

Don McNeil
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Dear Don,

Thanks for your letter, and all your hard work. As it turns out I just last night filtered out the text of your diagram for a genealogy of systems thought on the IIGSS web site. The diagram is difficult, but I like having the list to be reminded me how diverse the visions have been. I wonder what kind of database could do it justice.

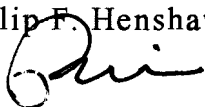
I have various thoughts on why GST failed. I agree the main problem was with failing to develop a teachable core of theory or science, or even a learnable practice. I think there's a key reason for that, that the tools of science rely on tracing necessities (the = sign), and natural systems are composed of loops of opportunities (the ? sign). The physical subject has a structure incompatible with our trusted ways of thinking. Dat's a problem. New ways of thinking then proliferated... wildly.

I'll need to read a little further to see what historical details are in what you sent. My interest in mapping the growth periods of GST is sort of silly but possibly instructive, to test out my theory on the theory itself. My empirical method starts with identifying positive feedback driven growth periods in the data. It requires some form of data. Sometimes you then look for the "big idea" that was their starting seed. I think all natural systems develop from the growth of loops of opportunity (for the loop)(connecting stuff left lying around, say, pencils in a jar) and that the beginning loop is often special. Loops of opportunity are often untraceable (because they follow no necessity) and are the structure inside of the system. What outside observers see is a kind of mirror image. Some facts about them will be reduced to science (predictable uncertainty) but it'll take observation, identifying systems as individuals and patiently watching. To me this model as just a logical consequence (after brushing away some distractions) of noticing that systems originate from growth.

I'm not writing much these days either, only ever published the two papers in SGSR 85 and then the one on my web site.

Do you have Len's email or address? You seem to be online, do you prefer not to use email?

Sincerely,
Philip F. Henshaw



9/17/2005
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