

March 25, 2009

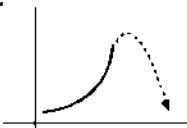
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Dear Phil,

Thanks for your letter of October 2008. It has been a long, sad, difficult winter. I have browsed some in your current website and found it to be increasingly clear and approachable. Congratulations on that. I still recommend what I outlined at length in my letter to you in May of last year, but people have got in trouble for following my advice in the past, and you might do well to do better. Nonetheless, I'm sure that I would benefit from some discussion with you about how my suggestions fit or do not fit with your view of what you are trying to do. I think that you would be pleasantly surprised by how much a reading (or re-reading) of H.T. Odum's Systems and General Ecology (1993 edition) would mean to you at this juncture. It is long and dense and not what any of us would want to read in our spare time, but I think it will probably prove to be a prerequisite for your accomplishing some of what you are trying to do, even if you substantially disagree with parts of it. A decade ago, H.T. had developed a suite of simulation blocks for the "Extend" simulator which allowed the symbolic models in his book to be used for actual calculations. The test of some of your ideas (and of mine) would eventually be to make some representative models and simulate them. "Extend" was one of the better tools as late as a few years ago; perhaps there are better ones now. In any event, if we live long enough, we will have to get beyond words and concepts and diagrams and pictures and do some serious modeling.

My "Going On ..." pages have piled up to over 400, almost enough to inscribe upon a whole jumbo roll of toilet tissue. I have answered some of your questions in it, but where? The current PDF of it is enclosed, along with a rudimentary website model which you may browse into via "systemicity.htm" in the "systemicity site" folder if you care to. (Sorry I don't have the right software or skills to make credible animations.) A lot could be done with all this, first to test it against expert criticism and then to prove it via modeling and finally to teach it, but I'll not live to see that outcome. Judging by what goes on in postmodern civilization such as it is, somebody needs to teach somebody something. The untenable doctrine of perpetual "growth" is civi-cidal. Maybe it's a symptom of global sexual frustration that people keep on driving a "succession" toward a "climax," albeit not a sustainable one.



It is as if Jay Forrester and Peter Senge, etc., never lived or thought or taught. Who was it who said, "At least get the sign of the feedback right"? Meanwhile, trying to fix "the economy" with the zeroth order cybernetics of stimulus-response behaviorism is a recipe for disaster sooner rather than later. Of course, any politician who would dare to tell the truth about the need for some level steady states would be crucified. This is how it happens that societies, nations, and civilizations die. Talk about trillion dollar pyramid schemes.

*Best regards,
Don*