

# “The Great Work – Our Way into the Future” by Thomas Berry

## Overview

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Themes	The Planetary Context		The Sociological Transformation			The Species-Level Change
	Our Contemporary Task	The Historical Background	A New Way of Knowing	How to Decide	End of an Era	
Chapters	<p>Introduction</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Great Work</li> <li>2. The Meadow Across the Creek</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. The Earth Story</li> <li>4. The North American Continent</li> <li>5. The Wild and The Sacred</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. The Viable Human</li> <li>7. The University</li> <li>8. Ecological Geography</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Ethics and Ecology</li> <li>10. The New Political Alignment</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. The Corporation Story</li> <li>12. The Extractive Economy</li> <li>13. The Petroleum Interval</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. Reinventing the Human</li> <li>15. The Dynamics of the Future</li> <li>16. The Fourfold Wisdom</li> <li>17. Moments of Grace</li> </ol>
Major Points	<p>The book is about: the human presence on planet Earth in the opening years of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.</p> <p>The Great Work now is to carry out the transition from a period of devastation of the Earth to a period when humans are present to the planet in a mutually beneficial manner.</p> <p>The Great Work of a people is the work of all the people.</p> <p>Whatever preserves and enhances this meadow in the natural cycles is good; whatever opposes it is not good.</p>	<p>Our great work has to do with a new understanding of planet Earth.</p> <p>Three commitments are basic: to observational science, to a developmental universe, to an inner self-organizing capacity.</p> <p>The historical and cultural accomplishments of the indigenous peoples of this continent are only now beginning to be appreciated and accepted into a general narrative of the human venture.</p> <p>To understand the human role in the functioning of the Earth we need to appreciate spontaneities that we associate with the wild.</p>	<p>We need to move from our human-centered to an earth-centered notion of reality and value.</p> <p>This comprehensive context of our thinking is important in any consideration of human affairs.</p> <p>The universe would become the primary university.</p> <p>The basic course in any college or university would be the story of the universe. This story can fulfill its role only if the universe is understood as having a psychic-spiritual as well as a physical-material aspect from the beginning.</p>	<p>The older tension in human affairs between conservative and liberal based on social orientation is being replaced with the tension between developers and ecologists based on orientation toward the natural world.</p> <p>So influential is the commercial-industrial order that our dominant professions and institutions are functioning in this context.</p> <p>The more ultimate question has to do with the soul of the future. .. The next generations need an inspiring vision of wonder.</p>	<p>The corporations have taken possession of human consciousness in order to evoke the deepest of psychic compulsions toward limitless consumption.</p> <p>An organic economy is an ever-renewing economy. An extractive economy is a terminal economy.</p> <p>The greatest of human discoveries in the future will be the discovery of human intimacy with all other modes of being on the planet.</p> <p>The story of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century will be the story of the terminal phase of petroleum.</p>	<p>The historical mission of our times is to reinvent the human – at the species level, with critical reflection, within the community of life-systems, in a time-developmental context, by means of story and shared dream experience.</p> <p>The evolutionary vision provides the most profound mystique of the universe.</p> <p>Guidance can come from: indigenous people, women, the classical traditions and science.</p> <p>The present is a historical and religious moment of grace.</p>
Excerpts On Pages	ix, x, xi, 1, 3, 4, 7, 10, 12, 15, 16, 20	21, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 33, 35, 36, 40, 47, 48, 54	56, 58, 70, 72, 77, 80, 82, 85, 86, 99	100, 104, 105, 106, 107, 109, 110, 113, 114, 116	117, 119, 121, 122, 127, 132, 134, 136, 138, 140, 149, 150, 157	159 - 162, 164 – 166, 168, 169, 174, 175, 176, 193, 195, 196, 201

