

WN *Source*

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‘Hot 5 and 15’ texts and #1 people





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Access September 2005 Public Health Nutrition ‘Choices’ section here
Access April 2012 Rio 2012 vision for the future 14 contributions here
Access May 2012 Rio 2012 vision for the future 15 contributions here

Editor’s note

For some time now *WN* has in each issue been carrying the *Inspiration* series, in which authors celebrate the work of a person or group they greatly admire in the field of public health and nutrition, with booklists. Examples are Claus Leitzmann on the authors of *Limits to Growth*, Barrie Margetts on David Barker, Geoffrey Cannon on Rudolf Virchow, Jane Kramer on Claudia Roden, and Annelies Allain on Halfdan Mahler. Here we introduce *Source*, an alternative occasional series. Here authors will list the texts that most inspire and guide them in their work, with reasons for their choice, and an indication of their vision now and for the future. The lists and comments can be of special value to colleagues, especially those early in their careers. The lists and the reasons for the choices can also be useful to those who develop curricula for MSc and other courses.



Hélène Delisle, Barrie Margetts, Tony McMichael, Barry Popkin, Ricardo Uauy, Mark Wahlqvist
New Nutrition workshop participants and their 'Top 5' choices of sources of inspiration (see Box 1)

What written work most inspires us? Who are the writers who guide us? Who sets the examples for thought and action? What is our vision now and for the future?

This is the first of an occasional *WN* series designed to answer such questions. Some have already been addressed, including by leaders of the public health, nutrition and allied professions pictured above, as a product of a three-day workshop meeting held in Giessen, Germany nine years ago, of which one of us (CL) was host – access the special issue of *Public Health Nutrition* section on sources of inspiration above. Visions for now and the future, including guidance to writers, books, and other sources of inspiration, have also been published in *WN* in April and May 2012, on the occasion of the *World Nutrition Rio2012* conference – also access these above.

The purpose of the Giessen meeting was to discuss and agree *The Giessen Declaration* on the definition, principles, scope, nature and purpose of nutrition as taught and practiced now and in the foreseeable future. This was done. The key agreement of the meeting and later discussions was that nutrition is an environmental, political, economic and social as well as a biological and behavioural discipline. This was a guiding principle of the *Rio2012* conference and now is so generally accepted as to seem common sense. The other product of the Giessen meeting was the special issue of *Public Health Nutrit*ion mentioned above of which we were guest editors, with its section on 'Sources'. For this, participants were asked to

> Recommend fifteen sources that have most influenced their own understanding of the nature and scope of nutrition science. These could be books, textbooks, reports, major articles or other sources, all of which have been influential and also are recommended now as a further way to discern the 'big picture' of nutrition science and food and nutrition policy….Authors were asked to list their ´top 5´ and their ´next 10' sources.

Our impression at the time and afterwards was that everybody felt the project was worthwhile. Everybody saw the point of a uniform approach. The lists are windows through which can be discerned the beliefs and values that drive the work of the contributors, as citizens as well as professionals. They give insight into the core beliefs of the participants – where they are 'coming from'. Here below are eight examples, of which the final two are ours. These 'top 5' lists are not in rank order but alphabetical order of last names.

Box 1

Six 'Top 5' sources from *New Nutrition* participants

Helene Delisle
WHO collaborating centre, University of Montréal

David Barker. *Mothers, Babies and Disease in Later Life*
Alan Berg. *The Nutrition Factor. Its Role in National Development*
Josué de Castro. *The Geography of Hunger*
Susan George. *Jusqu'au Cou. Enquête sur la Dette du Tiers-Monde*
Amartya Sen. *Development as Freedom*

Barrie Margetts
Association president. At that time, editor of *Public Health Nutrition*

Andreas Fuglesang. *About Understanding...Cross-Cultural Communications*
Susan George. *How the Other Half Dies. The Real Reasons for World Hunger*
Frances Moore Lappé, Joseph Collins. *Food First: Beyond the Myth of Scarcity*
Michael Lipton. *Why Poor People Stay Poor*
Karl Popper. *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*

Tony McMichael
Australian National University

Luigi Cavalli-Sforza, Francesco Cavalli-Sforza. *The Great Human Diaspora*
Jared Diamond. *Guns, Germs and Steel*
Stephen Jones (*et al, ed*). *Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Human Evolution*
William McNeill. *Plagues and Peoples*
Stephen Stearns (*ed*). *Evolution in Health and Disease*

Barry Popkin
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

S Boyd Eaton, Marjorie Shostak, Melvin Konner. *The Paleolithic Prescription*
Frantz Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth*
Ivan Illich. *Limits to Medicine: The Expropriation of Health*
Theodore Schultz (*ed*). *Economics of the Family. Marriage, Children and Human Capital*
Theodore Schultz. *Transforming Traditional Agriculture.*

Ricardo Uauy
President, International Union of Nutritional Sciences, 2005-2009

Michael Crawford, David Marsh. *The Driving Force*
IHGSC. *Initial Sequencing and Analysis of the Human Genome*
Francis Moore Lappé, Joseph Collins *et al*. *World Hunger: Twelve Myths*
Leonardo Mata. *The Children of Santa María Cauqué*
Geoffrey Rose. *The Strategy of Preventive Medicine*

Mark Wahlqvist
President, International Union of Nutritional Sciences, 2001-2005

Auden WH *et al*. *I Believe. Personal Philosophies of 23 Eminent Men & Women of Our Time*
Peter Farb, George Armelagos. *Consuming Passions. The Anthropology of Eating*
Kenneth Kiple, Kriemhild Ornelas (*eds*). *The Cambridge World History of Food*
Thomas Kuhn. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*
Master Sun-tzu. *The Art of War*

Box 2

Two more 'Top 5'sources

Geoffrey Cannon
University of São Paulo. At that time, World Cancer Research Fund International

Mike Davis. *Late Victorian Holocausts. El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World*
Jack Drummond, Ann Wilbraham. *The Englishman's Food. Five Centuries of English Diet*
Sigfried Giedion. *Mechanization Takes Command. A Contribution to Anonymous History*
Tony McMichael. *Human Frontiers, Environments and Disease*
Hugh Trowell, Denis Burkitt (eds). *Western Diseases. Their Emergence and Prevention*

Claus Leitzmann
Convenor, Giessen workshop. Justus-Liebig University, Giessen, Germany

Alan Berg. *The Nutrition Factor. Its Role in National Development*
Geoffrey Cannon. *The Politics of Food*
Fritjof Capra. *The Turning Point*
Werner Kollath *Die Ordnung Unserer Nahrung*
Colin Tudge. *The Famine Business*

What impressed us and colleagues about the 'Top 5' lists, as you can see from the six examples shown above, and then the our two immediately above, is partly that they were almost all books. But more than that, these are mostly radical and especially concerned with poverty, often in the form of testimonies on behalf of impoverished and dispossessed populations. This seems to be the conscience of professionals committed to public health and nurition speaking out.

Overall, we were fascinated to discover which turned out to the 'top book' and the 'top author' (mentioned most times, from all 15 choices, not just the 'Top 5'). The book 'winner' from the choices most often made, which included books by Alan Berg, John Boyd Orr, Denis Burkitt (usually with Hugh Trowell), Jared Diamond, Susan George, Ivan Illich, Francis Moore Lappé, Marion Nestle and Amartya Sen, (Tony McMichael, Colin Tudge and Geoffrey Cannon were discounted, as Giessen participants) was *Western Diseases: Their Emergence and Prevention,* devised and edited by Hugh Trowell and Denis Burkitt, with many distinguished contributors. The author 'winner' was *Susan George*. A frequent comment was that all her work is illuminating.



Alan Berg, Francis Moore Lappé, Denis Burkitt, Jared Diamond, Ivan Illich, Susan George, and Amartya Sen. Seven of the New Nutrition 'top' authors and documents in 2005. Among those eligible, John Boyd Orr, Hugh Trowell and Marion Nestle, and their books, were also chosen

The lists and the authors chosen are not fully representative. The 'top 5 and 10' lists are by participants from the Americas, Australia and Europe. The participants were selected on the basis of having a broad view of nutrition. Practical considerations, such as budget for travel, meant that most came from Europe. Almost all choices were of books written in English. Few contributors made many choices of sources written before 1950, Tim Lang and Klaus Meyer-Abich being exceptions.

The whole list has been of great benefit to us, and one of us (GC) has a copy of Leonardo Mata's vastly important study chosen by Ricardo Uauy on his desk now, signed by the author. For colleagues wanting to make the acquaintance of compilers of very best sources, the lists are great ways to start a first conversation.

Our new proposal

So here and now we propose that this initiative be continued, as a collective guide to the next period identified as of 'sustainable development', between 2015 and let's say 2030 and beyond. The 'rules of the game' for the *Public Health Nutrition* special issue worked well. We invite continued participation. The rapidly changing and emerging global circumstances that bear on nutrition as taught and practiced, and on its translation into what need to be rational policies and effective actions, make this exercise much more than 'academic'. Colleagues need to know what to read and who to trust. So do policy-makers – including those who are *WN* readers. The sources selected do not need to be recent – some texts are eternal, although we suggest that most choices should address the times in which we live now.

In guiding the choices of others, we suggest that those making selections should usually prefer sources that they themselves frequently use. Sources known to be important but which are not often consulted should, we suggest, be chosen only occasionally. The quality of the lists is improved by being personal and in this way giving a sense of the person making the selection. We make four emphases.

- Range. The list should be of sources considered to be the most valuable to the teaching and practice of nutrition now, but there is no requirement that these be from what is perhaps usually thought of as the public health or nutrition literature, as is evident from the lists above.
- Availability. The sources need to be written and published work, and of any type, including reports and papers. If any choice is of a source that is not in print or available on-line, and if it is possible to guide readers to the source, this is strongly encouraged but is not necessary.
- Time. As already indicated, there is no need for the source to have been first published recently. Thus two *New Nutrition Science* participants (Klaus Meyer-

Abich and Esté Vorster) chose the Judeo-Christian *Bible*, and one (Mark Wahlqvist, as shown above) chose Master Sun-tzu's *The Art of War*.

- Relevance. We wish to move away from notions like 'All-Time Greats'. Instead, we wish to encourage lists of sources considered to be of special relevance to the special period of history in which we live now, as guides to knowledge, policy and action in and for the years 2015-2030 and thereafter.

No doubt many if not most choices will be from the public health and nutrition literature, but as said above, this is not required. Nor need the choice be 'scientific' or even factual – as well as tracts, manifestos, mission statements and such-like, novels and even poems and inscriptions are all allowed. Thus for the *PHN* special issue, Tim Lang chose Upton Sinclair's 1906 *The Jungle*, and Colin Tudge chose William Cobbett's 1822 *Cottage Economy*.

It is not allowed to include your own work. To be more precise, the exclusion is of any source, including book, report, book chapter or paper of which you are named lead or co-author, or for which you were principally responsible as commissioner, editor or publisher. A source of which you are a contributing author, named or not, is allowed, but your own involvement should be stated. We make seven additions to the rules, asking also for the following choices.

- Source. Among the 'top 5' sources, we now also ask for the number 1 text, from any time in history until now. This may cause agonised inner debate!
- Author. Similarly, the number 1 author. This may or may not be the author of the number 1 document.
- Champion. The person now active who can most help to transform the world system, as this affects public health and nutrition.
- Leader. The person now active within the relevant professions, preferably well-known to you, whose work is most relevant to nutrition and public health.
- Young leader. As above, except that the person should now be early in their career, under or around the age of 30.
- Reasons. A one-paragraph description of and reasons for each choice to be given. This can include links to supporting or illuminating documents.
- Length. The overall contribution including all the items mentioned above should be more than 2,000 words and less than 4,000 words.

We also make one suggestion and one tip, based on experience. The tip is that participants do not ruminate but complete the task quickly, ideally in one sitting, with a second session for revision. The suggestion is always to bear in mind the writing and the authors that have made the deepest and most enduring impact on your own thinking and practice, and that you might specify at the beginning of conference presentations as especially influential, as one of us (GC) often does.

Introduction

Geoffrey Cannon writes: Here now then follow my own selections, made in mid-2014. Having done this once before, and now with my co-author Claus Leitzmann having tweaked the rules and guidance, I am still finding the prospect rather excruciating. Must I? … Yes, I must. But what counts as relevant? … That is for me to decide. Can I make choices of sources that I have not read, but which I know are important? … No, this is forbidden. Can I choose sources that I know to be super-important, but which I rarely consult? Only sparingly, and I must not make a choice of some very brainy source in order to awe the reader. The format allows for sources not in the list to be mentioned. Can I break the rules? No. (Thus, Barry Popkin listing the same author twice was an oversight).

Can I interpret the rules? Well yes, of course. In this respect, a decision I took in 2005 I take again now. This is to tend not to make choices, especially within the 'Top 5' series and the final number 1 choices, that I feel are liable to be made by others. For instance, left to myself I might choose Susan George as number 1 author, especially these days when the mighty power of transnational corporations is so much more evident. But I feel I can rely on others to boost her, as they did in 2005.

So my own bias within the rules is to tend to prefer sources that I guess will not figure prominently in other lists, and to favour my own areas of academic training, professional experience, and special interests. It also feels right that most choices should be of different types – like, one on food, one on nutrition, one on the roots of malnutrition, one biography, one work of philosophy, one reference book, and so on. My own iron rule is that any text chosen must be well-written.

The Top 5

Alan Davidson. *The Oxford Companion to Food*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. Awesome. Over 1,000 pages, arranged as an encyclopedia, a work of staggering erudition that took its retired British diplomat author, one of the founders of the annual *Oxford Symposium*, over 20 years to compile, with the help of many devoted friends and colleagues, perhaps above all Tom Jaine. It combines history, geography, botany, gastronomy, biography, with knowledge of chemistry, metabolism and nutrition. As the one indispensible encyclopaedia, some people may choose the huge 2,150 large format double-column *Cambridge World History of Food,* with its vast number of authors whose contributions vary from wonderful to laborious, as Mark Wahlqvist did (see above). But I prefer Alan Davidson's flair and wit, and puffing of his favourite foods, starting with fish. Also chosen in 2005, not as one of the 'top 5'.

Mike Davis. *Late Victorian Holocausts. El Niño Famines and the Creation of the Third World.* London: Verso, 2001. If we cannot discern reality we are wandering. Mike Davis leads us to understand. what is going on in the world now. Thus, the perennial crisis of food insecurity, deficiency and starvation in Asia and Africa can be addressed effectively only after the origins of immiseration in what has been termed 'the underdeveloped world' or 'the Third World' are understood – and also when we realise that history is now repeating itself. Its meticulous analysis and compelling conclusions are now all the more an essential guide to what goes down in the world, with indications of what is to be done. A gripping story-teller, and a brilliant writer. Also chosen in 2005. *See my column in the May issue of WN*

Sigfried Giedion. *Mechanization Takes Command. A Contribution to Anonymous History.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1948. The thesis of this amazing book is that technology determines human affairs and the human condition, and thus shapes the nature of civilisations. It is a 750-page large-format anatomy in particular of the Machine Age of the 19th century. Includes a 125 page section on the transformation of farming and of biscuit and bread-making, and of 'the mechanisation of death' – great cities served by slaughterhouses constructed as vast disassembly lines that then morphed into the automobile assembly lines devised by Henry Ford. For me it proves that supply determines demand. Full of illustrations. Sigfried Giedion as an architect and thinker was a friend of Walter Gropius and James Joyce, and strongly influenced Marshall McLuhan. Also chosen in 2005.

Eduardo Galeano. *The Open Veins of Latin America. Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent. Twenty-Fifth Edition.* New York: Monthly Review Press, 1997. First published in Spanish, 1971. The foreword by Isabel Allende is an impassioned letter of devotion to the author. It passes the basic test of being browsed, read, referred to, marked with a hundred stickies, given to friends. With his *Memory of Fire* trilogy, it is now a set text in his native Uruguay and elsewhere in Latin America, and should be read, marked and inwardly digested by everybody with an interest in the way of the world. It shows why nutrition is part of public health and why public health is part of the totality of human affairs within the living and physical world and the biosphere.

Ministry of Health, Brazil. *Dietary Guide for the Brazilian population.* Draft subject to revision after public consultation. Brasília: *Ministerio da Saúde*, 2014. The first dietary guidelines to be based on explicit stated principles, to define health as including well-being in all its aspects, body, mind, heart and soul, and to address family, social, economic and environmental as well as personal aspects of nutrition and nourishment. Its recommendations, which focus on meals and the environment of eating with the family and in company, also take into account what people in Brazil actually eat. The whole document, with suitable adaptations, will work worldwide. (I am a member of the team at the University of Sao Paulo responsible to the Ministry for drafting the guidelines). *Access a preliminary English translation here.*

The next 10

Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin. *The Physiology of Taste. Or, Meditations on Transcendental Gastronomy*. Translated with notes by MFK Fisher. Washington DC: Counterpoint, 1949. First published in French, 1825. A common reaction of those who come across this masterpiece of almost 200 years ago, translated plus notes written with fire and bite, is cries of wonder. Perhaps everybody knows that here is the source of 'The fate of nations is determined by what they eat'. And such anecdotes! And such wise sayings! Thus here in 'On Obesity', Meditation 21, the original account of why refined sugars and starches make you fat. 'Meat-eating animals never get fat (think of the wolves, jackals, birds of prey, crows, etc)… All animals that live on farinaceous foods grow fat whether they will or no. Man follows the common rule. Starch produces this effect more quickly and surely when it is combined with sugar'. The Professor, as his illustrious translator calls him, is the inspiration for John Yudkin, Robert Atkins, Gary Taubes, Robert Lustig, and the rest.

William Brock. *Justus von Liebig. The Chemical Gatekeeper*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. With special thanks to my dear colleague and co-author Claus Leitzmann for bringing us to Giessen and the Museum housing Justus von Liebig's laboratory and lecture room, and for giving me this book, the one biography here. Von Liebig more or less devised modern nutrition as a biochemical discipline, and gained enormous influence by stressing protein, and by inventing what was in effect plant, animal and human artificial fertiliser, including baby formula. His influence on public affairs in his day was as great as that of Louis Pasteur a generation later, and he is less well known now only because of the eclipse of German science and language as one of the various catastrophic results of the First World War.

Paul Farmer. *Pathologies of Power. Health, Human Rights, and the War on the Poor*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005. A professor at Harvard, Paul Farmer has been based in Haiti since the late 1980s, and now in Rwanda. His life's work includes proving that in all settings universal basic primary health care is feasible as well as being a human right and a duty of governments. Adequate food and decent nutrition springs from this. *Partners in Health*, of which he is co-founder, works in support of some of the most impoverished and dispossessed communities on earth. His story is told vividly by Tracy Kidder in *Mountains Beyond Mountains* (New York: Random House, 2003). An admirer of Eduardo Galeano and of Liberation Theology, he identifies the reality of impoverishment as 'structural violence'. He has powerful supporters. Jim Yong Kim his long-time colleague and friend at Harvard, also a co-founder of Partners in Health, is now president of the World Bank.

Paul Feyerabend. *Farewell to Reason*. London: Verso, 1987. All disciplines need to be based on a set of explicitly stated principles, and all principles need to be reasoned

through ethically, and rationally and expressed clearly.This means that they must have a sound philosophical basis. So to choose one text in this category, candidates are by Karl Popper, or Mary Midgley, or a relevant treatise of Aristotle – who can be a good read – or Chuang Tsu or Lao Tsu. But the blurb of *Farewell to Reason* explains my choice. It is 'a vigorous challenge to the scientific rationalism that underlies Western ideals of "progress" and "development", whose damaging social and environmental consequences are now widely recognised'. And in the first essay 'Notes on Relativism': 'This world is not a static entity populated by thinking ants who, crawling over its crevices, gradually discover its features without affecting them in any way… It was once a world full of gods; it then became a drab material world, and it will hopefully change [so that] matter and life, thought and feelings, innovation and tradition collaborate for the benefit of all'. Wonderful stuff. He socks it to us with such style.

Susan George. *Ill Fares the Land. Essays on Food, Hunger and Power*. London: Penguin, 1985. As said above, Susan George was the 'top author' choice when we began this initiative in 2005. My advice is to read and mark anything and everything by Susan George. As a founder of The Transnational Institute and a TNI Fellow since 1974, she has been studying world governance for close on half a century now, and she knows where hundreds of millions of bodies are buried. This is a hard choice, because the much younger Naomi Klein's 700 page savage and gripping analysis *The Shock Doctrine* (New York: Picador, 2007), is in the same category, and also exposes how the Chicago School of monetarists have succeeded in destroying public goods in many countries, is better known. *How the Other Half Dies* chosen in 2005.

Tony McMichael. *Planetary Overload. Global Environmental Change and the Health of the Human Species*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. The category here includes Paul Ehrlich, James Lovelock, Tim Flannery, and earlier seers such as Henry David Thoreau or William Morris. Most people might pick Jared Diamond's *Collapse*. My own second choice is *The Way*, by founder-publisher and editor of *The Ecologist* Edward Goldsmith. My firm first choice is made because Tony McMichael combines immense scholarship with a awesome survey of 'the big picture'. His knowledge and wisdom is all about the great crisis of the Anthropocene, this new age in which human overuse and abuse of the living and physical world is now threatening the fate of our species and the planet. Here is one insight. 'Our 1400cc brain, with its convoluted frontal lobes dedicated to abstract thought, is 3-4 times larger and more complex in its 'higher-level' cerebral wiring than are the brains of early hominids. Yet it is still a brain that has evolved for dealing with the here-and-now of individual and group survival… as a species, we need to think more imaginatively and more providently about the world's – and our – future'. If I had worked with Tony more closely I sense he would be my choice as number 1 leader. Also chosen in 2005.

Thomas Piketty. *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Belknap Press, 2014. 'Jane Austen and Honoré de Balzac…. were intimately acquainted with the hierarchy

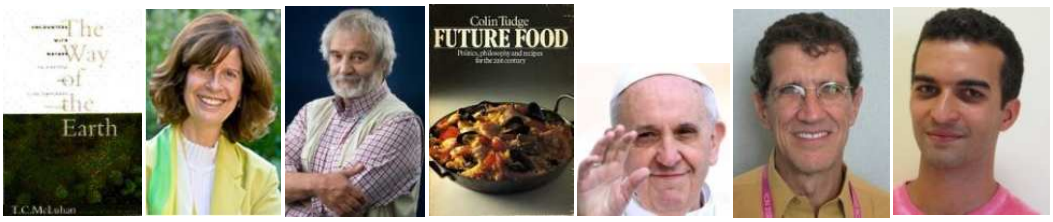
of wealth in their respective societies. They grasped the hidden contours of wealth and its inevitable implications for the lives of men and women… Indeed, the distribution of wealth is too important a subject to be left to economists, sociologists, historians and philosophers. It is of interest to everyone, and that is a good thing… Democracy will never be supplanted by a republic of experts – and that is a very good thing'. At last, a great book on equity written as well as ever Adam Smith, John Maynard Keynes and John Kenneth Galbraith could write, and this here for our times now. The friend who wrote urging me to read *Capital* (this one) said drily that the word 'wealth' in the quotation above could be replaced by 'health'.

Michael Pollan. *Food Rules. An Eater's Manual.* London: Penguin, 2009. It is tempting to choose one of Michael Pollan's full size books – *The Omnivore's Dilemma* with its coruscating account of corn farming in the US, or *In Defense of Food,* in which he demolishes the notion that food should be seen in terms of its chemical constituents. But this is the one. It comes close to being all you need to know about personal food, nutrition and health, if you live in the US or a country like it. Its 64 tips start with a pithy motto, developed with his *New York Times* readers and followers. One of my favourites is 'Don't eat breakfast cereals that change the colour of the milk'. Another; 'Eat animals that have themselves eaten well'. Another 'Eat only foods that will eventually rot' (which I reduce to 'Good food goes bad'). See the three commentaries in *WN* in *April*, and also in *May*, and also in *June-July 2013.*

Silvestre Silva (photographer), Helena Tassara (writer). *Frutas no Brasil* . São Paulo: Nobel, 2001. The first Europeans in Brazil were astounded by the beauty, abundance and taste of the hundreds of species and varieties of tropical fruits enjoyed by the native peoples. What sadly is no less astounding is the neglect of this heritage in Brazilian food culture, except at breakfast and from the *lanchonete* snack and juice bars in most shopping streets. For everybody who does not visit the tropical North of Brazil, this big format book with glorious pictures and illuminating text will show you its wonders and may induce you to come and stay a while. Access Silvestre Silva and add '*frutas*' and you will see what I mean.

Colin Tudge. *So Shall We Reap*. London: Allen Lane, 2003. Biblical. A deeply learned, brilliantly written, sustained hymn of hate against corporate agribusiness, the product of 40 years of study, travelling, journalism, broadcasting, authorship and campaigning by this primarily sunny and optimistic sage. Like other writers chosen here, Colin Tudge has mastered and integrated several disciplines, including botany, zoology, gastronomy, agronomy, always guided by principles of the evolution of all living things in their environments. For me he is the Great Tudge, and I may have misled you so far, because this big book is primarily positive. He explains why traditional farming as practiced for thousands of years can and must feed the 9 or 10 billion, with plenty to spare. See his two commentaries in *WN* in *June-July* and *August September 2013.*

The Number 1s



Choices above all. The text: The Way of the Earth by Teri McLuhan. The author: Colin Tudge. The champion: Pope Francis. The leader: Carlos Monteiro. The young leader: Thiago Hérick de Sá

A guiding principle has been to choose people I know well, when I can. This has helped me see who I trust, what trust is, and what and who else I can trust.

Number 1 text

TC McLuhan. *The Way of the Earth. Encounters with Nature in Ancient and Contemporary Thought*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993.

My own rule is that this be by somebody now alive and active. This is my 'desert island' choice – if I had access to only one text relevant to public health and nutrition which I could read, mark and digest endlessly, what would this be. Well, I will assume that the island is not a desert and so I do not have to choose a manual on which wild foods will not kill me. As with Teri McLuhan's other books, starting with her *Touch the Earth* (New York: Outerbridge and Dienstfrey, 1971), *The Way of the Earth* is a text largely of thoroughly researched quotations put in context. Its meditations on nature reflect on nourishment of body, mind, heart and soul. A Number 1 book and its author should ideally be lovely in all ways. So these are.

Number 1 author

Colin Tudge

In these times I return to him again and again. He has a special understanding of and respect for agriculture, evolution and gastronomy, and therefore of the right relationships between the land, the living world, and the planet. He is an immensely learned scholar and a sparkling writer, an endless source of knowledge and understanding. He is another author of whom I can say 'read his books and other writing and his blogs, everything, it's all there'. *Future Food*, his 1980 book shown above, is outstanding after 35 years. Since it is allowed to mention other authors, some more specialised, also to be recommended to policy-makers and colleagues, candidates for a Top 10 list (but not all for a Top 5) here are twelve more in alphabetical order. Essential guides for our times include Manuel Castells, Tim Flannery, Tony McMichael. Broader, including authors no longer alive, are Alexander von Humboldt, Lynn Margulis, Mary Midgley. Ideological guides include Naomi Klein, Pablo Neruda, Howard Zinn. Bubbling under are authors who see part, much or most of the picture such as Alan Davidson, Michael Pollan, Claudia Roden.

Number 1 champion

Pope Francis I

The rules say this person must be active now. No, I don't know Jorge Mario Bergoglio, the first pope from the global South, who as a senior prelate continued to minister to the slum-dwellers of Buenos Aires. Maybe like you though, I feel that I do. A pope who lives in a hotel, answers the telephone, gives a ride in the pope-mobile to an old buddy he sees in the crowd, who celebrates Liberation Theology and its philosopher Leonardo Boff, and who is precise and pointed in his rejection of casino capitalism, is a light shining in our world. He is the most recent *Time* magazine *Person of the Year*, and is identified by *Forbes* magazine as the world's fourth most influential living person, after the leaders of Russia, the USA and China. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, he says: 'Today everything comes under the laws of competition and the survival of the fittest, where the powerful feed upon the powerless…The worship of the golden calf has returned in a new and ruthless guise in the idolatry of money and the dictatorship of an impersonal economy lacking a truly human purpose… In many countries globalisation has meant a hastened deterioration of cultural roots and the invasion of ways of thinking and acting proper to other cultures which are economically advanced but ethically debilitated'. If the way the world works now is transformed, as it must be, Pope Francis will be a reason why.

Number 1 leader

Carlos Monteiro

Again I follow the rule that this person must be active now. At around the age when most academics in Brazil retire, Carlos stepped out on a very big adventure. This is to prove that the big issue with nutrition, food and health is not nutrients, and is not foods, so much as what is done to food before we acquire and consume it. That is to say, the big issue is food processing, now the main driving force of the world's dominant food system. He is listed as one of the most influential Brazilians, is a distinguished nutritional epidemiologist, and is a UN agency senior advisor. But I would not single him out just for reasons like this. His own summary of his beliefs gives a better idea why. He says: 'I have two abiding commitments. One is to the independence and social responsibility of scientists. The other is to the health and welfare of the people…I learned them in the 1970s, at the time of Brazil's period of military dictatorship, when I worked as a young paediatrician in poor rural villages and urban slums in the state of São Paulo, and also in Porto Nacional, a small city in the backlands of what is now the Northern state of Tocantins. I learned that sustained protection and improvement of public health depends on a good understanding of the history, culture, resources and political regime of any country'. He is proud to promote young professionals who work in NUPENS, his department. He is committed to the development and expression of ideas and concepts. He is demanding, challenging, striving, courageous, imaginative and enthusiastic. He is the scientist who, with the team he has convened in Brazil and in other countries, above all can align nutrition and public health with the new world that now must arise.

Number 1 young leader

Thiago Hérick de Sá

Among the scintillating young people I work with, I have chosen somebody who is still a student. I first met Thiago in Carlos Monteiro's office. There was something about him. Carlos mentioned that he took initiatives that others would not dare to do. But that wasn't it. Later I realised. Thiago has an aura. This would be visible to someone more sensitive than me. We started to work together. He now contributes regularly to *WN*. He challenges what the journal does – a needed tonic. I moaned to him for not meeting a skype date and he politely confronted me. 'We live in different realities, G: 800 reais ($US 350) month on a PhD scholarship, living in an expensive city like SP and having to help my Mom and little brother, believe me, it is not affordable at all. I suggest you get a TIM mobile, it would cost 25 cents every time we contact each other. Do I like this situation? Absolutely not, but at the end of the day, that's the price I have to pay to be an exception in Brazil as a country guy from a poor family able to study, to graduate, to gain a PhD'. I was ashamed. Thiago comes from Porangatu, a small town in the north of the State of Goías. At school he won a succession of scholarships and started university age 16. He is going to be a star. No, he is a star. Remember it was me who said this in print first.

Status

Geoffrey Cannon states: I am a member of the team at the University of São Paulo convened by Carlos Monteiro. Heartfelt thanks to Claus Leitzmann. Renewed thanks to Barrie Margetts for enabling the September 2005 special issue of *Public Health Nutrition*. Thanks also to the colleagues whose lists are reprinted here *and to* everybody else who participated, in response to the Giessen meeting and the *World Nutrition Rio2012* conference.

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