



## *Humanitas* Teacher Training with Nate Antiel

### Lecture 10: Joining the Great Conversation

#### **Outline:**

The Great Conversation connects readers to timeless questions through dialogue with primary texts. Students progress from eavesdropping on historical exchanges to participating in them, cultivating an internal dialectic that makes the conversation a personal and transformative experience.

#### **Introduction to the Great Conversation**

- **Definition of the Great Conversation**
  - A dialogue across time about truth, goodness, beauty, nobility, and holiness.
  - Originates before Aristotle and continues in foundational texts and ideas.
- **Purpose of Reading Primary Texts**
  - Engaging with timeless questions through historical and contemporary lenses.
  - Recognizing the dialogue among thinkers and texts over centuries.

#### **Exploring Intertextual Resonance**

- **Socratic Approach to Examination**
  - The unexamined life is not worth living; a life without dialectic lacks meaning.
  - Encourages returning to texts to identify connections and engage deeply.
- **Case Study: Locke and the Declaration of Independence**
  - Students identify Locke's influence on Jefferson's work.
  - Process involves comparison, analysis, and evaluation of ideas.

#### **Tradition and Historical Presence**



- **T.S. Eliot's "Historical Sense"**
  - Awareness of both the pastness and presence of history in texts.
  - Recognizing how thinkers like Locke reappear in surprising contexts across time.
- **Role of Students in Tradition**
  - Students learn to observe textual interactions.
  - Progress from eavesdropping to active participation in the Great Conversation.

## Becoming a Participant in the Conversation

- **From Listening to Engaging**
  - Transition from observing dialogue to interacting with texts as conversation partners.
  - Seminar discussions foster interaction between students, texts, and ideas.
- **Internal Dialectic**
  - Questions like "What is going on here?" and "What does this mean?" drive inquiry.
  - Liberty versus license as an example of questions provoking deeper understanding.
- **Personal Transformation Through Engagement**
  - The Great Conversation shifts from external to internal, shaping students' thoughts and values.

