



**California Institute
of Integral Studies**

Journal of Conscious Evolution

Volume 1

Issue 1 *Issue 01/2005*


Article 10

May 2018

From Homeland Earth; A New Manifesto For The New Millennium

Morin, Edgar

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.ciis.edu/cejournal>

 Part of the [Anthropology Commons](#), [Cognition and Perception Commons](#), [Cognitive Psychology Commons](#), [Developmental Psychology Commons](#), and the [Philosophy of Mind Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Morin, Edgar (2018) "From Homeland Earth; A New Manifesto For The New Millennium," *Journal of Conscious Evolution*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 1 , Article 10.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.ciis.edu/cejournal/vol1/iss1/10>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals and Newsletters at Digital Commons @ CIIS. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Journal of Conscious Evolution* by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ CIIS. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@ciis.edu.

HOMELAND EARTH
Edgar Morin

From *Homeland Earth; A New Manifesto For The New Millennium*

Now that the fantastic adventure begun in the 15th century has come to an end, the shout of Columbus' lookout man takes on at last a planetary meaning: Land! Land!¹

Even up to 1950-1960, we were living on a misapprehended Earth, on an abstract Earth. We were living on the Earth as object. By the end of this century, we discovered Earth as system, as Gaia, as biosphere, a cosmic speck — Homeland Earth. Each one of us has a pedigree, a terrestrial identity card. We are from, in, and on the Earth. We belong to the Earth which belongs to us.

THE GREAT CONFLUENCE

At this turn of the millennium, we have reached almost simultaneously a point at which many complementary forms of awareness have become possible:

- **The awareness that Earth is one (telluric consciousness)**
- **The awareness that the biosphere is unified/diversified (ecological consciousness)**
- **The awareness that humankind is one/many (anthropological consciousness)**
- **The awareness of our Dasein, of "being there," without knowing why**
- **The awareness of the Planetary Era**
- **The awareness of the Damoclean threat**

- **The awareness of the doom that looms at the horizon of our lives, of all life, of every planet, of every sun**
- **The awareness of our terrestrial fate.**

Thanks to these modes of awareness, messages coming from the most diverse directions can henceforth converge; some of them religious, others ethical, humanist, romantic, or scientific, and others still relating to the Planetary Iron Age.

In this way, the humanist conception of the Enlightenment, that everyone has the same essence, can merge with a romantic feeling for nature, a feeling that rediscovered the umbilical relation to Mother Earth. At the same time, we can join our love of those both near and far—a love that has its distant origin in the great universalist religions, whether as Buddhist commiseration for all living beings, or as evangelical brotherliness, of which internationalist brotherliness has been but a lay socialist heir—to the emerging planetary consciousness, which links humans together and all to our common terrestrial nature.

All these messages have been obscured and have deteriorated over time, sometimes even turning into the opposite, through interaction with various institutions. They stand in need of unceasing regeneration, and perhaps they can regenerate each other through the gospel of doom. They are as so many disjointed fragments of a puzzle which, once completed, reveals the form of an anthropo-ethic.

HOMELAND EARTH

Mastery over nature? We are unable as yet to control our own nature, whose madness impels us to mastery over nature while losing our own self-control.

Master the world? We are as microbes in the gigantic and enigmatic cosmos. Mastery over life? Even if one day we could make a bacterium, we would have only copied an organism that forever leaves us dumbfounded. Would we know how to make a swallow, a buffalo, a sea lion, or an orchid? We can massacre billions of bacteria, but we cannot prevent resistant bacteria from propagating. We can kill viruses, but we are defenseless in front of new viruses that taunt us, undergo mutations and renewals. Even as far as bacteria and viruses are concerned, we are compelled to strike a deal with life and nature.

We have transformed the Earth, domesticated its vegetal surfaces, and gained mastery over its animals. We are not for all that masters of the cosmos, not even of the Earth.

To be gypsies of the cosmos, vagabonds of the unknown adventure, such is the anthropological destiny that comes to light from the depths of the fifth century of the Planetary Era, a destiny that follows on a multi-millennial limitation to the repetitive cycle of traditional civilizations, to beliefs in eternity and supernatural myths. Such is our *Dasein*, to be, as it were, thrown on this Earth, wandering, treading untrodden paths, worried, anxious, but also full of dash, poetry, ecstasies. Such is *Homo sapiens demens*, an unbelievable “chimera,” a new invention, a monster, a chaos, a subject of contradictions, of wonder—judge of all things, trustee of the truth and cesspool of doubt and errors; the “glory and rubbish of the universe,” in the words of Pascal (1670/1931, p. 184), and such is *homo*, as already seen by Heraclitus, Eschylus, Sophocles, Shakespeare and, undoubtedly, many others in other cultures.

We must relearn our terrestrial finiteness and renounce the false infinite of technical omnipotence, of mental omnipotence, of our own yearning for omnipotence, so that we may bow to

the true infinite that is unnamable and inconceivable. Our technical powers, thought, and consciousness must henceforth be devoted to fitting up, improving, and understanding, not to mastering. We must learn to "be there" (*dasein*), on the planet—to be, to live, to share, to communicate and commune with one another. Self-enclosed cultures always knew and taught that wisdom. From now on, we must learn to be, to live, to share, to communicate and commune as human beings of planet Earth. We must transcend, without excluding, our local cultural identities, and awaken to our being as citizens of the Earth.

A COMMON EARTHLY FATE

Our homeland a planet? Such is our place in the cosmos. We know now that this small, lost planet is more than a place jointly owned by humans. It is our home, *maison*, *Heimat*; it is our motherland, our Homeland. Neither suns nor space would provide us with a home: We would burn in the one place and turn into ice in the other. We might indeed someday leave the planet, whether to explore or to settle other worlds. These torrid or ice-cold worlds, however, are lifeless. It is here, at home, that are to be found our plants, our animals, our dead, our lives, and our children. We must preserve, we must save our Homeland.

Our "common earthly fate," then, proves to be singularly deep, vast, and timely. We all share a common destiny. We all live in the common garden of living beings and dwell in the common house of human beings. We are all drawn into the common adventure of the Planetary Era, all threatened by nuclear and ecological death. We are all subject to the struggles attending the turn of the millennium.

We must base human fellowship on the realization that we are

lost, not on the illusion of salvation, but on the awareness of our participation in the complex web of the Planetary Era, on the awareness of our common death and life predicament, on the perception of the struggles attending this turn of the millennium.

The realization of our common earthly fate ought to be the key to this turn of the millennium: We are answerable for this planet; our life is bound to its life. We must put our household affairs in order. We are citizens of the Earth and, thus, we share the same fate as the Earth.

CO-PILOTS OF THE EARTH

This shared destiny imposes a telluric responsibility on humankind. We must henceforth forsake the conquering agenda spelled out by Descartes, Buffon, and Marx. We must no longer strive to master the Earth, but to nurse it through its sickness, and learn how properly to dwell on it, to manage and cultivate it.

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 the 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.

To come through the Planetary Iron Age, to save humankind, to be co-pilots of the biosphere, to civilize the Earth--these four concepts are linked in a recursive loop, with each being necessary to the three others. The deadly sickness of the planet could then possibly mean rebirth—the emergence of a new humanity. Politics could be grounded anew. The old struggle for

the survival of humankind would be absorbed into the struggle for the birth of humanity.

EARLY STAGES

The times are, to say the least, very harsh. Looking at the past, nothing is certain. The present is breaking apart. The future has collapsed. How is it possible not to doubt? The events of 1989-1990, which we took for a splendid sunrise, were nothing after all but the dazzling sight of an exploding supernova. But was it really an accident? Evolutionary processes, when speeded up, become explosions. As if moonstruck, the world is driven to a debacle as yet unseen. Homeland Earth, already so close, is still beyond reach. Disasters follow on disasters.

Civilize the Earth? Go from humankind to humanity? What can we expect of *Homo sapiens demens*? How can we ignore the gigantic and terrifying problem of human deficiencies? Always and everywhere, domination and exploitation have prevailed over mutual assistance and fellowship. Always and everywhere, hatred and contempt have prevailed over friendship and understanding. Until now, religions of love and ideologies of brotherhood have brought more hatred and disagreement than love and fellowship.

Throughout history, madness and unconsciousness have more often than not swept away reason and consciousness. Why should folly and unconsciousness, one more time, not settle our destiny? Today, indeed, how blind seem traditionalists, modernists, and postmodernists. How fragmented is people's thinking. How unrecognized is planetary complexity. Such general unconsciousness of key issues. Such barbarousness in human relations. Such slackness of spirit and soul. There are so many misunderstandings.

Progress in the wake of culture? Not so long ago Nazism made barbarous the most cultured country of the world. Saint-Germain- des-Prés or the Sorbonne providing a standard for humankind? Would that quell meanness, envy, or wickedness? Would that procure clear-headedness and the knowledge of our situation in the world? Progress in the wake of civilization? Civilization is only a thin crust, cracked and defective, bringing about as many new problems as it solves. Freud's diagnosis of the disease of civilization (that civilizations have become neurotic owing to the civilizations themselves) applies also and especially to our own. When excessively civilized, a civilization fosters a craving for barbarism, as John Boorman has shown in *Zardoz*.

What does it mean, then, to civilize the Earth, if culture and civilization themselves are part of the problem? It means—and we are thus brought back to our main argument—that culture and civilization do not procure salvation. Nonetheless, through the very discontent brought on by its contentment, civilization feeds anthropological discontent all over again, and with it the pursuit of hominization. The discontent of contentment that has arisen in our civilization, and that undermines it, is precisely what may pave the way for its further evolution.

Once again, we meet with the principle of resistance. Finally, we have at our disposal the principles of hope within hopelessness. The first has to do with life itself: As every living being regenerates itself through being non-coercively directed toward its future, so do all human beings renew their hope while regenerating their life. Not that hope builds up life, because it is rather life that builds hope, but the best formula is the following: life builds up hope that builds up life.

The second principle has to do with foreknowledge: All the

great transformations or creations have been unthinkable until they actually came to pass.

The third principle has to do with probability: All the happy events of history have always been a priori improbable.

The fourth principle is that of the mole that digs underground and transforms the substratum before anything is changed on the surface.

The fifth principle has to do with the possibility of rescue through the awareness of danger. In the words of Hölderlin (1980): “...where danger threatens/That which saves from it also grows” (p. 463).

The sixth principle is anthropological: We know that *Homo sapiens* has thus far made use only of a very small portion of its mind/brain potential, so that we are far from having exhausted the intellectual, emotional, cultural, civilizational, social, and political capabilities of humankind. The point is that our current culture is on a par with the still-present prehistory of the human mind, and that our current civilization is on a par with the still-present Planetary Iron Age. What this especially means is that, barring a possible catastrophe, we have not reached the limit of human brain/mind potential, of societies' historical possibilities, or of human evolution's anthropological capability. We may well be disillusioned and envisage nonetheless a new stage of hominization, which would also be a new stage of culture and civilization.

These six principles apply equally in the worst-case scenario. They give no assurance. Life may accidentally meet with death. The unthinkable will not necessarily come to pass. The improbable is not necessarily felicitous. The mole may destroy

what ought to have been preserved. Rescue may be unequal to the peril.

The adventure remains unknown. The Planetary Era may possibly come to naught before it has even begun to bloom. Perhaps humankind's struggles may lead only to death and ruin. However, the worst is not yet certain, and the game is not yet over. In the absence of any certainty or even probability, there is the possibility of a better world.

The task is huge and unassured. We cannot eschew either hope or despair. Both holding of and resignation from office seem equally impossible. We must have a “passionate patience.” We stand on the threshold, not of the last, but of the early stages of the battle.

Excerpted with permission from *Homeland Earth; A New Manifesto For The New Millennium*, by Edgar Morin with Anne Brigitte Kern. (trans; Sean M. Kelly and Roger LaPointe). New Jersey: Hampton Press, Inc. Copyright 1999 by Hampton Press, Inc. All rights reserved.

References

Hölderlin, F. (1980). *Patmos* (M. Hamburger, trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Pascal, B. (1931). *Pensées* [Thoughts]. (L. Brunschwig, ed.). Paris: Hachette. (Original published 1670).

¹ In French, the same word: terre/Terre means both land and Earth.