

February 2021 Entry (on the 'macrosociology' of GGDM)

“Sociologists have lost their vision of what science is. Indeed, only in a discipline that has lost its way could mechanical number crunching, *per se*, be considered ‘science’ and philosophical navel contemplation be defined as ‘theory.’ It is almost as if we have forgotten that science and theory are part of the same enterprise. That is, science is to seek understanding of the universe, and the vehicle through which such understanding is to be achieved is theory. Sociology has allowed poor philosophers to usurp theoretical activity and ‘statistical packages’ to hold social science hostage.” – Jonathan H. Turner, “Returning to Social Physics: Illustrations from the Work of George Herbert Mead,” [George Herbert Mead: Critical Assessments, Volume 3](#) (1992), Ed. Peter Hamilton, p. 132 (available on Google Books).

The key question on the subject of whether GGDM is a work of sociology theory is whether I am, in the words of [Prof. Jonathan H. Turner](#) in 1981, a “poor philosopher” attempting to “usurp [sociological] theoretical activity.” Or perhaps whether my project, GGDM, even merits the status of poor philosophy masquerading as sociological simulation? Or in the later words of Professor Turner, is the sociology of GGDM “caught in a vortex of relativism, solipsism, and cynicism” and “just another genre in the humanities”? Or finally, in still other words from Professor Turner, is GGDM “in essence, empirical descriptions rather than theories”? Necessarily so, because it is a simulation.

(on GGDM’s ‘macrosociology’)

“Elaborating category systems and using them to describe empirical events can be useful for seeing events in more analytical terms, but it is not a good way to build a general theory because the categories are not testable – indeed, they are simply ontological assertions – and the connections enumerated among the categories are generally not testable as well. Category systems often make for interesting philosophy but not particularly good theory, unless they are simple and used to develop general laws on basic social processes.” – Jonathan H. Turner, [Theoretical Principles of Sociology, Vol. 1, Macrodynamics](#) (2012), p. 20.

There are about a half dozen elements that form GGDM’s approach (assertions if you like) to macrostructure or macrosociology:

1. The base axiom, “Humans need meaning” which was inspired by The Austrian School (a/k/a [Praxeology’s](#)) base axiom “Humans act intentionally” (the [Axiom of Human Action](#)). The concept of the existential void was already developing a couple of years before I formulated the Axiom of Human Meaning, but exposure to praxeology solidified the idea into a base starting axiom.

- a. Corollary to this is the idea that meaning shields us from the [existential void](#), which

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we can see because of our intelligence, even if we don't want to look.

2. Near axiomatic and structural embrace of Clarence Marsh Case's "four orders of natural phenomena" to explain the struggles of sociology to be recognized as a science, the false equivalency placed upon it to the physical science standards (the 'epistemological fraud') and the equivalence of objective reality and subjective reality to humanity (that humanity creates its own subset of realities via interpretation which cannot be directly adverse to physical or biological reality).

a. I have been able to trace Clarence Marsh Case's four orders of natural phenomenon back to [Aguste Comte](#), one of the fathers of sociology, however, I reject the charge of strict empiricism in sociology (that is, the '[social physics](#)' of Comte) and maintain that there remains a strong philosophical element in sociology (see, 'sociology is more related to philosophy than it wants to admit' 2 [Constructural Elements](#), p. 199 and 3 [Fallen to Earth](#), p. 1530).

3. Axiomatic embrace of security (safety, boundary control, in loco parentis) as the 'supra-legitimacy' of sovereignty and legitimacy, and 'happiness' as the meta-aspect of humanity that is addressed by religion mainly (but also pets vicariously and philosophy), that acts to shield us from the Existential Void, death, and the Kantian guilt of reproduction (the '[rational anti-natalist argument](#)').

4. [Holism](#) and nesting levels of systems as a continuity and as the proper way to understand human civilizations; to me, it always depends on what height you are looking from ("[View from a Height](#)" as Isaac Asimov titled one of his books on physics) and you will see the same processes repeat and slowly morph at each level. Compare this to more empirical, structural, mainstream views of macrosociology. I don't think that this is a thought unsupported by science generally, for example, biology and physics must necessarily be understood holistically at some level by systems dynamic interaction and systems within systems.

a. Fuzzy Concepts as a necessary element to understanding both human beliefs (internally), ideology, and human social structures that act to cause change.

5. Civilization as a constant emergent and Gestalt Structure, and Gestalt Structure as the machine of emergence.

a. This cycles metaphysically back to the idea of the Existential Void, that a Gestalt Structure is the only shield against the Existential Void and is the "human thing."

6. The "looking" power of humans to locally affect the universe (in a sense, technology, but that is only the current form), which we do not fully understand yet (the effect is exaggerated by certain necessary game mechanics which I acknowledge as unrealistic), which preserves humanity as the top of the local heap, having a special relationship with the universe by nature of the 'fractured universe.'

a. This dovetails somewhat into the idea that human civilization is necessarily a gestalt structure.

7. A sense of parallelism of the greater trends of global maturation of human civilization, understanding, awareness, and thought with the way in which a human child grows and matures (this is sort of a [transhumanist](#) argument).

Another thought, I don't know where this fits exactly: There were people who at one time insisted *on their authority* that God would not create the Earth as an imperfect sphere, and thus there must be huge continents in the Southern Hemisphere ([terra incognita](#)) to balance the great land mass in the Northern Hemisphere. This is quite odd (hypocritically inconsistent) when all the while they insisted that God created all of the creatures and created man to rule over the Earth, but that man is imperfect and subject to sin and needed to be 'saved.'

(on Fuzzy Groups)

“Let me say quite categorically that there is no such thing as a fuzzy concept... We do talk about fuzzy things but they are not scientific concepts. Some people in the past have discovered certain interesting things, formulated their findings in a non-fuzzy way, and therefore we have progressed in science.” – Rudolf E. Kálmán.

“I would like to comment briefly on Professor [Lotfi A.] Zadeh's presentation. His proposals could be severely, ferociously, even brutally criticized from a technical point of view. This would be out of place here. But a blunt question remains: Is professor Zadeh presenting important ideas or is he indulging in wishful thinking? No doubt Professor Zadeh's enthusiasm for fuzziness has been reinforced by the prevailing climate in the U.S. – one of unprecedented permissiveness. Fuzzification, is a kind of scientific permissiveness; it tends to result in socially appealing slogans unaccompanied by the discipline of hard scientific work and patient observation.” – Rudolf E. Kálmán.

My embrace of fuzzy groups, fuzzy concepts in GGDM is not a sign of genius. Far from it. Somewhere in the most Euclidian part of the universe, [Rudolf E. Kálmán](#) is heartily laughing and eternally scowling at me at the same moment (Mr. Kálmán would not venture into a black hole, for instance, where physics becomes 'fuzzy'). For those who may disagree with my characterization of Rudolf Kálmán, I remind you that he comes through history as a scowling, authoritarian type whose 'protected hunting preserve' (in the words of [Loren Eiseley](#), see [1 Technology](#), p. 684) has been invaded by fuzziness.

I state in [4 Culture](#), p. 404 that the more a fuzzy concept is defined, the less useful it is, and that is true in politics and religion as well as human macrostructures. There is a signpost on the road up ahead... Yet, fuzziness is a fact within the third- and fourth-orders of natural phenomena (*à la* Clarence Marsh Case) – it allows for interpretation – in fact, it is the defining fact in the latter orders of natural phenomenon with which we

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have been most concerned through history. Fuzziness is the ability to both hold a view of the universe that is profoundly wrong in historical hindsight while also imagining states of the universe that are no longer apparent from the data, imagining parts of the universe that we cannot see, and bringing into existence a phenomenon (or appearance) which does not derive from empirical facts (*à la* [Kant](#), see ‘is & ought’ discussion, [1 Constructural Elements](#), p. 179). How do we reconcile that?

(on silly space games)

“Summing up the book as a whole, one has often had to point out how surprisingly little he seems to have read on quite a number of essential topics. It would be fair to say that whenever his facts are broadly correct they are not new, and whenever he tries to strike out on his own he often gets things wrong, sometimes seriously. So we should not judge *Sapiens* as a serious contribution to knowledge but as ‘infotainment,’ a publishing event that will titillate its readers by a wild intellectual ride across the landscape of history, dotted with sensational displays of speculation, and ending with blood-curdling predictions about human destiny. By these criteria it is a most successful book.” – C.R. Hallpike, “[A Response to Yuval Harari’s ‘Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind,’](#)” *New English Review*, December 2017.

As these things go... I received a solicitation e-mail from Amazon for a free Kindle book in mid-September 2020. One of the books shown was by [Yuval Noah Harari](#), whose name I recognized because I quoted him once in GGDM on the subject of the [Turing Test](#). Regardless of what is said about him by academia, and I admit that I have not read his book, I believed then and I believe now that his quote used in GGDM is a useful contribution to discussion of the subject, and thus, it stood on its own merit (this is the same argument I make about Wikipedia quotes). Harari has been savagely criticized by an eminent professor and thus destroyed within academia, and it is precisely the same criticism I expected when I wrote GGDM (see various ‘silly space game’ and ‘pretentiousness’ commentaries, [2 Expansion](#), pp. 890-891, [3 Colleges](#), p. 499 and Silly Space Game Fallacy, [2 Fallen to Earth](#), p. 1519, and Fallacy of Pretentiousness, [3 Fallen to Earth](#), p. 1546). The ‘Professor Hallpikes’ of the world will insure that GGDM has no redeeming intellectual value and will never be considered anything more than a silly space game.

But from reading about Mr. Harari in Wikipedia, I discovered the new or emerging discipline of “[Big History](#)” and realized that GGDM had wandered unknowingly (since I never heard of it before) in to Big History. They had to use the term Big History because ‘[macrohistory](#)’ was already taken and so was ‘[cosmic history](#).’ Anyway, I feel that my fractured universe-emergence argument would fit at least within the first third of a Big History course. It may in fact be a key intellectual development in that field, but likely no one will ever read it or see it, or realize it.

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(on a grander scale)

“Some of Chomsky’s books will consist of things like analyzing the misrepresentations of the Arias plan in Central America, and he will devote 200 pages to it,’ Finkelstein said. ‘And two years later, who will have heard of Oscar Arias? It causes you to wonder would Chomsky have been wiser to write things on a grander scale, things with a more enduring quality so that you read them forty or sixty years later. This is what Russell did in books like *‘Marriage and Morals.’* Can you even read any longer what Chomsky wrote on Vietnam and Central America? The answer has to often be no. This tells you something about him. He is not writing for ego. If he were writing for ego he would have written in a grand style that would have buttressed his legacy. He is writing because he wants to effect political change. He cares about the lives of people and there the details count. He is trying to refute the daily lies spewed out by the establishment media. He could have devoted his time to writing philosophical treatises that would have endured like Kant or Russell. But he invested in the tiny details which make a difference to win a political battle.” – Norman Finkelstein, quoted by Chris Hedges, [“Noam Chomsky Has Never Seen Anything Like This”](#) Truthdig, April 19, 2010.

This implies that those who write things on a ‘grander scale’ are moral inferiors who are concerned about buttressing their enduring legacy. That all intellectual writing should focus on the trivial details of the day (noting that [Machiavelli](#) is difficult to read for that very reason, [The Prince](#) is loaded with trivial details of Italian politics known to his contemporary audience, for which he goes on for pages), aim for political change, and play dodgeball with daily lies. This, by extension, makes GGDM a morally-inferior work in the Chomskian world, as it seeks to live above the politics of here and now, and to discuss in a view from a height, human civilization.

I did choose the subject of GGDM – I began with an idea of creating a simulation of human civilizations that raised ‘population’ to some status above being ‘factors’ or ‘money’ in the game. In doing so, I followed it wherever it (and my life) went – into phenomenology, macrohistory, macrosociology. In GGDM, I have spoken truths which will be unpopular if anyone ever reads it, which according to Chomsky’s classic definition, is what an intellectual is supposed to do. Are you an intellectual if no one ever reads your writings? I keep coming back to this point.

Did I write ‘for ego’? I think that GGDM makes clear my stance on that point. In fact, Chomsky’s vigorous and emotionally-charged defenses of his works (that is, he was offended by contemporary criticisms and responded from that posture) in the various controversies, makes clear that he had ego as much as or more than any (with some to spare), and is, completely opposite the stance explicitly taken in GGDM regarding criticism of it.

[Noam Chomsky](#) was clearly concerned with buttressing his legacy by answering the criticisms while he is still alive, as a record for posterity (because others, inferiors, must speak for you after you are dead). As [Avi Sion](#) said in [Paradoxes and Their Resolutions: A Thematic Compilation](#), p. 209: “To pretend making no claim, even as one plainly

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makes one, is a breach of the law of identity: it is denying that a fact is a fact.” This is not to suggest that answering contemporary criticisms is a [crime of ego](#) *per se*, but rather, in opposition to [Norman Finkelstein’s](#) claim that Chomsky didn’t write ‘grander’ things because he wasn’t concerned with buttressing his legacy, it is clearly evident that he was so concerned, as much as any other public intellectual.

By Charles W. Phillips