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The last issue of this series sought to get a little closer to an understanding of what a new world-view might be. Some of the writers were named. What a "world-view" is is how we see ourselves; how we distinguish action as good or bad; how a child places itself in space and time. Thomas Berry has written an essay called The New Story which says that the critical element in perceptions as to right and wrong, good and bad, is an understanding of how the world got to be like it is. Where did we come from? How did we get here? What kind of meaning is there to life? How does one explain suffering, sin, death? It's all a matter of the story, he says, a matter of how values are identified and passed on. I tried to write a summary of The New Story, ending up with the enumeration of three values: Differentiation, Subjectivity, and Communion, a proper understanding of which may provide an entry into the new world-view.

What is under attack presently is the Cartesian world or the Newtonian paradigm. When the Scientific Age—Technological Age— was ushered in by Gallileo, and Francis Bacon and then boosted by Newton and Descartes the break away from what some call the Hermetic tradition occurred. Thomas Berry has a theory that the Scientific Age resulted from the terrified reaction of the Europeans to the plague, when the religious believing community fled to the prayer bench and the new rationalists to the microscope. The controlling belief came to be that the mysteries of nature could be penetrated and power over it asserted if one could reduce a structure to its component parts, analyze it chemically and mathematically and describe its workings. All things ultimately could be analyzed and the hostile earth brought under control, dominated and exploited. The earth was provided by God for the service of humans and had no rights which might withstand the human whim. What could not be measured and quantified was not really real. The repression of the unconscious was required. At the same time the Protestant Revolution got under way. The consequent rise of the work ethic and the belief that wealth was a sign of God's favor was established. The modern industrial state had been born!

"What", says the young person in the shade of the oak tree, "was the Hermetic Tradition swept out by Cartesianism, and what is so bad about Cartesianism, and what is all the urgency about finding a new world-view"? What was lost when the Hermetic Tradition was discarded was the sense of a divine presence in everything, a sort of pantheism, animism, a notion of sacred harmony. The pre-modern person living in the environment did not see himself as a separate entity but as part of. And God was part of, not separate from. A state of mind like that could never have perceived the world as hostile, could not have believed that God would be pleased to see the natural world manipulated and exploited. It was necessary to deGod nature in order to depersonalize it and then to make it subordinate; in order to see a tree as a stack of paper napkins. The shift in thinking that began in the sixteenth century was a necessary precondition to entry into the world of Adam Smith, mass production, high finance, world trade and the belief that technology has the answer to every problem, and that money is a synonym for worth.

The Cartesian view is now some four hundred years old and it is beginning to crumble. I state this with some assurance that I am right despite the fact that nearly every economist of standing seems still to believe that all distress will be relieved by following the Cartesian principle, by greater productivity, and that the way out of a recession is to make and consume more stuff. I feel like I am right because the contradictions seem to me to be more and more obvious. The "productivity myth", as Hazel Henderson calls it, is a runaway system. It equates to a cybernetic condition of positive feedback, a condition where growth calls for more growth. The faster you go the faster yet you must go.

Look at the road system. Once the capacity to layout the interstate system has been developed its continued use becomes necessary to economic health, for it has now become the principal occupation of a large and very powerful social political and economic force. All that heavy equipment must be in continuous use or its cost cannot be amortized out. Thus when the Congress decides to stimulate the economy it provides five cents for every gallon of gas to the roadbuilders. And the roadbuilders get out their machines. Their increased productivity is a result of bigger and better earth movers, and fewer and fewer people. And as soon as one road is done another must be started. Who among the economists, the planners, is pointing to a way out of that enigma. These giant machines are not needed for maintenance. They are needed for new construction. The entire economy, in the same way, is dependent on growth at an ever increasing rate. The disastrous consequences are: one, the earth cannot withstand the assault; and, two, the human population cannot survive an automated world. When I ask an economist about this the answer comes back something like: "History shows that every generation has been better off than the one that preceded it. New technology always discovers new modes of accomodating to conditions. Why should we sacrafice for future generations? They are going to be better off than we are anyway". You may not believe it but that is the answer I have got from established and respected people in the profession. They do not offer answers only a vague faith that the good fairy is going to come along and make things OK.

What is the new world-view that will replace the old one? It lies in a fog in the future but some of the principles may be found in the ecological movement. There are a large number of people who discover every day that the earth is the primary reality. The life systems, of air, soil, water, wind, sun, oceans, mountains, rivers, wetlands, forests, wildlife, plant life , and minerals prove more and more to be what matters. The human begins to appreciate the fact that we are all earthlings, products of the natural world, participators, members. We are not lords but dependents.

". . . it is my guess that preservation of the planet may be the best guideline for all our politics, the best context for all our encounters with Mind and Being. The health of the Planet, if it can be successfully defended against the continuing momentum of industrial socialism and capitalism, may thus be the ultimate safety valve in the emergence of a new consciousness. And it is only in such a world, I believe, that the Cartesian paradigm can be safely discarded, and human beings begin living the lives they were meant to live all along; their own". Morris Berman.

Planetary Preservation will be the new ethos.

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August 25 Discussion of the Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter. Father Charles
7:30 p.m. Mulholland, Clay Stalnaker and others to lead.

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Career Choices - We are assembling at the Center a file of profiles of persons who have chosen to live lives which do not destroy or exploit the earth or any of its life systems. This will be a service to young people facing up to a choice of career.