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Don McNeil  
P.O. Box 312  
Wyalusing, PA 18853  
570-746-1646

Phil Henshaw  
680 Ft. Washington Avenue - #1A  
New York, NY 10040

Dear Phil,

Thanks for the package and the commentary. As a practical matter, your search for relevant books, papers, and lists of the same will surely be frustrated by the unsystematic and inattentive management throughout the course of the systems movement. The "Repository" on the IIGSS website is for the most part a list of the books and papers from my library which I placed with the IIGSS in 2000. It is far from a "complete" chronicle but is nonetheless quite representative of highlights of some of the best thinking in social, biological, physical, and theoretical systemicity. In that collection, one of the nexus references is George Klir's Facets of Systems Science with its selective bibliography as of 1991, but prior to that time when George was still actively engaged with the ISGSR/ISSS he had on file a definitive bibliography of what had been published on related subjects. If he won't respond directly to you/us nowadays, perhaps you can get at him through Stan Salthe. It might even pay off for you to visit in Binghamton to force the issue. Last I heard Klir keeps an institute there. You could also touch base with Stan on such a trip and swing down through Wyalusing here for some talk if you like. As I've mentioned previously, Len Troncale had access to the most complete collection of ISGSR/ISSS Proceedings and Yearbooks as a byproduct of his years as managing director of the organization. Because the articles in those publications are made for a parochial audience and were not widely distributed for the most part, they probably won't show up in any real-world search. They are biased so heavily toward "systems" that they might mess up any statistical analysis of publication history. (I had more than 30 papers in those volumes, seven in one year, which was considered scandalous at the time.) Nonetheless, there was some good content along with the bad in ISGSR/ISSS publications, and they deserve to be recovered and saved on their own merits. Klir probably had most of that stuff too, at least through 1990. In parallel to the ISGSR/ISSS was the American Society for Cybernetics (ASC) where some of the more profound scholars such as Maturana and von Foerster retreated from knee-jerk "isomorphy" and "interdisciplinarity" to muse about second order cybernetics, autopoiesis, etc. I suppose there is still an ASC website which might add flavor to the mix, and Stuart Umpleby at George Washington University in D.C. could offer some guidance if he would stoop to do so. Also, an offshoot of all this has been the "Principia Cybernetica" project which held some international meetings and may still have a website with references you could use. The SEED online community for which my 2003 paper "What's Going On With the Topology of Recursion?" was written tries to keep some systems fires burning (probably just the distant glow of flammable manuscripts).

When circa 2000-2001 I was still idealistic regarding the IIGSS as a repository for the legacy of systems thinking and as a launching pad for a new era of systemic appreciation, I was trying to collect as much relevant documentation and oral history as possible while it was still possible to do so. The proprietor of the IIGSS was not so keen on that, except for a few of his favorite luminaries, hence far too little was done. Since then, a lot of the good old heads have died and a lot of irreplaceable materials have been lost. I haven't checked recently, but I assume that the IIGSS website still lists (obsolete) references to people and places where good resources were once to be had. The Genealogy was another initiative of mine to map an extended view of "the conversation." Now that my own private version of the Genealogy is substantially more comprehensive and adheres more faithfully to a timeline, its presentation begins to say ostensibly what your work might highlight analytically. Clusters of activity in various subject matters can be seen directly on the chart and/or identified by searches of subjects, themes, and influences, and much more could be done with it if more content and better macro functions were to be added. I doubt that you will be able to decide whether the Genealogy is a resource or merely a distraction for your interests without seeing it first hand on a computer screen, preferably one having Imax proportions.

Beyond the practical matters above, to speak out about systemicity on its merits is not politically correct in this mercenary age of chopping and hacking, yet even our current pathologies are systemic in their origins and in their persistence. As much as I liked Richard Coren personally, and as much as I agree with his attention to what you call "the right physical things," I fault him as you do for not helping us very much to get what he is saying, partly because I doubt that he got what he was saying. For my part, I interpret his material as pointing to the developmental threshold where human actions will have more influence on day-to-day evolution than "nature" does. Of course, Mother Nature always bats cleanup and has the last word via apocalypse and by creating vacancies without naming successors, but in the interim, cultures alienated from the natural in made-to-order "brave new worlds" may carry on, though I hesitate to say "thrive." Stuart Kauffman has a lot to say about evolutionary tendencies, e.g., in his book Investigations, as does Stan Salthe in his Development and Evolution, but I find neither approach satisfying because in different ways each fails to attend to the high orders of cybernation inherent in systemicity, thus missing the pivotal core of what goes on. Someone needs to try again with topology before morphology and dynamics before stasis and cores before foundations and complementarity/supplementarity before competition/cooperation and the torus before the sphere, and all that. Each stirring is the genesis of an provisional invariance, however relative and temporary. The eddy is the entity at every level of discourse, as your own work in turbulence must surely have confirmed. As the extended Genealogy tends to confirm, all thinking is systemic thinking, even when it tries to be otherwise, because every repeatable thought is a spinoff from the cybernating systemic stirrings of mentation, and every sustained enaction is a heterarchical gyre.

Most people who have dismissed systemic studies have done so on the premise that they are "impractical" and "non-pragmatic." This certainly is the case insofar as systemic theory has never been advanced to where it can support competent systemic practice. Nonetheless, epistemology always needs re-examination and education can be served by critical thinking of a systemic kind. The materials I highlighted in my old "Re-Framing Systemic Paradigms for the Art of Learning" paper was my attempt to make clear the role and the content of a substantial paradigm-shift toward truly systemic conceptions, models, and metaphors. Also, I was inspired in 1995 by some personal consultations with Heinz von Foerster to gather materials of mine on the subject of "Construing Systemicity" (try to pronounce that three times in rapid succession), but the project stalled for several reasons and has never been completed. Because it is highly pictorial and ostensive in its nature, I do not apologize for showing it to people who might enjoy it. There are about 100 "finished" pages in it, mixed together arbitrarily with 250 sketchy pages. I have included a copy in PDF format on the enclosed CD for your amusement. I won't try to predict what images and captions will catch your attention, but I would say that you might find the quick review of the characteristic graphical signatures of a course change and its rates of change on p. 282 to be of some interest. As the philosophical wild-man Arthur M. Young suggested, a "developmental sigmoid" is traced by rate of change of a turning, whose own rate of change represents the cost of the development, and whose next derivative charts effectuation of controls. For Young (and old alike), the meanings attributable to derivatives of trends generally was: 0<sup>th</sup> position (place), 1<sup>st</sup> velocity (rate), 2<sup>nd</sup> acceleration (accumulation), 3<sup>rd</sup> jerk (control), 4<sup>th</sup> goal (intended place), 5<sup>th</sup> change of goal (indecision or deception), etc. As for the sigmoid and its many ramifications, it is clearly only part of a larger story, and it is important not to conflate all the phenomena which display it, in particular to avoid confusing a sigmoid of quantitative "growth" with a sigmoid of qualitative "development." More could be said, but mercifully I won't, except that systemology is about education first and foremost, at least until such time as it can be developed enough to offer a competent *applied philosophy*.

If you have read this far, you are either a very brave man or have some less flattering disorder. In any event, thanks for keeping in touch. I hope there is a way for your efforts to benefit from the rubble of mine.

Best regards,  
Don

## Publications, Presentations, and Related Materials

D.H. McNeil

- 1) "Adopting a System Release Discipline". Feature article in *Datamation*, January 1979.
- 2) "Stabilizing an MIS". Article in *MIS Quarterly*, Fall 1979.
- 3) "The Myth of Software Maintenance". Article in *ComputerWorld*, January 1981.
- 4) "Systemology: The Fundamentals of Systems Science"  
Masters Thesis in Social Systems Sciences, University of Pennsylvania, December 1981.
- 5) "A Challenge to Systems Philosophy"  
Conference Proceedings of the International Society for General Systems Research, 1984.
- 6) "Systemology"  
Conference Proceedings of the International Society for General Systems Research, 1984.
- 7) "A Conscience of Design"  
Conference Proceedings of the International Society for General Systems Research, 1988.
- 8) "A Context for Design"  
Presented to the Management Structures & Systems Organizational Design Seminar, 1989.
- 9) "A Systemological Approach to Hierarchy and Duality"  
*General Systems Yearbook: Proceedings and Preprints of Annual Meetings 1974-1992*  
edited by H.T. Odum, Chapter 22, pp. 307-314, 1994.  
(Also in Conference Proceedings of the International Society for Systems Sciences, 1989)
- 10) "Transcending the Gap Between the Natural and Human Sciences"  
Conference Proceedings of the International Society for Systems Sciences, 1989.
- 11) "Not Just Enough"  
Conference Proceedings of the International Society for Systems Sciences, 1990.
- 12) "A Meta-Disciplinary Conceptual Structure Based Upon Systemological Science"  
Conference Proceedings of the 2nd Canadian Conference on Foundations and Applications of General Science Theory, Toronto, 1990.
- 13) "The 'Problem' is the Problem"  
Conference Proceedings of the International Society for Systems Sciences, 1991.
- 14) "Ready for a General Theory of Systems: Brother, Can You Paradigm?"  
Conference Proceedings of the International Society for Systems Sciences, 1991.
- 15) "How Will Emergence Come Out?"  
Conference Proceedings of the International Society for Systems Sciences, 1991.
- 16) "A Systemological Terrain for Conceptual Maps"  
Conference Proceedings of the International Society for Systems Sciences, 1991.
- 17) "The Gap is Our Fault"  
Conference Proceedings of the International Society for Systems Sciences, 1991.
- 18) "Isomorphy in a Master Key"  
Conference Proceedings of the International Society for Systems Sciences, 1991.
- 19) "Making a Constitutional Convention Unconventional"  
Conference Proceedings of the International Society for Systems Sciences, 1991.
- 20) "The Principia Prospect"  
Presented at the First Principia Cybernetica Seminar, Brussels, Belgium, 1991.
- 21) "The Truth About Systems"  
Conference Proceedings of the International Society for Systems Sciences, 1992.
- 22) An Introduction to General Systemology. Unpublished book draft, 1992 - 1993.
- 23) "Planning and Managing the Evolutionary Development of Computer Software"  
(Unpublished teaching notes, 1979 updated 1983 and 1989).
- 24) "Ethical Derangement and Conscience as a System"  
Conference Proceedings of the International Society for Systems Sciences, 1993.
- 25) "Architectural Criteria for a General Theory of Systems"  
Conference Proceedings of the International Society for Systems Sciences, 1993.

- 26) "Mapping into Perspective the Systemic Concepts of a Tree of Knowledge"  
Conference Proceedings of the 3rd Canadian Conference on Foundations and  
Applications of General Science Theory, Toronto, 1993.
- 27) "On the Future of the ISSS". Prepared for a Conference on the Future of the ISSS,  
October 1993.
- 28) "Re-framing Systemic Paradigms for the Art of Learning".  
Presented at the American Society for Cybernetics Conference on  
"Cybernetics in the Art of Learning", November 1993.
- 29) "A General System for General System Theory". Unpublished paper, October 1993.
- 30) "Systems on Purpose"  
Conference Proceedings of the International Society for Systems Sciences, 1994.
- 31) "A Survey of Applied Systemology".  
John Wiley: Systems Research, Vol. 12 No. 2, pp 133-145, 1995.  
(Also in Conference Proceedings of the International Society for Systems Sciences, 1994.)
- 32) "What's Wrong with this Picture? Towards a Systemological Philosophy of Science with  
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- 33) "Applied Philosophical Systems for the Future".  
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- 34) "Re-cognizing the Topology of Systems". In General Systems Theory — Approaches and  
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for General Systems Studies, Slippery Rock, PA, July 1995.
- 35) "Re-framing Systemic Paradigms for the Art of Learning."  
Gordon and Breach: World Futures, Vol. 46, pp. 23-45, 1996.  
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November 1993.)
- 36) Construing Systemicity: An Illustrated Sampler. Book draft, September 1995.
- 37) "It's NOT Just That Simple! Grasping for a Systemic Paradigm We Can Live With".  
Unpublished paper, June 1995.
- 38) "On the Topology of Uncertainty" (co-authored with Vladimir Dimitrov).  
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Physica-Verlag, New York. (Also in Proceedings of the Fuzzy Logic and Management of  
Complexity conference, Sydney, Australia, January 1996.
- 39) "On the Union of Complements" (co-authored with Gyuri G. Jaros).  
Conference Proceedings of the Budapest meeting of the International Society for Systems  
Sciences, 1996.
- 40) "Construing Systemicity 101" (1996, 1999) unpublished paper intended for the Australian  
Systems Conference.
- 41) "A Context for Designing," (1989, 1999) unpublished paper revised for Bela Banathy's  
Fuschl Conference of 1996.
- 42) "What's Going On with the Topology of Recursion?" for SEED Journal (Semiotics,  
Evolution, Energy, and Development), Vol. 4, No. 1, March 2004 (on web).