

CENTER FOR REFLECTION ON THE SECOND LAW
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Affiliated with
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The central fact of life is life itself. We enjoy life. We live life. We are alive as a component of the dense living web which occupies the surface of the planet Earth. Life came to be more than three and a half billion years ago according to an analysis of some rocks recently found in Australia, and over that period has evolved into the stupendous, glorious phenomenon we see and reflect on and participate in and belong to. "Oh! God, how magnificent is thy work!"

That all life forms are closely related is beautifully proclaimed by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in The Phenomenon of Man, Book Two, Chapter 1, "The Advent of Life":

We have already called attention in this chapter to the curious fact that all molecules of living substances are asymmetrical in the same way, and contain precisely the same vitamins. Now, the more complex organisms become, the more evident becomes their inherent kinship. It manifests itself particularly in animals, in the identical solutions found for various problems of perception, nutrition and reproduction — everywhere we find vascular and nervous systems, everywhere some form of blood, everywhere gonads and everywhere eyes. It continues in the similarity of the methods employed by units for collecting together in higher organisms and becoming 'socialized' and finally it crops up again in the general laws of development ('ontogenesis' and 'phylogenesis') which give to the living world, considered as a whole, the coherence of a single upthrust.

We seek to convey here an understanding that life is a unity which all living organisms share. That all are dependent on all and that each is dependent on each. Life itself is what we all possess in common with each other and with all living things. We all depend on each other and every other thing that lives, from the tiniest to the largest, from the simplest to the most complex. We are not separate masters of the earth. We are participating, belonging, integral members of a process, a system which we need and which needs us.

The Earth and the earth process produced life, the biosphere, which is as integral to the earth as is the inner core, outer core, lower mantle, transition zone, upper mantle, crust and atmosphere. (Sunlight is also a basic component of earth and life). Teilhard identified the last integral and indispensable element, the noosphere, the ambience of thought and spirit, which attributes of the human are earth qualities and whose proper application is to understanding and nurturing the earth. The earth as primary producer of life, primary lawgiver, teacher, healer, true mother is now rightly seen as the human's principal and primary client.

Which gets us back to the fundamental fact that the human is the earth and is the earth become conscious of itself, and now becomes the custodian of the health and welfare of the earth. This concept springs out of Teilhardian thought as it is expressed by the Riverdale Center for Religious Research, whence comes the force which animates this center.

What has all this to do with reflection on the Second Law? Well, the earth process seems to proceed along two different paths. The Second Law says that all energy

ultimately becomes unavailable Entropy, and that all order ultimately becomes dis-orderly. On the other hand, Teilhard has enunciated what he calls the Law of Complexification which recognizes that all life forms evolve toward greater complexity. This is what Jacob Bronowski called Stratified Stability. "Evolution is the climbing of a ladder from simple to complex by steps, each of which is stable in itself."

Life then, involves Entropy and Evolution and what this Center aims at doing is to think about this and to get anybody we can to think about it. The creation of Entropy is counter to life. It diminishes the ability of the earth to support life and enhancement of life is good and the degradation of life is bad.

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Hazel Henderson is an economist, a futurist, an author, lecturer, consultant to the Congress on technology and economy, and member of advisory boards too numerous to list. E. F. Shumacher, author of Small Is Beautiful, was her friend. Her book Creating Alternative Futures, An End to Economics has become a classic work read and quoted nationwide. Her article "The Entropy State" is very pertinent to our way of thought.

At a time when the average citizen tends to feel more and more uneasily the weight of large bureaucracies — public or private — Hazel Henderson's clear-sighted exposition of the dangers of over-centralization and the advantages of operations conducted on a smaller and more human scale could not be more timely. Barbara Ward.

There are many cultural figures today who are 'far out', but Hazel Henderson is one of a small number who can take the ideas, visions and new paradigms and make them understood. She is a true transformer in more ways than one. William Irwin Thompson.

Mrs. Henderson is going to be in Raleigh on November 12th and 13th. She will be here primarily as a guest of NC State University, but this Center has arranged to capture her for a period during that time. We plan to engage her in informal discussion on the subject of alternative futures. In preparation for that session we are scheduling three meetings to discuss her work and how to think about alternative futures for North Carolina.

If you are interested, please write Jim Berry with your response to the following:

- Will you attend the session with Mrs. Henderson?
- Will you attend preparatory sessions to review Mrs. Henderson's book?
- Will you purchase a copy of her book? We have ordered ten copies.

Include any suggestions you may have.