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“FOUNDING A NEW RENAISSANCE”

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ABSTRACT

As new-humanists and astro-humanists, we look with interest at those historical ages, before the current one, which have seen the development of humanist philosophies. One of the most interesting periods, from this point of view, is certainly the Florentine Renaissance of 1500. Our age shows numerous common points with that period, that saw the discovery of the "new world", the beginning of the banking system and the international trade. Today we have the globalization of the economy, and a new world has been "discovered" (since 1969) and it is in our range: the Moon and the Geo-Lunar system. Philosophically, the Renaissance' season saw the development of the new-Platonism, the focusing on the man, and the aim to the universe and to the infinite. The new-Humanism and the Astro-Humanism retake, in some measure, the platonian values, reaffirm with strength the centralness of the humans, aiming to a transcendental fusion between man and nature, and expanding the borders of the human activities at least to the solar system, in perspective to the endless universe. The enlightened patronage of the Medici family assured the material bases for the development of the Renaissance culture. Nowadays we have, in the world, some interesting and fertile sprouts of patronage (Diamandis and Maryniak, founders of the X-Prize, Paul Allen, minority partner of Microsoft, Google and others). We can finally find another factor of similitudes: human civilization should finally exit the Middle Age of the flat self-targeted economism, giving a new impulse to the ethical and social growth of the humans. What is missing? The practical and technical approach of the modern patronage can seem essential at first sight, and exempted from "useless chatters". In reality our epoch is dreadfully lacking of the cultural and philosophical dimension, without which any development can only remain, in perspective, tied up to the momentary taste of the fashions and the various media opinions leader. We need, therefore, to found an institute for a new renaissance, or for the space renaissance. Such institute will finally setup the studies, the education, the cultural, philosophical and scientific search which we cannot anymore keep on missing.

STATUS OF CIVILIZATION

Economy and Society

We assist to the continuous growth of symptoms, more and more evident, of the crisis of the closed world ideologies. After the failure of the collectivist utopia, with the collapse of the eastern bureaucracies, we entered by now, if not the definitive failure, the likely worst crisis of the liberalist utopia. The development of China and India suddenly has to face the narrowness of the planet's material and energetic resources. The fanciful strategies of the speculative finance (sub-prime loans crisis), and the warmongering policy of the planetary powers, are making the globalized economy fall into a crisis compared, for intensity, to the 1929 great depression. Fuel prices keep on rising, leaving alone the one of the metallurgic raw materials and copper, feeding the inflation. The resource crisis is nowadays showing itself at the level of alimentary resources, whose price is constantly increasing. Wheat and rice, the traditional food stuff of the poorest populations, are scarce, and in Africa famine and hunger raise again their head with renewed violence.

Human Rights, Ethics And Culture

China violently clames rights of territorial dominion on Tibet. “Matter of life or death”, stated the Chinese government, ready to sweep away an ancient spiritual and pacific culture – the Tibetan Buddhism – of which the world would have a great need. Slavery is sadly practiced in the heart of the so called advanced countries. 4 or 5 deaths on the job per day (in Italy) is an unbearable continuous holocaust. Violence against women and children is news of everyday. Old and new conflicts make thousands of casualties in the whole world, and war is still seen by the politic leaders as a “solution” or even a “resource” for economy. Culture is jeopardized by trash commercial productions in all the fields. Justice is jeopardized: criminals charge the judges, damaged people cannot claim their rights, the justice is loosen in thousand of quibbles and delays. The whole establishment seems aimed to *educatethe* people to the idea of a huge holocaust to come. We demand quite another kind of education! We need an improvement of Ethics and Culture, not a worsening!

Prospect of Civilization

Sticking on fighting for the possession of the more and more scarce resources of this planet, we can only fall into a continuous ruin, that will end with the end of our civilization! If the world remains closed, shortage of resources and energy will raise an increasing number of conflicts; authoritarian involution and regression to pre-democratic government models will be the normal agenda, both in post-industrial, pre-industrial and emerging countries alike¹. Any aim to lighter governance models will be an unreachable dream, and our civilization will collapse on itself, maybe before reaching 10 billion inhabitants. The demographic collapse will cause a vertical fall of science and technology, illnesses, natural and environmental catastrophes will strike what will remain of human kind. Humankind itself is at risk of extinction, not only civilization. If the world remains closed, it will look like a big jail, where our children will be prisoner since their birth².

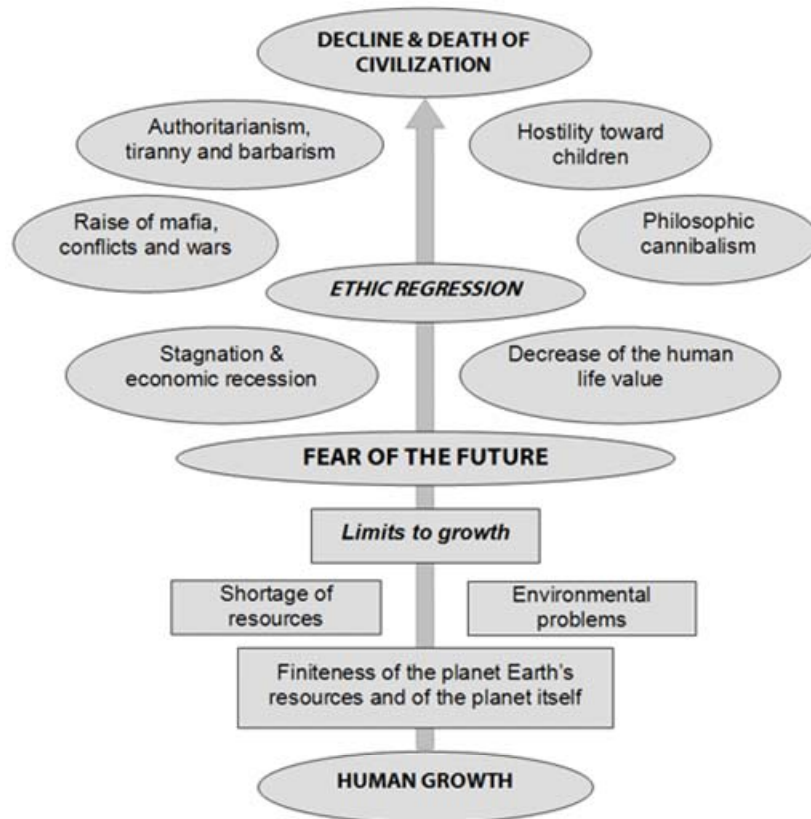


Figure 1. The Paradigm of the Closed World

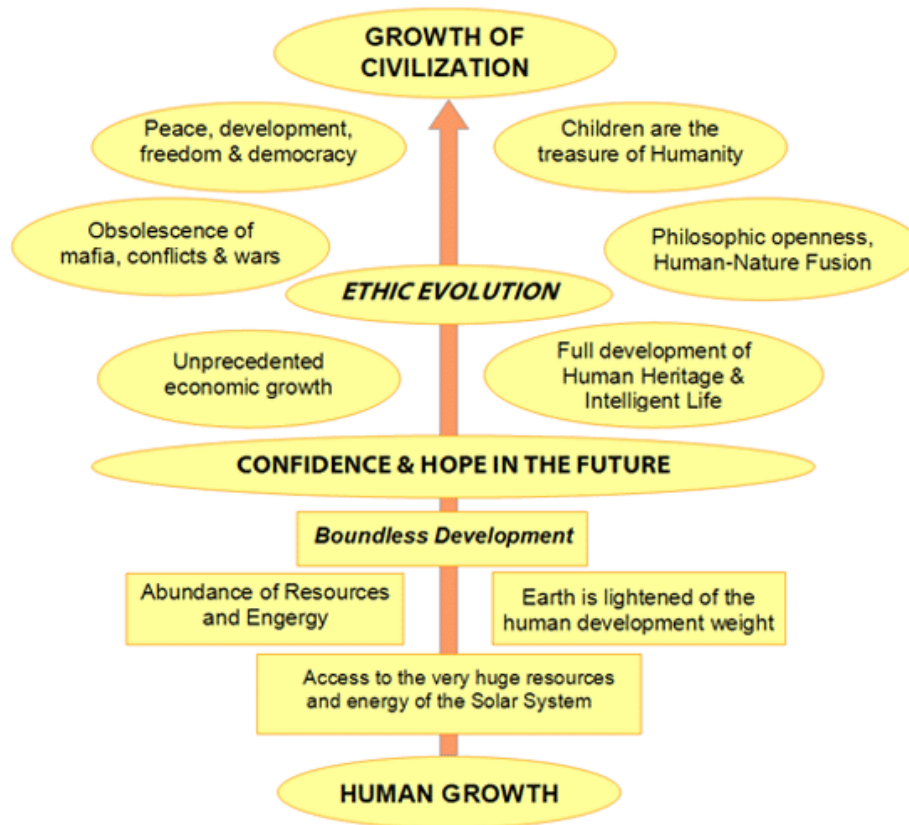


Figure 2. The Paradigm of the Open World

Lady Earth is going to give birth?

Three years ago, we said "Earth is not sick: she's Pregnant!". It is a wonderful prospect: a baby Solar Civilization, to be born in extraterrestrial space would at least halve the possibility of extinction of our kind, due to an internal or cosmic cause. Both the extraterrestrial and the terrestrial communities would profit of the enormous resources of the near Earth environment (just to start). But it could be a nightmare, if Mother Earth will not give birth: an abortion would infect our culture forever the decline of our culture would be likely irreversible likely our kind will not have a second possibility.

HUMAN NEEDS

The world has an extreme need to finally deliver the XX Century' ideologies to history. A new vision of the world is extremely urgent, able to include at least the Moon and the Near Earth Asteroids. The new dimension of development should finally allow to start the exploitation of the enormous energies and raw materials of the solar system. Only a space faring society will have the possibility to complete the long voyage, from the animal status to a full human status. A new, great, Renaissance is in our range! The decision is up to us, almost seven billion intelligent beings, which populate the third planet of the Solar System! The prize will be a really wealthy, fully inclusive, society of free individuals and communities, where the famine and the underdevelopment will be only a chapter in the past history.

STRIVING FOR FREEDOM

When a new degree of freedom is identified, the risk is to start behaving as we were already free. But our ethics is slower than our thought, space and resources are limited, the experiment fails (something we learn, sometimes...). Freedom needs the acknowledgement of failures and mistakes. Freedom needs wide space, abundant resources, ethics. Ethics needs awareness, study, culture, evolution. Freedom needs projects, culture, and evolution.

TECHNOLOGIES OF THE FRONTIER, SISTER ORGANIZATIONS AND FRIENDS

WHAT TO DO? SOME POSSIBLE WAYS

Information / Outreach Approach – First choice is to keep on issuing web magazines, based on voluntary effort, holding international meetings every two years, holding seminars on key topics every six months. Such choice is not much more than a culture club. Though it would be an high level culture club, it would not interest much more than ourselves, and the few that will be able to find us on the web.

Political / Ideological Approach – Second possibility, try to federate the pro-space organizations world wide, make a world wide movement, maybe a political party. It requires a degree of activity, toward the people and the institutions, and a fighting spirit that we don't have, or don't want to have.

Entrepreneurial Approach – To make a company, or a consortium, in the segment of space tourism technologies and/or commerce. This choice would be worth and profitable, but all of us has their activity, and would be difficult to change.

Cultural / Philosophical Approach – To promote education and studies on the open world and extraterrestrial expansion concepts. To create an institute or academy, to give birth to a foundation, in order to collect funds, and gain support to our cultural current. To make a concrete global education programme. What I suggest is this last option.

INTERESTING TOPICS FOR STUDIES & OUTREACH

As I will better argue later, the setup of the new academy shall be mainly a philosophic setup, not only scientific. Hereafter are some topics, a kind of cultural base, upon which to build a study platform for our Academy: Ehricke's Moon Industrialization studies³; O'Neill space engineering studies⁴; Space Option or Extraterrestrial Imperative⁵; Robert Pirsig: a new humanist⁶; Earth is not sick: she's Pregnant!; Giacomo Leopardi: an astro-humanist in advance on his time; Julian Simon: a paradigm of growth⁷; Maria Montessori: education for freedom and peace⁸; Ehricke, Pirsig, Wolfe, Darwin, Montessori: evolution and life industrialization; Space Age Philosophy: Tsiolkowsky⁹, Clarke, Harris, Asimov, Heinlein, Butler, Brunner; Luigi De Marchi: the Human Cosmic Revolution; Patrick Collins: the failure of Space Agencies to reduce the Cost to Orbit, SpaceTourism¹⁰; David Ashford, Patrick Collins: The Civil Aviation approach to Astronautics¹¹.

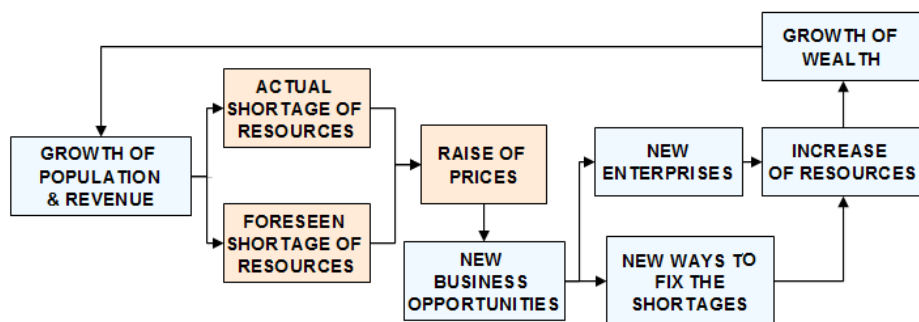


Figure 3. The Julian Simon's Paradigm of Growth

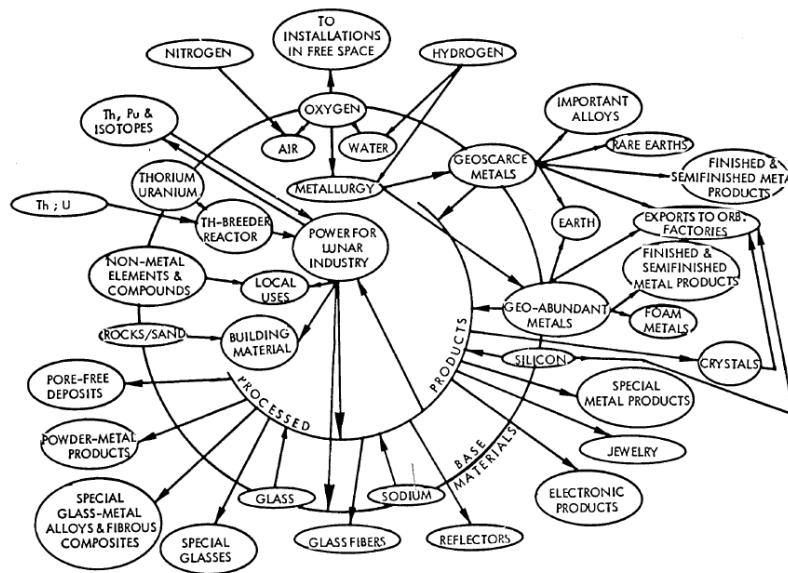


Figure 4. Krafft Ehrlicke: Lunar Industrial Products



Figure 5. Gerard O'Neill space colony (artistic view)

TO FOUND A NEW RENAISSANCE

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What is missing?

The practical and technical approach of the modern patronage can seem essential at first sight, and exempted from "useless chatters". In reality our epoch is dreadfully lacking of the cultural and

philosophical dimension, without which any development can only remain, in perspective, tied up to the momentary taste of the fashions and the various media opinions leader. We need, therefore, to found an *institute for a New Renaissance, or for the Space Renaissance*. Such institute will finally setup the studies, the education, the cultural, philosophical and scientific search which we cannot anymore keep on missing.

What is Space Renaissance

Space Renaissance is a new, global philosophy, having its basic ground on Earth, and its natural development in the extraterrestrial space.

Our founding concepts are New Humanism and Astro Humanism. We look at the past Renaissance (1500) as an inspiration for mecenatism and capability to aim high, and to make great projects by means of good will and mutual cooperation.

Among our scopes: (i) To give birth to a Foundation (ii) To build a great school for graduates and post-graduate doctorates and masters (iii) To build the philosophy and the culture of the Space Age, to help the New Renaissance of Humanity in Space. The statute is in progress, and will be soon submitted to all the good willing Terrestrians.

Some basic concepts

Earth is not sick: She's Pregnant! Space Tourism, key to open the High Frontier. Humans are resources, not problems! Space is safer than Earth. Space is easier than Earth. Space is more convenient than Earth. A Constitutional Clause for Right to Space¹². The Greater Earth Manifesto¹³.

The 1500' renaissance–differences & similes

As new-humanists and astro-humanists, we look with interest at those historical ages, before the current one, which have seen the development of humanist philosophies. One of the most interesting periods, from this point of view, is the Florentine Renaissance of 1500. Our age shows numerous common points with that period: the "new world" was discovered, the banking system saw the light, the international trade begun. Philosophically, the Renaissance' season saw the development of the new-Platonism, the focusing on the man, and the aim to the universe and to the infinite. The enlightened patronage of the Medici family assured the material bases for the development of the Renaissance culture.

Nowadays, a new world has been "discovered" (since 1969) and it is in our range: the Moon and the Geo-Lunar system, economy is globalized, a new communication tool exists: the internet. The Astro-Humanist philosophy retakes, in some measure, the platonic values, reaffirms with strength the centralness of humans, aiming to a transcendental fusion between man and nature, and expanding the borders of the human activities at least to the solar system, in perspective to the endless universe.

The need for a new concept of patronage

Unfortunately, often the owners of good ideas do not own...many money! It was observed that the main difference between nowadays and 1500, is that: we don't have a Medici, the rich people of today are greedy and not interested in the progress of civilization, and we are in presence of a real *moral question*.

But: the number of rich people, both in absolute number and in percentage, is incomparably higher today than in 1500, and we have a communication mean, that can help us: the internet. Two things we need: to gain visibility, in order to get the attention of possible benefactors; to draw a detailed project and planning, of what we want to do.

Concepts for a New Renaissance Academy

A Draft Programme (Work Breakdown Structure)

WP1- Design an excellent programme of studies, lectures and activities

WP2 - Get manifestations of interest by lecturers

WP3 - Get a certification of the cultural high level of the initiative, by a well known international authority

WP4 - Make a “trusted” fund

WP5 - Found the academy

The Renaissance’ Cultural Range

The philosophic inheritance will include: ancient humanist and astro-humanist seeds (Sumerians, Egyptians, Greeks, ...), the 1500 Renaissance, the birth of the modern scientific philosophy, history of science, scientific thought and scientists, enlightenment, technological and industrial revolutions; forerunners of the open world philosophy; the XX Century ideologies (a critical review).

Present and Future Studies

Our philosophic and ethic research will cover, at least: contemporary humanist and astro-humanist philosophers, the electronic society (an up to date, detailed, social analysis); the institutions’ failures: governments and agencies made a long chain of mistakes; the space age philosophy, and a real and concrete astronautic development.

Our idea of the Space Renaissance Academy is a very dynamic one, since we know we have a very hard task to carry on: awakening people from the dangerous sleep of the reason. The space age culture is not for the future, the space age philosophy is for today, the space age shall be today, or it will never be!

Does something like that already exist?

The International Space University has only masters in scientific and management matters. Space Agencies don’t have a structured education section. IAF and IAA don’t have a structured education section.

The earthly scientific universities have space related matters, but only on scientific subjects (with some exceptions, e.g. university of Firenze on space architecture). Space Philosophy and Astronautic Humanist Culture are not addressed at all. Space scientists and agencies managers are not “*naturally inclined*” to teach philosophy, whatever they can believe or sustain! Lacking of an up-to-date philosophy, the agencies do not have practical strategies suitable to take the Earthly Civilization over the season of Pregnancy.

A sound Astronautical Culture

After the first travel to the Moon, Humankind wasted 40 years. The cost to orbit is still intolerably high (20.000,00 \$ / Kg), compared to the public investment on space agencies! The high frontier is not open to private enterprises. The above situation is the result of a shameful big lack of *humanist philosophy*.

We shall give birth to a new philosophy, but we can’t afford to spend years in this task, “waiting for better times” in practice. None two-times-strategy is allowed! Therefore we shall take to high priority the themes and activities to ignite a real Space Economy as soon as possible: Civil Aviation approach to Mercantile Astronautics, Development of Space Tourism¹⁴, Colonization of the Moon and the Near Earth Asteroids.

Some Authors to study

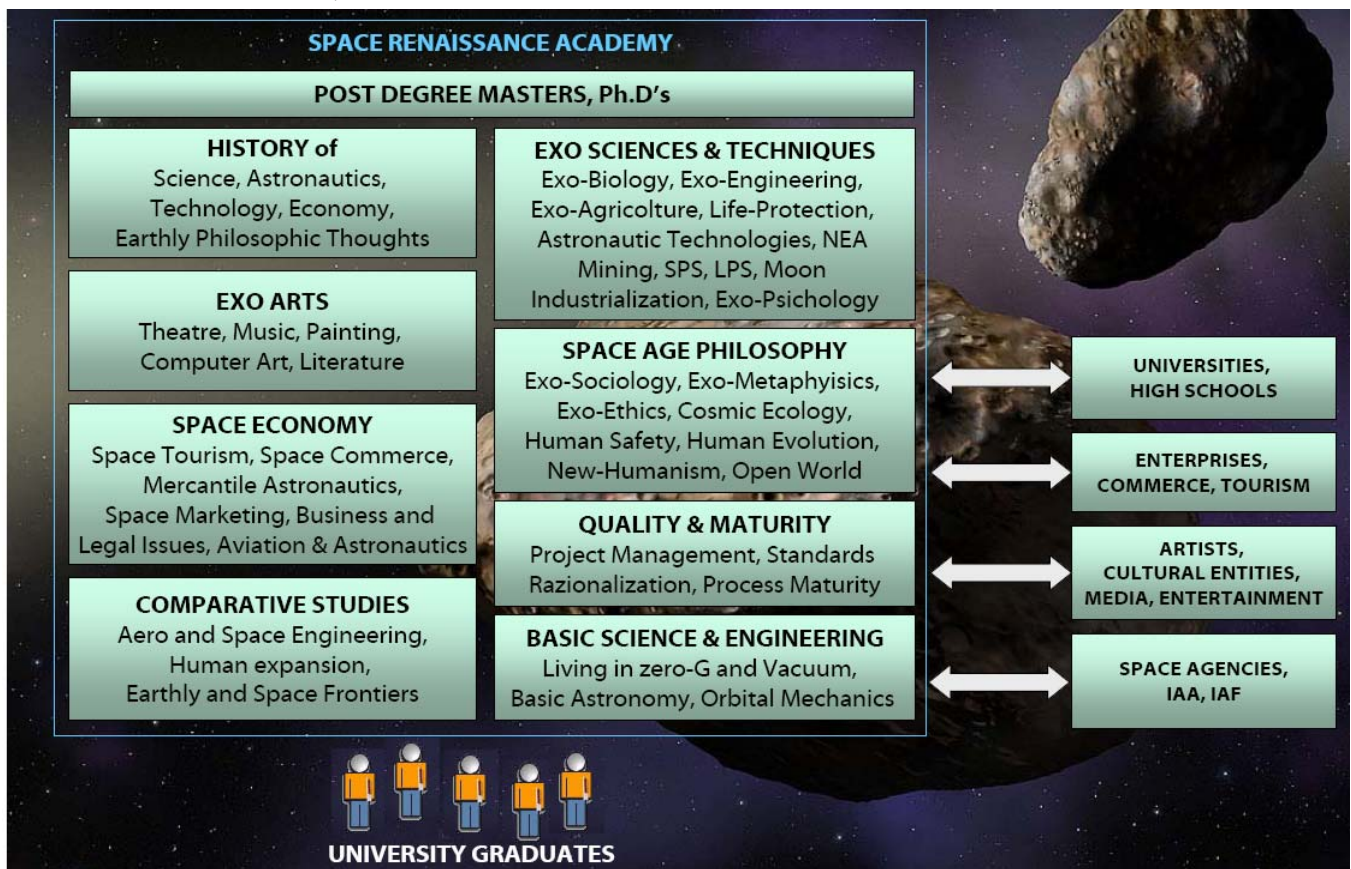
Alfred E. Van Vogt “NON-A”, Alfred Korzybski “General Semantics”, Amartya K. Sen “Inequality Reexamined”, Charles Darwin “On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life”, Charles L. Gerlach “Profitably Exploiting Near-Earth Object Resources”, Galileo Galilei; Giacomo Leopardi “Operette morali”, “Il Copernico”, “La Ginestra”, “L’infinito”; Giordano Bruno “De l’infinito universi et mundi”(Bruno acknowledges for the first time the variety of worlds of the universe, beyond the Copernico’s and Galilei’s heliocentrism), Immanuel Kant “Critique of Pure Reason”, Isaac Asimov “Change!”, Julian Simon “Population, the ultimate resource”, Konstantin Tsiolkovsky “Outside the Earth”, “The aims of astronautics”, Krafft A. Ehicke “The extraterrestrial imperative: Why Mankind Must Colonize Space”, Luciano De Crescenzo “History of the Modern Philosophy”, Mahatma Ghandi, Maria Montessori “Education and peace”, Muhammad Yunus “Banker to the Poor”, O’Neill, Gerard K. “The High Frontier: Human Colonies in Space”, Octavia E. Butler

“Parable of the Sower”, Olaf Stapledon “The Stars Maker”, Robert A. Heinlein “The Moon is a Harsh Mistress”, Robert M. Pirsig “Zen and the art of maintenance of the motorbike”, “Lila, an inquiry into morals”, Sir Martin Rees “Our Final Hour”, Thomas Jefferson “The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen United States of America” (July 4th 1776)”

Our Concepts to develop

(Patrick Q. Collins) The Space Economy, The Economy of Space Tourism, The failure of the Space Agencies to reduce the Cost to Orbit, The Civil Aviation approach to Astronautics; (Marco C. Bernasconi) The Space Option, Inflatable Technologies for Space Applications; (Steven Wolf) The Evolutionary Impulse; (Michael Martin-Smith) Astrobiology, Astronomy, Space Age Philosophy; (Arthur Woods) Outreach, The SEEDS concept, Space Art; (Alberto Cavallo) Reunification of culture: scientific and humanistic, western and eastern, A Minimal common Ethics for everybody; (Michael Huang) Spaceflight or Extinction; (H. H. Koelle) Concepts and Studies for Lunar Settlements; (David Criswell) Lunar Space Power; (Jonathan Tate) Defence from, and use of, Near Earth Asteroids; (Stephen Ashworth) Space Age Philosophy; (Giancarlo Genta) Space Age Science and Philosophy; (Vincenzo Zappalà) The truth on the so called Climate Changes, Astronomy and Astrophysics, Asteroids; (Piero Galeotti) Astronomy and Astrophysics; (David Buth) Gaian Science, Gaian Philosophy; (Philip R. Harris) Space Age Philosophy; (A. Autino) New-Humanism & Astro-Humanism, The Human Heritage and the value of our big number
Space is easier and more convenient than Earth, Space is safer than Earth.

Space Renaissance Academy - A draft architecture



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 - ¹² <http://www.tdf.it/constitution/sr-clause.htm>
 - ¹³ <http://www.greaterearth.org/>
 - ¹⁴ Collins, Patrick, Q. & Autino, A., "What the Growth of a Space Tourism Industry could contribute to Employment, Economic Growth, Environmental Protection, Education, Culture and World Peace", paper presented at the International Astronautic Academy Symposium on Private Human Spaceflight, May 28-30, 2008, Arcachon, Bordeaux, France