

A New Earth Culture

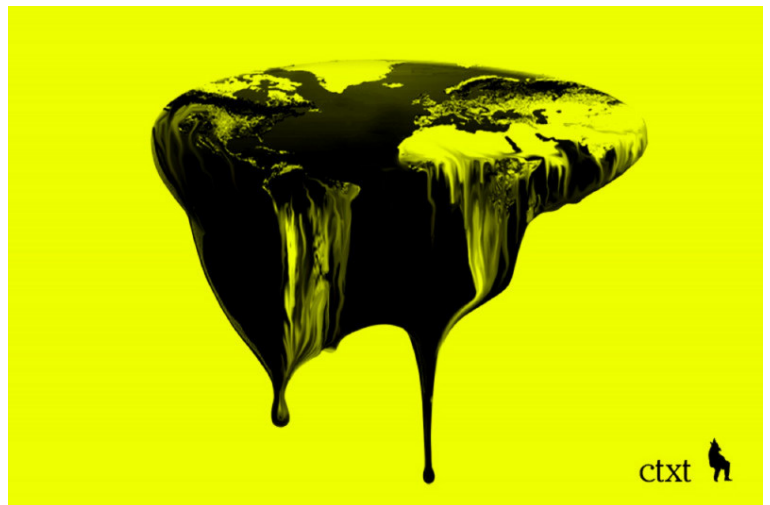
Decrease the material and energetic scales and fight against the unfair accumulation of wealth to build a fairer reality for all living species and the planet

Milena Radovich / Diego Astiz

Summers with historic temperatures, droughts and torrential storms; escalating armed conflicts in different parts of the planet; the Mar Menor is dying, hundreds of people arrive in cayuco boats to the Canary Islands while others die on the way; the Sixth Mass Extinction... How we can tackle or even manage to understand the ecosocial crisis in which we find ourselves is not a simple political task.

The bombardment of information is enormous. Cell phones are filled with flashy headlines searching for clickbait, enveloping us in a sense of constant alarm. We live in times of exceptionality, but when exceptionality becomes the norm, it loses its political potential. It is impossible to react and oppose every event happening to us today with the same intensity and indignation and to build desirable alternatives.

The environmental movement has long been explaining the scientific causes of the decline processes and ecological alarm in which we find ourselves today, but also proposing initiatives and alternatives that allow us to think that there is a way out. However, the multiplicity of processes and symptoms in which we find ourselves today can generate a feeling of overwhelm and despair. It is, therefore, vital to understand but also summarise and order the events currently causing our lives to be traversed in different ways by the multisystemic crisis in which we find ourselves. To dismantle and rethink the cultural assumptions that sustain them. Putting ideas in order is also necessary for building alternatives, exits, and solutions.



Terraplanetary warming / La Boca del Logo

the culture of economic growth is a suicidal culture.

This reordering of ideas must aim at a cultural change, a new way of looking at the planet, not as an inexhaustible source of resources but as a political subject on which our survival depends. We need a New Earth Culture.

This New Earth Culture dares to summarise in seven ideas the paradigmatic shift we need to build a more just reality with the whole of life and the planet.

1. **Decreasing on the material and energetic scale.** It is vital to understand that the culture of economic growth is a suicidal culture. We live on a planet of limited resources and find ourselves in a situation of translimitation; degrowth is not an option but an inevitable fact. The question is whether this degrowth will be disorderly, extending the opulent lifestyle of a planetary minority over ever larger areas of sacrifice (especially peripheral peoples, women and ecosystems), or whether we will degrow by redistributing with criteria of sufficiency, social and ecosystemic justice.

2. **Building equity in common.** We all want to save ourselves. Inequality is sustained by the hoarding of resources by elites who increase their profits each year (parallel to their percentage of CO2 emissions). Currently, social and ecological responsibility is painfully asymmetrical. The redistribution of resources and environmental justice become indispensable conditions to ensure the survival of human and non-human life in dignified conditions. Given the impossibility of growing in the material and energetic sphere, what is needed is to combat the unjust accumulation of wealth and to distribute and share within the limits between the ecological ceiling and the social floor of minimum needs.

3. **Maintaining biodiversity.** The Sixth Mass Extinction of species is a catastrophe threatening the balance that maintains the biosphere. This is essential for the functionality of vital systems and processes such as photosynthesis,

Understanding our eco-dependent nature means overcoming the idea of human beings as the pinnacle of evolution.

pollination or soil fertilisation, which are responsible for sustaining the complexity of life on Earth. Understanding our eco-dependent nature means overcoming the idea of human beings as the pinnacle of evolution and understanding that the

solution to this crisis will not come from the hand of technologies that overcome any natural process but from being able to imitate and regenerate the thousands of symbiotic relationships between species that today maintain life on the planet. The idea of dependence and diversity (ecological and cultural) makes us strong as a species.

4. **Living off the current sun.** The way of life of the enriched Global North is based on a deeply petrodependent culture. The consumption of fossil fuels is not only imperilled by its depletion but also leads us into climate chaos.

Waste is an exclusive human creation, so we must stop the accumulation of waste in the air, land, and water.

The increase in atmospheric temperature is a fact; the question is, to what extent will we allow this increase to occur, and what climatic consequences will it cause? Nuclear energy is not a salvation plank since, among many other reasons, its waste

production deepens the translimitation of sinkholes. We must convert the energy model based on renewables in a decentralised and fair way.

5. **Closing material cycles.** Waste is an exclusive human creation, so we must stop the accumulation of waste in the air, land, and water by pursuing its reduction and seeking biocompatibility by inserting it into the circular cycle of life. To this end, it is essential to abandon the linearity of the current production process, which accumulates

waste and gives rise to massive landfills, and replace it with a process based on sufficiency, proximity, slowness and reintegration into ecosystems. Although less well known, our disruption of the major biogeochemical cycles (carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus) is as fundamental and pressing as climate imbalance or the massive loss of species.

6. **Putting life at the centre.** As eco-dependent beings, we are interdependent beings. Humans inhabit vulnerable bodies in need of care. This care has been sustained, paid or unpaid, mainly by women. The advance in rights and freedoms of women in the Global North cannot be sustained in the bodies of precarious women in the Global South. Care is a basic task; it is up to us to value and share it. To put life at the centre is to promote a culture that encourages lives worthy of being lived within ecological limits, is committed to non-violence in resolving conflicts, and emphasises cooperation over competition.

7. **You write about the NEC.** We cannot make the paradigm shift without the rest of the people, first because we do not know all the answers, sensitivities, reflections, experiences and struggles that each person and collective has or experiences, and second because the more people join this change, the closer we will be to achieve it. We propose to participate by adding a new idea to drive this shift and enrich this New Earth Culture.

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