

Don McNeil
P.O.Box 312
Wyalusing, PA 18853

Dear Don,

It's good to see you're still adding and shaping the work. Sorry if the winter brought some personal tragedy, a friend lost perhaps? I'm juggling dreams and losses all the time too, but still motivated by the race to awaken some fresh insight in human dreamers about the physical place we are part of, far more interesting, complex and dangerous than the dreamers seem to imagine. Thanks so much for the compliment on my web site. It has been anything but "clear and approachable" for others for so long, but I keep adding and adjusting, hoping to begin getting others to give me their success and failure stories to use in maturing the presentation. At this point I still really wonder if anyone gets that the subject is not my ideas at all, but a way of redirecting our attention to help see how the physical organization of the world we take part in develops. It would fill us with wonder and clarify our choices. I've been very prescient on how the present disarray would develop, and getting my observations across regularly now too. I'm still, though, finding an amazing level of intransigence among other "thinkers" and "doers" about questioning the beliefs that are clearly failing. I'm obviously "intruding" on their prerogative to make up their own realities!! So I'm not hopeful our society will avoid a truly unrecoverable collapse, such that we would not recognize the kind of future society to grow out of it.

Still, I keep failing at higher and higher levels, and I trust there are others out there in the wilderness doing likewise. The shocking thing, of course, is having gotten so good at mapping out the "expert errors" that science and popular wisdom are rife with, I've found even my old trusted and even life long intellectual companions and correspondents unable to carry on with the game of untangling them. A good example is the ecologists. I have been discovering they have framed their science using the exact same error as the economists, using the idea of "natural law" borrowed from physics plus equations as their main model! The general flaw is that equations of controlled variables can't represent group learning processes for dispersed independently learning parts, the actual subject of both those sciences. So teaching the subject as the theory radically misrepresents and distracts students from studying their actual physical subject. Formulas have NO emergent behavior and ecologies and economies are ALL emergent behavior. We now see consequence in the failure of both to describe or predict or say how to respond to the grandly disruptive new behaviors presently developing all over. If we'd only learn to turn the representation around, and use our simplistic models to help us see the real subjects rather than replace and hide them, a rather simple thing, I think we'd get somewhere. Not a sole in the dozen fields I have built forays into wants to even discuss that possibility.

I do still definitely like your highlighting both the work and diverse contributions of the founders of complex systems thinking, as you nicely did in your letter of last May. I find lots to glean. I'm still longing to find a clue as to how to make it clear that the model is not the actual subject, though. Physical realities of complex systems are easily determined to be a) far too complex and changing to be represented with manageable rules and measures and b) made of stuff that can't be pushed through our sensory conduits to co-inhabit our minds, so... I think

3/28/2009


P. F. Henshaw
pfh@synapse9.com

680 Ft. Washington Ave, NY NY 10040

(212) 795-4844

we should just give up on that pipe dream. If "giving up" on our mad vision of capturing all of nature in our minds gives us no insight other than into our own limitations, that at least would be a major achievement. Our whole society, though, remains unified by the dream of limitlessly multiplying our control of everything, as if the physical world could be located in our own minds. Even when you talk to the students in the best sustainability programs that's what entirely consumes their interest. It's a disaster!

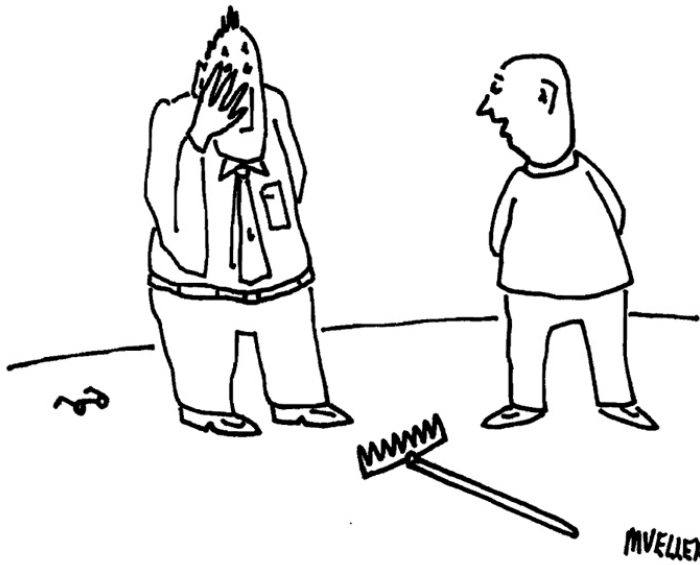
All the best,

The New Yorker retains it's sense of humor though :-)



New Yorker
12/15/08

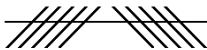
First, we need to stabilize his spine!



"You're not stepping on it right."

New Yorker 3/3/09

3/28/2009



P. F. Henshaw
pfh@synapse9.com

680 Ft. Washington Ave, NY NY 10040

(212) 795-4844