On Babylonic Engineering Levels of Discourse *

One of the capital errors made by political scientists and commentators –which unfortunately I didn't formulate clearly enough in my last essay, *Iron Hemline on the Sand*– is to confuse different levels of discourse. In an earlier essay, I had spoken about the confusion of "…the macro, meso and microcosmic levels of discourse," as one of the cardinal sins of philosophy –giving some examples thereof. [1] However, any serious thinker can plainly see that such a classification leaves much to be desired.

Perhaps it would be best to start by the traditional definitions of these words before embarking on their reformulation.

First of all, the etymology of the word "microcosm" is from the ancient Greek roots μικρός (*mikrós*, "small") plus κόσμος (*kósmos*, "universe, order"); whereas the word "macrocosm" derives from the Greek μακρός (*makrós*, "great, long") plus again κόσμος. The use of the microcosm/macrocosm analogy refers to an ancient metaphysical view which posited a structural similarity between the human being (i.e., the microcosm) and the grater "cosmos." Using this analogy, truths about the nature of the cosmos were inferred from truths about human nature, and vice versa. (By the way, "mesocosm" is used by biologists to describe any outdoor experimental system that examines the natural environment under controlled conditions, such as studies that provide a link between field surveys and highly controlled laboratory experiments.) [2]

However, in my use of these words I am referring to the fact that there is a lot of epistemological confusion between these three κόσμοι of ordinary discourse; and that therefore many calamitous policy errors have ensued as a result.

First of all, it's evident that there is an enormous difference in contemporary discourse between the words: "order" and "universe." Whereas in the era of Anaximander and well into the Middle Ages, the universe was confined to a "flat-Earth" version of our planet, and believed to be a well-ordered and harmonious system, in our times the word "universe" has been redefined to mean an infinitely and ever-expanding chaos of gigantic galaxies, only 5% of which is more or less known, while the rest is a mysterious and yet unknown "Dark Matter." [2]

Second, while in ancient times the microcosm was "man," conceived as a harmonious entity, in our times physicists have further reduced the microcosm to the subatomic nano-cosmic scale of elementary "particles" and unconfirmed forces called "flavors" and "quarks," and labeled them: *up, down, strange, charm, bottom* and *top*. [3]

Since the 19th century, physicists and mathematicians have attempted to develop a single theoretical framework that can account for all the fundamental forces of nature, or what has been called the "Unified Field Theory"–a term coined by Albert Einstein. For a century now, several scientists have attempted to unify gravity and electromagnetism with Einstein's general theory of relativity; but have not yet arrived at any sort of harmonious macrocosmic/microcosmic totality. [4]

Taking these factors into consideration, I'm obliged to redefine the three levels of philosophical discourse about the meaning of "order" so as to scale them narrowly to a more identifiable spectrum of contemporary human interaction. In the process, I will also ignore the use of cosmos to mean "world," as it perpetuates the ambiguity of the ancient Greek word "cosmos." Of course, the choices for the parameters of these three *cosmi* are almost infinite. For instance, one could choose the triad "Heart-Family-Western culture" or maybe the triad "Individual-Hometown-Civilization" … on and on.

So therefore, my final choice for this round is the triad "Individual Person ↔ Sociocultural Locus ↔ Human global field."

Needless to say, this choice does not much simplify my presentation. First of all, one would have to clearly define each term. Secondly, one would have to show the processes of interaction or interdependency between terms through examples and diagrams. And finally, one would have to prove that the presentation improves our analysis, without leading us into temptation to commit cardinal sin –philosophically speaking.

So, here go my first attempt at definitions of the micro (1), meso (2), & macro (3), *cosmi*:

Microcosm (1) <u>Individual person</u>: A reasonable adult human being of any gender.

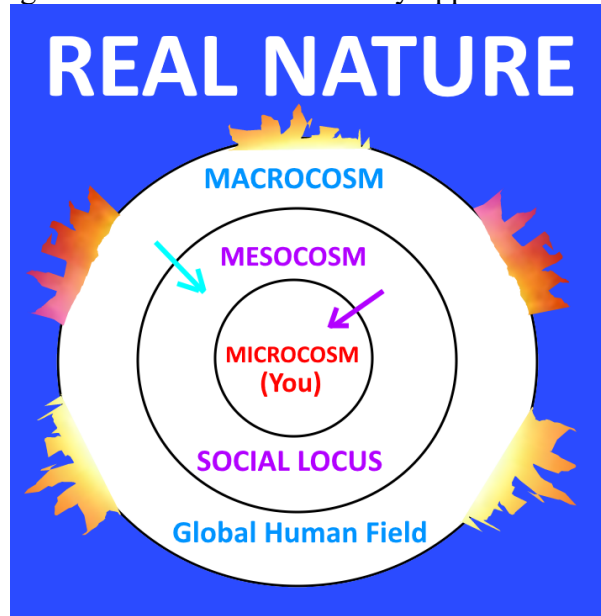**Mesocosm** (2) <u>Sociocultural locus</u>: A group of people having something in common.

Macrocosm (3) <u>The human global supranational field</u>. The general Earth-based field of activities solely under the control of humanity, and beyond the power of "Nature" to modify.

INDIVIDUAL PERSON	SOCIOCULTURAL LOCUS	HUMAN GLOBAL FIELD
Personal identity, ethnicity, culture, nationality, "race," gender identity. Mental state, sense of self-worth, unconscious drives, I.Q., Citizenship or immigrant status, official language proficiency, schooling, profession or trade. Marital status. Hobbies. "Class," or class-consciousness, etc.	Nation, nation state, colony, kingdom, province, municipality, community, neighborhood. National banks and local branches, food co-ops. Labor unions. Parish, bishopric, mosque, Hindu temple, synagogue. Athletic club, sports team, fan-club. NGO's, SME's A.A., NRA, etc.	UNO, UNICEF, UNESCO, WTO, IMF, NATO, FVEY, BRICS, ASEAN, the British Commonwealth, World Economic Forum ("Davos"), the I.O.C., the Red Cross, the Catholic Church (Vatican). Social media (e.g., Facebook, TikTok). Mass media (e.g., NBC, CNN, FOX, etc.).

Right off the bat, one can see that many new variables have been added that would need to be also defined (e.g. "reasonable," "gender," "Nature," etc.) as well as subtle nuances which blur the boundaries between the *cosmi*. Nevertheless, I have produced the table featured above to help to clarify their possible intersectionality. It is obvious by its quick perusal to see, for example, that in our 21st century, macrocosmic players –such as social media influencers and multinational corporations– have powers over microcosms that override those of the mesocosms, such as national governments and courts of Justice.

By the way, "intersectionality" is a sociological analytical framework for understanding how groups' and individuals' social and political identities result in unique combinations of discrimination and privilege. Examples of these factors include gender, caste, sex, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, religion, disability, height, age, and weight. The term was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. She describes how interlocking systems of power affect those who are most marginalized in society. Activists and academics use the framework to promote social and political egalitarianism. Intersectionality opposes analytical systems that treat each axis of oppression in isolation. In this framework, for instance, discrimination against black women cannot be explained as a simple combination of misogyny and racism, but as something more complicated. Intersectionality engages in similar themes as triple oppression, which is the oppression associated with being a poor or immigrant woman of color.[5]

On the illustration on the right, I try to show that (1) patterns of intersectionality occur constantly between the three *cosmi*, further blurring the coherence of each cosmos as a field of philosophic discourse; and also, that (2) Humanity's sociopolitical and economic development from the very start has had a destructive effect on non-human Nature, bringing us through human-induced climate change to the point of our own possible extinction as a species, as well as the long-term irreversible deterioration of our planet's very fragile biosphere.

REAL NATURE

MACROCOSM

MESOCOSM

MICROCOSM
(You)

SOCIAL LOCUS

Global Human Field

* Written by © Pascual Delgado, July 8th 2024.

1. See my essay *The Seven Cardinal Sins of Philosophy* in this same website, July 22nd 2016.
2. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microcosm%E2%80%93macrocosm_analogy
3. See my essay *Pandora's Subatomic Box* in this same website, dated August 5th 2022.
4. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unified_field_theory
5. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intersectionality