

Don McNeil
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Dear Don,

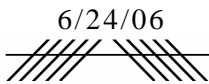
Starting from the end, it's that moronic quality of the old 'sustainable growth' movement and such that has always been one of my better guides to where the dirt was. Nothing like a cover-up to expose things, after all. I'm not real optimistic insight will propagate as fast as the disconnects that make the errors easier to trace, but there's at least a global crescendo of 3rd or 4th generation systems thinking from diverse and unequal directions developing along with what seems to be rather massive natural crisis. Sure, a pessimist might say it's probably happened that intelligent people pointed out that things were coming apart at other times when they did, and no one learned from it, so why hope anyone could talk sense to people now any better.

I hope you don't mind my using my interpretation of your graphic idea of systems to talk about what I think is the same thing but with a little different emphasis. For me the great diversity of system structures you see fitting the toroid geometry need a more static model as a teaching tool, that still presents the main dynamic dilemmas. I just like presenting the environmental link as a seam all the way around cutting through each loop instead of as a tube plugging in on each side. I got inspired last weekend and wrote a fairly comprehensive overview of my systems observation method, theory and issues in 22 paragraphs with little ideagrams. I haven't been able to write as much of an expository piece in quite a while. Anyway, I included my interpretation of your model in the way I wanted to use it, and would appreciate any comment you might have.

(<http://www.synapse9.com/ObservingSystems.pdf>)

One of the interesting things you criticize about what you call the GST dumbbell is that what starts as looking like a polarity becomes a loop by finagling a second path between the poles. Another way to grow a system from a polarity is treating it as the *axis* of a loop, since one of the tendencies of dynamic states is to revolve around some ideal they never cross and to progress in a spirals. Anyway that's one I've tried to make sense of but even though I still think most systems seem to get somewhere by going in circles that don't quite connect, trying to *think* in circles and get somewhere mostly just makes people dizzy!

I answer the question of what the best generalized model of systems, such as the Touring machine for computation, by just saying *look*. All theories are imperfect representations of things we can't understand without some idea of a theory, so the best representation seems to be their combination, the pattern and the thing together. For me it's necessary to dethrone the laws to do that, by pointing out that they're all imaginary, as evidenced by the fact that they have, as you suggest, the required characteristic of universal schema that they're independent of all units. They never have any scale, so they have to be projections of our



imagination and independently real. I'm sure that doesn't settle it somehow. The confusion between what originates inside and outside our imaginations probably has at least as long a future of clarification as it has a history of deep confusion.

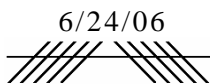
It *is* interesting that we look tend to look at mirror images of cybernation as growth "halted by the diverting or being deprived of positive feedback" or "initiated by diverting being deprived its negative feedback". They both have an impersonal and uninvolved actor, an act of God perhaps, being the responsible, and so fall short of pointing out the instruments of animation involved in each as may develop in real systems and their dynamics.

Thanks for the recommendation of Wm Powers. He published a new addition of his original 74 work in 2005, but I opted to by his 98 paperback "Making Sense of Behavior: The Meaning of Control". I'll be curious to see if he makes much of the inside-outside issue of where reality lies (whether its the meanings we construct or what you find following references to things beyond meaning to which our meanings get attached).

Best regards,



Philip F. Henshaw



6/24/06

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