

Declaration of Dependence

With every breath, every sip of water, and every bite of food we take, we depend on the healthy, unpolluted Earth.

Fearful for the preservation of a future for mankind, we wish to express our concern about the way the current globalizing culture (civilization) is, by means of its expansion, destroying the Earth and any prospects for the lives of future generations. It is demonstrably the case that the Earth is not the property of the human race and that humans are in no way superior to nature. Despite this, our culture is irreversibly destroying the majestic creation that has been shaped by territorial evolution over billions of years; it is exhausting the Earth's non-renewable natural capital, exterminating living organisms and vast ecosystems that are millions of years old, as well as disrupting the global life system. It is eliminating the natural conditions which witnessed the origin of the human species and to which we are still biologically related. It is high time that the short-sighted and self-satisfied admiration for everything human and cultural was brought to an end and that instead we start to preach both admiration and humility in the face of the fascinating evolutionary complexity of the Earth, which is the only possible host system for our culture. In the age of globalized culture we must abandon the predatory approach to nature that was once so useful for the rapid expansion of local cultures in a healthy biosphere. No biological species, not even our own, which was instrumental in creating culture, is able to conquer nature. The genomes of biological species represent only a fraction of the evolutionary wisdom of life and our theoretical knowledge is incapable of grasping its complexity. The biosphere is the cradle, home and grave of mankind, and human culture has to subordinate itself to it.

Nevertheless, unless we end the conflict between an anti-natural culture and the Earth, the habitability of our planet will deteriorate and the whole human species could be subject, through its own fault, to premature extinction. General intellectual contemplation, which in ancient times focused on wonder, in the Middle Ages on humility and in the modern period on doubt, will now be centered on a fear for our survival. The new, evolutionary-ontological understanding of the world therefore challenges us to acknowledge the imperative value of nature and the nature-dependent, merely instrumental value of culture.

We would like to emphasize the following:

1 The biosphere in its totality is the smallest relatively autonomous system capable of long-term development over time. All of its subsystems, individuals, populations, biocenoses and culture are temporary and conditional, and are existentially dependent on the creativeness and prosperity of the biotic whole. Even the harmonious upbringing of our children presupposes the presence of an impersonal mother nature alongside their biological mother.

2 Nature is contained not only in our external environment but also in every one of us. We are one of many species of the planet Earth which are of evolutionary origin and which are in harmony with the biosphere. However, we also know that we are an exceptional species, the only one that has ever created a culture, because, in harmony with our genome, we have ignited another evolution, the oppositional cultural evolution.

3 The once inconspicuous cultural evolution now threatens the future of mankind due to its predatory orientation, masked behind affluence and the expansion of consumer technology. This is because culture is neither a cultivation of nature nor a continuation of its evolution by other means. It is an artificial physical system with its own internal information; this information is not, however, genetic information, but a human intellectual culture.

4 This spiritual culture, the imagined genome of the cultural system, is not as wonderful and exalted as it once seemed. Since it is rooted in the human genome and since its partial components are still liable to the predatory philosophical foundations of ancient cultures, it is species-selfish, limited and short-sighted. It helps to expand a cultural system that ravages the planet irreparably.

5 In the last three hundred years in particular we have succumbed to the temptation to give preference to developing those human abilities and powers – cool symbolic communication, partial scientific rationality and economic calculation – that result in a growth of material riches and secular power over both humans and nature. The end result of this is a global technosphere unadjusted to natural reproduction.

6 In a comparatively short period of time we have ravaged easily accessible natural assets, such as forests, ores and liquid fossil fuels. The planetary expansion of a technically developed culture has been achieved only at the cost of occupying the Earth ourselves and damaging it

for other living systems. Through our contemporary culture we are the only cause of the mass extinction of biological species that is now underway. And we, too, are a species endangered by our own culture.

7 Since the laws of conservation of mass and energy apply to the whole universe, cultural existence can originate only by destroying the older natural existence. The expansion of an artificial cultural existence brings about a dangerous retreat of natural existence and the disappearance of the Earth's original natural order. It is with this natural order that evolution has also harmonized the human organism. Cultural existence does not originate through positive destruction of nature but through negative technical destruction, and is dependent and transient; it is not harmonized in evolutionary terms with mankind. Nature can neither integrate it nor support its evolution without mankind.

8 The predatory spiritual foundation of culture (the predatory paradigm) disseminated by contemporary science, education and politics must be replaced by respect and reverence for nature, by a biophile spiritual paradigm. The never-ending political arguments about the correctness of either right or leftwing orientation hide the seriousness of the conflict between culture and the Earth, human biological invariability and dependence on nature. It prevents a change in direction of culture to the benefit of cooperation with nature from gaining ground.

9 Natural evolution also evidently pilots the success of the human biological evolutionary construction. This test is, however, an indirect one; it is performed by means of human creations, i.e. the compatibility of the functions and body of culture with the biosphere. A cultural system that exceeds a notional limit of stress exerted on the Earth, and which is over-extensive and anti-natural, will inevitably cease to exist, and mankind along with it, irrespectively of its technical and informational level.

10 The Earth's host system may tolerate and feed the allochthonous cultural system in the long term only if the inanimate culture system achieves maturity over time – if it grows, like the biosphere, in qualitative terms only. And this means intentionally bringing contemporary culture's metabolism, which is un-adapted to nature, nearer to that of living systems. Otherwise we will exhaust natural raw materials and fuels unnecessarily rapidly and infest the planet with waste and products of culture that are incompatible with nature.

11 In a situation where it is impossible to demonstrate either somatic or mental improvement of humans through culture, the purpose of culture cannot consist merely of growth of manufacturing and consumption, in a notional utility that we cannot even define. It cannot consist of dubious profit which we cannot equitably distribute. It must comprise the health and welfare of humans inside a healthy biosphere. Even though we have a natural right to live and realize our potential as appropriate, i.e. to create and develop culture, we must abandon its current aggressive strategy. For the near and remote future alike we need a healthy and habitable Earth.

We therefore invite the public to reconsider the relationship between nature and culture, and to be cautious about the wider and more remote consequences of mankind's creations. Anti-natural culture is nowadays expanding at an ever faster rate. It brings previously unknown affluence to the technically developed part of mankind, but it doesn't remove poverty, war, violence and inequality. As a whole it functions as the largest destructive power on Earth. The more we cooperate globally, the greater the harm we do to nature. Since culture destroys things which are not of our creation, it can also destroy everything we have created ourselves. Contemporary culture can be adapted to the Earth and to the human biological essence only if we approach it as an artificial, non-biological structure with inadequate internal information. The biophile reconstruction of culture which awaits us therefore represents a challenge to all responsible people on this planet – scientists, politicians and laypersons alike. They will need to think, act and make decisions while bearing in mind that the Earth is the only inhabited planet in the universe as we know it today, and that it is a precious, original piece of this universe, which transcends both us and culture and which we have no right to devastate. It is high time we return the Earth to its sanctity, its long-overlooked evolutionary and informational value, its subjectivity that is superior to humans. We may have created huge technical systems and developed information networks, but the natural order of both inanimate and animate forms which we have lost cannot be re-created, even by natural evolution. If we want to survive on the Earth, we have to be wise and give way to nature. The age of the symbiosis of culture and nature still lies ahead of us.