

« HOMELAND EARTH »

A MANIFESTO FOR PLANETARY SOLIDARITY



HOMELAND EARTH

TERRE PATRIE

This manifesto is the centrepiece of the campaign “Homeland Earth | Terre Patrie” initiated by the “Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution” (ASPR) in Stadtschlaining. It is inspired by the book of the same name by the great French sociologist and philosopher Edgar Morin, who will celebrate his 100th birthday this year – 2021 – and to whom crucial insights within this work are owed (Morin/Kern 1999). It is a proposal designed to be continuously discussed, enriched and improved upon as a “work in progress” during the 2021 campaign by all interested parties.

The concept of “Homeland Earth” does not merely entail stating an existing fact, but also defining a necessary goal: it is a matter of changing the existing unjust world order through diverse acts of global solidarity so that a new policy of coexistence can overcome the great challenges of humanity and create a good, sustainable life for all – in other words, that Homeland Earth is shaped in such a way that all people can actually feel at home.

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See: www.homelandearth.com

Imprint

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Time for reflection, time for change

Harder days are coming.
The loan of borrowed time
will be due on the horizon.
Ingeborg Bachmann

The global coronavirus pandemic and the consequent economic crisis have changed the world, even if only by making us more aware of the current state of the world. It is as if we all sense that major changes are underway, without knowing exactly what they will ultimately bring. For many, this triggers feelings of anxiety and defensiveness, denial of the problems at hand and a search for scapegoats. At the same time, however, there is also a sense of optimism in many people, brought about by the new experience that some things that seemed impossible have now suddenly become possible. Despair and hope go hand in hand.

We are now forced to put aside certain activities that we once took for granted. But we also have the opportunity to experience others more intensively and consciously. This can be a time of contemplation and reflection, and potentially also one of critical examination and revision of certain ways of thinking and living. Now is definitely the moment to adjust to harder times, but also to new possibilities and creative developments. In any case, we are coming to realise: we have been living on credit thus far. Not only have the richer countries and the richer classes within each country set up a life for themselves in which they thrive at the expense of those poorer than them. They have also borrowed from "System Earth", and all of humanity is now forced to repay these debts. The global environmental disaster is making itself drastically felt everywhere. However, not all nations and social classes are equally responsible for this, nor are they equally affected by it. This is because the ecological crisis is exacerbating existing global inequalities and injustices.

It is therefore time to reorient ourselves, to gather insights for new modes of thinking from which new action can spring. It is time to think, feel and act *planetary* in order to be able to face the challenges that are now emerging not just here and there, but are coming at us all at once. In this context, thinking, feeling and acting planetary means three things: with a perspective that considers the planet as a whole; with a commitment to planetary justice that extends to all people; and finally with a planetary connectedness that includes the entire living environment.

This call to action seeks to bring together insights that already exist, but in a scattered form. We draw on insights that come from the most diverse regions of the world, but which have up until now been only tenuously connected to each other. We want to sift through and collect these experiences, combine and condense them and thus unite them in a new synthesis. In particular, our priority is to reflect upon and bring together the goals of socio-critical, ecological, gender-sensitive and anti-racist or post-colonial movements. This is our proposal for a new *planetary thinking*. This call to action aims to provide orientation in a time of confusion, to offer hope in a time of anxiety, to illuminate paths on which many have already taken first steps, and finally, to bring together people who have until now gone separate ways, because after all, we all share a common goal.

However, in order to encourage a breakthrough of this *planetary thinking*, it takes not only knowledge, but also courage: the courage to think beyond the barriers of the previous way of thinking, the courage to leave the paths of the mainstream and accept rejection or non-observance, the courage to consider ideas that question one's own habits in life, the courage to venture out of one's comfort zone, the courage to face crises, and the courage to be different and to want to become different!

1. The courage of insight, from which knowledge grows: the poly-crisis

Man has survived hitherto,
because he was too ignorant to know
how to realize his wishes.
Now that he can realize them,
He must either change them,
Or perish.
William Carlos Williams

Every society faces complications and problems; every generation has the impression of living in a special time; every nation's own tasks seem the most difficult; every person is his or her own. Nevertheless, today's situation is new and incomparable. Experts from a wide range of disciplines agree that we are facing new challenges never before encountered in the known history of humanity, challenges that no longer affect just individual countries or regions of the world, but humanity as a whole. It is no longer a question of one crisis or another, but of multiple crises, of a mega-crisis or "poly-crisis" faced by the world society, which has many facets. It is a world crisis that, in a hierarchised and economically unequal world, affects people differently in terms of severity and the nature of its effects. In individual parts of the world and for people in different social strata and life situations, the facets that are the most critical and urgent will differ. It goes without saying that these problems also need to be addressed specifically in each case. So although this poly-crisis has very different effects and is therefore perceived differently, its consequences are felt everywhere. And above all, it is arguably the first poly-crisis – since the Neolithic Revolution – that threatens not just one or two civilisations, but the continued existence of the entire human species.

Aspects of the poly-crisis

Let us take a look at some of the key challenges:

* *Livelihood-threatening poverty, hunger and disease or preventable early death* in many regions of the Global South point to a world of extreme inequalities that continue to increase with each crisis. According to a 2020 Oxfam study, the world's roughly 2000 billionaires own

around 60 per cent of the planet's total wealth (Schwär 2020). This obscenely unfair global distribution of life opportunities is often referred to as the “birth lottery”. Despite numerous programmes to fight poverty, which is also the ultimate objective of the UN’s *Sustainable Development Goals*, the successes have been modest. This is because a persisting neo-colonial world order ensures that enormous amounts of value are transferred from the Global South to the Global North each year. Poverty finances wealth. This opens up the rift that runs through the world again and again. But even in the industrialised countries themselves, under the conditions of neoliberalism, the gap between those with lower incomes and the big earners is widening. Important segments of the population are threatened by social decline.

* *Intra-societal violence*, which is widespread throughout the world, albeit in very different ways, and which is legitimised and motivated by notions of the superiority of the owning classes, of men over women, and of so-called developed or civilised nations. Violent, extremist, fascist tendencies on both the right and the left, as well as ideologies that falsely invoke the major world religions (Christian fundamentalism, Islamic or Hindu extremism and others) and that equally falsely claim to temper the social consequences of neoliberal policies, are on the rise and are undermining democratic systems. This is the mechanism of exclusion and persecution that is always directed against those who are labelled as ‘others’ and who are thus made into scapegoats, and that today particularly affects marginalised groups, women, refugees and migrants worldwide.

Even in democratic societies, in the North as well as in the South, a *loss of social cohesion* can be felt, and deep divisions are opening up; democracy is not criticised in order to improve it, but is instead questioned by irresponsible politicians as well as by so-called populist movements. We have been in a state of spiritual and cultural regression for a long time. Human rights and civilisational values are being called into question and made to seem contemptible.

* *Wars, terrorism and other armed conflicts* are becoming increasingly difficult to contain. The cancellation of the nuclear deal with Iran by the USA has further increased the nuclear threat. According to SIPRI, arms spending in 2019 reached its highest annual growth rate since 2010. Unrestrained arms production and trade, in which Europe’s rich and democratic states have a large stake, are making the world increasingly unsafe, fuelling regional wars and terrorist actions. Geopolitical tensions between world powers, and consequently also between regional powers, are increasing. Economic competition threatens to degenerate into war, power struggles are justified using ethnic and religious motives, and resistance against injustice is ideologically exaggerated. This hardening of identities does not allow for compromise. The mechanisms of peaceful dispute resolution and conflict management by the UN and other institutions are becoming less and less accepted.

* Economic hardship, the climate crisis, wars and mass displacement are leading to *refugee movements* of unimagined proportions. According to UNHCR reports, there are currently around 80 million people who have been forced to leave their homes (internal and cross-border migration). These mass migrations are a consequence of all the crises while simultaneously representing a new source of conflict themselves, exacerbating tensions within and between states. The rich countries (such as the USA at the Mexican border or

“Fortress Europe”) react with selective admission, which ensures them the cheapest and most disenfranchised labour, and at the same time causes massive isolation. In doing so, they accept the misery and death of thousands of people and denounce the democratic ideals of the equal value of all people and of global brotherhood upon which they as “civilised nations” claim to be based.

* The *ecological crisis* has reached worrying proportions. The so-called planetary boundaries that ensure the balance of the biosphere, to which we owe our lives, have already been exceeded in two respects: global warming and the loss of biodiversity (species extinction). This is all the more alarming considering that this threat is still progressing, despite the fact that science has been warning of this development for decades and people are already suffering its consequences today in many parts of the world – and this especially affects the segments of the global population that lack the economic means to take countermeasures. The countermeasures taken so far (such as the Paris climate targets) do not adequately address the dimension of the threat, not to mention that it is by no means certain that they will all be realised.

* The *European Union*, awarded the Nobel Peace Prize as a model of peaceful transnational cooperation, is losing much of its internal cohesion. Brexit has diminished its international importance, and the differences among the member states are so great that it has so far been impossible for it to develop a common foreign policy, even if only to defuse the most concerning trouble spots in its immediate vicinity, e.g. in the Middle East and the Mediterranean. It is also failing to find a common policy against the coronavirus pandemic. Even the joint purchase of the coronavirus vaccine has been hailed as a great diplomatic success. Due to its inhumane treatment of refugees, the EU is calling its global reputation into question and making it easier for political extremists to give the appearance of credibility to their attacks against the West and the North.

* All over the world, and especially in the rich North, the *elites* are attempting to escape crises and catastrophes by *disconnecting and walling themselves off* so as to continue their privileged lives. This is done by way of material demarcations, electronic barriers and the revival of ideologies of the superiority of their own civilisation. Any resistance to this is branded as terrorism; at the same time, true terrorism is not recognised as the warning sign of a society that is falling apart. This in turn is contributing to a *mental crisis*, a revival of cynical and negative thinking that lacks any future perspectives.

* All these crises are interrelated in many ways. Climate change increases poverty and leads to refugee movements, armament increases the danger of war and creates new refugees, undemocratic conditions affect people in poverty disproportionately, the defence of privileges exacerbates environmental crises and promotes violence, and so on. What is more, deeper connections also exist: if you consider all of the individual crises together, the underlying cause ultimately boils down to a crisis of the basic foundations upon which our economy, politics and culture are organised as a whole and the idea we have created of this world order. The structural crisis is linked to a spiritual-cultural crisis.

* To this complex of crises is now added the coronavirus crisis, a further crisis factor, but also “a symptom of the sick normality in which we lived” (Manifesto 2000). We have entered, as

Edgar Morin drastically puts it, a phase of “planetary agony” (Morin/Kern 1999, 77 ff.). But this can also serve to sharpen our perspective of the crisis as a whole and its deeper causes.

The deeper causes of the crisis

A crisis of human hubris

Previous major crises in human history – famines, diseases and epidemics, natural disasters, a lack of food and resources – often resulted from a lack of mastery of the surrounding nature, from insufficient technology or logistics, or from too little knowledge of correlations (e.g. hygiene) and ecological cycles. Today's poly-crisis, in contrast, is a crisis of abundance: it has arisen from an ‘excess’ of mastery over nature, and above all from the complete lack of restraint of those who have the power to use this excess to the full. For our power to act, as Hans Jonas notes, is many times greater than our power to foresee the consequences of its use and to judge the significance of our own power (cf. Jonas 1979). Nuclear energy, a “waste product” of the production of nuclear weapons, with its permanent need for security and guarding and the unsolved problem of storing radioactive waste for up to a million years, is just one example and symbol of human hubris. This *hubris* is itself a substantial factor of agony:

“The life-and-death struggle of the planet is not simply the sum of traditional conflicts of all against each, plus the various kinds of crisis, plus the emergence of new problems without a solution. *It is a totality that feeds on conflictual, crisisal, and problematical ingredients, a totality that envelops, outstrips, and feeds them in return.*” (Morin/Kern 1999, 77 [emphasis in original])

Finally, the full extent of the “planetary agony” only becomes visible when we turn our attention not only to the conflicts between people, nations and states, but when we also realise how much our technological development, especially in the last 50 years, has contributed to the instability of the biosphere, which is the prerequisite for human life on Earth:

“However, it is the first time that we are facing a global crisis that covers every corner of the planet and is even altering the geological era of the Holocene in which different cultures emerged thanks to the stability of the climate. The magnitude of the crisis is so great that what is at stake is no longer a particular civilization but the fate of humanity and life as we know it.” (Solón 2017, 7)

The now widely used and equally controversial term *Anthropocene* sums up this state of affairs in a catchy formula. The Anthropocene epoch, a hitherto only unofficial unit of geological

chronology, describes the most recent period of Earth's history in which human activity has begun to exert a decisive influence on the planet's climate and ecosystems (cf. National Geographic 2019). At the same time, however, this term also encompasses the ambivalence of the human situation: humanity has come into the position of influencing the biosphere in a visible and lasting manner, but this impact permanently endangers humanity's own conditions of life and survival. Adding to the complexity, the generalising talk of "humanity" as a whole is also problematic: in reality, it is only a relatively small privileged group within Western affluent societies and a few islands of prosperity in the Global South that exerts such a devastating influence on *all*. This is why there are alternative proposals for naming the epoch: *Plantationocene*, *Capitalocene*, *Anthrobscene*, *Misanthropocene*, *Chthulucene* and more (cf. Amster 2020).

A crisis in our economy and way of life

This hubris is both the result and the legitimisation of an economic and living system that is now proving devastating to human and non-human beings alike. This mode of production, which emerged as the Western system of economic activity, has increasingly become the global economic model and even the ideal. It is based on the idea that 'society' can emancipate itself further and further from 'nature' or the constraints of nature by means of technical and scientific developments. What has actually taken place, however, is not 'emancipation' from nature, but the externalisation of the consequences of the destruction of nature.

The necessary counterpart of this mode of production is the "imperial mode of living" (Brand/Wissen 2017), which, especially in Western affluent societies, enables a broad class of people to live a comfortable life without the ensuing negative consequences on the overall state of the Earth system ever becoming visible. The resources from other parts of the world are appropriated at the expense of the local labour force and the environment, and our own problems (e.g. waste) are exported.

It was the colonialist conquests and the ruthless exploitation of both humans and non-human living beings and the whole of nature by the European powers since the 16th century that enabled and created the present imperial way of life, production and civilisation. This present unjust world order is more destructive by far in its effects than any historical predecessor. But this is also the reason why it has become more changeable today. It no longer harms only the 'rest of the world', but ultimately also those who ostensibly benefit from it. Planetary thinking makes it possible to understand these connections.

2. The vision that grows from realisation: Homeland Earth

Man is not the pinnacle of evolution,
he is a being in transition,
and he can become a conscious collaborator
in his own evolution,
but if he does not rise above himself,
he will be passed over.
Sri Aurobindo

An idea whose time has come

Planetary thinking views itself as a reaction and response to the poly-crisis. It arises from the insight that we must consider the ecological and social crises together. Establishing or maintaining ecological balance is not a purely technological project, but first and foremost a global political one. The struggle for global justice, in turn, misses its target if it is not also conducted as a struggle for global environmental justice. In the words of Edgar Morin:

"It is no longer time to merely state the ecological catastrophes. Nor to indulge in the idea that the development of technologies alone could provide a remedy, let alone correct the major aberrations that threaten to disrupt the planet and the biosphere for good. The saving leap in development can only come through a huge upheaval in our relationships with humans, other living beings and nature. An ecological sense of solidarity must replace the culture of competition and aggression that currently dominates global relations."
(Morin 1989)

In the meantime, *planetary thinking, compassion and action* are being developed in various shapes and forms from more and more sides. The **diverse theories and practices of the worldwide social movements, peace movements, ecology movements, feminist and post-colonial movements, ecological agriculture, experiments with the common good economy, new forms of education, buen vivir, convivialism and many others** play a major historical role.

Homeland Earth

Planetary thinking leads to the vision of the *Homeland Earth* as developed by Edgar Morin since the 1980s. Morin's starting point is the earth as a 'system', in line with modern natural sciences, whose findings have only recently begun to become common knowledge. We must always think of humans in the context of all life and all living conditions of the biosphere:

"On the one hand, we belong completely to biological, physical, and cosmic nature. On the other hand, we belong completely to culture, that is, to the universe of speech, myth, ideas,

reason, and consciousness. Starting from and reaching beyond its identities that root it to the Earth and bespeak its place in the Cosmos, *Homo* also produces its typically human identities.” (Morin/Kern 1999, 40)

This also includes the contradictory nature of human nature: as *homo sapiens* and *homo demens* at the same time, a human is not just a rational being, but is also driven by her or his urges, fantasies and phantasies, by the passions a fact that every vision of the future must take into account.

All this constitutes the “anthropological unity” of the human being. This invalidates any racism or sexism that assumes fundamental natural differences to legitimise a differentiated ranking. However, it is a contradictory unity – unity in all the facets of diversity, and unity in spite of all diversity. This encompasses not only cultural differences, but also the divisions and hierarchies of the world with the rich and powerful on one side and the poor, oppressed and marginalised on the other.

This theoretical unity of humanity becomes a tangible one in times of globalisation. But contrary to the neoliberal promises, this unity is realised as a “planetary agony” that has in fact reached, according to Morin, a “Damoclean phase” of extreme threat. Humanity, whether we like it or not, now forms an “earthly community of destiny”, which, however, lacks the consciousness required of such a community of destiny. There is a globalisation of threats, but this has not yet resulted in a globalisation of solidarity.

The hope now lies exclusively in facing the situation in all its radicality, in having the courage to face the need for a diametrically different way of life, and in ceasing to act as if we were the ‘masters of the earth’:

“Becoming aware of the earthly community of destiny must become the key event of our century. We are in solidarity *on* this planet and *with* this planet. We are anthropo-bio-physical living beings, children of this planet. This is our Homeland Earth.” (Morin 2015, emphasis added)

Homeland Earth – this is thus not only the statement of a fact, but also a description of the challenge we face. It is the challenge of realising the potential we have been given to repair the damage we have done and, at the same time, of opening up new horizons for human life. It is the call to turn this insight into the earthly community of destiny into a hopeful political programme and a programme for life for each and every individual.

The great task with which we are faced is that of taking responsibility for our common *Homeland Earth*, and this means the double duty of being “in solidarity *on* and *with* this planet”. In concrete terms, this means:

- The globalisation of solidarity based on global responsibility and manifested in *global citizenship*:
“Humanism turned planetary thus demands that solidarity/responsibility, without slackening in existing communities, be extended to the planetary community of destiny.” (Morin 2015)

- In addition, the extension of solidarity to non-human life, without which human life would also be unthinkable; a solidarity that expresses itself as *planetary citizenship*:

“We humans must work toward a partnership with the terrestrial biosphere. To be sure, this will involve an unceasingly strenuous effort. In the process, we should not seek to pilot, but to co-pilot Earth. A partnership is required: a partnership of humanity and nature, of technology and ecology, of conscious and unconscious intelligence. The Earth commands through life, humankind through consciousness.” (Morin/Kern 1999, 146)

Homeland Earth is a wake-up call that strives to remind us of the human condition. At the same time, *Homeland Earth* is a programme that needs to be realised. The final definition of *Homeland Earth* is that of a vision that reaches far beyond the present.

Stepping out of the prehistory of humanity

“Our system is thus either condemned to death or to metamorphosis.” (Morin 2014, 24) This great task of saving our basis of existence could – according to the hopeful vision – herald a new age of human history, a leap in development that is possible but by no means self-evident, and which could be called the *civilisation of civilisation*. We would then actually be able to regard the history of humanity up to now as its “prehistory”:

“What is coming to an end before our eyes is the prehistory of the human being. Yes, a prehistory far too long, consisting of all our identitarian convulsions, all our deluded ethnocentrisms, our egos that are considered ‘sacred’, be they patriotic, communitarian, cultural, ideological or otherwise. [...] A pious wish, they will say. No, a prerequisite for survival; and therefore the only realistic option.” (Maalouf 2009, 303-305)

So far, we are experiencing “the inability of the world to become world, the inability of humanity to become humanity” (Morin/Kern 1999, 114). The long-term, secular task of implementing the idea of *Homeland Earth* also intends to overcome this inability. For we must see becoming human as a process, not as a completed phase. So far, we have used only a small portion of our intellectual potential, but human imagination, creative power and performance have proven to be extremely capable of increasing. We have the strategies and the know-how to reshape our relationship with nature. We have the mental capacity and the knowledge to refute all ideologies that justify man's domination over other human beings. We have the most important psychological and social science knowledge to shape our social relations in a democratic, peaceful and friendly way and to transform conflicts without violence. We have a treasure of cultural works and activities that help us to understand ourselves better and inspire us to grow beyond ourselves. We have all the technical means for a good life, but we need to control and regulate technical progress from an ethical point of view. In short, instead of destroying our basis of existence, we are in a position to create a sustainable, prosperous, meaningful life for all people on our planet and to master the great challenges we face as humanity, “united in conflict”. Then, finally, *hominisation* can become real *humanisation*:

“The completion of humanity in humanity, the new all-encompassing community of the Homeland Earth, the metamorphosis of humanity are the faces of the new human adventure that is desirable and possible.” (Morin 2015)

The civilisation of civilisation and the humanisation of man, the idea of human advancement – this is not a utopia made of wishful thinking. Rather, this is a vision based on knowledge; a hope full of scepticism; an objective that we want to claim is possible, but that no one can claim will actually be achieved ...

3. Action guided by insights and visions: the Great Transformation

We need a new movement,
that we have from the dominant one,
all-pervasive culture of violence,
of destruction and death away
towards a culture of non-violence,
of life and creative peace.

Vandana Shiva

Counterforces have long since formed worldwide, in science, culture, politics and civil society, which use their respective means to not only point out the dangers, but to also seek ways out. How many people have already realised that we want to, can and must live differently! A *Great Transformation* is necessary, another world is possible! The impetus for this is provided by great visions – such as *Homeland Earth* – that show new ways of thinking and new practical possibilities, and that give us the courage to walk these new paths. Edgar Morin also upholds that this transformation is only conceivable and feasible as a metamorphosis. It is not about a revolutionary upheaval that wipes clean the slate of the past, but rather about the adoption of all cultural, spiritual and technical achievements, but in a new context. Metamorphosis stands for both upheaval and continuity at once. It also stands for a non-violent transformation of the existing, inadequate social order.

Hundreds of millions of people, if not more, long for a life other than an existence based on the exploitation of nature and their fellow human beings, characterised by cutthroat competition and the senseless accumulation of wealth on the one hand, and scandalous poverty and abject misery on the other. Many millions are seeking alternatives within their own sphere of influence and with the means at their disposal and, as far as they are able, are putting these into practice in experiments, micro-initiatives and new forms of organisation. Hundreds of thousands of people formulate sophisticated ideas for overcoming the old system, at least selectively, and thousands of these ideas reach a global exchange thanks to the various forms of media. These people are breaking out of the entrenched ways of thinking, they are overcoming the prevailing dogmas, and they are ignoring the outdated taboos.

A reform of thinking

This social metamorphosis, this Great Transformation requires a reflection on the very essence of human existence, on our position in the biosphere, on our possibilities and limits in *Homeland Earth*. “Only a fundamental awareness of what we are and what we want to become can make the transformation of civilisation possible.” (Morin 2020)

For this, in turn, a reform of thinking is indispensable if we wish to have a clear grasp of the overall picture and at the same time locate ourselves within this context:

“Our way of knowing has underdeveloped the ability to think in contexts, to contextualise information and to integrate it into a totality that gives it meaning. [...] The fragmentation and subdivision of cognition into disciplines that do not communicate with each other makes it impossible to perceive and comprehend fundamental and global problems.” (Morin 2012, 155)

Overcoming this tradition of thinking involves various aspects:

- We must overcome the “methodological nationalism” (Ulrich Beck) that views all problems through the lens of the nation state. This does not mean renouncing national identities, but relativising their significance. For in times of accelerated globalisation, most phenomena can no longer be comprehended in national categories, and we must also consider the concepts of local and national in terms of their penetration by the global.
- But we must also leave behind “methodological racism and sexism”, ways of thinking that perceive the world exclusively from the perspective of a male-dominated or Western civilisation that is thought to be superior. These ways of thinking prevent us from adequately understanding historical contexts and current systemic inequalities.
- Furthermore, we need an integrative view that bridges the epistemic divide between nature and culture and brings together the many, hitherto separate bodies of knowledge from the natural sciences, cultural studies and social sciences, thus making visible the connections that we have ignored up until now. A connective way of thinking that pursues the integration of knowledge, that understands integration as a method of knowledge generation.
- But it is also not enough to simply think in global categories and the category of global justice as long as we consider humanity to be isolated from its natural environment and ignore the numerous interactions between humans and (living) nature. This conceptual unification of the human and the earthly community of destiny is what makes up *planetary thinking* in the first place.
- But for our thinking to correspond to this complex reality, it must itself be complex thinking. For far too long, the endeavour has been “to reduce the complex to the simple, that is, to separate what is connected, to unify what is multiple, to eliminate everything that brings disorder and contradiction into our understanding.” (Morin 2012, 157)

This new way of thinking is emerging as a learning process of countless individuals and groups across the planet. It means learning from knowledge that is not yet ready, that no one can yet offer. It means a kind of learning that generates the new knowledge it seeks.

These learning processes are elementary in order to bring about a metamorphosis as a whole. We must not think of this metamorphosis as merely a change in our attitudes and values. Metamorphosis means that everything must undergo a fundamental change. It also involves a transformation of the structures and power relations that permanently reproduce our current mode of production. Just as, conversely, every structural change enables a change in consciousness – a permanent dialogical process. Individuals and groups need to change in order to empower themselves, to work on changing structures that hinder this learning and change. It is a learning process, therefore, that is simultaneously a process of social confrontations and struggles; it implies learning in these confrontations, and not a straightforward absorption of knowledge.

It is necessary to give the existential struggles and learning processes for the future of our *Homeland Earth*, which are taking place today, a common direction whilst also preserving their plurality and diversity in order to lend them strength and assertiveness. New social inventions are needed to create democratic governance mechanisms from the local to the global level, in order to prevent the threat of climate change, species extinction and the destruction of the necessary diversity of life, as well as the danger of self-extinction through nuclear weapons, hunger and war. A new culture of peace and corresponding political structures are needed to enable a meaningful, sustainable and secure life.

The four principles of transformation

Four principles, which can serve as guidelines and prerequisites for any action, should be emphasised:

** Planetary ethics*

A new kind of capacity to act also requires new rules of ethics or even a new kind of ethics, as is made undeniably clear to us every day by genetic engineering, the nuclear threat and climate change. A new ethics, we state in agreement with Hans Jonas, must also include the biosphere, because we are now in a position to intervene in it in a sustainable way. These are interventions that we ourselves can neither estimate in their practical consequences nor judge in their ethical consequences. Therefore, human power must be restrained by ethical barriers. The *principle of responsibility* (Jonas 1984) must become the ethical guideline at a planetary level.

** A culture of peace and non-violence*

A culture of peace, a concept also propagated by the UN and UNESCO, means: It is possible to organise societies and the world as a whole in such a way that the normal state is no longer war and conflict, but rather peace and cooperation. This requires overcoming a way of thinking and a system that are both based on the two pillars of patriarchy and militarism. This change is, to a large extent, the task of systematic education:

“A culture of peace will be achieved when citizens of the world understand global problems; have the skills to resolve conflict constructively; know and live by

international standards of human rights, gender and racial equality; appreciate cultural diversity; and respect the integrity of the Earth. Such learning can not be achieved without intentional, sustained and systematic education for peace.”

(<https://www.peace-ed-campaign.org/about/>)

** A Convivialist Philosophy and Politics*

Convivialism, a new, expanded humanism defined as the “art of living together”, is an alternative political philosophy to neoliberalism. It is also about “mentally overcoming the religion of the economic and the concept of homo economicus” (Adloff/Leggewie 2014, 14). It draws on all teachings, experiences and philosophies that can help to “control intemperance and conflict in order to prevent them from degenerating into uncontrollable violence; everything that encourages cooperation; as well as everything that lends itself to dialogue and the exchange of ideas within the framework of an ethic of discussion.” (The Convivialist International 2020, 39)

** A cosmopolitanism without illusions*

Cosmopolitan concepts are often hindered by proposing rigid and unrealisable models (the ‘world state’) or remaining very vague or very hesitant (‘UN reform’ and ‘global structures’). They often succumb to the illusion that one can simply replace the level of national and regional cultures with a supranational or supraregional level. We, on the other hand, are in search of a “cosmopolitanism without illusions” (Sheila Benhabib 2014) as a realisation of the political dimension of *Homeland Earth*. This means insisting that people have political rights – but also responsibilities – not merely by virtue of belonging to a particular state, but by virtue of being human. The cosmo-political task is to enable *democratic interactions*, i.e. international and transnational forms of civil society dialogue that have the capacity to democratise existing power relations. Ultimately, it is a matter of world society being able to regulate the world market according to ethical principles, whereas up to now, the world market has controlled world society according to the principles of generalised greed.

The seven urgent but long-term tasks

As goals of the concrete utopia *Homeland Earth*, we want to highlight seven agendas that seem particularly urgent to us, which at the same time can only be realised in the long term:

- Overcoming a mode of production based on extractivism, fossil fuel extraction, factory farming and the ruthless exploitation of all natural resources.
- Overcoming the capitalist principle of permanent profit increase and thus of unlimited economic growth; this also includes overcoming consumerism and the consumerist system.

- Finalising the decolonisation of the world, which is far from complete; even today, many colonial legacies have not yet been removed: economic dependencies, arbitrary borders, colonial structures in the economy, education, administration, and even thought patterns and stereotypes.
- Overcoming the patriarchal-militarist system and developing a culture of gender justice that goes beyond the question of equal pay for equal work and encompasses all areas of life; if historically, the subjugation of the female sex has been the model of any kind of domination of human over human, the complete abolition of this subjugation can become the model of convivialist coexistence.
- Developing a true democracy on a cosmopolitan basis, in which all people living on a territory for a prolonged period of time actually have a say and in which the law of the strongest is replaced by the strength of the law in international relations; that is, experimenting with new forms of transnational democracy to make cosmopolitan life possible.
- Overcoming security thinking in the area of the military, with the permanent arms race, the constant optimisation of weapons of mass destruction, standing armies and the threat or use of military force as an instrument to achieve political goals.
- Developing a culture of deep connection to all living beings as the basis and guideline for sustainable production and living. This requires a permanent 'intercultural' dialogue both between and within scientific, ethical and religious perspectives and ideas.

Knowing that our personal change will in no way be enough to transform the world, we must nevertheless work tirelessly to bring our own behaviour more in line with our beliefs.

Knowing that the reforms of the structures that support the existing system cannot achieve anything if they are not accompanied by reforms of the underlying culture, we must nevertheless make every effort to change the existing structures in order to override their devastating effect.

Knowing that any new culture will inevitably and hopelessly wear itself out on the existing structures if they are not eliminated, we must nevertheless tirelessly pursue a metamorphosis of culture with all our might.

Let us not let the future be taken away from us!

This work on the Great Transformation, on the social metamorphosis, requires hope, but at the same time it also offers, with every actionable step, a strengthening of faith in the future, that is, in the meaning and effectiveness of our actions. In fact, everything depends on us understanding ourselves as *citizens of the world* – in solidarity with all people on this planet –

and as *citizens of the earth* – in solidarity with all life on earth. Let us continue the adventure of becoming human! A utopia? Certainly. But a necessary one. Because it is necessary to sow the seeds of utopias today in order to be able to harvest new worlds tomorrow. In his speech in Florence in 1932, in the midst of fascist Italy, the great European Stefan Zweig raised his voice and said:

“And so, even today, no one can be denied the right to write himself a letter of home as a European, to call himself a citizen of this not yet existing state of Europe and, despite the borders that still exist today, to feel our diverse world fraternally as one from within”. (Zweig 1983, 209)

History has proven Zweig's vision right. A quarter of a century later, the first steps towards European unity had already been taken, even if it is doubtful whether the people of Europe already perceive their diverse world fraternally as one from within. And yet we say today – entirely in the spirit of the cosmopolitan poet:

And so no one can be denied the right to call themselves an earth citizen and to feel planetary solidarity for our diverse world, for our Homeland Earth, from within.

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