

**Article Started by Piero Scaruffi dec 5 2021 Blog completed 4/9/2024**

**Contributing authors” 1) Roger Malina 2) ? please join in and edit away, but please don’t erase the contributions of others:**

**Invited so far: Tami Spector, Diana Ayton Shenker, Termeh Rassi, Danielle Simbieda, feel free to invite others.**

**Title suggestion: A neo-renaissance ? but**

**Sub title : Weaponizing the crossings of arts, sciences and technologies for the post pandemic worlds**

**ABSTRACT: lead author ?**

**INTRO: piero lead**

Derek Thompson’s article in the Atlantic (December 1, 2021) correctly diagnoses a scarcity of innovation in the USA and remarks that “progress has slowed down in many fields”. His article joins a literature that has been growing since Tyler Cowen's e-book "The Great Stagnation" (2010), written by an economist, Peter Thiel's article "The End of the Future" (2011), written by a Silicon Valley venture capitalist, Max Marmor's "Reversing The Decline In Big Ideas" (2012) by another Silicon Valley entrepreneur; Jason Pontin's "Why We Can't Solve Big Problems" (2012), Rick Searle's article "How Science and Technology Slammed into a Wall and What We Should Do About It" (2013) by a political scientist, all the way to Ross Douthat's “The Decadent Society” (2020).

Thompson offers his own analysis of the causes and he may be right on all of them, as could be Marc Andreessen when he laments “The problem is inertia”. However, we feel that there is a bigger cause that Thompson neglected (certainly bigger than inertia). Thompson mentions Thomas Kuhn’s opinion that “paradigm shifts in science and technology have often come from young people who revolutionized various subjects precisely because they were not so deeply indoctrinated in their established theories”.

In other words, those young people were not hyper-specialists. We happen to believe that there is a correlation between a hyper-specialized education and the stagnation of ideas. In fact, we believe that creativity stems from inter/cross/trans disciplinary thinking, not from the hyper specialized thinking that has become the norm in US science and technology. Historically, the great peaks of creativity have typically occurred when interdisciplinary thinking was the norm, whether in ancient Athens, in the Florence of the Rinascimento, in Paris at the turn of the 20th century, or in China during the Han era. The USA has moved towards increasing hyper specialization and that could be the single most direct cause of the stagnations of innovations.

**Laying the foundation for what’s new under the sun ? ( not right ) Piero lead**

One of us (PS) has written a cultural history of the Bay Area to explain the unbridled creativity that led to what is now known as “Silicon Valley”. It is hard to draw a straight line between the 1940s and the age of Apple, Google, Facebook, Twitter, Tesla, Intel, Oracle, and so on if one only considers technology and money. The great scientists of the 1940s were to be found in the universities of Western Europe and the East Coast. They were winning almost all of the Nobel Prizes. The big money was in New York and London. The great electronic corporations were, again, on the East Coast and in Western Europe. “Silicon Valley” should have happened in Paris or New York, or in Florida or in Amsterdam (all great centers of high technology), not to mention Detroit that was the leading center of innovation for half a century, but not in the Bay Area that was lagging behind in engineers, money and know-how.

Back then, and until 1974, the Bay Area was mostly famous for unorthodox thinkers, writers, musicians, politicians, poets and artists, many of whom frequently embraced unorthodox ideas, whether East Asian philosophy or “beat” poetry. Likewise, inspired by the spirit of “think different”, Bay Area engineers didn’t win Nobel Prizes but tinkered with new technologies in unorthodox ways.

The “unorthodox” thinking must have been more important than money, brains, corporations and Nobel Prizes if, 80 years later, the Bay Area dwarfs any other region of the world in innovation. A straight line leading from the 1940s to today emerges if one considers the general creativity and not only the technology. Innovation does not happen in a vacuum. The role of the humanities in shaping the creativity of an era seems to be forgotten in today’s USA. A culture that produces hyper-specialized workers yields great CEOs and extremely efficient organizations but is unlikely to raise a generation of innovative thinkers, let alone a generation of Leonardos.

### **The Leonardo networks of networks ( roger lead)**

In the 50s and 60s artists restarted appropriating emerging science and technologies for art making. The early artists were told “if you have to plug it in, it cant be art’. They were also told “ oh you are American, don’t show in Paris, show in NY’. And they were told that artists didn’t write about their work, art critics did.

This led to the founding of the Leonardo journal in 1968. In the 1980s two non profits were founded; Leonardo the International Society for the Arts Sciences and Technology in San Francisco, and Observatoire Leonardo des Arts et Technosciences in Paris.

The organisations advocate that artists can write about their own work, just as scientists do. They advocate that artists can appropriate emerging sciences and technologies to create art that makes sense in the contemporary worlds. They advocate that scientists and engineers should explore arts based approaches to discovery and innovation. And that this should be done in a cross

cultural context. But acknowledge that there is no best method, but many stronger and weaker methods.

In the 1990s, Piero Scaruffi founded the Leonardo Art Science Evening Rendezvous in the San Francisco Area. He was told, this is a stupid idea- the bay area already has hundreds of colloquia and symposia where this kind of work can be presented and discussed.

As of Dec 2021, there are 43 Leonardo LASERS internationally, from the DASERS at the National Academy of Sciences to the nomadic LASERS in Africa and elsewhere.

This network of networks arose without specific funding. It is based on a gift exchange economy where the Leonardo nonprofits publicize and archive the work of the LASER hosts, and the hosts figure out how to organize local events based on local support.

This accelerating network of networks, we would like to argue, is a new manifestation of the “glocal” where we think and act locally, but frame our thinking cross culturally.

We hope that this could be an emerging neo-renaissance that would address the concerns of Derek Thompson. The COVID 19 endemics are a severe societal trauma. The analogy is a colony of ants in a bottle. The bottle sits there for decades and the ants go about their business. Then the bottle is shaken, and temporary chaos occurs.

Suddenly cultural and social coincidence, serendipity and synchronicity are triggered, as has been the case in previous pandemics and early days of endemics. The ants who used to be friendly, start fighting.

The Leonardo publications at MIT Press have now published the work of some 20,000 neo leonardos, a larger creative community than that which led to the Renaissance, including people such as Leonardo Da Vinci.

In 195? President Roosevelt commission from “Science, the Endless Frontier: by Vannevar Bush.

This led to massive funding of the science and technologies after WWII. This triggered decades of useful, and some less useful, innovation. But as argued by Derek Thompson, contemporary society sliding the wrong way to solve the problems of over population, climate change, pan and endemics etc

**President Biden: Please commission a new Vannevar Bush report: Arts, Sciences and Technologies, the endless frontiers for Post WWII.**

We propose that the Leonardo LASERS Network of Networks be commission to organize and

develop reports not only to the US. Government but also all other governments devastated by WWIII. UNESCO might be the appropriate venues. UNESCO was co-founded by some of the same people who co-founded Leonardo.

Since the combinations of the arts, sciences and technologies will help us win WWIII, lets see if it can help win the “peace” and create an inclusive, sustainable and beautiful world. o use the words of the EU New European Bauhaus: [https://europa.eu/new-european-bauhaus/index\\_en](https://europa.eu/new-european-bauhaus/index_en).

We suggest focuses on redesigning curiosity, intuition and human nature. And we advocate re-establishing gift exchange as a fundamental strategy.

But we are open to other approaches. The provocation “weaponizing” art science and technology arose in a conspiratorial meeting of the post pandemic provocateurs when a guest provocateur, Shirag Gupta, argued that we must learn to convert pain to paint.

Postscript: 4/9/2024

I just reached out to Shirag Gupta- he was the leader of a start up incubator walking distance from my university and we rapidly cross connected. But then he shifted totally to political and other activities.

The main change since i wrote the above with Piero Scaruffi is the emergence of a Smart Village movement in reaction to the technological failures of the pandemic disorganisation.. The term provokes negative reactions, often, because both ‘smart’ and “village’ can be misinterpreted.

The group includes friends from Colombia, Canada, Argentina and we are organising a Ciber-Village workshop in Bogota on May 10.

One method is to collect and analyse data about ourselves, but what data ? we will avoid age, gender,ethnic origin. Its a provocative thinking exercise- we complain about our data driven culture that has become data rich and meaning poor, rather than meaning rich and data adequate.

Here is where we were as of a few days ago:

What data (relevant to the workshop) are we going to collect that will make you think

- What skills do you want to bring to the workshop
- What are they reading
- What are their musical interests
- Do not collect age, height, generic
- What place do you recommend to others? (that you have visited)
- Transformative experiences? (0 gravity = Roger)
- What questions do you wish we asked you?
- ADD MORE QUESTIONS

One narrative is that the pandemic might lead to improved social innovation rather than technological innovation.

Other than job hunting and job seeking is changing rapidly- people rarely same in the same 'profession' all their careers these days ( whats not in your resume matters)

Key concepts still include autopoietic emergence rather than strategy.

David Brancusio is coming in a few days to interview people for the film he is working on. I suspect that 'crystallisation' might occur but that sounds too frozen in undesirable ways.