

Don McNeil
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Dear Don,

So, not getting any suggestions from others I did this quick little study of the publication history of GST, using Google, just to see how it would work. I'm sure I'll rethink my comments and would welcome yours. Hope you find some little surprises. Perhaps you could think of some better search terms I could use. I think there were actually several underground intellectual movements making rushes at the great mountain of organized complexity. They've all run aground it seems to me, having made celebrated progress without really getting anywhere, except for some modest achievement using brute force calculation. Maybe they'll all have lasting impact if anyone ever puts the useful pieces together. Catastrophe theory, chaos, AI, cellular automata, what have you, all work a little better than the I Ching, but not all that much better. Then you look at Tom Bewley's computer modeling of turbulence and find it just stunning (turbulence.ucsd.edu/~bewley/)!

I like your comments on *the conversation*, but maybe the problem is one of frustration with not knowing quite how to shed the reductionist approach, and establish a well founded and useful method at the same time. That, of course, is what I think my work should provide, but most people have quibbles with it of some kind, usually unmentioned, and I frequently have quibbles with similar work of others. Coren is obviously looking at the right physical thing, but I just don't get what he's saying about it yet. Still, when I see people focusing on the correct physical thing I think it's worth listening to what they have to say. I guess that's essentially my proposed method, that we all go back to the basics of direct observation and frequently throw out everything we know.

That's where my interest in growth curves lies, as a reliable source of intimately detailed and useful information about the progress of rapid holistic evolution in complex things that tend to matter a lot to us. They provide anyone something common and profound in nature that you can hold onto without having to trust in your own or anyone else's interpretation. They're also quite useful and extremely hard to depict as following any remote form of causation. It's not a completely automatic window into complexity, obviously. People have noticed that things grow, taking it for granted as 'just what they do' for a long time. What begins to be suspicious is just how many things invent themselves through the same locally original process of rapid evolution. It's almost as if one can open one's eyes and suddenly discover that every bump on every curve displays the long hidden secret of life! If that notion occurs to anyone and is fun, that's fine, but you don't need to believe in it, can just toss it away, and the particularly rich source of compelling life stories that it came from is always still there to feed other interesting retellings.

Regards, Philip F. Henshaw



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