

An Introduction to Ecology and Spirituality

Dr Andy Letcher

FROM HIS NEW BOOK 'BOOM!'
BY TOM BROKAW

JONATHAN DARMAN • DAVID GATES • BARBARA KANTROWITZ
AND EVAN THOMAS **PORTRAITS BY** NIGEL PARRY

Newsweek



1968

The Year That Made Us Who We Are



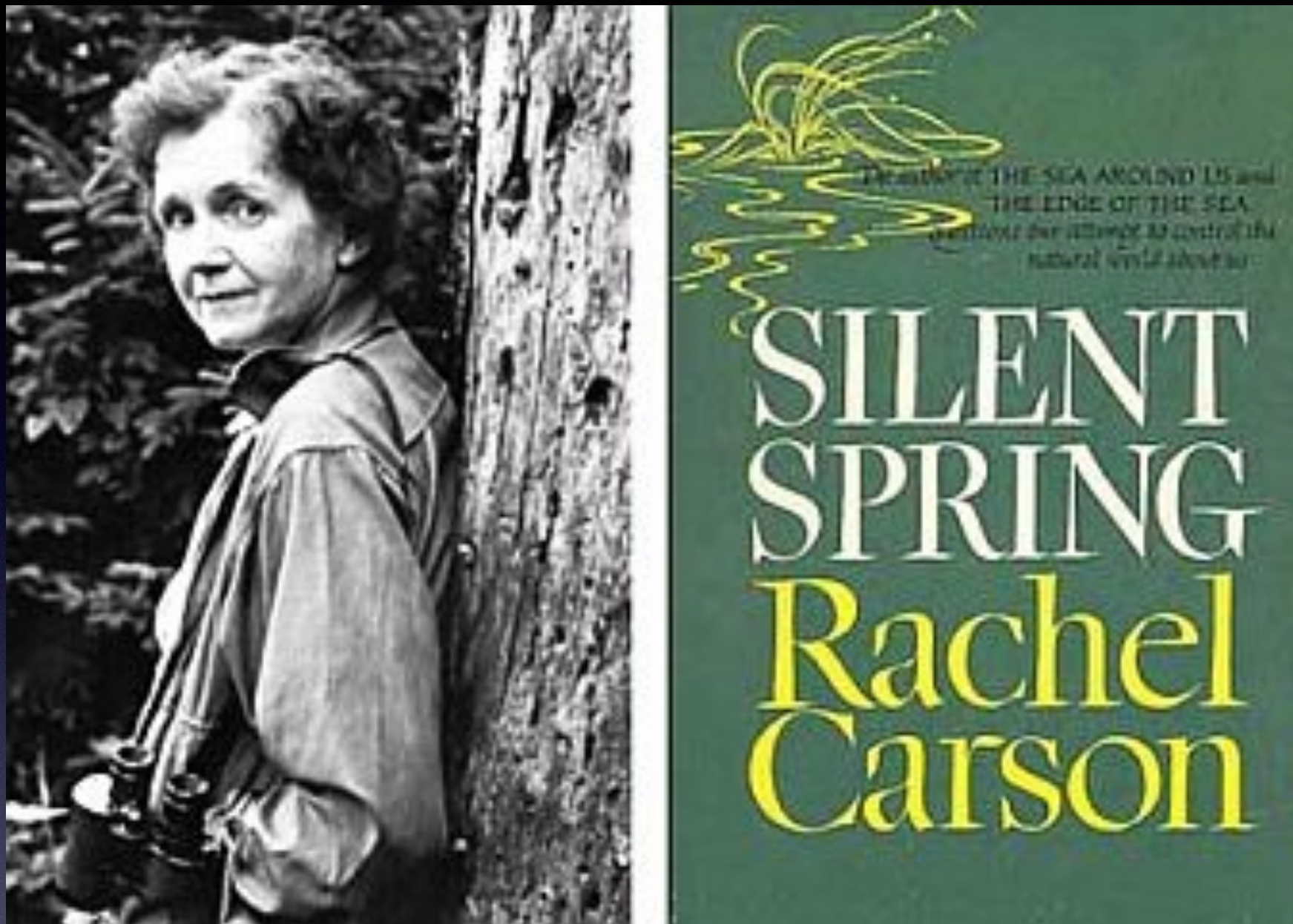


Christmas Eve 1968

Apollo 8: Frank Borman, Jim Lovell, William Anders

“The vast loneliness is awe-inspiring and it makes you realize just what you have back there on Earth.”

—Jim Lovell



1962

Ecology

- The scientific study of organisms in their living and non-living contexts
- The wider sense that we live in a world that is morally interconnected: to change the part is to change the whole



Ecology meets spirituality



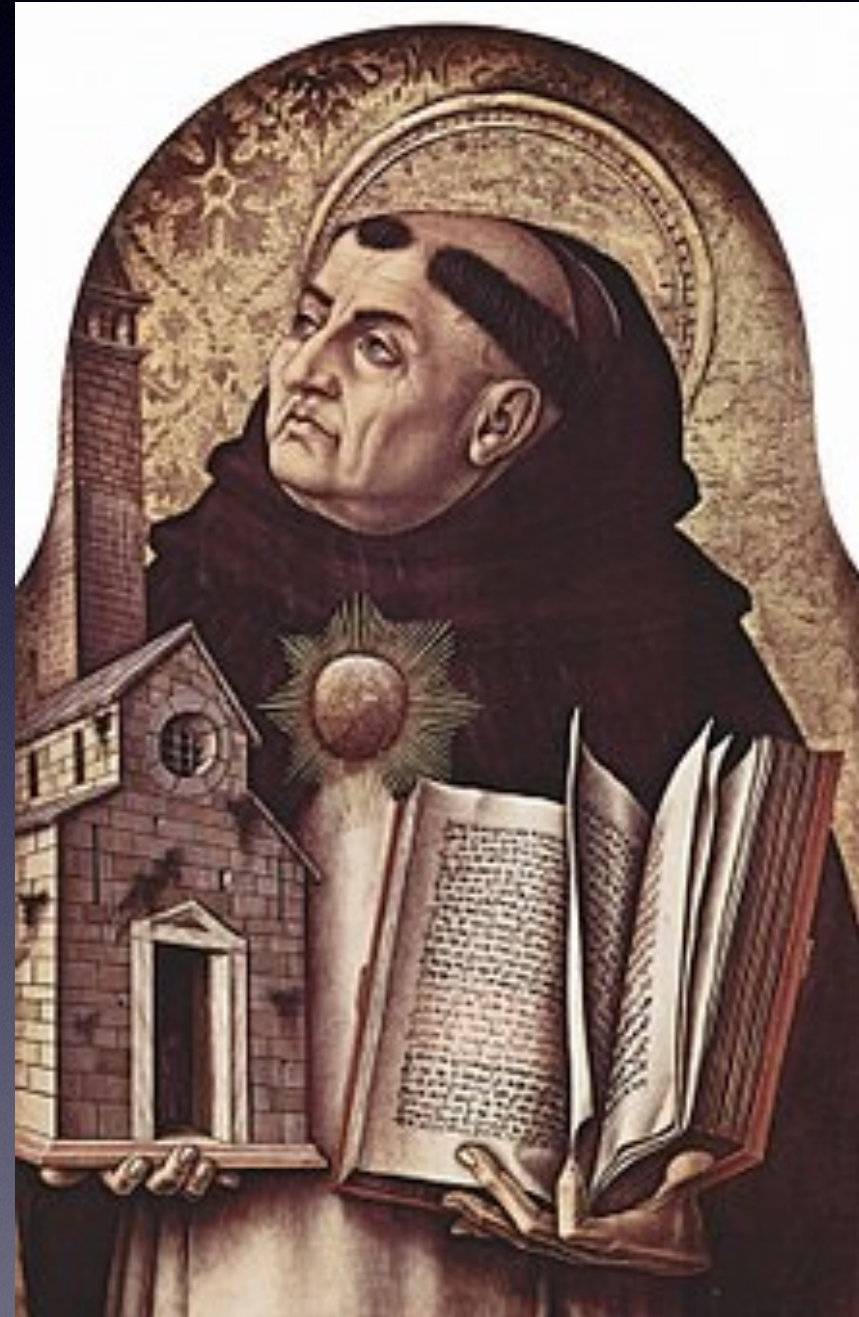
February 1968
Maharishi Mahesh Yogi



The New Age Movement

Active vs. contemplative life

- Thomas Aquinas
- must first be active, lead a moral life
- then contemplation may lead to the 'beatific vision'

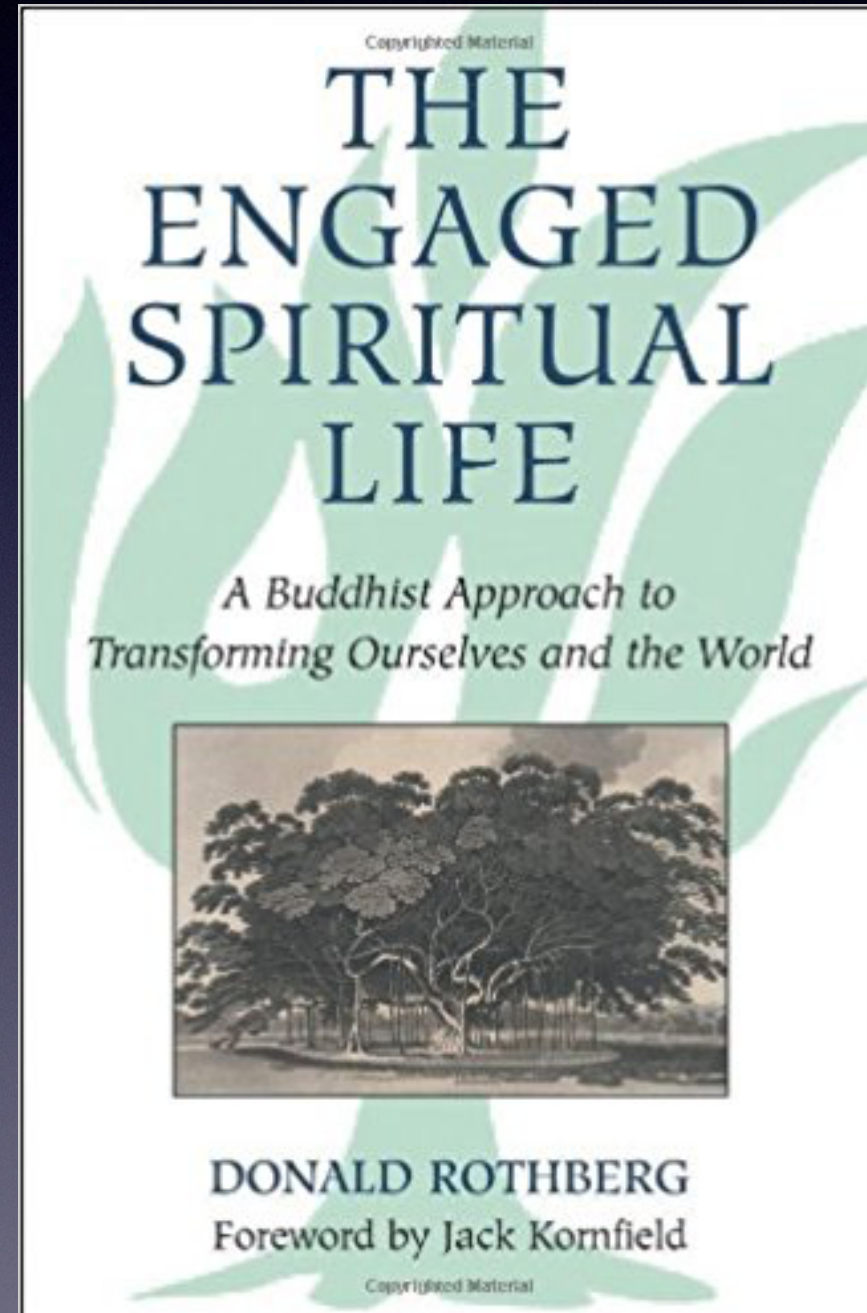




April 1968 Martin Luther King
assassinated
Spiritual activism?

Donald Rothberg

- Buddhist perspective
- Spirituality *must* be socially and ecologically engaged





Joanna Macy

Vandana Shiva

“Industrialism and capitalism have led to the separation of economy from ecology and a separation of our material existence from our spiritual being.

Now this separation is threatening our very survival.”





Will a global turn to spirituality solve the ecological crisis?

- the **is-ought** problem
- the **ought-does** problem

- the **is-ought** problem
- the **ought-does** problem



Max Weber



Jorgen Habermas



Medieval cosmology

Modernity sunders

Science

Modernity sunders

Science

Intersubjective

Modernity sunders

Science

Intersubjective

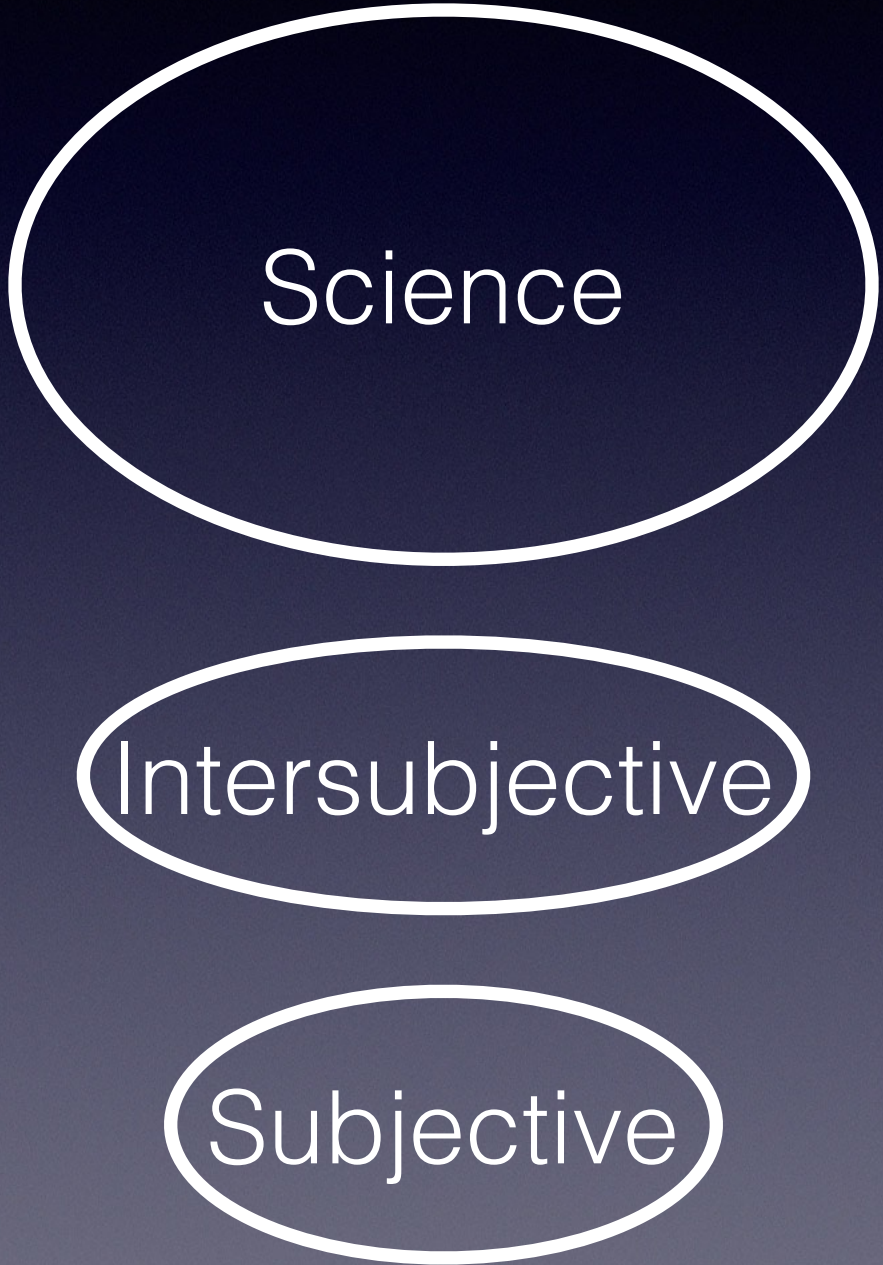
Subjective



Richard Dawkins

The subjective realm of little importance/explicable by science

Hierarchy

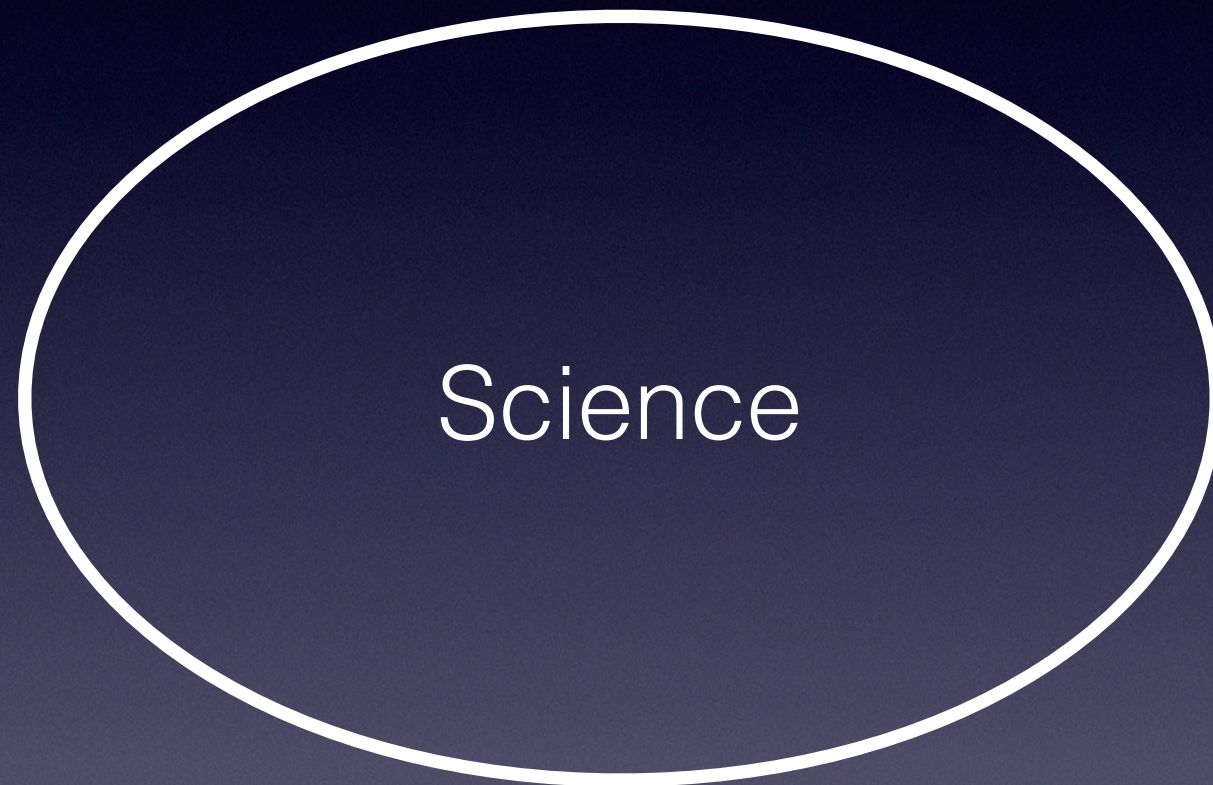


Science

Intersubjective

Subjective

Hegemony



Science

How do we address this split?

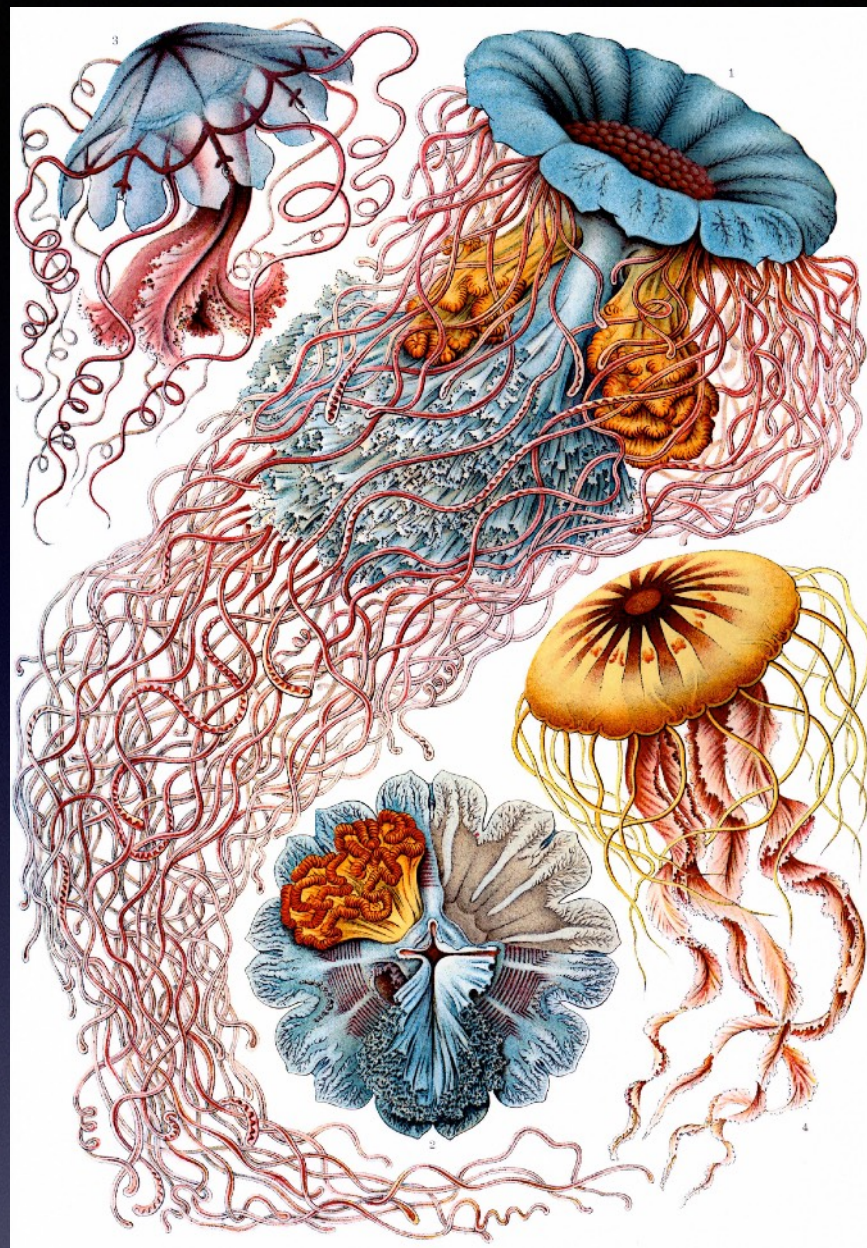
Science

Intersubjective

Subjective



1) Return to the premodern Romanticism

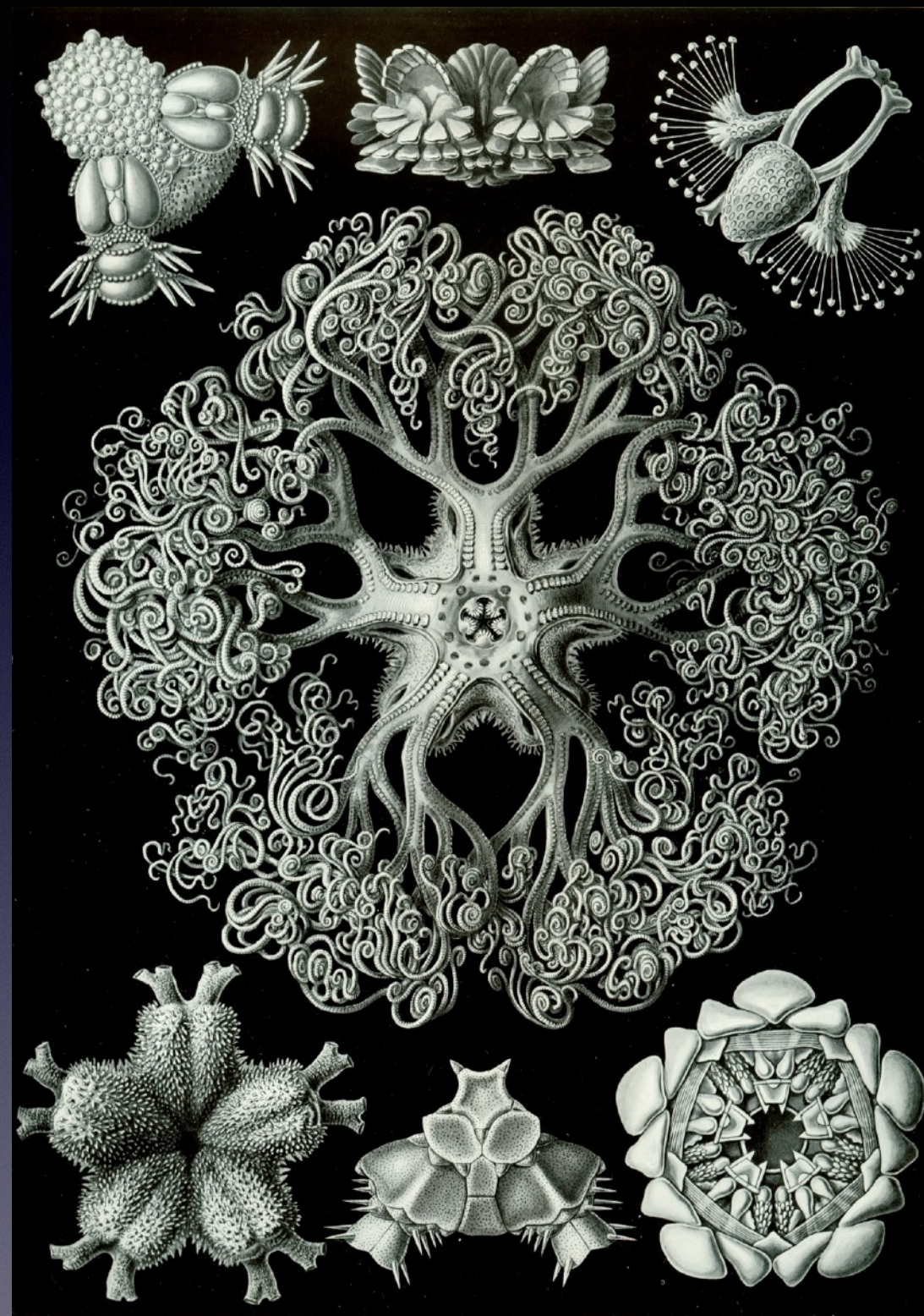
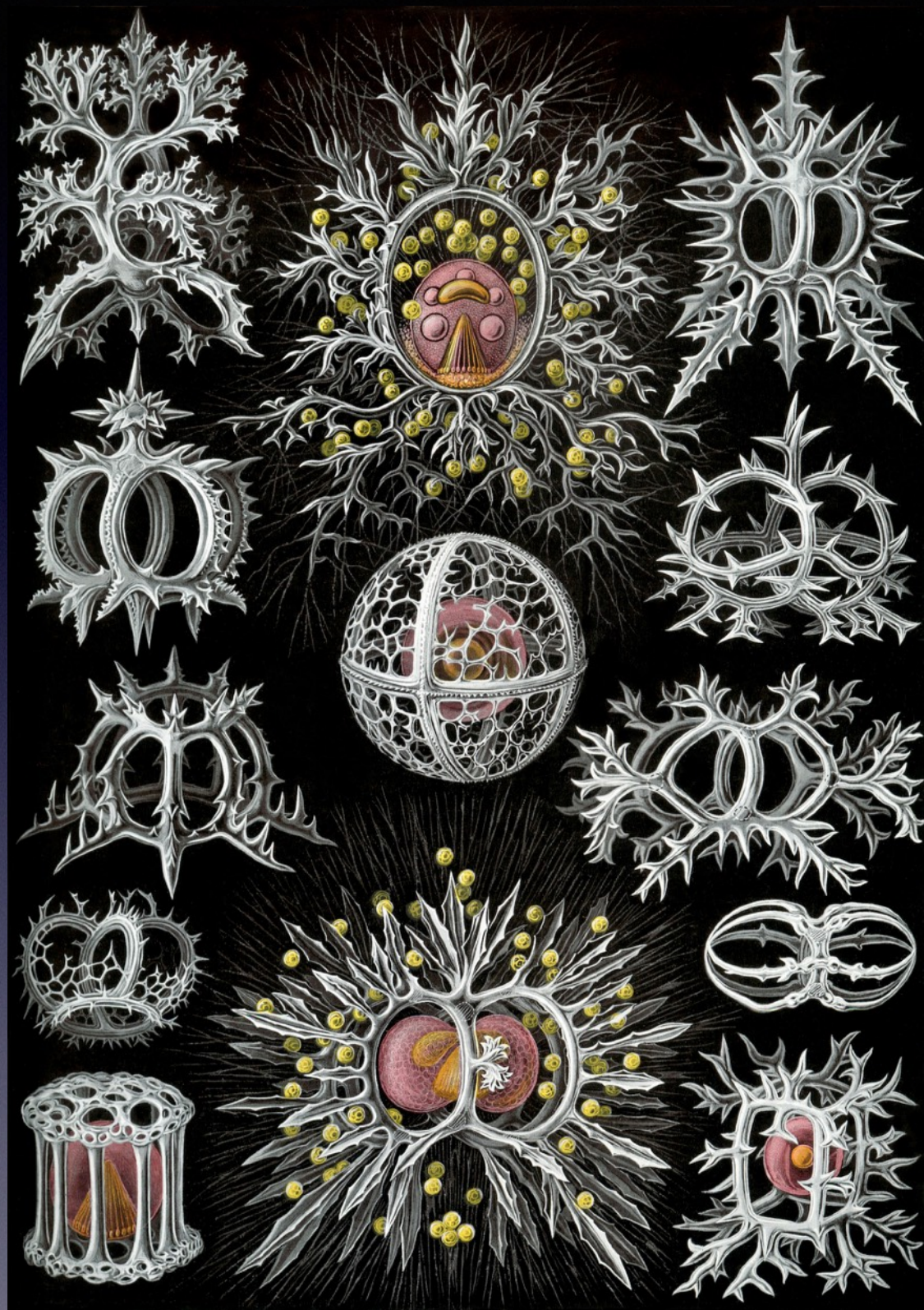


2) Attempt to bridge the divide
Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919)

- coined 'Ecology' in 1869
- study of ecology leads to cosmic truth (monism)

“the orderly course of evolution, according to fixed laws, now leads the human spirit through long eons from a primeval chaos to the present ‘order of the cosmos’.”

–Ernst Haeckel 1895



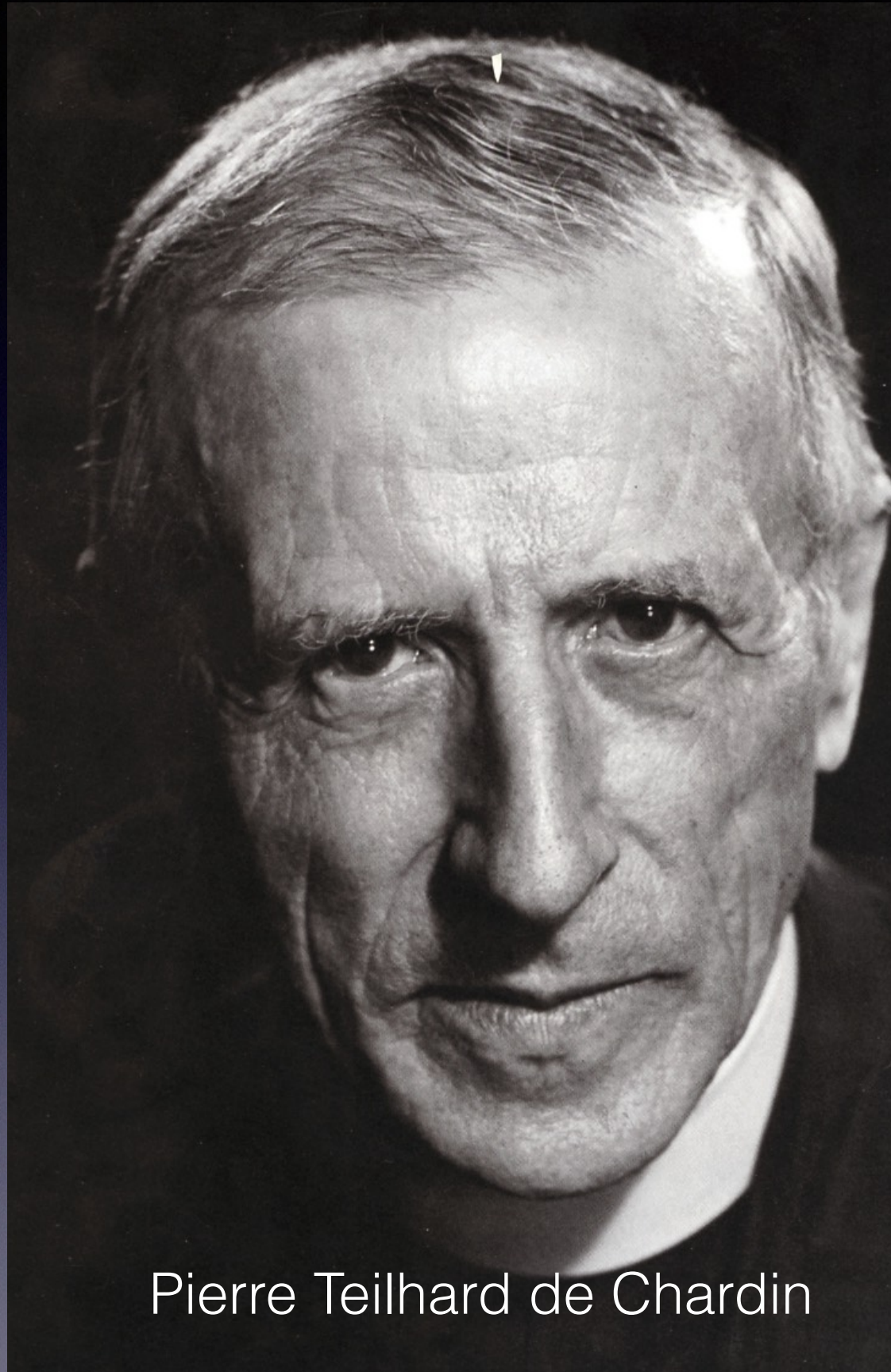


Thomas Berry

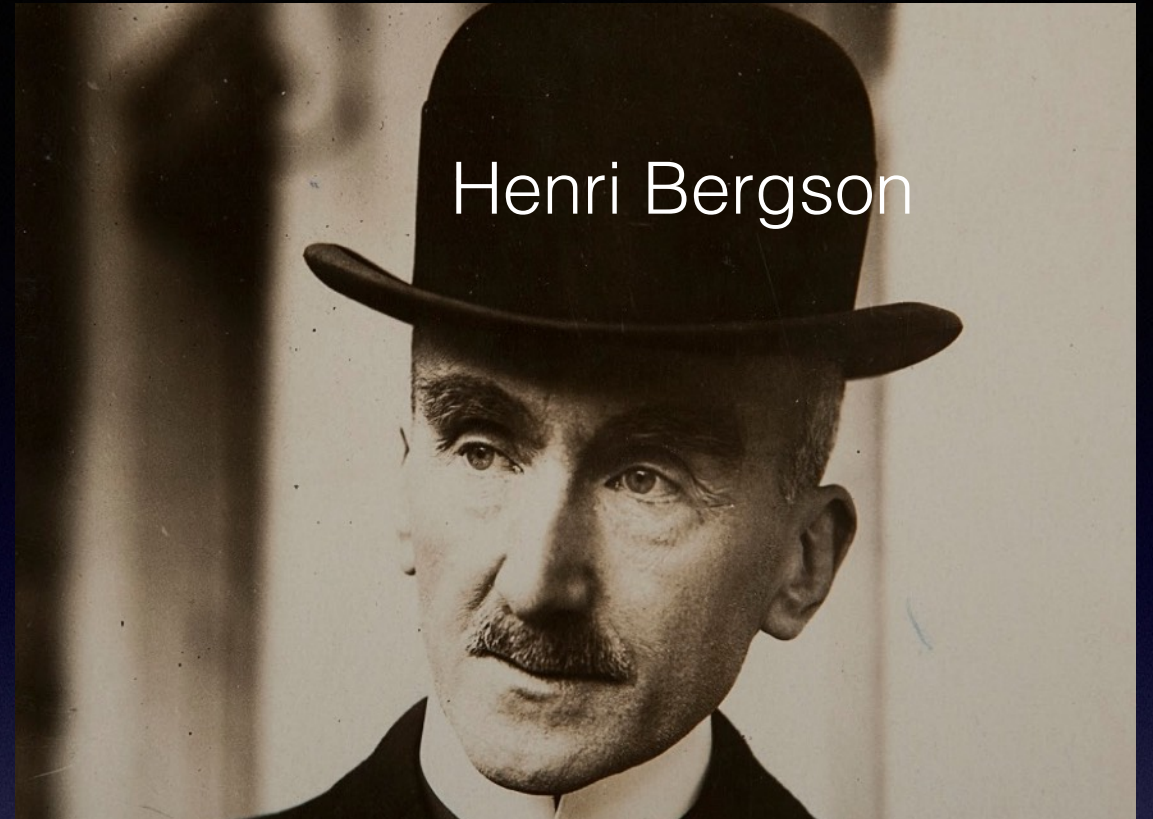
The New Story

“For Berry, anyone who has grasped the reality of cosmic interrelatedness and planetary independence is ‘an ecologist’.”

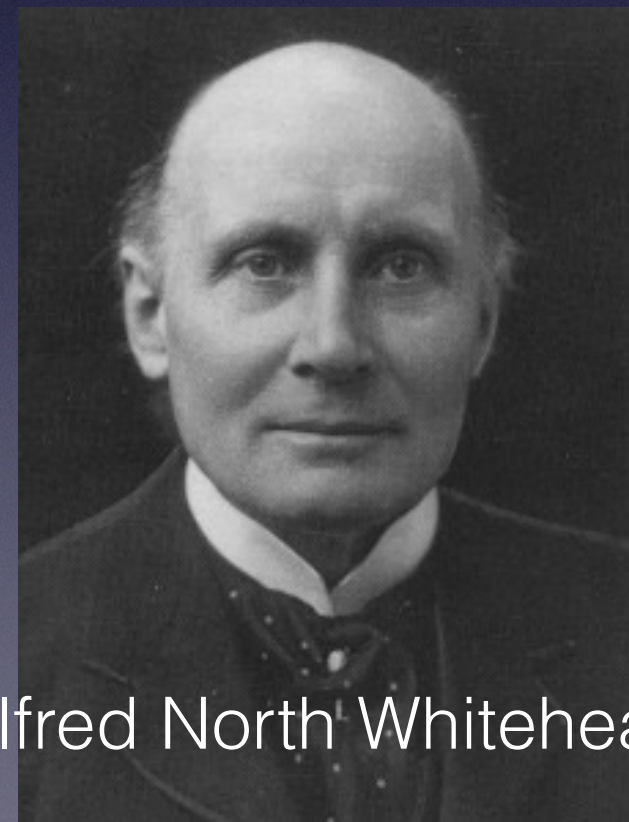
–*Grounding Religion* p.53



Pierre Teilhard de Chardin



Henri Bergson



Alfred North Whitehead



Richard Dawkins

Atheist 'spirituality'?



3) Postmodern critique

Challenge the assumptions of modernity



Val Plumwood



The new animism