



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA

Science with a heart

My vision for a paradigm shift
in the social sciences and higher
education

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Chapters of this presentation

- ✓ Introduction
- ✓ Problematic science
- ✓ Building blocks for a new meta-paradigm
- ✓ Envisioning a new scientific & university system



INTRODUCTION



Some relevant information about me

- Italian cultural background (humanism/Renaissance)
- International multi-disciplinary background in the social sciences (PhD)
- Extensive professional experiences outside the academic world
- Intensive family & community life



Padua, city of Galileo

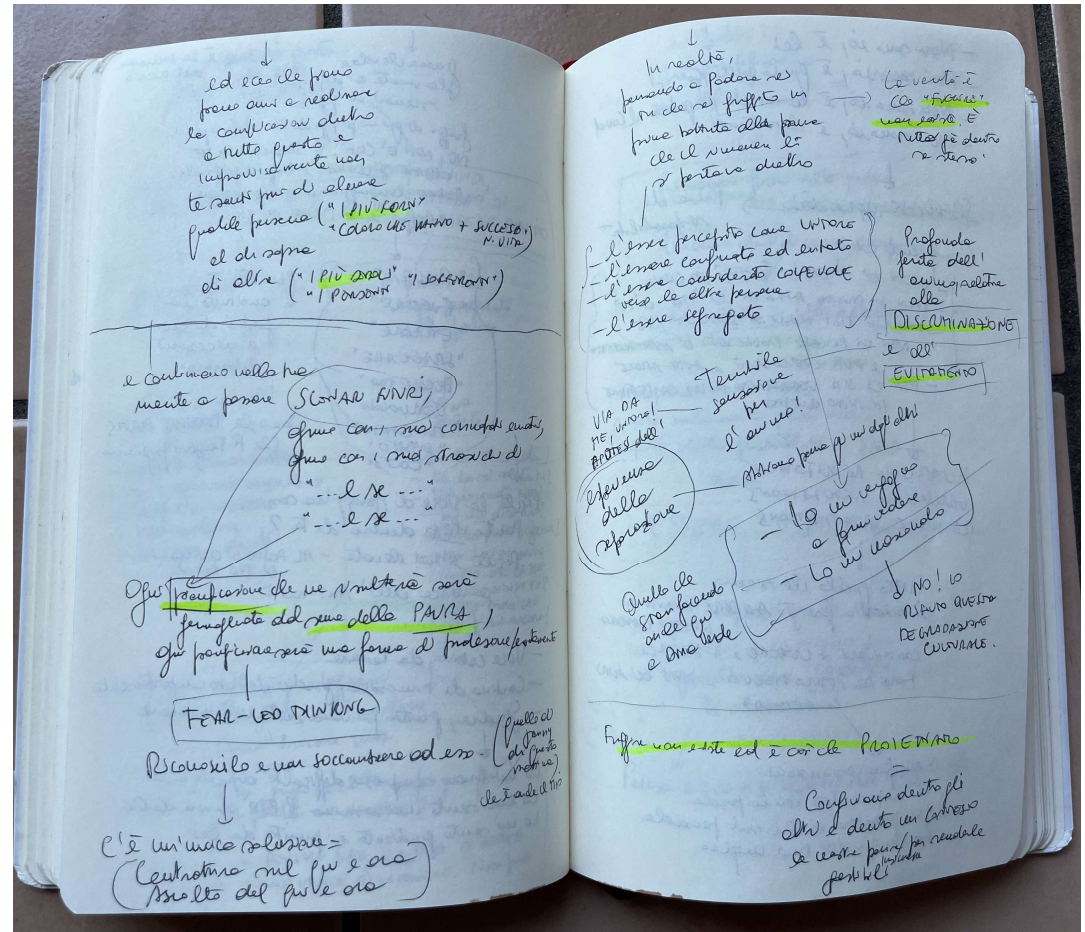


The M.I.T. in Boston



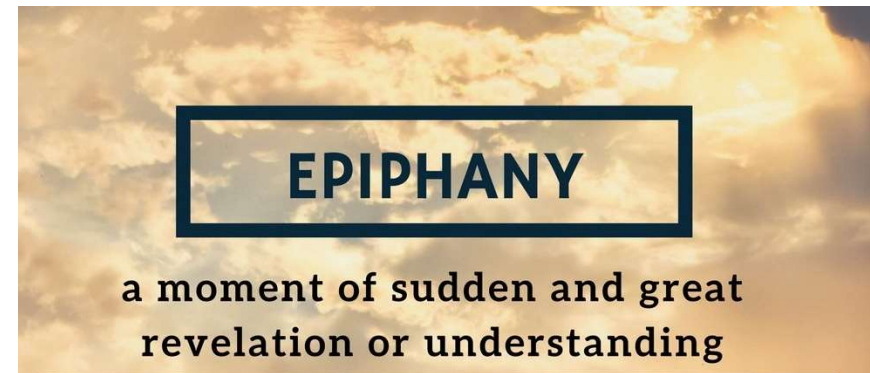
Meditation and the path of spiritual development

- Thousands of different vantage points on myself, on being human and on our world
- Ongoing emersion and resolution of personality tangles
- Liberation from cultural constraints, gratitude for what is
- Listening to my soul, a graceful process of healing



The origin of my «science with a heart» vision

- A dissonant voice within academia: feeling the need of more openness and «common sense»
- All of a sudden: struck by the light of vocation. Reconciling science and God: this is what I am looking for!
- ...from then onwards: plenty of «emergent» independent research and writing



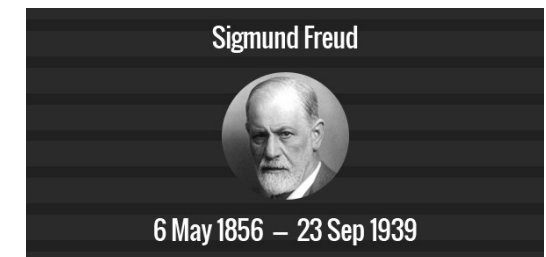
PROBLEMATIC SCIENCE



The current dominant scientific paradigm simplistically reduces, classifies and ideologizes reality, making it more «actionable»

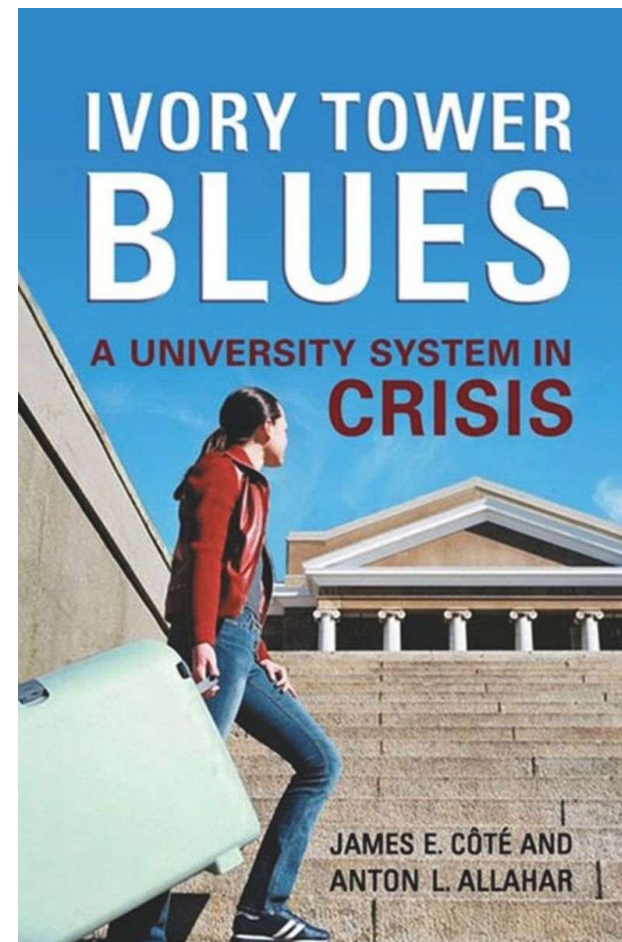
In most cases, social science disciplines:

- are grounded on either-or views (vs. complexity/inter-dependency)
- rely on unquestioned assumptions or biases
- make use of highly connoted language (i.e. stereotyping and labelling)
- cling to outdated theories, ideas and concepts
- focus on disciplining reality (vs. understanding it)
- are not anchored to any higher-level view of the world (i.e. source of meaningfulness)



Academia still predominantly operates as ivory tower, separated from the rest of the world

- Strong psychological attachment to disciplines
- Complexes of superiority/inferiority
- Mistaking theory for reality
- Education secondary to research
- Taboo about all things subjective, emotional and spiritual



Scientific disciplines predominantly grow vertically, in a self-centered way

- They require full adherence and provide a strong sense of identity
- They tackle ever more specialized topics
- They only focus on the material level of reality (i.e. its superficial manifestations and symptoms)
- They try to (competitively) expand their reach into other fields
- They might end up seeing innovators as «heretics», while favouring the fully compliant



Disciplinary bubbles?



All this has profoundly problematic implications on the real world



*Too much (and too narrow)
economics?*



*Too much (and too narrow)
architecture?*

Academic science tends to beget educations/technologies/applications/recommendations that are both narrower and narrower in their scope, and more and more detached from other realms of life and from «common sense»



**Despite all praises of the dominant scientific ideology,
our science appears to be stuck in a rather early stage of development.**

**Science ends up becoming an end in itself,
only to the extent that we feel deprived of a higher source of meaning.**



BUILDING BLOCKS FOR A NEW META-PARADIGM



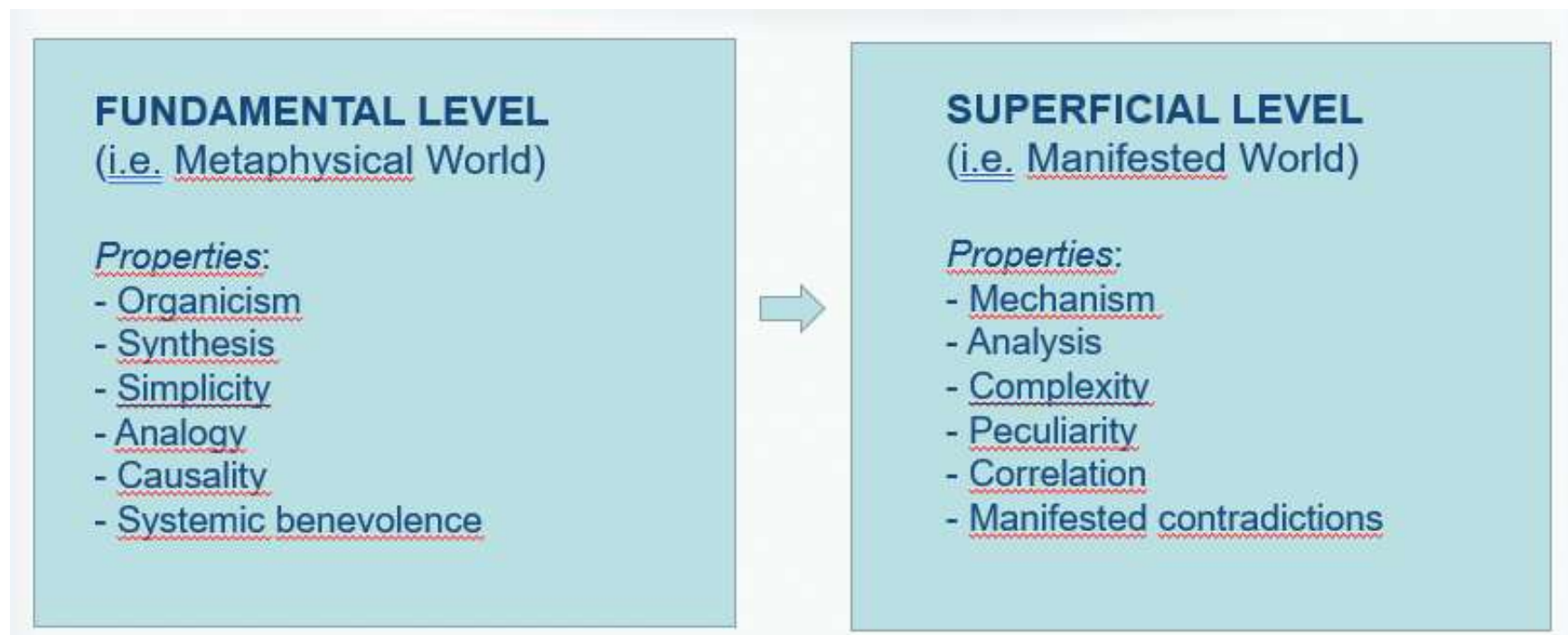
Given the choice, what would a new meta-paradigm need to do?

- Place science within a broader view of life as sacred, meaningful and necessary
- Reconcile all things objective with all things subjective
- Reconcile all things material with all things metaphysical
- Reconcile theory and practice, head and heart, inner world and outer world
- Free science from ideologies and self-serving attitudes
- Free science from complexes of superiority/inferiority
- Broaden science education, leveraging on real-world experiences (vs. controlled-environment experiments)



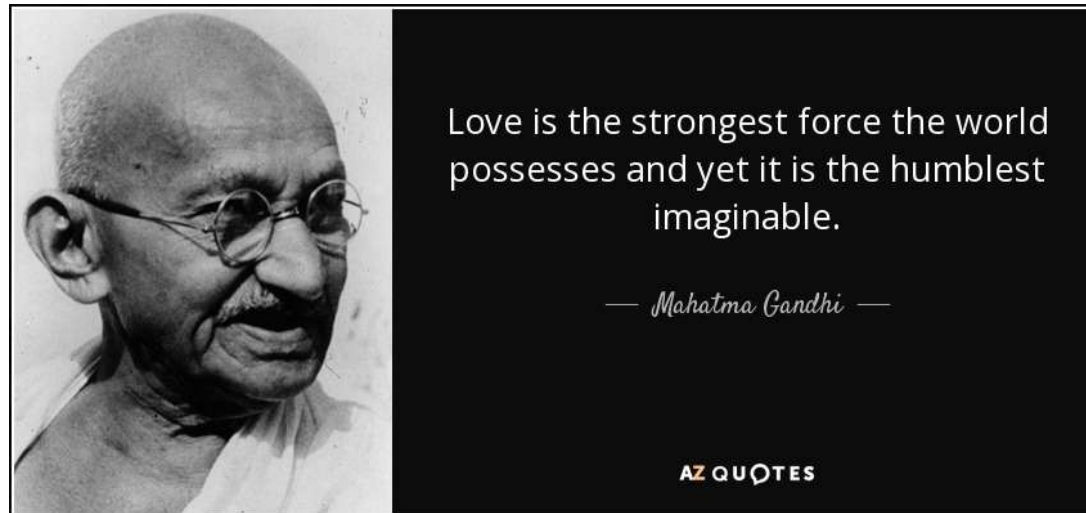
I propose that - as a first indispensable step - everything be anchored to a new ontological and epistemological framework

For this purpose, we could postulate the existence of two «levels» of reality - the superficial (i.e. material) vs. the fundamental (i.e.essential) - characterized by **antithetic properties** yet governed by **resonant laws**



This framework allows the metaphysical to be reintegrated into science, healing a great wound of our modern age

- Postulate n.2:
The manifested world is spawned by the metaphysical one, i.e. everything in our world/universe is the result of a **metaphysical drive** and has a **spiritual-evolutionary meaning**
- Postulate n.3:
Both the manifested and metaphysical level of the world result from the **benevolent force of Love** that governs our universe and is the ultimate substance of it



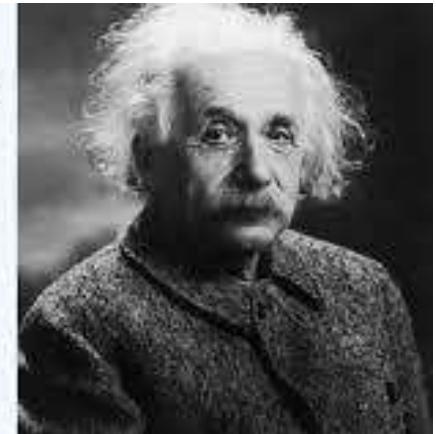
For science to develop a proper (i.e. integral) understanding of reality and action in reality, the fundamental level of it needs to be accessed

- Higher intuition («**insight**») is the means through which human beings can access the fundamental level of reality
- «Good universal common sense» is our sensor and compass to align with the benevolent force of Love that governs our universe. It is **wisdom**'s other name.

"I believe in intuitions and inspirations. I sometimes feel that I am right. I do not know that I am."

ALBERT EINSTEIN

dontgiveupworld.com



For «good universal common sense» to become beneficial to science, it needs to be unequivocally defined and operationalized

My proposed definition of good and universal common sense:

“A higher form of logical intuition and attribute of the heart, which is related to the emotional capacity of all human beings to distinguish the positive from the negative, the useful from the damaging, the specific from the generic”

Good universal common sense is a form of **inductive** reasoning born out of **subjective** experience (vs. deductive morals).

For example:

«Scolding my child hurts me» → «Hurting is not good» → «Hence, I stop scolding her/him»



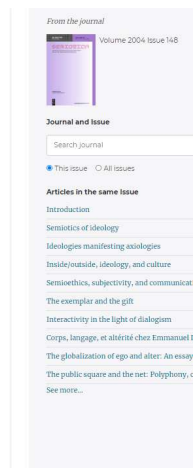
G.u. common sense can help us free science from ideologies, reductions and moral dilemmas, making it more benevolent (i.e. conscious of Love)

- The signpost of an ideology is a redundant and abstract language (“over-languaging”)
- The signpost of a reduction is a purely superficial language
- The inevitable outcome of ideologies, abstractions and reductions are moral dilemmas

Semiotics of ideology

WINFRIED NÖTH

If an ‘ideology’, in its broadest sense, is ‘a system of ideas’, semiotics, the study of sign systems, is predestined to make essential contributions to the study of ideologies. The semiotic approach to the study of ideology begins with an investigation of the concept itself, which has changed con-



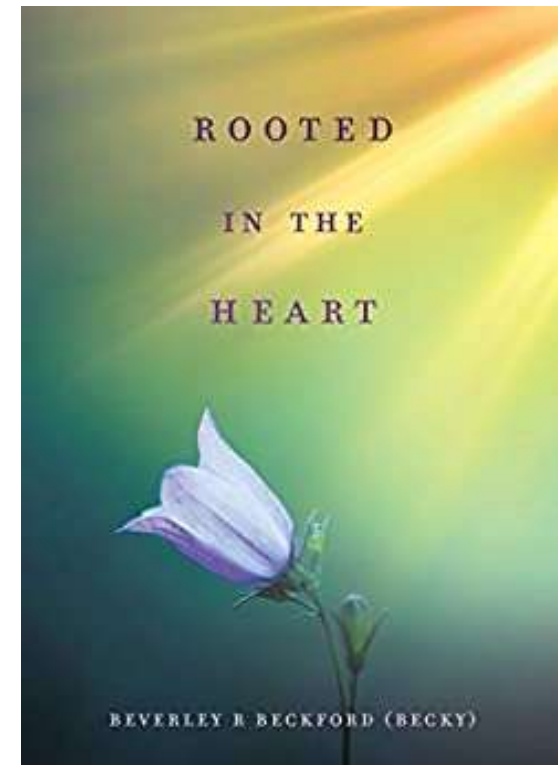
In order to create a more benevolent science, we need to «re-language» it

From negatively connoted (i.e. low-vibrating) words
to positively connoted (i.e. high-vibrating) ones

From a complicated (i.e. life-denying) language
to a simple (i.e. life-affirming) one

From superficial theories to fundamental laws

From superficial (i.e. problematic) applications*
to fundamental (i.e. wholly beneficial) solutions



In order to create more truthful scientific disciplines, we need to rebuild them from the inside out, anchoring them to Love

From an aseptic science

ECONOMICS

Main reduction: Human beings as rational and self-interested choice-makers

Main purpose: Maximization of social welfare

MEDICINE

Main reduction: The human body as a machine

Main purpose: Fighting diseases

The same applies to all other social sciences (for example, psychology and political sciences) and to all applied science (for example, engineering and architecture)

To a science with a heart

ECONOMICS

Main anchoring (i.e. bridge concept to the fundamental level): Money

Main purpose: Enabling the full expression of human potential

MEDICINE

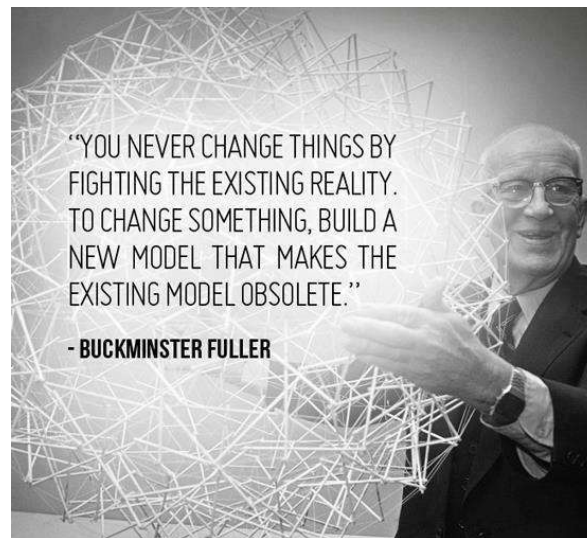
Main anchoring: The healing process

Main purpose: Human wellbeing, holistically meant

The same applies to all other social sciences (for example, psychology and political sciences) and to all applied science (for example, engineering and architecture)



ENVISIONING A NEW SCIENTIFIC & UNIVERSITY SYSTEM



Why does the vast majority of my intellectual masters operate outside academia? The same is true for the many global networks I belong to



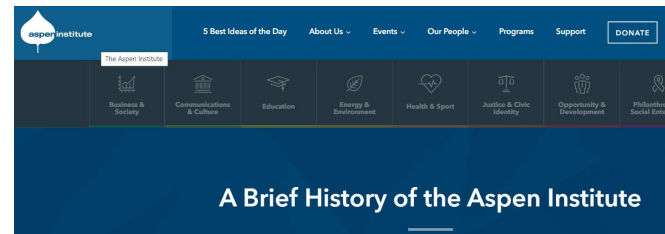
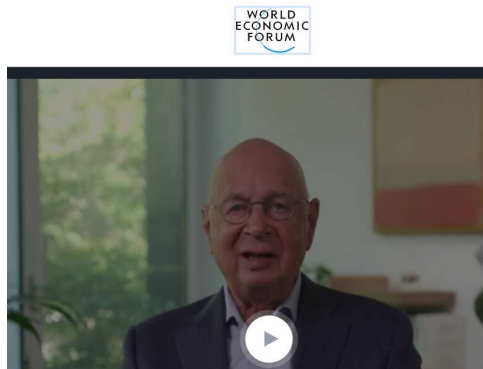
I envision co-creating a new beautiful house and community for us
We need each other's support to build the future!



I imagine a future scientific community open to the whole world, for the regeneration of humanity and of our planet

Immagino:

- Un luogo altro rispetto a quelli dove attualmente operiamo, che si vada ad aggiungere ad essi
- Un luogo splendido, di convivenza armonica tra natura e cultura, un luogo di potente energia spirituale
- Un luogo in cui tutti noi e molti altri potremo sperimentare insieme, creando proposte trasversali e sinergiche verso pubblici che ancora non raggiungiamo e in modi che ancora non possiamo immaginare
- Un luogo in cui convergano persone di tutto il mondo, in rappresentanza di tutte le culture, le professioni, i credi e le ideologie, in cui si possano sperimentare nuove forme di convivenza pacifica e risoluzione dei conflitti
- Un luogo in cui costruire nuova comprensione e nuovo dialogo sulla natura della vita e della civiltà umana
- Un luogo in cui ciascuna persona venga aiutata a guarire, a scoprire la propria vocazione e a fiorire
- Una nuova casa di tutti e per tutti, promotrice di una filosofia generativa e rigenerativa, adatta ai nostri tempi



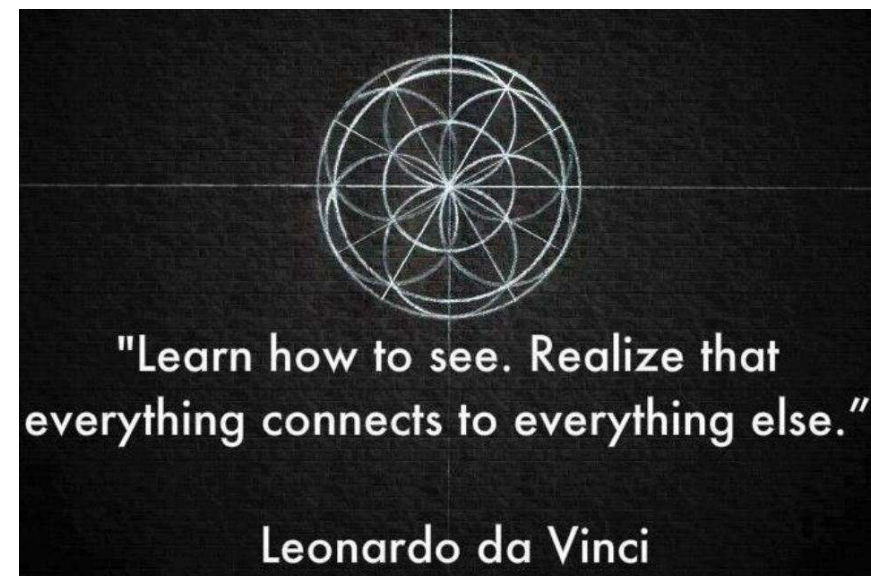
TED Ideas worth spreading

Simultaneously, playin the role of a World Economic Forum, an Aspen Institute and a TED for our new era. A «leadership school» for the new world.



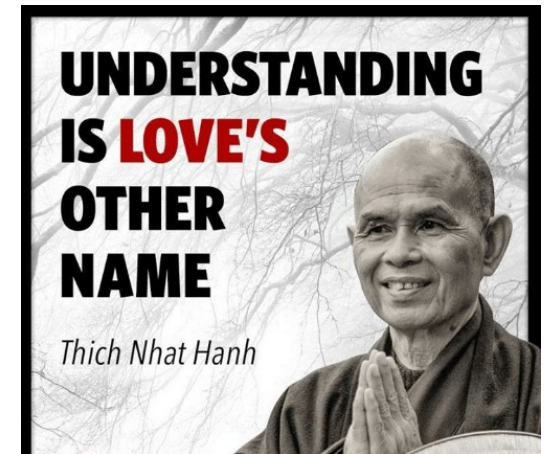
Many research perspectives can provide support for a Science with a Heart meta-paradigm, and can be supported by it

- Quantum physics
- Consciousness research
- Systems science
- Complexity science
- Philosophy of science
- Biomimicry
- Cosmology
- ...



Eventually, a Science with a Heart meta-paradigm will facilitate:

- A scaling back of reductionist approaches to a more conscious and appropriate role
- The creation of a new science that instead of reifying what nobody wants intentionally shapes “the world our hearts know is possible” (in the words of Charles Eisenstein)
- The advent of a new technical revolution, leading to a plethora of simple – yet still unimaginable - applications (*technologies, practices, policies, therapies, decisions*)
- The advent of a new psychology, bridging the gap with spirituality
- The inception of a new university and research system, promoting new practices, publications and pedagogies
- Ultimately, a broader cultural revolution, leading to a radical simplification of our world (in most cases, not doing things will be the way of the future) and to a safe space for dialogue among worldviews and religions (by means of good and universal common sense)













Some relevant readings

- On the need for economics to evolve beyond the current paradigm:
Doughnut Economics (Raworth)
- On the need for medicine to evolve beyond the current paradigm:
The medicine that I desire (Gava)
- On the need for science to evolve beyond the current reductionist-materialist paradigm:
The science delusion (Sheldrake); *The dusk of scientism* (Sermonti)
- On the need to embrace system thinking:
Thinking in systems (Meadows)
- On the need for a new cosmology:
Journey of the universe (Schwimme and Tucker), *The science of love* (Currivan)
- On the need to change dominant narratives:
Climate: A New Story (Eisenstein)
- On the properties of the fundamental level of reality:
The seven spiritual laws of success (Chopra)
- On the peculiarities of social sciences:
Ideas and opinions (Einstein)
- On the future of education:
Education for life (Walters); *Sustainability, Human Wellbeing and the Future of Education* (Cook et al.)



A few writings of mine on the topic

-  (2011)_F.DalFiore_Disciplines for the common good_Book chapter (Common Knowledge, EPFL Press)
-  (2013)_F.DalFiore_Understanding versus Interpreting_Article published in personal blog
-  (2014) F.DalFiore_Overcoming the compartmentalization of human knowledge and professional development_Presentation at University of Reading, Henley Business School
-  (2014)_F.DalFiore_A simple path for science. Fixing ideologized scientific knowledge through good and universal common sense_Unpublished draft paper
-  (2016)_F.Dal Fiore_Science with a hearth. Complementing reductionism with an understanding of love_Unpublished draft paper
-  (2016)_F.DalFiore_Meditation, Simplicity and the Pursuit of Science_Article published in a special issue of Meditatio journal (WCCM)
-  (2017)_F.Dal Fiore_Are social sciences in need of a fundamental reform_Presentation at LUMSA University
-  (2017)_F.Dal Fiore_Are social sciences in the need of fundamental reform_Short paper for conference at LUMSA University
-  (2018)_F.DalFiore_Science with a heart. In search for a new paradigm_Presentation at Meditatio Center London (WCCM)
-  (2019)_F.DalFiore_Book ideas



**Thank you for your interest,
Please know that I feel privileged and deeply grateful for that.**

**Radically new discoveries and applications remain far from our sight, only to the extent that we remain fixated on materialism and scientific reductions.
Soon all this will change.**

With love, Filippo Dal Fiore





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Grazie di cuore