



Contact Email for June 2018

Quintus Tullius Cicero a Roman soldier and commentator, in the first century BC, commented that people should, "Avoid any specific discussion of public policy at public meetings." He followed this up with a position statement which I would adopt for my contributions to the community:

Although you have all the accomplishments within the reach of human genius, experience, or acuteness, yet I thought it only consistent with my disposition to set down in writing what occurred to my mind while thinking, as I do, on the subject, not with the expectation that you would learn anything new from it, but that the considerations on a subject, which appeared to be disconnected and without system, might be brought under one view by a logical arrangement.

Over the years I have done a lot of that. I have 51 publications listed in the National Library Catalogue. Many of these come from taking what was already there and presenting it in a different way, often shocking people because I was able to show that what they thought was happening wasn't, and, with a few ideas of my own, what could happen.

It seems to me that this is basic sociology. We look at what is happening between people, in the community, in organisations, in government and say, "yes you have access to all the information in the world. However, if you will pause a moment and think about it in terms of the musings I have had on the subject, you too may see things differently, and hopefully in a way which will make things better".

I am amazed at the way academia has been able to dismantle sociology, it almost no longer exists. I am concerned that academia thinks it is always right and that any so called research outside of academia must be suspect. When, in fact, the boot is on the other foot. Academia is beset by dominant theories. Its reliance on peer review is not to keep up standards but to ensure that the dominant theory is not challenged.

This is not a new idea, there are others who have shown the same scepticism. (See Philip Coppen's, "The Lost Civilization Enigma" (2013), Steven Poole's, "Rethink, The Surprising History of New Ideas" (2016) and others going back over the years.

Where the challenge comes is that, in academia your research has to be tied to a theory and others who have written on the same subject. Research done outside of academia cannot be tied to a theory but to the reality of the problem being researched. The outcome is not years of academic debate, but a solution to the problem for those who employed you. If you did solve the problem, you will likely get more work, if you didn't, life might get difficult.

Sociology ought to be the stand out application for making human interactions better. It is not a theoretical discipline, these are tied to the fixed elements in the universe. Whereas sociology is tied to human interaction, which is never a constant. If you want an example read Tönnies "Community and Society". Not the Cambridge version by Jose Harris but the Michigan State University Press version by Charles Loomis. Few people have read the whole work. They used to teach about Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft but not very well. Give it a go, it will be worth it.

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