

CENTER FOR REFLECTION ON THE SECOND LAW  
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It is of primary importance, it seems to me, to win acceptance for a conclusion that human civilization is in a crisis condition. Fritjof Capra, physicist at UC Berkeley, wrote a book on that and called it The Turning Point. The opening sentence in the preface reads:

My professional interest during the 1970s has been the dramatic change of concepts and ideas that has occurred in physics during the first three decades of the century and that is still being elaborated in our current theories of matter. The new concepts in physics have brought about a profound change in our world view; from the mechanistic conception of Descartes and Newton to a holistic and ecological view, a view which I have found to be similar to the views of the mystics of all ages and traditions.

Capra goes on in the preface to state that the crises of inflation and poverty and unemployment and pollution and violence and crime are all facets of the one central crisis of perception:

We are trying to apply the concepts of an outdated world view to a reality that can no longer be understood in terms of these concepts. We live today in a globally interconnected world in which biological, psychological, social and environmental phenomena are all interdependent. To describe this world appropriately we need an ecological perspective which the Cartesian world view does not offer. . . . We need a new paradigm.

Capra is pleading throughout the book for a change in paradigm, in perception, and of course a principal theme of this Center and the Riverdale Center has been to urge exactly that. Therefore. . . .

The Center for Reflection on the Second Law and the Riverdale Center for Religious Research now announce a summer conference to be held at the Frank Porter Graham Conference Center, near Wadesboro, NC on July 13th, 14th, and 15th. It will begin with supper on the 13th and that will be followed by a talk and discussion. There will be three such periods on Saturday and two on Sunday. The FPG Center is on a farm out in the country near a small lake rich in bass and bream. There will be time for walking and reflection and for fishing.

The purpose of the conference is to bring to the attention of the people who come the cascade of opinion affirming what Fritjof Capra, Morris Berman, James Jones, Thomas Berry, Wendell Berry, Teilhard de Chardin, and literally hundreds of others are saying with all the power they can muster. Big changes in the way we perceive ourselves and the world are necessary and are in progress. Unless these changes result in the rejection of the world view that now guides activity in the West and the adoption of a world view which recognizes the central importance of the natural world to both physical and spiritual health, catastrophe is a near-time prospect. The seminar will be called The Reenchantment of the World after a book by that name by Morris Berman. A flyer is in preparation.

After supper on Friday, we will get under way with a talk by James W. Jones, Associate Professor of Religion at Rutgers University. Professor Jones will have the job of bringing home to us the fact that there really is a huge and growing number of observations on the part of many respected observers that the "Old Story" is coming to an end and a "New Story" is in formation. (Thomas Berry uses the term "Story" as his designator for world view, paradigm, perception, consciousness level, etc., etc.). Jones will make it clear, I believe, that the state the world is in is a direct result of the 'Story' that people

have been using to provide life purpose, to energize action, consecrate suffering, integrate knowledge, answer the questions of children, and provide guideposts for decision making. He will point out what is right and wrong about the old "story", and reflect on why it is necessary to move on into the next age, the solar age, the ecological age, into reenchantment; and will give some of his own ideas about what that might be like.

On Saturday morning, Thomas Berry will give the audience his vision of what an enchanted earth is meant to be. "Our contemporary world is awakening once again to the reality and wonder of the earth. Hardly anything is more important for the future. The human venture depends absolutely on this quality of awe and reverence and joy in the earth and all that lives and grows upon the earth; for the human is among these living things. As soon as the human is isolated from these currents of life and from the profound mood that these engender, then the most basic satisfactions of human existence are diminished, for all the products of his machines cannot evoke in the human that total commitment to life from the subconscious regions of being that is needed to sustain the life process and to carry it on into a hazardous future. How the human feels about himself and the earth process, these are questions of utmost urgency."

On Saturday afternoon, Dr. Albert J. Fritsch of Appalachia-Science in the Public Interest, Livingston, KY, will talk about his projects aimed at proving the practicality of simple living, of living by the efforts of one's own hands, of using what is available to make a decent life. "I will not make a prediction of what is going to be but of what could be if individuals and communities work together to create their own future. Some qualities of this creative activity must include: movement toward ecological sustainability; maximizing communication among communities; deemphasizing institutionalization; new outlets for work opportunities; emphasis on the use of renewable energy; a decentralized mode of governance. I will describe a model community."

On Saturday evening, Jones and Berry and Al Fritsch, if he can stay for it, will simulate a talk to a bright eighteen year old who wants guidance on how to make career choices. "If a student would listen and follow your advice what would you say to him/her?", is the question they will be asked to address.

On Sunday morning, Dr. Sally Humble, a high school teacher in Raleigh, will talk about the artist, particularly the poet, as interpreter of the natural world as purveyor of the true sense of joy to be found in the discovery of the wonders of creation and human participation in it.

During lunch, or soon after, Jones, Berry and Humble will conduct a conversation with the audience as to whether or not something important is happening, whether it has been identified and clarified at this conference, and whether there ought to be follow-up.

Get your reservations in. Costs for two days room and board will be something like \$60, and there will be a modest charge for the conference.

#### SECOND LAW DISCUSSION GROUP

7:30 PM  
May 31

Dr. Leslie Real, Zoologist and Philosopher will examine Rupert Sheldrake's new book A New Science of Life. This is described as the most controversial book to appear in a long time. It has split the scientific world. Sheldrake's theory describes an invisible "field" akin to the magnetic or gravitational field which gives shape and form to living things and organizes behaviour. All of you who believe there are more ways to know than through hard science ought to come.