

# **Contemporary Systems Thinking**

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*Contemporary Systems Thinking* is a series of texts, each of which deals comparatively and/or critically with different aspects of holistic thinking at the frontiers of the discipline. Traditionally, writings by systems thinkers have been concerned with single theme propositions like General Systems Theory, Cybernetics, Operations Research, System Dynamics, Soft Systems Methodology and many others. Recently there have been attempts to fulfill a different yet equally important role by comparative analyses of viewpoints and approaches, each addressing disparate areas of study such as: modeling and simulation, measurement, management, 'problem solving' methods, international relations, social theory and last, but not exhaustively or least, philosophy.

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Janet McIntyre-Mills

# Transformation from Wall Street to Wellbeing

Joining Up the Dots Through Participatory Democracy and Governance to Mitigate the Causes and Adapt to the Effects of Climate Change



Springer

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ISSN 1568-2846

ISBN 978-1-4899-7465-5

ISBN 978-1-4899-7466-2 (eBook)

DOI 10.1007/978-1-4899-7466-2

Springer Boston Heidelberg New York Dordrecht London

Library of Congress Control Number: 2014940066

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# Dedication and Remembering

*To the displaced and hungry  
To my mother who taught me to question  
To George Thompson on whom the light of  
day might shine<sup>1</sup> I dedicate this book.*

## Hua Hu Ching's 77<sup>th</sup> lesson

*“ ... it will be from the misuse and partial development of intelligence that a time of confusion will arise and grow progressively worse. People will lose their appreciation for a healthy life of plainness after being attracted to and entrapped by all kinds of accumulated bad habits. Slavery will pervade human life and all human relationships under different names and reasons. If one is not a slave of social under development, he will be the slave of all kinds of emotional entrapment; if not the slave of his desires; then the slave of his ego...Most people become slaves to natural demands, fashionable luxuries, social power, artificial religion or ideology, destiny, and most of all, psychological excuses. All kinds of unnecessary conflict will be brought about, aggravating turmoil and creating unprecedented calamity on a large scale...”*

(tr. Hua-Ching 1989, p. 201)

Perhaps we need a simpler approach, namely a recognition that what we do to others and to the environment, we do to ourselves. My hope is that we will be able to re-evaluate our lives and relationships with others.

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<sup>1</sup> Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa, by George Thompson edited by Vernon, S. Forbes, with poems by Thomas Pringle. Thompson relates his journey to map out some of the interior of South Africa and was described by the Baralong as one “on whom the light of day might shine”.

# Acknowledgements

My thanks to Peter Turner who lives in Alice Springs for his mentoring and friendship since 1997 when we met in Alice Springs and for all the conversations<sup>1</sup> since the International Systems Sciences Conference in Brisbane entitled “Making Liveable, Sustainable Systems Unremarkable” (12–17th July, University of Queensland).

My thanks to Local Government for the funding that made this research possible and for the generous support by those who participated in the research, in particular David Hope, John Mugabushaka, Adib Muhammad Shomad and Bevin Wilson. My thanks also to the University of Indonesia for the opportunities over the years to develop a regional sense of the potential for overlapping biospheres that could be protected through local stewardship rather than through local exploitation.

I also acknowledge and thank Norma Romm for commenting on sections of this manuscript.

I thank Systems Research and Behavioural Science for allowing me to include sections of material published as two articles, entitled:

McIntyre-Mills, J and de Vries, D. 2012b. ‘Transformation from Wall Street to Well-being’ Syst. Research and Behavioural Science First published online: 10 Oct 2012 doi: 10.1002/sres.2133

I acknowledge that sections have been presented at the following conferences and that abstracts appear in the proceedings or on the conference websites:

McIntyre-Mills, J. 2013. Binchai, N and Hope, D. Engagement to address the policy and governance challenges of climate change mitigation. Local Government Researchers Forum, University of Adelaide, 7th July, abstract in conference proceedings.

McIntyre-Mills, J. with Binchai, N. 2013. ‘Being, having, doing and interacting’: towards ethical democracy, governance and stewardship International Systems Sciences Conference, 13–19th July Haiphong Paper, User Guide and abstract accepted and double blind refereed Conference website ISBN number 978-1-906740-11-5.

All photos in this publication were taken by this author.

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<sup>1</sup> Conversations recorded on Sunday 20th and Sunday 27 Feb and Tuesday the 13th April which are the basis of this introduction.

This is the first of two volumes comprised of a series of essays that can be read separately and in any order or as chapters on a common theme, namely how should we live? The first aim is to explore ways to achieve wellbeing (whilst addressing the challenges for mitigation and adaptation to climate change). The second aim is to invite participation in sustainable and ethical governance. Read together the overlapping chapters deepen an understanding of governance, democracy and ethics applied to this area of concern. Read separately each chapter stands alone in developing an argument. The book strives to provide a resource to help address this concern by enabling current and future policy makers, managers and researchers to work across professional and organizational boundaries. Gibbons et al. (1994) argue that the ability to work across boundaries is vital for ‘The new production of knowledge’ and vital for *‘the dynamics of research’ to address current complex challenges*. A core capability will be to transcend disciplinary boundaries, synthesize diverse perspectives and critically analyse the role of science in public policy. The capabilities required to contribute effectively to the exploration and resolution of significant social and policy issues are vital (Increasingly those working at the interfaces of policy, science and society are turning to systemic participatory approaches and ‘multiple methods’ to address the challenges of complexity, integration, participation and improved communication in addressing issues that span disciplinary boundaries. Managers, policy makers, scientists and technologists have been drawn into increasingly visible policy struggles and debates on scientific interpretation, as well as moral, ethical, and value based uncertainties about the applications of new technologies).

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Her research addresses wellbeing, consciousness and cosmopolitan ethics associated with the design and transformation of governance and democracy. It focuses on excessive social, economic and environmental consumption and suggests ways to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change through protecting cultural ecosystems. She is a board member of several journals, including the *Journal of Globalization Studies*, *Systems Research and Behavioural Science*, for example. She is an elected board member of Research Committee 10 on Participation and Organizational Transformation of the International Sociological Association, and has participated in Research Committee 51 of Socio-cybernetics. She is also a member of the International Systems Sciences and the Action Learning and Action Association.

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