

earthscan  
from Routledge

# The Human Capacity for Transformational Change

*Harnessing the collective mind*

Valerie A. Brown and John A. Harris



# Re-shaping our minds: the parameters of transformational change

Valerie A. Brown  
and John A. Harris  
Local Sustainability  
Project ANU, 8.8.14

## Australian Public Service Board, 7.8.14:

*“We are on the edge of a cultural evolution impacted by the reverse end of the industrial revolution, with mass off-loading of resources, increasing unemployment and financial uncertainty”.*

### APSB Training courses:

- \* Concurrent & Transformational Change Management
- \* Change Driven Release Management
- \* Managing Change in Local Government
- \* Ensuring Change Outcomes are Achieved
- \* Maintaining culture and engagement whilst managing change
- \* Aligning HR and Communications to achieve success

# Transformations



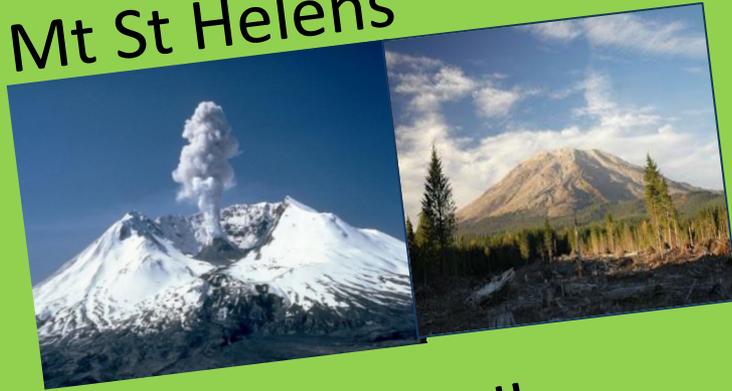
Hiroshima



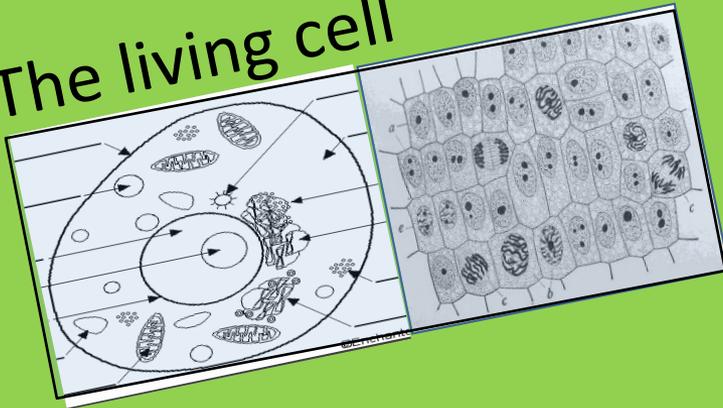
MH17



Mt St Helens



The living cell

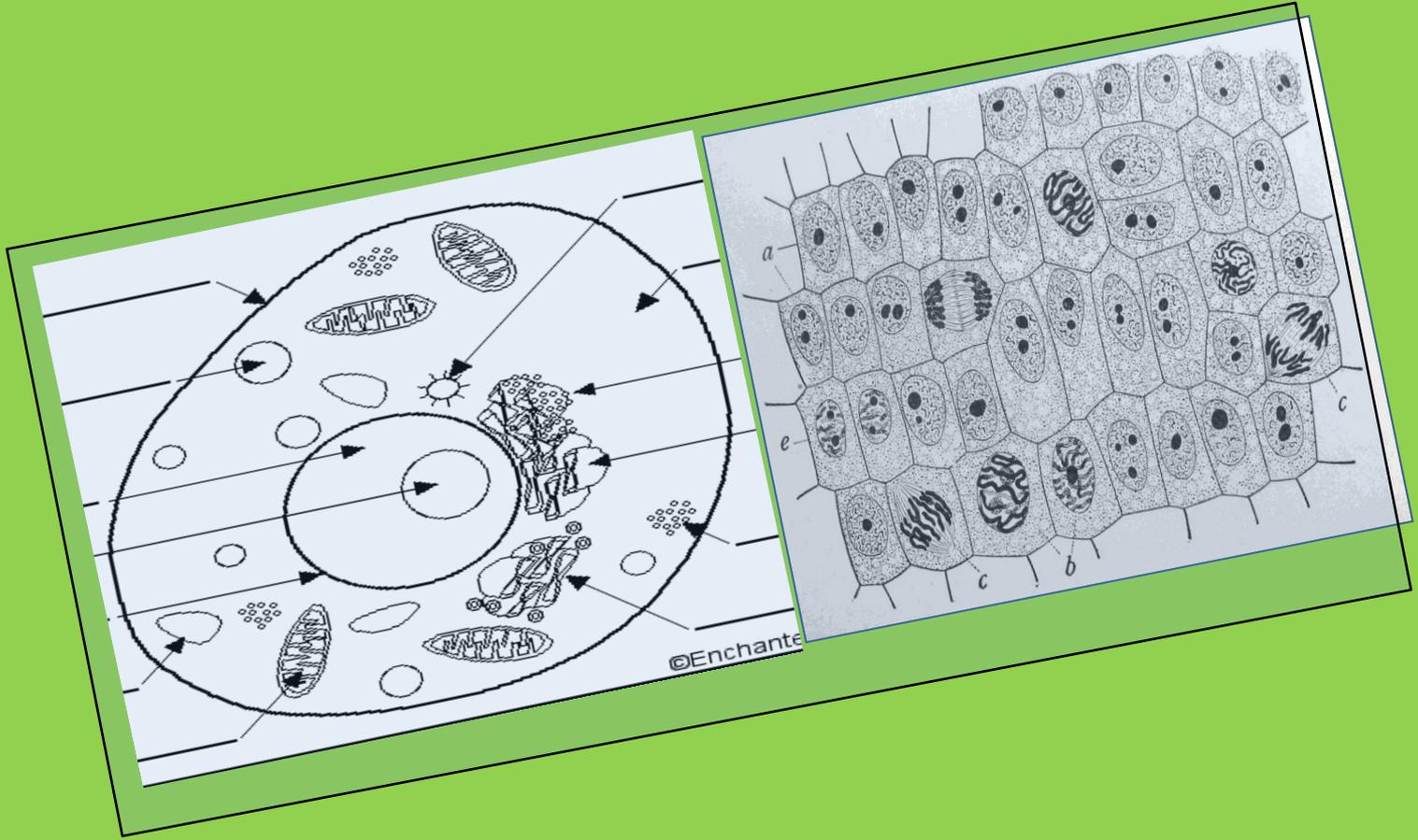


Human evolution













# Transformations



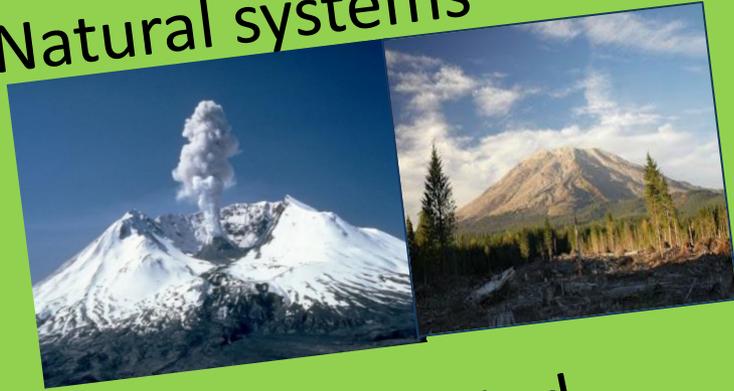
Social system +ve



Social system -ve



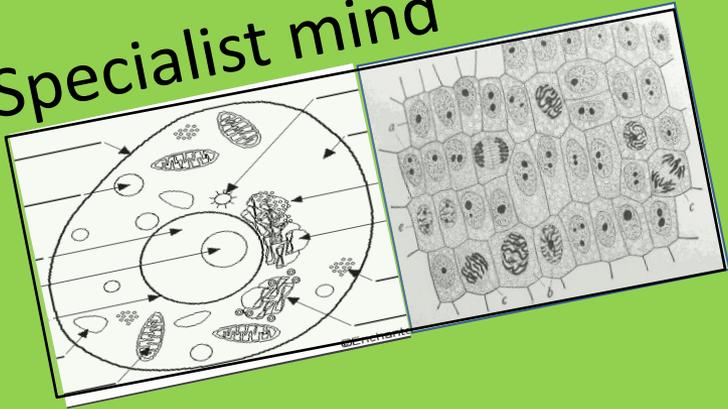
Natural systems



Collective mind



Specialist mind



# Transformational Change 2014



❖ A four-dimensional world

❖ Shaped by 5 key inter-relationships

❖ Applies all 7 ways of knowing

❖ To create collective social structures  
eg science, economy, democracy,

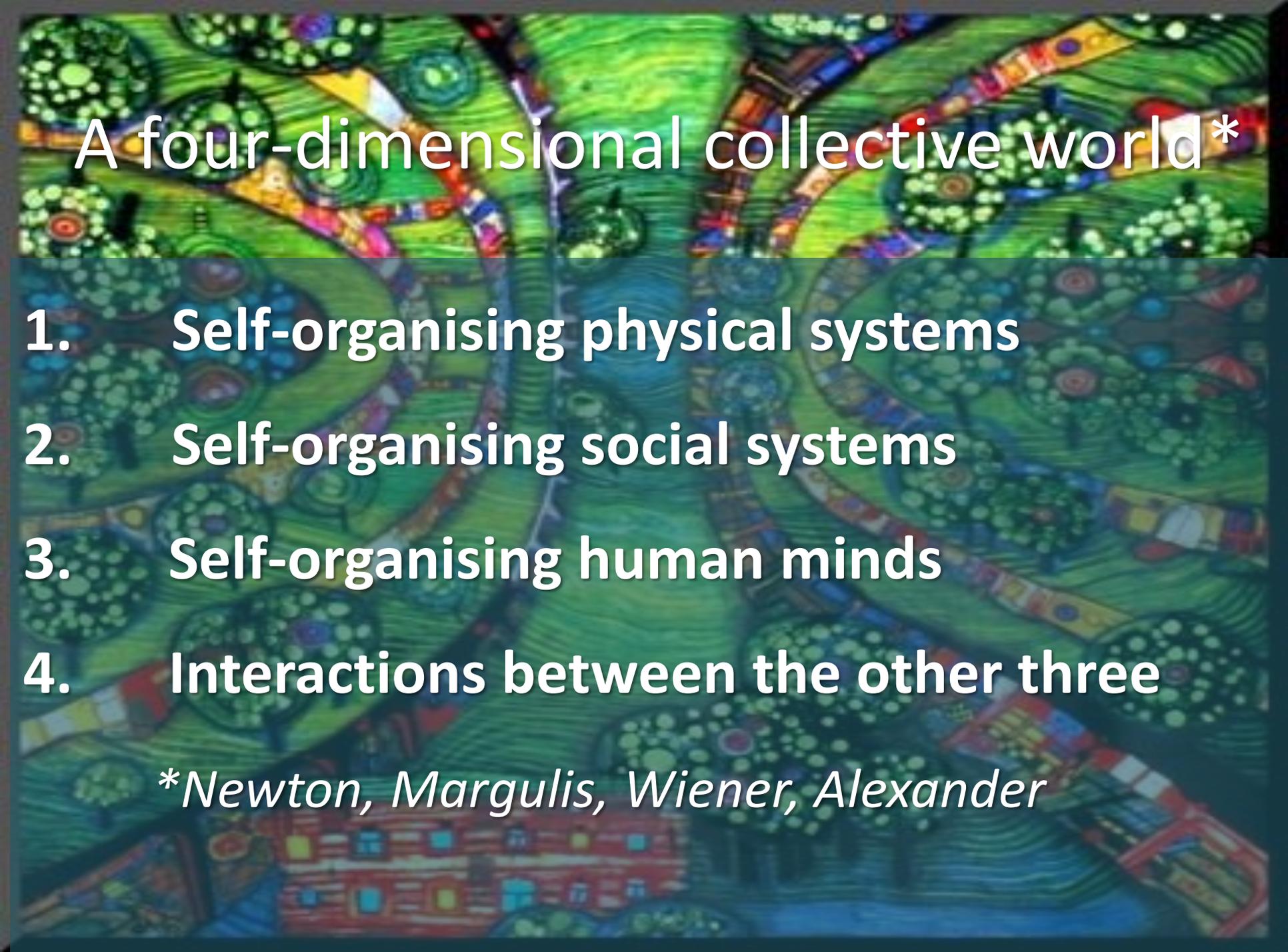


# Transformational Change 1. A four-dimensional world

## Moved on from:



- ❖ Nature red in tooth and claw
- ❖ Humans in charge of the world
- ❖ Our mind divided into sections
- ❖ The world as two or three-dimensional



# A four-dimensional collective world\*

1. Self-organising physical systems
2. Self-organising social systems
3. Self-organising human minds
4. Interactions between the other three

*\*Newton, Margulis, Wiener, Alexander*



# Heresies we need to accept \*

- ❖ Natural systems are cooperative and purposeful
- ❖ The planet is a single self-organising system
- ❖ Humans are evolving to a collective mind
- ❖ Humans are not in charge of the world

*\*Darwin, Lovelock, Midgeley, Bateson*



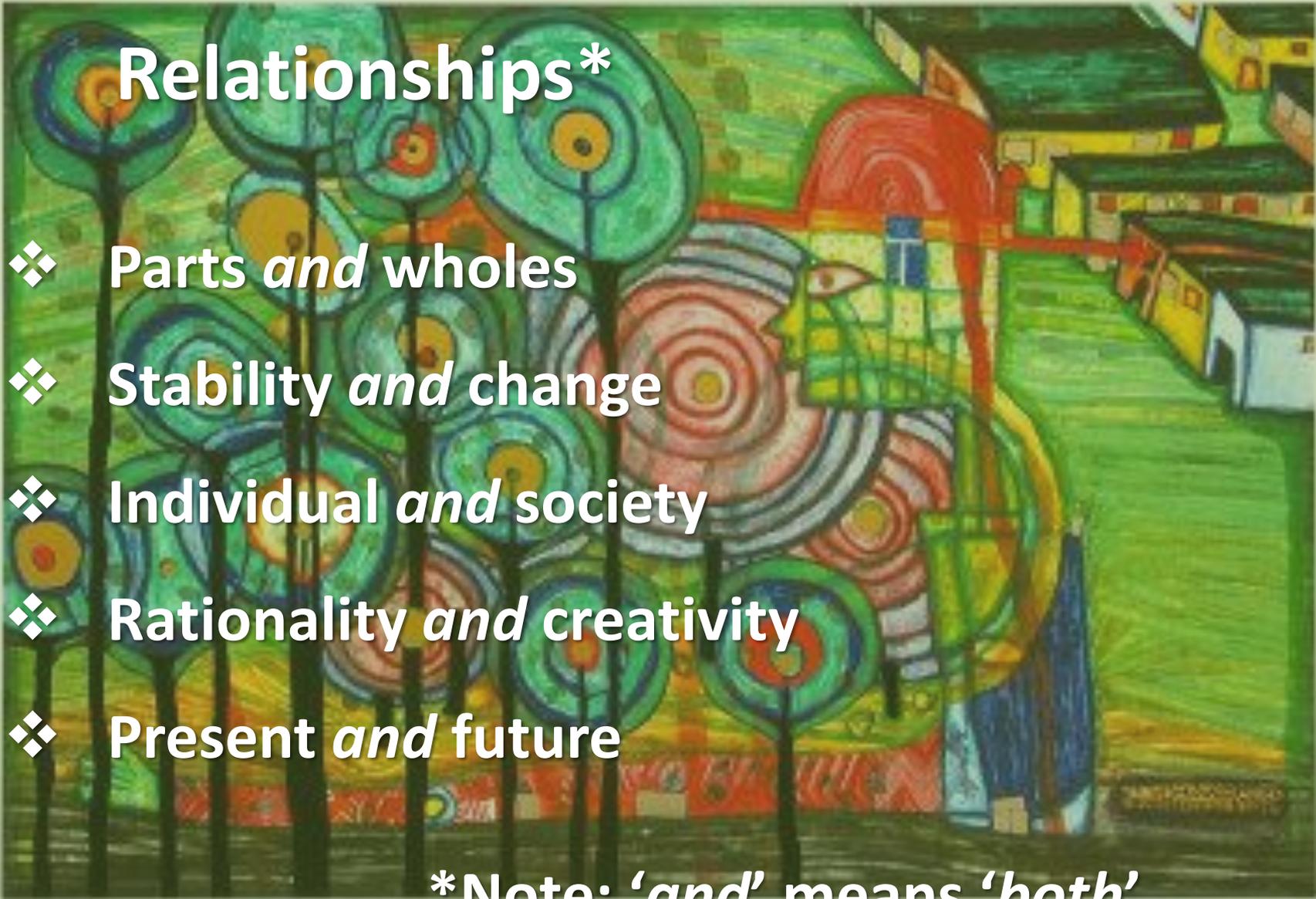
# Transformational change 2. Relationships not opposites

There it is my child: the modern, deregulated, rational, amoral, free market economy. The law of the Jungle. How awesomely BEAUTIFUL!



Law of the Jungle!!  
I see no colored butterflies, no orchids or parrots. I see no great leafy canopies or gentle creatures of the wild. I see no jungle at all.





# Relationships\*

- ❖ Parts *and* wholes
- ❖ Stability *and* change
- ❖ Individual *and* society
- ❖ Rationality *and* creativity
- ❖ Present *and* future

\*Note: '*and*' means '*both*'



# Synergies re-shaping society\*

- ❖ **Parts & wholes: the local as a fractal of the global**
- ❖ **Stability & change: choosing uncertainty**
- ❖ **Individual & society: dynamic interactive systems**
- ❖ **Rationality & creativity: creative rationality**
- ❖ **Present & future: the future as the present**

\* Nowotny et al

The image features a complex, multi-layered abstract painting. The central focus is a large, stylized face with a wide, open mouth in shades of blue and red. The face is surrounded by intricate, wavy patterns in yellow, green, and blue, suggesting a landscape or a state of mind. The background is a mix of solid colors and textured brushstrokes. On the left side, there is a vertical strip with various geometric shapes and colors. At the bottom, there are several small logos and text elements, including a stylized 'N' logo, a circular logo with a sunburst, and some text in Chinese characters and numbers.

Transformational change 3.  
Using all of our brains.



CHINA ART MUSEUM

Guangdong Province Academy of Fine Arts

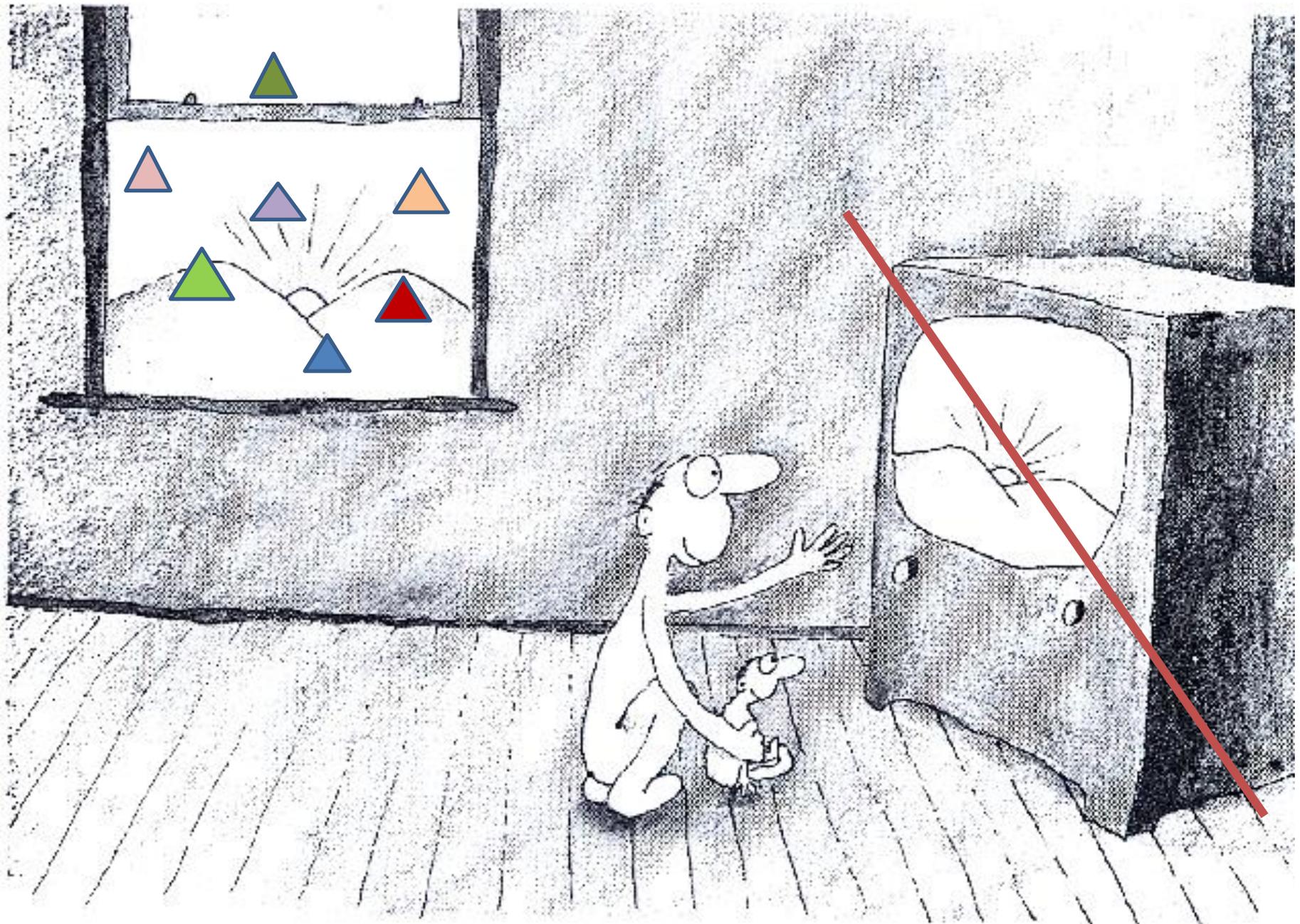


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# Making full use of our minds: the action

## *7 Ways of understanding*

❖ Individual

❖ Physical

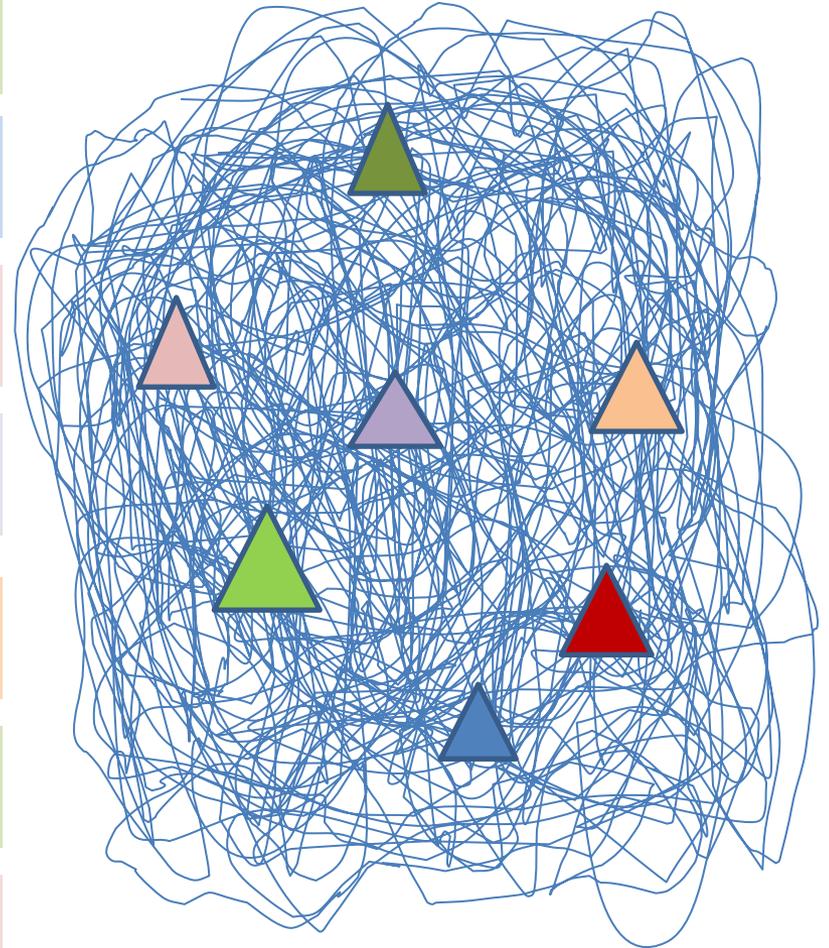
❖ Social

❖ Ethical

❖ Aesthetic

❖ Sympathetic

❖ Reflective



# Making full use of our minds: the action

## 7 Ways of understanding

❖ Individual experience

❖ Physical observations

❖ Social narratives

❖ Ethical principles

❖ Aesthetic patterns

❖ Sympathetic emotions

❖ Reflective synthesis



# Making full use of our minds: the action

*Understanding*

*How*

*Sharing*

❖ **Self**      **introspection**      ↔      **Experience**

❖ **Physical**      **observations**      ↔      **Ecosystems**

❖ **Social**      **symbols**      ↔      **Stories**

❖ **Ethical**      **principles**      ↔      **Values**

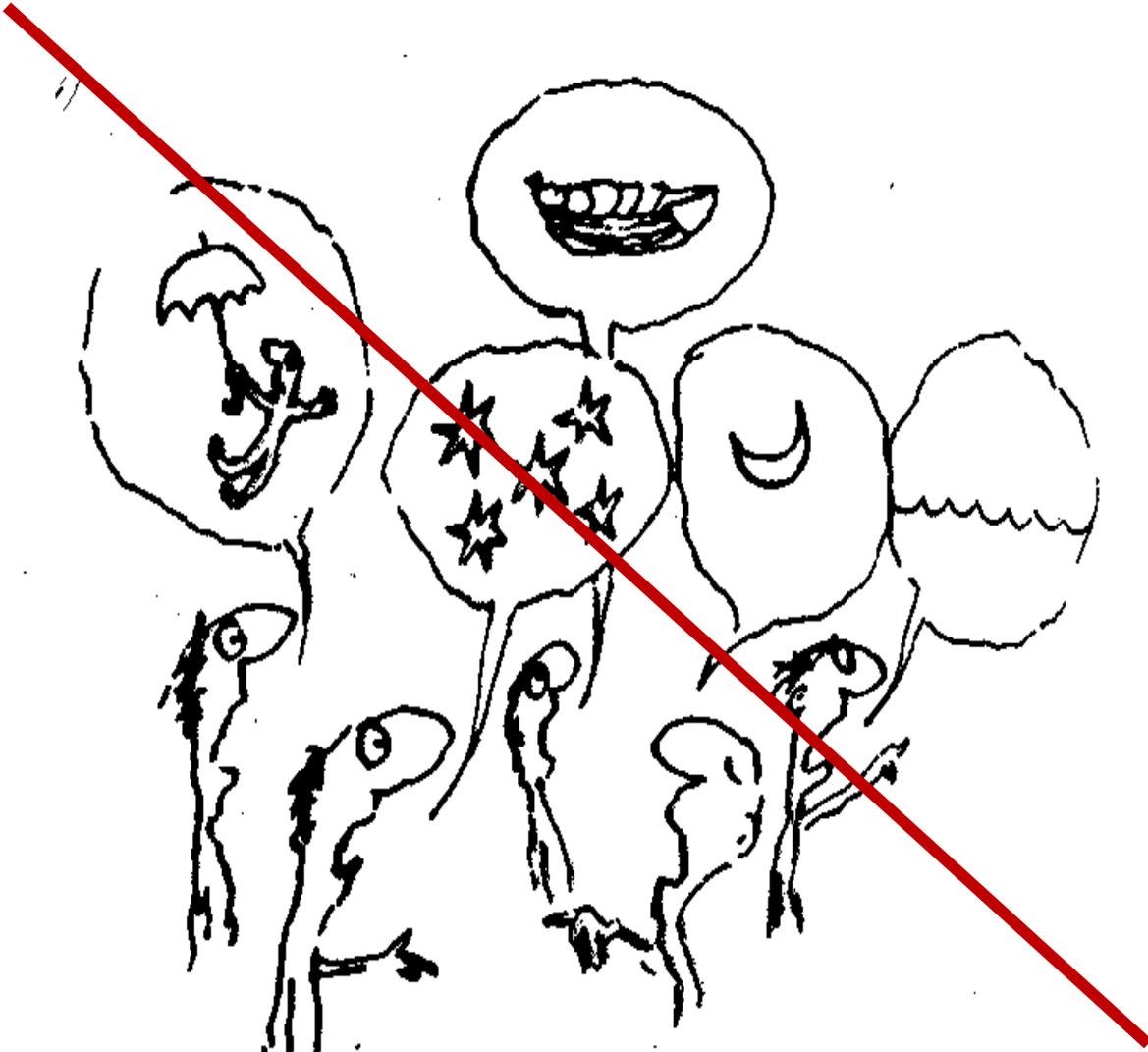
❖ **Aesthetic**      **fit**      ↔      **Patterns**

❖ **Sympathetic**      **recognition**      ↔      **Dialogue**

❖ **Reflective**      **collage**      ↔      **Meaning**



**Transformational change 4:  
Collective social structures: .**



# Re-shaping science: sources of evidence

- ❖ **Personal:** *both not or, and not but*
- ❖ **Physical:** Measurements, observations
- ❖ **Social:** Community narratives, metaphors,
- ❖ **Ethical:** Professional, personal, societal
- ❖ **Aesthetic:** Imaginative ideas, creative design
- ❖ **Sympathy:** Friendship groups, trust, CoP
- ❖ **Reflective:** Open systems, collages, patterns

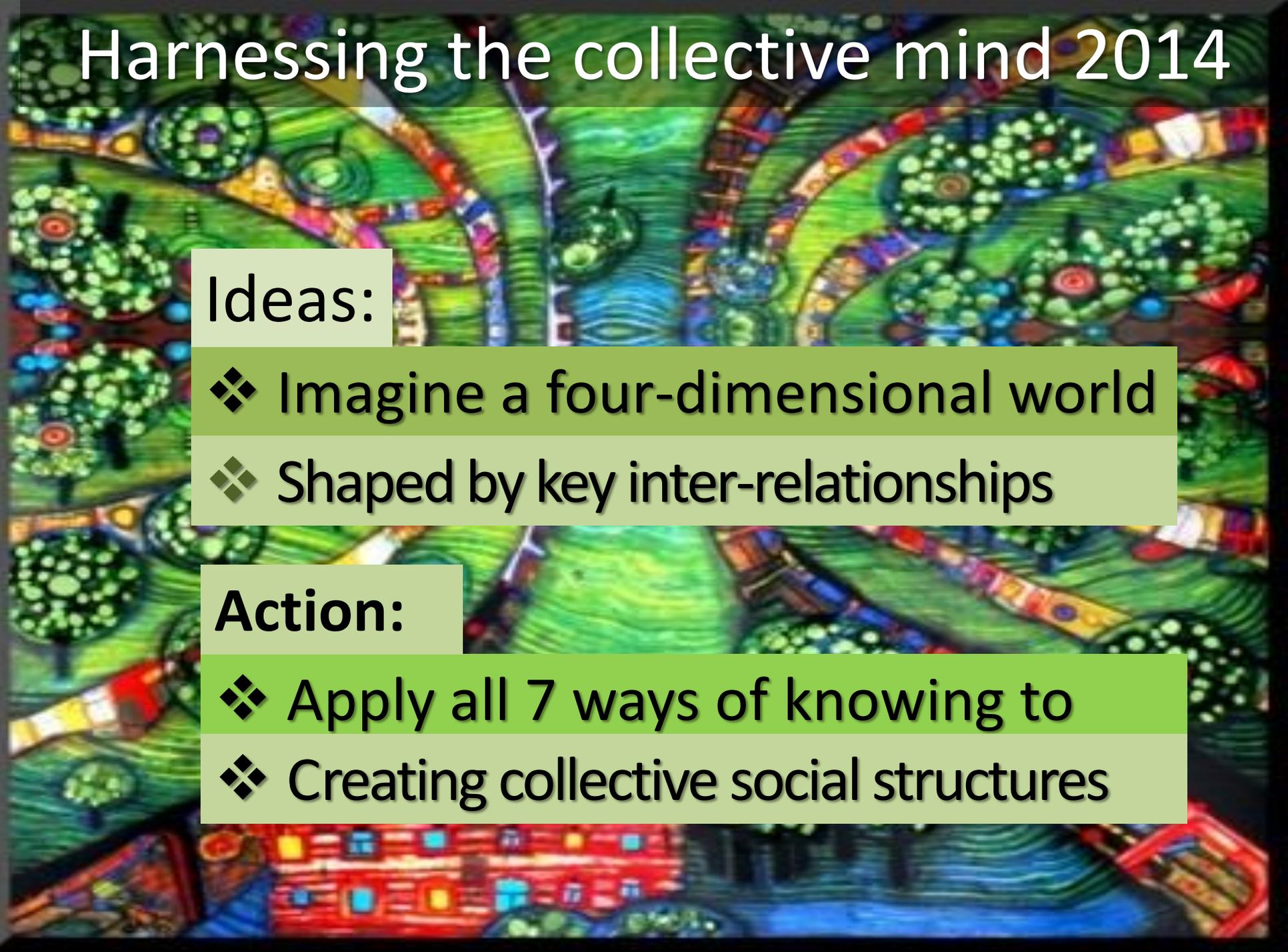
# Re-shaping society: collective structures

- ❖ **Language** : inclusive language, *and not or*
- ❖ **Democracy** : direct + deliberative + deep + digital
- ❖ **Economy** : governing common pool resources
- ❖ **Science** : seven forms of evidence
- ❖ **Education** : seven ways of learning
- ❖ **Identity** : Other-directed collective mind

# Collective science. eg Climate change

- ❖ **Personal:** age, education, income, nationality
- ❖ **Physical:** modelling, temperatures, ocean levels
- ❖ **Social:** denialists, disciples, distortions
- ❖ **Ethical:** professional, personal, faith-based principles
- ❖ **Aesthetic:** natural systems, cultural patterns
- ❖ **Sympathy:** inequity, biodiversity, identity
- ❖ **Reflective:** open systems, hyperobjectivity,

# Harnessing the collective mind 2014



## Ideas:

- ❖ Imagine a four-dimensional world
- ❖ Shaped by key inter-relationships

## Action:

- ❖ Apply all 7 ways of knowing to
- ❖ Creating collective social structures



# Conclusions:



1. Transformational change is always a sharp break in the pattern; tomorrow will not be the same as yesterday
2. The response to the break is self-organised from within the diversity of the system; no one is in charge.
3. A transformational change is never final; the conclusion of one is ready for the challenge of the next.
4. Transformational change is inherently collective; the whole pattern changes or the system reverts.
5. In human-initiated change, the shift in ideas comes first; collective action in the whole system follows.

# Collective communication

<b>Personal:</b>	<b>Blogging, dialogue</b>
<b>Physical:</b>	<b>Data visualisation, hard systems</b>
<b>Social:</b>	<b>Social media, soft systems</b>
<b>Ethical:</b>	<b>Conscience, holist religions</b>
<b>Aesthetic:</b>	<b>Music, dance, poetry, literature, art</b>
<b>Sympathetic:</b>	<b>Memoir, TeDX talks</b>
<b>Reflective:</b>	<b>Synopsis, the agora, think tanks.</b>

# Conclusions:



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# Narrative: exploring transformational change 2014



## CHANGING IDEAS

1. A ~~three~~ four-dimensional world

2. Shaped by ~~opposites~~ inter-relationships

## CHANGING ACTION

3. Applying ~~one~~ seven ways of knowing

4. To ~~competing~~ collective social structures

# Re-shaping Language

- ❖ **Personal:** *both not or, and not but*
- ❖ **Physical:** group, set, crowd, precinct, system
- ❖ **Social:** community, neighbourhood, homestead
- ❖ **Ethical:** aim, ideal, responsibility, caring
- ❖ **Aesthetic:** imagined, created, inspired
- ❖ **Sympathy:** I - thou, friendship, empathy, trust
- ❖ **Reflective:** dream, consider, contemplate

# Re-shaping Economies (after Ostrum)

❖ Personal:

❖ Physical:

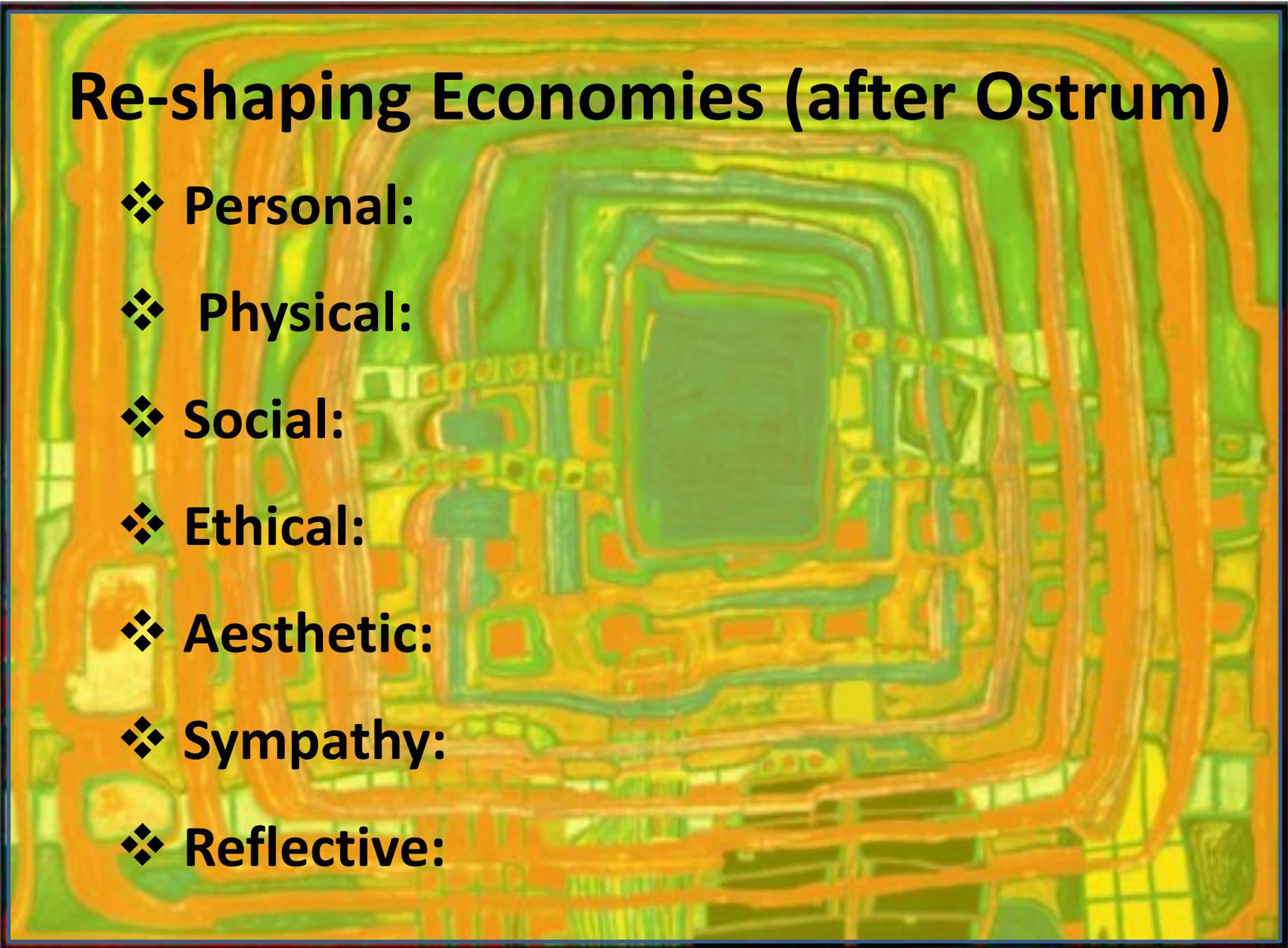
❖ Social:

❖ Ethical:

❖ Aesthetic:

❖ Sympathy:

❖ Reflective:



# Re-shaping Democracy (after Mindell)

- ❖ Personal:
- ❖ Physical:
- ❖ Social:
- ❖ Ethical:
- ❖ Aesthetic:
- ❖ Sympathy:
- ❖ Reflective: