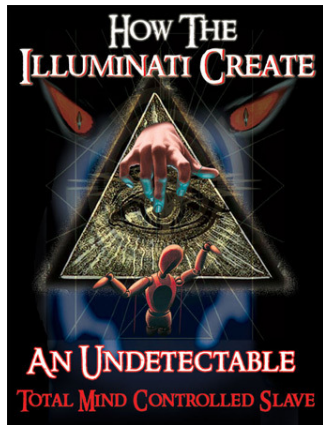# Systems Sustainable

"Systems' Theory" is not about systems per se, it's particularly about systems that are composed of systems that feedback with each other. It's the opposite of reductionism and is becoming increasingly more important as isolated parts of the world -- and critical systems in the world -- are coming in conflict with each other. Systems' theory is about how interacting systems function.

Linear and reductionist thinking is a poor way to handle a majority of the complex problems. Narrow, linear thinking sells trash and controls people: simple-minded solutions appeal to the simple minded.

This is the reason I have created games. Games are a good way to explore and tinker with feedback systems. Games let you participate in systems that develop structures not manifest from the start. Some of my games are on the games page of my web site. For example one called Global Warning has players build small autonomous communities that interact with each other. The players decide between working together or competing against one another.

It's good to see systems' thinking cropping up more often, but it's really a bigger concept than can be moved into the collective consciousness through a few important examples. The notions of ecology and sustainability hinge on understanding ones' place in a larger system.

This is the problem with the whole globalist agenda. Globalist plans of a one world state were conceived in simpler times when the plutocrats, privateers and patriachs could bury the bodies in unmarked graves and didn't have to share the booty with each other. That topic takes off in another direction but, related to it, is the article On The Keynesian Lunacy of Targeting Outcomes, whose author says:

Regular readers know how little time I have for macroeconomics. One reason is that it's obsessed with the targeting of interest rates, GDP, inflation, unemployment, exchange rates, et cetera, as though such a thing was possible without unintended consequences. Since such variables are actually outcomes of a complex process, most macroeconomics seems to me to be an embarrassingly naïve study of outcomes which completely neglects process. All outcomes are caused by an underlying process.

...Even mildly complex systems, any outcome is the wrong thing to target. As we just saw, targeting one outcome of such a process changes that process, and changing the process subsequently changes all the other outcomes. In any kind of complex system where the underlying outcome generating processes aren't well understood – whether a company, or a society – the effects of changing the process won't be well understood either.

This is just good 'ol system's theory that's echoed by Dana Meadows in her book: **Thinking in Systems: A Primer**, in which she says:

The world's leaders are

Systems' thinking is not simply a way of understanding things that has been rejected, it's a way of understanding things that is categorically at odds with the reductionist trash that we're fed through the media, public education, and almost everywhere else. Thinking in systems is not impossible, it's necessary in order to understand how synergistic things work. "In most cases the whole has properties that cannot be known from analysis of the constituent elements in isolation." (from Wikipedia)

Certain people are given credit for pushing systems' thinking, though I think anybody who understands anything well has discovered systems' thinking for themselves. The names that come up are basically popularizers, and one of them is Fritjof Capra.

I used to attend Fritjof's course at U.C.Berkeley in 1976 and it's hard to believe that that he is now 72! He's written a bunch of good books that angle toward Systems' Thinking. They include "**The Tao of Physics**," "**The Turning Point**," and "**The Web of Life**." He's also just released a book on Leonardo Da Vinci. In the introduction he writes:

Only now, five centuries later, as the limits of Newtonian science are becoming all too apparent and the mechanistic Cartesian worldview is giving way to a holistic and ecological view not unlike Leonardo's, can we begin to appreciate the full power of his science and its great relevance for our modern era.

On the other hand, Fritjof has not mastered the sound byte. Here's one of his quotes that is supposed to be "notable":
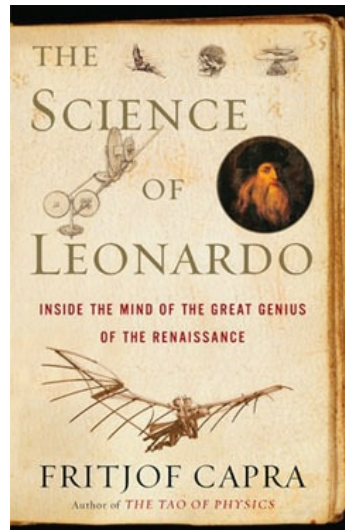
The phenomenon of emergence takes place at critical points of instability that arise from fluctuations in the environment, amplified by feedback loops.
— Fritjof Capra, The Hidden Connections: A Science for Sustainable Living
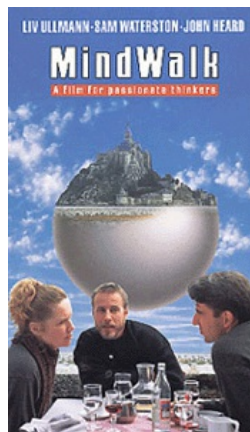
In spite of this, his book **The Turning Point** was turned into a movie (by his brother, no less) called "MindWalk" and, if your interested in the topic, which I hope you are, you can watch it for free at this web site. However, this is a really low res video production. The audio seems OK so maybe it's not too bad, after all the movie is essentially a bunch of talking heads.

Fritjof also founded, or helped to found, the Center For Ecoliteracy which is all about bringing ecological thinking to education, and from there to the masses. I just subscribed to their newsletter to learn more about it.

Maybe this "systems" thing is hype. I just finished writing a long article on Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder in which I claim to be "system theoretic." In the introduction I write:

We examine Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder in terms of the systems that define it. In doing this we consider the individual, in Ludwig von Bertalanffy's words, as an "organism (that) creates the world around it." Considering ADHD as an aspect of the whole environment allows us to assemble partial and conflicting views to create a single, multifaceted picture. The ADHD label is shown to manifest the failure of the social, economic, therapeutic, and political parts of our culture.
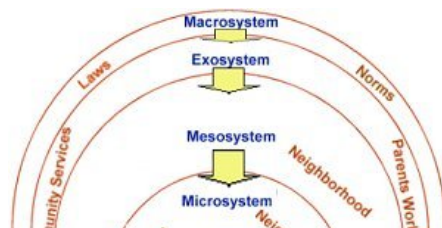
But really all I'm doing is looking at all the pieces and all the players and pointing out how they effect each other and how this leads to the ADHD label. And once you see all the parts and appreciate their intellectual bias and commercial motives, it seems obvious.

Bronfenbrenner's Culture **Ecology Model**
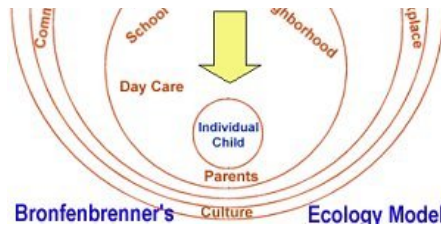
Calling this "systems theory" is like calling Sherlock Holms a Systems' Theorist. There's really just one way to see the whole, and all the other ways are inadequate.

When I get the article published I'll put it on my site for you to read.