Science in peril ... (and it carries part of the blame)
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Monday, 6 May 2019
14h00-16h30
Sala Convegni – Department of Psychology and Cognitive Science
Corso Bettini, 31 – Rovereto

Abstract:
The advent of a new era of anti-science politicians has drastically altered the relation between science and society, to the detriment of science. It seems scientists are just waking up to a reality in which neither the authority nor the funding of scientific research is evident. These processes happen autonomously outside science. To make matters worse, within science there is a growing feeling of crisis as sloppy methodology, sloppy peer review, and outright fraud are on the rise. I think that we, as scientists, should all be very concerned about these processes. They not only happen simultaneously but also reinforce each other. An ominous example is that of Andrew Wakefield. This convicted fraudster is now involved in the Republican party in Texas to promote his erroneous views on vaccination and autism. I propose that we, as scientists, have to do two things. First, we must restore order in our own house. My lecture will be largely concerned with this aspect. We have no time to waste. Every error we make will be magnified and used against us. Second, it is time we realise we are not operating in splendid isolation, only coming out to announce our results expecting the general public to applaud us. Why should they? They do not have a clue as to why scientific results are more credible than other results because we failed to tell them. We should start seeking the dialogue with those around us, the sooner, the better.

This seminar is part of the workshop “Moving psychological science forward: Issues in methods and epistemology”

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Applications for the Doctoral Course in Cognitive Science are open now until the 31st of July 2019. More information can be found at https://www.unitn.it/ateneo/57173/concorso-di-ammissione