The story of *Unflattening*, written by Dr. Nick Sousanis begins as a story of how humanity is stuck in a sort of conformity, in that we are all born, assigned a role, and die in a process. To Sousanis this especially applies to the thought of schooling and how we are raised.

Many outside stories and experiences helped Sousanis to write the book *Unflattening*. One of those sources is Death from the 1957 movie *The Seventh Seal*. The story is about a character named Block who returns to Sweden after fighting in the Crusades to find the country being ravaged by a plague. Block is a fan of chess and plays himself for fun. Eventually, he needs to use that skill when he challenges Death to a game of chess to stall his demise while Block's family tries to escape.

At first, these two stories seem irrelevant to one another; until you start to look at the deeper symbolism. When looking at pictures from each of the stories, one of the first things that pops out is the dark, dreary skies which show a very gloomy and sad scene. Both of these stories need that feeling to be effective because of the direness of the situations. Another big theme in both *The Seventh Seal* and *Unflattening* is that each can relate to the seeming silence of God. In *Unflattening*, this is seen in that the people not being unique like God would want but instead conforming and being forced to follow a path as if they were created out of a factory. In Death of *The Seventh Seal*, Block and his family cry out to God to save them and do not get a response leaving them with a hopeless and empty feeling.

*Unflattening* deals with the fact that people are put here to follow a path and accomplish their purpose in life to contribute to society as society wants them to do. This can be correlated to Death from *The Seventh Seal* because Block is asked by Death if he has accomplished his meaningful deed—which is as if people were all created to serve one purpose like a machine. A much deeper correlation can be made if you look at the main character's name. His name is Block, and when you think of a block, like a cube, they are all the same. In *Unflattening*, all people are the same and are constructed to be that way, like a block.
Ultimately, the big theme that can be found in both stories is the fact that we go through life like a process, born, learn, and live by doing what we are supposed to do. Then we die. It is as if, according to these stories, that we are set on this path, but there is no one outside of ourselves that can help us and that we, in this world, are on our own.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Watch Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* (1957) [1:36:13]
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxhZ Zi6884