

Bibliographies

This is work in progress, and although it is something of a labor of love, it is also extremely time-consuming. I am constantly coming upon notes and references to various books or essays that had slipped my mind as sources of ideas and inspiration. This only one of several bibliographies I eventually hope to include, and it is *only* a beginning.

Annotated Bibliography

[Ausubel, Kenny](#). Ed. *Nature's Operating Instructions: The True Biotechnologies*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 2004.

This collection of essays on developing sustainable technologies and using them sustainably includes sections that explore the practical, philosophical, and spiritual aspects of addressing modern-day problems and trying to reverse or mitigate their effects. Topics range from biomimicry to agribusiness to bioengineering, and the necessity of finding and using new models for economics that acknowledge the interdependence of human beings and the natural world. Contributors include Paul Hawken, Wes Jackson, Michael Pollan, Amory Lovins and Hunter Lovins, David Orr, and Terry Tempest Williams. The link is to his bio on the website for [Bioneers](#), which was kindly (and enthusiastically) suggested to me by one of my fellow pubmates on the *Serenity* forum.

[Bateson, Mary Catherine](#). *Our Own Metaphor: A Personal Account of a Conference on the Effects of Conscious Purpose on Human Adaptation*. Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991.

The conference referred to took place in 1968, and was organized by anthropologist and psychiatrist Gregory Bateson; it included discussions on biology, cybernetic processes, learning, and ecology. Conference members included Warren McCullough (cybernetics), Barry Commoner (biology and

social science), Gordon Pask (cybernetics), Horst Mittelstaedt (zoology, cybernetics, physics), Fred Attneave (psychology), Will Jones (history of philosophy), Peter Klopfer (zoology), Anatol Holt (psychology, physics, chemistry, mathematics, linguistics, computer science), Gertrude Hendrix (mathematics and pedagogy), Bert Kaplan (psychology, 18th and 19th century German philosophy), Ted Schwartz (cybernetics and linguistics), and Mary Catherine Bateson (anthropology and linguistics). Discussions centered on the then-emerging connections among cybernetics, systems theory, and the human sciences. This edition (the original was published in 1972; I first read it in 1981) features a new foreword, in which Mary Catherine Bateson notes that developing "ways of functioning that will not destroy the viability of our planetary home will depend on conversation, understood in its widest sense: individuals in interaction manipulating words and tools, the symbols of economic exchange, political power, and passionate belief. Over time, there is a need to develop an ecology of ideas that will allow diversity and change and permit individuals to identify with the larger systems to which they belong" Tellingly, she goes on to refer to the conference itself as "a parable for the worldwide conversation that lies ahead of us" (xv). This is probably where I first got the idea for worldwide, small-scale conversations as an impetus for change. It also encouraged me to think about what human beings can *decide* to do, as opposed to what they're conditioned by social conventions to think they *must* do.

[Berry, Wendell](#). *A Continuous Harmony: Essays Cultural and Agricultural*. San Diego, Calif.: HBJ, 1972.

I was first introduced to Wendell Berry in the '80s, in the same class that inspired my re-examination of William Morris: "Poet Economists, Poet Ecologists" (taught by Prof. Tim Redman). Reading his work reminds me of coming home—of revisiting familiar places, people, and ideas. As an essayist, Berry touches on themes that have become intertwined in my own work (both

writing and teaching), and it is very difficult to locate when and where in his books I first encountered them. His considerations of the interrelatedness of life, the land, language, and the "household" were probably more influential than I will ever be able to acknowledge.

_____. *Standing By Words*. San Francisco: North Point Press, 1983.

This book, and in particular the eponymous essay, focuses on the ethics of language—on saying what one means, and meaning what one says; it has become, for me, the contemporary, more ecologically evocative, surrogate for Orwell's "Politics and the English Language," and seems—more than twenty-five years later—particularly timely in its observations. Berry's description of propriety was probably instrumental in my consideration of the relationship between technology and necessity, about which he asks the following essential question: "how appropriate is the tool to the work, the work to the need, the need to other needs and the needs of others, and to the health of the household or community of all creatures?" (51).

_____. *What Are People For?* San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990.

In this collection of essays on everything from sex to technology, Berry's reasons for not buying a computer are alone worth the price of admission; but since it's available [here](#), you can get a nibble for free.

[Bookchin, Murray](#). *The Ecology of Freedom*. Palo Alto, Calif.: Cheshire Books, 1982.

One of the criticisms I expect to arise concerning my story is that it is essentially naive—that people could never live like this, that human nature is incapable of long-term cooperative efforts, that capitalism is somehow the natural state of affairs for human beings. Reading Murray Bookchin made it clear that people much better versed than I am in economic theory think that human beings are capable of engaging in many alternatives to the global

economy that has already characterized the twenty-first century. He died in 2006, and there's a nice obit at the [Institute for Social Ecology](#), along with an [interview](#) in the Institute's journal, *Harbinger*.

[Buber, Martin](#). *Paths In Utopia*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1958.

My introduction to utopian theory came in late 1975, when I enrolled in a course at Stony Brook called "Perspectives In Philosophy," thinking I was going to be reading Plato and Aristotle. Instead, the course was called "Perspectives In Community," taught by Pat Hill. Buber was on the reading list, and I was immediately hooked; the resulting tip toward socialism, as they say, changed my life. A good introduction to his work, from Maurice Friedman's biography, *Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue*, is available online: "[Community and Religious Socialism](#)."

Geertz, Clifford. *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1971.

Even though it's nearly forty years old, this is still one of the best treatments of Islam available. The reason I include it here, however, is that it's an example of Geertz's notion of ethnography as "thick description" as well as an eloquent illustration of how environment (both physical and cultural) affects belief. This book and his *Interpretation of Cultures* (1973) have informed much of my approach to anthropology. He died only recently (2006), and there's an [obituary](#) at the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton, where he was emeritus professor.

[Hyde, Lewis](#). *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property*. New York: Vintage Books, 1983.

In his own words, "It is the assumption of this book that a work of art is a gift, not a commodity. Or, to state the modern case with more precision, that works of art exist simultaneously in two 'economies,' a market economy and a gift economy. Only one of these is essential, however: a work of art can survive

without the market, but where there is not gift there is no art" (xi). Grounded in anthropological theory and ecological consciousness, Hyde explores the role of art in the modern world. His ideas have informed mine (and those of my characters) about the nature of art and the nature of economics. His newer book, [*Trickster Makes This World*](#) is equally worthy, and inspired a short story I wrote called "Left Behind" (copies on request). A description of his latest project on the [Cultural Commons](#) is available on his website.

[Idhe, Don](#). *Expanding Hermeneutics: Visualism in Science*. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1998.

My earliest dissertation research involved the newly-developing field called (for want of a catchier term) "philosophy of technology." When I began exploring the topic, the most interesting theoretical conversations were taking place in Continental philosophy, stemming from the work of Martin Heidegger. Neo-pragmatists like Richard Rorty were helpful, but Don Ihde was at the forefront. I heard him speak at a couple of SPEP (the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy) meetings, and began to read his books. Since hermeneutics (roughly, and inadequately, described as the "science of interpretation") is at the root of translation studies (something I was also working on at the time), Ihde's work was a natural fit. He's an engaging speaker and an accessible writer, even for those who haven't much background in modern philosophical discourse. This book provides a lucid explanation of the importance of visual technologies in the practice of science, and points to the increasing similarities between the sciences and the humanities in the modern world.

_____. *Technology and the Lifeworld: From Garden to Earth*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.

This book provides a solid, accessible introduction to ways of thinking about technology, and does one of the best jobs I've encountered of describing the

relationships between human beings and their technologies. When I mention to my students that one reason they can't interpret cave paintings is that they live behind too many veils of technology, I'm paraphrasing Ihde (and probably one or two others).

[Illich, Ivan](#). *Tools for Conviviality*. Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1973.

I can't be sure, but this is probably one of the wellsprings from whence arose my interest in a critical approach to modern technology. As Illich puts it in his introduction, "Our vision of the possible and the feasible is so restricted by industrial expectations that any alternative to more mass production sounds like a return to past oppression or like a Utopian design for noble savages" (xiii). Reading *Tools*, probably in 1974, inspired early conversations with fellow students at Penn on the development of appropriate technologies, and how completely our lives at the time were governed by the technological choices that had already been made for us. Some of our angst had to do with having to stand in long lines with boxes of key cards in order to run a computer program, but Illich's critique sparked something in all of us. His notion of "deschooling" must also have been one of the early influences on my educational philosophy. The link leads to e-texts of many of his works.

Jensen, Derrick. [Endgame](#). Vol. 1, "The Problem of Civilization." New York: Seven Stories Press, 2006.

Long after I had begun my project, and only just before it was finished, I discovered this book at my local Half Price store. Had I discovered it earlier, I'd have enjoyed instant confirmation that the ideas I deal with in the story are out there, being articulated and explored by many, many others. The view that civilization itself lies at the very root of modernity's problems is refreshing and timely, and Jensen's own project (vol. 2, "Resistance," was also published in 2006, but I haven't read it yet) is doubly gratifying because he's an activist, engaged in trying to change the world. Jensen is a frequent contributor to

[Orion Magazine](#), and prompts a considerable amount of discussion with every essay.

[Karatani, Kojin](#). *Architecture as Metaphor: Language, Number, Money*. Trans. Sabu Kohso. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995.

I'm not sure how much this book really influenced me, but I kept picking it up to read while I was working on *MNFN*. Karatani combines his Asian perspective with recent Continental thinking on aesthetics and technology into an interdisciplinary philosophical journey through areas that all have something to do with what I've been writing about.

[Langer, Susanne K.](#) *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1957.

In the Spring of 1967, I enrolled in a special, experimental Western Civ section at UC Riverside. I'm convinced that the reason I made the cut (just fourteen students were selected, and were joined by twelve faculty members) was that I was the only Greek major on campus. The idea was to create an interdisciplinary colloquium in which we would all read core texts, discuss them, write about them, and discuss what we had written. The reading list included Gombrich's *Meditations on a Hobby Horse*, Tom Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Herodotus's *Histories*, and Suzanne Langer. Although I didn't continue in the class after that quarter, the heady intellectual atmosphere stayed with me. Langer was the first philosopher I read outside of Plato, and she has informed my academic life ever since, both in my studies of philosophy and of anthropology.

[Le Guin, Ursula K.](#) *Always Coming Home*. New York: Harper & Row, 1985.

Le Guin is certainly my favorite writer of any kind of fiction, and I taught this book in my "Utopia and Technology" class. I also wrote about it in an essay about postmodern utopias for David Channell's "Science and Postmodernism"

class. The preamble to the novel, in which Le Guin imagines a future population in a specific location in California probably inspired me to think about a future Owens River Valley as the setting for a story. Although the Kesh society she describes and explores is both interesting and compelling, its spiritual basis has always seemed contrived—not the way a post-apocalyptic society, it seems to me, would really evolve. Her notion of technology as morally dangerous is thought-provoking and philosophically useful, but the novel itself falls into the after-the-bomb-we-all-become-primitives-of-some-stripe category of speculative fiction. As such, it played for me much the same role that Bellamy's *Looking Backward* did for Morris—as did Le Guin's other utopian novel, *The Dispossessed*.

_____. *Dancing at the Edge of the World: Thoughts on Words, Women, Places*. New York: Perennial Library, 1989.

In addition to being a superb fiction writer, Le Guin is a consummate essayist. I enjoy her non-fiction prose at least as well as her science fiction and fantasy. In particular, "A Non-Euclidean View of California as a Cold Place to Be," may be one of the best short articles available on the nature of utopia. But my real love in this book is her very short piece called "The Space Crone," a paean to women "of a certain age." It has inspired two characters in other stories I've either written or am working on, and quite frankly, *I want to be the old woman chosen to go to Altair*.

_____. *The Dispossessed*. A New Harper Perennial Classics edition was published in 2003.

Along with *Always Coming Home*, this novel taught me much of what I know about imagining utopia. Anarres is an intentional community writ large, complete with the problems one could easily predict given a marginal environment and a large population. Le Guin explores the inevitability of centralization in such an economy, and imagines a society of idealists—some of

whom become ideologues, and some of whom succumb to various pitfalls of human nature, such as power hunger and greed. This novel showed me that a utopian community almost necessarily requires a utopian environment and a limited population. The Odonians of Anarres weren't anarchistic enough for me; I needed to see how like-minded people would live, given conditions that would enable them to compose a world without rigid rules and centralized governments.

_____. *The Wave in the Mind: Talks and Essays on the Writer, the Reader, and the Imagination*. Boston: Shambala, 2004.

Another collection of essays, this contains "A War Without End," which articulates better than any other work I can think of, the need for utopian thinking. It also asks some really hard questions that, were we to answer them honestly, might actually lead to changes in the way we behave toward one another, and toward the rest of the world.

[McKibben, Bill](#). *Enough: Staying Human in an Engineered Age*. New York: Henry Holt (Owl Books), 2003.

McKibben's name is usually associated with his groundbreaking effort, *The End of Nature* (1997), which called for a radical rethinking of human/nature relationships. But *Enough* is dear to my heart because it explores a topic I considered in my master's thesis on bad metaphors drawn from science. McKibben explores the misuse of Darwinian evolutionary theory as a model for cultural evolution by those he calls the "techno utopians." These folks seek the ultimate in technological fixes: augmentation and change in human evolution by technological means. I was profoundly gratified to find this book as I was finishing my own, because it provided me with a measure of hope. If there are critics, especially critics with a well-established audience, all is not lost.

_____. *Hope, Human and Wild: True Stories of Living Lightly on the Earth*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1995.

This book illustrates the fact that change is not only possible, but it's occurring as we speak: on Roanoke Island, with the reintroduction of wolves, at Curitiba in Brazil, and Kerala in India. At the end of his introductory chapter, "Home," he says "This book offers no utopias; indeed, as the word is commonly understood, we have been living in a utopia all our lives, a place as sumptuously appointed and as divorced from physical labor as any in history. What I have been seeking instead are models of some post-utopia, places that resemble neither our pleasant daydream of a society nor the various nightmares so obvious in the world around us. Some places that make hope real . . ." (55).

[Nearing, Helen](#). *Simple Food for the Good Life: Random Acts of Cooking and Pithy Quotations*. White River Junction, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing, 1999.

The Nearings were early influences on my love for gardening and on my interest in the organic movement. I read through this newer book while I was writing *More News From Nowhere* and thinking about what people would eat. The work of Helen and Scott is being carried on at their last hand-built homesite, [The Good Life Center](#). Her comments on Scott's dignified death in 1983 are available at [In Context](#). A short [obituary for Helen](#) (who died in 1995) can be found on the European Vegetarian Union website.

[Orr, David](#). *The Nature of Design: Ecology, Culture, and Human Intention*. New York: Oxford UP, 2002.

I came across Orr's book in a short blurb in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, just after its publication. I ordered it for the Kelley Library at the Art Institute of Dallas, and read it shortly thereafter, being struck both by its treatment of familiar themes, but also by its practical advice. A recent article in the online

journal, [In Context](#), "[What is Education For?](#)" is also well worth reading by anyone involved in higher education. He explores education more fully in his new book, *Earth In Mind: On Education, Environment, and the Human Prospect* (Island Press, 2004).

Petrini, Carlo. *Slow Food: The Case for Taste*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.

The Slow Food movement is one of many current attempts to reject the relentless pace of modern life in favor of mindfulness—in this case about what we eat and how we cook it. Petrini's book is the movement's bible, and promotes a philosophical approach to consumption of various kinds. Further information is available on the movement's websites: [Slow Food International](#) and [Slow Food USA](#).

Rothenberg, David. *Hand's End: Technology and the Limits of Nature*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Early on in my studies at UT Dallas, I noticed the relationship between translation and metaphor (they're words for the same thing in Latin and Greek), and began to think of tools as metaphors for parts of the human body. Since one of the characteristics we're most proud of is that we make things (including tools), it seemed pretty logical that most of our tools are actually metaphors for hands--extensions of the hand designed to perform particular tasks. Rothenberg goes well beyond what I was musing about in the '80s, and describes in this book an intriguing history of how we have thought about nature and technology in the West, from the simplest of hand tools to the computer. He may also have been the first person to drive home the message (to me, at least) that knowing how the rainbow is formed does *not* diminish the wonder of its existence. For a review, see [this](#) from Howard Reingold.

Rybczynski, Witold. *Taming the Tiger: The Struggle to Control Technology*. New York: Viking, 1983.

One of today's most prolific writers on things architectural, Rybczynski's eclectic interests include the history and philosophy of technology--about which he has written two books (the other is *Paper Heroes: A Review of Appropriate Technology*, in 1980). One of his chapters, "From Cabin to Cockpit," includes a cogent discussion of the rationale behind the Arts and Crafts Movement, and a contrasting picture of Bauhaus aesthetics--as each fits into his critique of technology. He's now the Meyerson Professor of Urbanism at the University of Pennsylvania, and architecture critic for *Slate* magazine. A recent interview is available at Slate.com.

Sandbeck, Ellen. [Green Barbarians](#). New York: Scribner, 2010.

This book, like Alan Weisman's *The World Without Us* (below), would have been an enormous help (and psychological lifter-upper) when I was writing *MNFN*. I discovered it recently in a chain bookstore and blogged about it on [Owl's Farm](#). It doesn't really belong in this section, but until I set up the "What's Happening Now" bibliography, I wanted to include it for anyone who doesn't think it possible to live the "savage" life of my utopians. Sandbeck's book, which urges us to abandon many of our modern sensibilities about what we really need in order to survive and "live bravely" on our planet, is already helping me to thumb my nose at naysayers.

Shi, David. *The Simple Life: Plain Living and High Thinking in American Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

This book, which I first encountered while doing research for my dissertation proposal, provides a valuable history of the quest for the "simple life" in the United States, and of the utopian impulse that underlies efforts to fulfill it. The final chapter, "Affluence and Anxiety," holds up well as a description of the

beginnings of environmental and economic awareness in the years after World War II, and as a characterization of the continuing search for the "good life." David Shi is now president of Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina.

[Snyder, Gary](#). *The Practice of the Wild*. San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990.

The essays in this book, like everything Snyder writes, are taut, inspiring, lucid, and just plain enjoyable to read. I especially love "Tawny Grammar," in which Snyder muses about the sanctity of wild spaces and beings. Snyder lives in the northern Sierra Nevada, and his affection for the area and for the idea of the wild as valuable in itself--beyond any economic considerations--is both profound and inspiring.

[Tuan, Yi-Fu](#). *Morality and Imagination: Paradoxes of Progress*. Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989.

In some ways, this book is about ends and means. We are, in fact, what we make, and what we make is a product of our imagination--so that the moral content of imagination is worth examining. The question of progress looms large, as does the (resulting) desire to return to an often romanticized "simpler" life. Tuan's discussion of the role of fantasy is particularly useful.

_____. *Passing Strange and Wonderful: Aesthetics, Nature, and Culture*. Washington, D. C.: Island Press, 1993.

In this book, Tuan argues that a love of beauty--the aesthetic impulse--lies at the core of human culture, and explores its sources in the senses. Because he does not focus exclusively on Western ideas about aesthetics, he offers some very useful insights into differences between how we see the relationship between nature and culture, and how other peoples understand it. I think that part of my attraction to his work stems from the fact that his Chinese origins resonate with my childhood in Taiwan and Japan, and we both left Asia as children. I can't wait to read his new book, *Returning to China* (University of

Minnesota Press, 2007), to see what he says about the experience of going back sixty years after having left.

_____. *Segmented Worlds and Self: Group Life and Individual Consciousness*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982.

There is almost nothing this book *isn't* about, but at its center is the concept of community, and how individualism fits into notions about "common worlds."

_____. *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values*. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1974.

One of my favorite things about libraries is the possibility of accidental discovery when one enters the stacks to look for a particular book. I have no idea what I was looking for when I happened on this book, but Tuan's insights began to inform my views of everything from time to space to the environment the minute I sat down on the floor in front of the shelf and began to read. Like Mary Catherine Bateson's *Our Own Metaphor*, Tuan's *Topophilia* became a touchstone over the next twenty years or so, one to which I returned frequently.

Weisman, Alan. [The World Without Us](#). New York: MacMillan, 2007.

Quite a while after I uploaded *More News From Nowhere* to the web, Weisman's book and [website](#) appeared in the firmament. It answers many of the questions my students have posed about what future archaeologists would find, were we to disappear for whatever reason. I wish it had been published before *MNFN* came online, but it will certainly factor in any re-imagining that occurs in future, or in any of the sequels that keep popping into my imagination.