



Conversation recorded between [Vasilis](#), Dave and Jas on 13 October 2019 at Restaurant Atlantikos, Athens. We gave Vasilis the choice between two unrelated questions sent to LS, but because we couldn't decide on one, we spoke about both. **LS Issues is a series of questions that we try to answer. You can read the previous Issue 1 with Lisette [here](#).**

Issue 2

Dear Life Sport,

Do you believe the earth is flat?

- Anonymous

Issue 3

Hi Lifesport,

I have a friend who I have great dialogue with. We live in different cities but chat a lot online and whenever we meet in person, we get on really well. The issue is that he repeatedly uses me to network. Whenever I introduce him to friends or acquaintances, he kind of jumps on them, immediately follows them on social media and starts writing to them privately. He even sends them stuff in the post. He acts like it's the most normal thing in the world. Am I being weird about it or is his behaviour off? What really annoys me is that he does this even with people he previously said he didn't like or respect, but if he sees an opportunity, he connects with them anyway. I find it flakey and think he's lacking integrity. Do you think it's normal he does that, seeing he's an artist too and trying to build a network, or is it a sign of bad character?

- Anonymous

Vasilis: The second question, I don't have so much experience because I'm not so famous. I have a network but I'm not the guy everyone will listen to, e.g. who to exhibit or what to exhibit. I'm popular just as Vasilis..

Dave: Can you tell me is there a difference between being popular and being famous?

V: Yeah, that's why they are two different words.

D: Ha. I just noticed people in XX use the word famous a lot and perhaps interchangeably with popular? Is it a translation thing?

V: Yeah, they mean popular. Famous is when you are in the newspapers or on the internet, articles, things like that. Famous is when people know you but you don't know them. Popular is when you are just very social and know lots of people and they know you also.

D: Ok, good.

Jas: I think the issue the person describes can happen at any level, regardless of whether you are famous or popular or whatever. It could be that you just have one contact and there comes your friend and sort of uses you to get to know them and gets overly friendly, sending them stuff in the post.. It sounds a bit creepy.

V: Yes, I have experience with people taking advantage of me and my network, recent graduates for example. You meet them in an opening and they ask you 'What about this space, do you know anyone, maybe I can show my work there', things like that. But I haven't experienced that someone really just used me to get in contact with someone else and then only speaks to them.

D: I remember the artist from XX who asked you to introduce her to everyone you know in XX and it was like a paid job, right? That's probably the most direct example of this I have ever seen. She announced that she wants to pay you for your network.

V: Yeah yeah, it was part of an assistant job to connect her. In the last few years in XX it has become a bit of a profession to introduce people to the local art scene and getting to know the spaces. They are something like art tourist guides.

J: At the time of this job, were you aware that this was what she was doing?

V: Yes, I was aware. Also, when I read the question I realised how much this is happening that some people take advantage of networks and just think about their careers. Although a show doesn't make your career anyway and to network in XX doesn't really work because nothing that interesting will probably happen from it. I started to go to openings when I came back to XX



out of curiosity and to see art but then I realised that the network is more important than the actual exhibition in every opening. It's about who you will meet and who you will talk to.

J: In my experience, it's a difficult situation. Actual friendship and art industry often overlap and it's difficult to tell someone off about such a thing, like 'hey I didn't like that you jumped on so-and-so and sent them something in the post', it's hard to say that. But maybe you should just tell them and if they react badly they are not the right friend.. There should be a level of understanding and possibility for conversation in a friendship, otherwise why are you friends?

V: I like the first question! I had the same question by very educated people. They were very drunk and asked me 'Do you really believe that the earth is flat?' And I was like 'What is this question, are you drunk?' But they were serious and said 'Yes, I'm drunk but have you seen that the earth is round?' I haven't seen of course but there is an answer to this. For example, in a lifetime when you are born you learn some things, you learn to do a job maybe, you read some books but you never learn everything. When you are three years old, you drink milk from a glass but you are not able to say where the milk comes from and you don't know the whole interesting process of how the glass was made. I think it's exactly the same thing with the earth, of course you cannot prove it with your own eyes but it's the logic that you have to accept that there are some tools that prove it, logically.

D: It's about belief.

V: Belief is different, it's that someone tells you a story, like religion, and you believe it.

D: It is based on the story that we have left the planet. The only people who have seen that the earth is round are the people that have looked at it from space. The story is that people have been out there and could prove it for everyone else in a logical way.

V: But there are tools to measure the time, weather etc.

D: If the earth is flat, then we are living under some mega conspiracy and the people that are operating that system would be altering the time and the weather and all the tools. People that have been to space would be the only ones to have seen it visually but then there is the question whether they were in a manipulated altered state..

J: I think it would be more likely they never went there.

V: The whole conspiracy is a lot of work, do you think someone's able to do all of this?

J: People get obsessed. People sell t-shirts and cups promoting an idea, it's an industry to make people believe and follow. There was a Netflix movie

about a guy trying to prove that the earth is flat and I can't remember what happens but I believe he cannot prove it.

D: What does Netflix think? Do they have an opinion or are they part of the conspiracy?

V: I don't know but when I was 18 years old I was watching this series called Cosmos. It's this astrophysicist Carl Sagan. In a lot of episodes he explains everything about the world, everything from biology to astrophysics. Mostly astrophysics. Now the last years it's run by Neil deGrasse Tyson also an astrophysicist and actually the term for these people is 'populist scientist'. They make science accessible to anyone who speaks English and doesn't have further knowledge. They explain really complex things with very simple answers. I like them a lot, I follow them on social media, I post what they post. I like them a lot.

D: So, for you it's not even a question that the world is flat?

V: No.

D: Why do you like the question then?

V: I like the question because my motto is to question everything.

J: Are you 100% sure that the world is round?

V: Yes.

J: So how can you question it?

V: I don't question that it is round because there are some scientific facts, like the change of time in America, the change of time in Europe..

J: But there are also flat earth explanations, they have their own theories why we have day and night and different time zones.

V: I like the question because science, like art, is not always logical.

D: Is the question art?

V: No but the question is related to art. You question something that is fundamental, something that is out of question. The artist thinks the same way.

J: So what interests you is why they would ask that question?

V: Yes exactly. And for an artist I think it's a very healthy situation to question everything. Not for the career but to do something interesting. I like people that question everything but there are some things you cannot really argue





with, like drinking water. Of course you can also question whether to drink water but you will die if you don't.

D: So, your answer to the question if the world is flat is 'Do we need to drink water'? It's a nice analogy.

J: I don't think it's such an innocent question the way you say it, like the artist who just questions everything. The question is polarising people, as is flat earth theory, and that goes hand in hand with a rise of nationalism, racism, anti-elitism..

V: Yes, but it's freedom of speech, even if it's total bullshit.

J: Flat earth society is not new, it just resurfaced on social media and as we learned social media isn't really free speech.

V: Yes it became popular in 2014. Social media gave the power to anyone to speak about their beliefs. The outcome is that we see very strange things and manipulation. Before, journalists gave us information.

D: Something that was kind of life changing for me was walking. Most people don't do long walks from one city to another. The first really long walk that we did was from XX to XX, that's 300 kilometers and it took 9 days. From that experience there is absolutely no way that you can know for sure that the world is round, you can't. Not 100%. There has to be some doubt. If we don't have doubt, we can't have criticism! You can't believe facts 100%, all the facts can be fabricated, they are all logical, concepts are very inventive and clever, facts are clever, facts are interesting. Logics are created out of facts.

J: Logic also affects how we feel. If we accept the concept that the earth is round, it does something to our thinking, how we inhabit and operate the world opposed to if we believed it was flat. If it had a different shape, our thinking would be shaped differently too. Our perception of reality would be an entirely different one. If we accept that the earth is flat, everything would be different.

V: Yes, it would be the Middle Ages! There was a time when we believed the earth is flat.

D: True, but maybe we were dying out because of the effect that the flat earth thinking had on the human consciousness. Somehow, acknowledging that the earth is flat might have increased the speed in which mankind was to extinct itself. We changed the story and pretended that the earth is round. The new shape changed the effect on us.

J: It seems we are more attracted to the earth being flat because we like flatness. We are obsessed with flat screens, shiny surfaces. Look at this voice recorder slash phone, it's so flat, why are we so obsessed by flatness, the perfection of flatness?



V: There is an aesthetic obsession based on mathematics and perfection. For example, a lot of artists have done the perfect circle, or the perfect square, especially in abstract art and minimalism. But for me this idea of perfection is also related to the end, because in Greek the word perfection is the same as the end. We say Telos for end and Teleio for perfection. It's the same word origin.

J: So, the end is perfection.

V: The earth will be perfect when it is not sustainable anymore.

J: That's gloomy. Do you believe in climate change?

V: Yes I believe in climate change because I have seen the difference.

J: It could be natural?

V: But you see the black smoke coming out of factories, I don't believe that this doesn't affect anything..

D: So, your belief that the earth is round comes from the program Cosmos that you were watching?

V: Yeah, and school.

D: From school?

V: Of course, yes.

D: And you are not questioning the system of education? Who creates that system of education? You don't think that it could be potentially manipulated?

V: I went to school and now I speak English. That's because of the school. Everything is the school. How can I use the words 'flat earth' if I hadn't learned them in school, and at the same time I can say that the world is round?

J: Do you question the institution of education? They sometimes revise textbooks..

V: Yes of course, I criticise parts of the school. For example, religion. I don't believe anymore. In the bigger picture, I think they are trying their best but they are also human and sometimes wrong.

J: You're an optimist, that's very nice.

D: Do you think an optimist can be a flat worlder?

V: An optimist? No, I don't think so.

D: So, all optimists are round worlders?

V: Yeah, I think.

J: You have to be a pessimist to believe the earth is flat. You must want the end, the edge.

D: I don't doubt the flat earth 100%. I don't think you can.

V: Of course there is a small doubt.

J: We can't know unless we dug a tunnel and come out the other side.

D: Why has no one done it?

V: Because it's hot inside! The deepest hole was made by Russians. They tried to dig a lot.

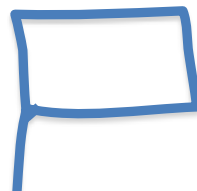
J: With all the technology we have, we can't drill a hole.

D: No, but we can fly to the moon.

V: Oh, over there is the artist XX. He's a painter, he's heading the big table. He looks busy..

J: You should say hi! Maybe you can introduce us? We could befriend him and send him private messages, maybe send him something in the post later..

V: No no, you don't need that! You work with very different artists. I don't think you match in character.



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