, behind boredom you will find it. To explore adaptability while navigating something very rigid and uncomfortable. Holding these tensions, allowing yourself to reflect not just on what you do, but on how curiosity or boredom appears, while you are doing it.

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