

Review: "*Beyond the Invisible*" by Federico Faggin

In his new book *Beyond the Invisible* (Mondadori, 2024), Federico Faggin continues his exploration beyond the boundaries of matter and the visible, delving into what he calls "the physics of the ineffable." This inquiry stems from his spiritual "awakening" in 1990 at Lake Tahoe, which led him to conceive the necessity of a new science that integrates spirituality and science, merging the two realms into what Faggin calls *Nousym*.

At the core of this new science is the "postulate of Being," according to which "the One is the totality of everything that exists, it is holistic and dynamic, and it seeks to know itself." Consciousness is viewed as "the capacity of the One to know itself," while free will is "the ability of the One to direct its own knowledge." For Faggin, these principles are self-evident, leading him to conclude that even "the quantum fields of physics must possess consciousness and free will." Completing this framework is the thesis of the identity between the whole and its parts: "As parts of the One, we are on a cognitive journey in union with the Whole."

In his previous book *Irreducible* (Mondadori, 2022), Faggin wrote: "If we accept that consciousness and free will are fundamental and irreducible properties of nature, the evolution of the physical universe cannot be the work of a 'blind watchmaker,' but the result of conscious and intelligent entities that cooperatively participate in its eternal becoming."

Faggin also expresses a strong concern for the future, claiming that "the world is on the brink of ruin, primarily due to materialism," which has propagated the notion that human beings are merely machines without free will and that consciousness is irrelevant. But is this truly the case? Modern philosophical and scientific thought does not seem to support this view. As early as the 1930s, Edmund Husserl criticized the sciences for their inability to explain human experience in his book *The Crisis of European Sciences*.

Nevertheless, Faggin seems to misunderstand the logic of modern science. Science does not seek ultimate truths but focuses on measurable and repeatable phenomena. One could speak of methodological materialism, but not of materialism that claims to reveal the ultimate essence of reality. Indeed, quantum mechanics, with phenomena such as entanglement, demonstrates the extent to which Faggin does not fully grasp the issue: mathematical models explain the "how" of phenomena, not their deeper "why." This is the domain of mysticism. As Ludwig Wittgenstein wrote: "The mystical is not how things are in the world, but that the world exists" (*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 6.44).

For Faggin, the idea that everything that exists possesses some form of consciousness is an incontrovertible truth. However, basing a theory on principles such as consciousness and free will, considered to be self-evident, appears problematic. Consciousness has always been at the center of many discussions among philosophers, neuroscientists, and cognitive scientists, with diverse opinions reflecting the complexity of the issue.

Equally, if not more, contentious is the theme of free will, one of the most debated and complex topics in philosophy, theology, and cognitive sciences, subject to multiple conflicting interpretations.

The questions Faggin raises touch on the great existential inquiries that have accompanied humanity for millennia, made even more pressing by the developments in artificial intelligence and machines. However, his answers go beyond the realm of truth and falsehood, beyond the boundaries of rigorous science and philosophy. We find ourselves in the domain

of poetry, literature, and religion, where the creation of meaning is achieved through words charged with imagination.

This recalls Aristotle's criticism of Plato and his theory of ideas: "In general, to say that unity is separate from things is to speak poetically and to add mere words" (*Metaphysics* 991a22). Similarly, Faggin's answers seem to belong more to the realm of symbolism than to that of science.

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Nicola Muraro

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